

SANSON ESTATE w i n e r y

WHITE

Riesling 2007 - \$14.95

The "07" has a distinct Alsace style with bold, brassy colour; forward aromas of applesauce, peach compote; and an ever-so-slight petrol note. On the palate the assertive tree fruit replays with an interesting seam of fresh herbs/thyme and really zesty acidity. This dry, racy Riesling really puts it all out there – none of that delicate, floral stuff here. Just the thing for a Berkshire pork chop on the barbecue. Don't chill this one too much – it really opens up if you take the bottle out of the fridge 15 minutes before service.

Select Chardonnay 2006 – \$15.95

A very surprising Chardonnay indeed! Exceptionally brassy in colour and the aromas and flavours certainly do not suggest an Essex County Chard at all. Actually, if I didn't know its origin, I would have guessed it came from somewhere like California or maybe even Western Australia. It's a very ripe, round fruit-driven wine, unencumbered by excessive oak and not particularly high in acidity. Its character is reflected in a lush, pure fruit core - but not cool-climate apple and pear as one would expect. It is actually redolent with of tropical, mango and guava, with notes peach and apricot. This one would be great with Paella, Berkshire Pork chops or roast chicken on a Sunday afternoon.

Autumn Harvest Vidal 2007 - \$12.95

I really don't think I have ever visited Sanson Estate without someone coming in during my time there and buying a couple of bottles of this wine. It seems to be a staple for Essex County locals. Vidal is actually a hybrid grape that was designed to survive Canada's inclement winters but it found a niche as icewine - actually celebrating those same cold months. Harvested a little late in the fall, after the fruit has had time to accumulate extra ripeness this wine shows round, honeyed aromas of pineapple and peach that carry to a soft, round, full palate. It's simply an easy-to-drink, slightly off-dry, unoaked wine that is great on its own or will compliment a surprising range of foods - anything from pan-fried fish to roast fowl to spicy.

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RED

Baco Noir 2007 - \$15.95

From the start, Baco has been one of Sanson's "go to" wines and the 07 is another great effort. Deep ruby colour and staining concentrated purple hues. The aromas show classic wild berry/black currant and crème de cassis balanced with elegant, sweet oak bouquet – that's one of the keys with Baco, getting the oak to balance the bold fruit without the whole thing getting too overblown. On the palate it is full and round with ultra-ripe fruit, the other key is to keep the vigour of the vine in check to avoid green notes. Baco is a workhorse hybrid around here and it really makes my day when I can pour it for those I-don't-drink Canadian-wine-folks – and have them tell me they think its "a pretty decent California Zin". Right on, Dennis!

Bird Dog Red 2005 - \$19.95

Bird Dog has developed kind a cult following in "The County" and this '05 is a great example of why. This a serious, full-bodied wine with a prominent whack of oak - however, with extended cellar time at the winery it has become really nicely integrated and lost most of the youthful, astringent edge seen in its earlier tastings. It is still very firm though, packing a good tannic punch on the finish and would continue to age nicely in your cellar through 2015. At the time of this tasting (Nov. 2009) it showed deeply extracted ruby colours and was just beginning to take on some lovely, mature, garnet hues. The palate was also evolved, with all that sweet, elegant oak and notes of old leather in the forefront nicely integrated into the core of jammy raspberry fruit. This is a great fall/winter wine to serve with hearty braised meats or Sunday roasts.

Cabernet Sauvignon 40%, Cabernet Franc 35%, Merlot 25%

Barn Cat 2006 - \$16.95

A medium/light colour suggests an easy-to-drink wine, which Barn Cat is, but at the same time, like an onion, you peel away the layers and there is much more there. The aroma's lively and pleasing with cherry notes at the core and highlights of new leather, red licorice, and a touch of anise. These impressions are rounded out on the palate with some sweet vanilla/wood and a refreshing zest of acidity that lingers on a crisp finish. The mild tannins, the smooth mouth-feel ... the pleasant bite on the finish. All indications point to a great wine drinking experience for the next few years to come. This guy is just the right weight and balance for a Berkshire chop or some spicy sausage right off the barbecue.

Barn Cat 2006 is a blend of these four grapes: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir

Baco Noir Reserve 2008 - \$24.95

I think I detect a slight change of style this year. Previous vintages seemed to have a more defined oak influence but this one is really focused on fruit character – Baco fans can rejoice! Lots of that brambly elderberry and wild currant aroma and flavour backed by the lively, juicy acidity that purists love. There are still evident notes of wood to add complexity but this wine is like the old Tiger's Stadium compared to that damned new "ballpark" they have – one for the purists.

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