

The Province

FINAL EDITION |

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2013 | VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

\$1.43 PLUS GST

\$2.14 minimum
in outlying areas



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With well over 200 wineries now operating in British Columbia (pretty much an amazing threefold increase in the last decade), wine enthusiasts certainly don't lack selection. However, finding all these B.C. wines can prove an issue, with many wineries producing a limited supply of bottles or relying upon limited distribution. As a remedy, the British Columbia Wine Institute has again partnered with B.C. Liquor Stores for their annual Best of B.C. release, providing shelf space to a collection of 10 limited supply, in-demand reds. This week we look at three serious sippers from this curated crop.

THE SWIRL: Best of B.C. tastings

In conjunction with the Best of B.C. release, sommelier-led wine tastings of a variety of B.C. VQA wines are being offered at a number of B.C. Liquor Stores. This Saturday tastings are taking place from 3-7 p.m. at the 8th and Cambie (Vancouver), Whistler Marketplace (Whistler), and Highgate (Burnaby) B.C. Liquor Store locations. For complete details visit bcliquorstores.com.

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Laughing Stock 2011 Blind Trust Red (\$30, #492421)

The Naramata Bench's Laughing Stock Vineyards has developed quite the cult wine following. And while the winery's memorable, sassy stock trading-themed motifs may grab initial attention, it's the wine inside that keeps people coming back. Apropos of the name, the grape breakdown of their Blind Trust Red blend is kept under seal. That is, it's under the winemaker's discretion to change the blend each year, and you won't know the actual blend until you unwrap and unseal the bottle (having uncorked my bottle, I will say that the Blind Trust features five different grapes!). What is upfront, however, is the bold and punchy demeanour of this plummy, herby and elegant red that finishes with lingering fruit and spice.

Bottom line: A- "Great balance."



LaStella 2010 Fortissimo (\$35, #840504)

It's another blend — and another bold red — with LaStella's Fortissimo Selezione di Famiglia, or Family Selection. This time the classic Bordelais triumvirate of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon get mixed with an addition of eight per cent Sangiovese, the famous Tuscan grape. The blended wine ages in a combination of French and Slavonian barrels and larger puncheons, and the result in the glass shows overt aromas of ripe dark fruit and toasty oak in a grippy, quite dry style overall. There's also ample freshness and pizzazz, a nice feat considering the challenge of the 2010 vintage.

Bottom line: B+ "Pair with braised shanks."



Painted Rock 2010 Syrah (\$39.90, #130989)

Though relatively young, Painted Rock Estate Winery has already raked in serious accolades and won the palates of serious wine enthusiasts since their first releases in 2007. Located on the Skaha Bluff south of Penticton, the specs on this impressive Syrah show the winery means business. To appease a tough vintage and ensure proper ripening, Painted Rock's winemaking team "green harvested," or culled, 20 tons of fruit (from a 70-ton total). The subsequent juice saw 18 months in mostly new French and American oak barrels. The fruit of this labour is a lush, cracked pepper and sinewy red that melds fruity and savoury into one layered mouthful of elegant Syrah.

Bottom line: A- "Elegant yet powerful."

