



Written by
Richard Hemming MW
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British Columbia's (im)perfect pitch



Practice makes perfect - yet imperfections are supposed to be an important feature in our appreciation of pleasure. The symmetrical beauty of the human face is said to be enhanced by an offset mole. Fine wine is made more engaging by atypical, often quite esoteric flavours. The odd bum note greatly improves a Chopin recital.

Okay, perhaps the last point is debatable, and underlines why my own piano playing mostly remains behind closed, locked, soundproofed doors. A recent exception to this rule is pictured below, when I couldn't resist playing a few bars on this beautiful grand piano at Mission Hill's winery in British Columbia.



Thankfully for all concerned, my main business in the region was to get to know its wines.

The main winegrowing region surrounds Lake Okanagan (pictured below), a backdrop that was more beautiful and dramatic than I had anticipated. It dominates the landscape there, and has an important practical effect too, moderating the very hot summers common to the region.



Yet the two grape varieties we tasted most frequently have decidedly cool-climate heritage: Riesling and Pinot Noir. Here, they grow alongside bedfellows as apparently disparate as Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay, Grüner Veltliner and Pinot Gris. Much like the imperfection that signifies beauty, there is much about the wine of British Columbia which seems incongruous. Determining the region's preeminent style is perhaps the most obvious example of this. Among my tasting notes below are glossy, internationally styled bordeaux blends; skin-contact orange wines; pet-nat made from Gamay; off-dry Rieslings; oaked Chardonnays and icewines made from Syrah and Viognier. No style of wine is beyond the ambitions of winemakers here.

On the one hand, this is symptomatic of a vibrant winemaking scene which doesn't labour under the restrictive appellations of the old world; on the other hand it betrays an incoherent understanding about what styles are best suited to their terroir. Such a situation is not uncommon for relatively new wine regions (the modern incarnation of the BC wine industry dates only from the early 1990s), and you could argue that such diversity shouldn't be discouraged if the wines are good quality. But then again, the region's most-planted varieties of each colour, Pinot Gris and Merlot, are definitely not its best wines.

What does seem true, however, is that newer vintages of all varieties are generally better than older ones. That is not to infer anything about the potential ageability of BC wine, but to observe a definite improvement in quality across the board in recent years. While increasing vine age

might be partially responsible for this, it seems to me that the more persuasive reason is an increased understanding and experience among winemakers of how to make the best wine they can in their region: practice making perfect.

Yet part of this evolution involves embracing the imperfections of true beauty. In the early days, many BC wines were made to a formula that was technically balanced, with ripe fruit, expensive oak treatment and which strove to an ideal of perfection that was in fact rather anonymous. British Columbia was by no means the only region producing such wines throughout the 1990s and 2000s, but as a newly established region it perhaps lacked the confidence to try something more daring.

As that confidence has grown, it has resulted in the explosive diversity of styles. This signifies the coming of age of British Columbia, and it makes for an exciting prospect. Whether certain styles will eventually establish themselves as the true calling cards of the region remains to be seen (I'd be focusing on Syrah if it were up to me). In the meantime, discovering the potential of British Columbia is one of the things that makes it so compelling as a region. There are still plenty of glossy, internationally styled wines being made, many of which are excellent. But the wines which are the most beautiful are those which aren't afraid to play a few bum notes.

These 222 notes are grouped by style and ordered by producer (sur)name. You can rearrange the order using the dropdown link, and use the anchor links to jump to the relevant section.

Order by ▼

Sparkling
Riesling
Chardonnay
Whites other than Chardonnay and Riesling
Rosé
Gamay
Pinot Noir
Syrah
Bordeaux varieties
Icewine

SPARKLING

- [Bella, Ancestrale Chardonnay 2016 British Columbia](#)*Not VQA. Methode ancestrale. Slightly cloudy. 100% Chardonnay. Disgorged June 2017. No sulphur.*
Quite a cider-esque nose with apple fruit that has an oxidative, bruised-fruit quality. Certainly refreshing, thanks to brisk acidity, and very well balanced at a low alcohol level. Dry finish. (RH) 9.1% Drink 2017-2019
16.5
- [Bella, Ancestrale Chardonnay 2016 Similkameen Valley](#)*Strange nose – musty with a strong cheese note, plus sweetness on the finish that gives candied fruit. (RH)10.3% Drink 2017-2018*
14.5
- [Bella, Blanc de Blancs 2016 British Columbia](#)*Disgorged August 2017. 100% Chardonnay from a limestone site in Kamloops.*
Lovely pure apple fruit on the palate with a delicious shot of lemon juice. Relatively soft acidity, lovely creamy fizz. Just a touch of nutty character and lovely pithy grip on the palate.

(RH)11.1% Drink 2017-2020

16.5

- Bella, Blanc de Blancs 2016 Similkameen Valley 100% Chardonnay. *Disgorged June 2017.* Much more earthy notes than their Kamloops bottling, but also has fresh vibrant apple character. Interesting nutty character on the palate. Delightfully drinkable and fresh without being simple. (RH)11.5% Drink 2017-2020
16.5
- Bella, Reserve Brut Nature 2013 Okanagan Valley 100% Chardonnay. *42 months on lees, disgorged April 2017.* Strong fruit intensity. Excellent complexity and breadth on the palate with bready notes and a long, creamy mouthfeel. Excellent mealy character and gently pithy persistence. (RH)12% Drink 2017-2023
17
- Bella, Ancestrale Rosé 2016 Okanagan Valley Gamay. *Disgorged August 2017.* Raw, vibrant, red-cherry aromas. Super-bright on the palate. Lovely simple, succulent fruit. Not much persistence but the immediate fruit on the palate is totally sufficient to satisfy. (RH)11.8% Drink 2017-2022
16.5
- Bella, Ancestrale Rosé (Mariani Vineyard) 2016 British Columbia 100% Gamay (clone 787) from the Mariani vineyard. *Disgorged August 2017.* Very pale orange colour - almost more white than rosé. Gorgeous rhubarb fruit - so evocative and pure! Dry, vivid, very slightly vegetal, but absolutely stunning in terms of fruit purity. Creamy, salty, fantastic flavour range. Really something special. (RH)10.9% Drink 2017-2020
17.5
- Bella, Ancestrale Rosé (Orchard House Vineyard) 2016 British Columbia 100% dry-farmed Gamay from Orchard House Vineyard, Naramata Bench. *From magnum.* Dark pink - almost red, really. Very authentic Gamay flavours - a bit of bubblegum, plum and redcurrant. Reasonably short persistence, but the way the fizz and fruit works together is remarkable. (RH)10.9% Drink 2017-2020
17
- Bella, Rosé 2016 British Columbia Non-VQA. 100% Gamay from Cavada Vineyard. Pale salmon appearance. Gorgeous strawberry fruit. Absolutely delicious on the palate at first with lovely pure fruit, although it finishes with a hamster-cage mousiness - frustrating! If you don't mind that long musty aftertaste, there's loads to like here. (RH)11.8% Drink 2017-2021
15
- Bella, Rosé 2016 Okanagan Valley *Disgorged July 2017.* 100% Gamay. Bright baby pink. Simple, youthful raspberry and blackcurrant fruit - really lovely and fresh with tangy, vivid acid and strong purity on the finish. (RH)12.1% Drink 2017-2021
17
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Narrative Ancient Method 2015 Okanagan Valley 100% Pinot Noir. *Pet-nat. From the Garnet Valley Ranch property.* Simple palate with a musty, hamster-cage finish that spoils the purity. (RH)11.5% Drink 2016-2018
14
- La Stella, d'Osoyoos Moscato 2016 Okanagan Valley RS 44 g/l. Some petrol and oil notes alongside the simple grape-juice aromas. Light petillance on the palate. Soapy character on the finish. (RH)9.7% Drink 2017
15
- Sumac Ridge, Stellar's Jay Brut 2014 Okanagan Valley One-third each of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc. *Aged 36 months on lees.*

Frothy, light, generous dosage giving honeyed notes on the palate. Not much autolysis.

(RH)13% Drink 2017-2020

15.5

- Summerhill Pyramid, Blanc de Blancs Brut 2010 Okanagan Valley *Disgorged 2017*. Simple fruit, basic autolysis giving a creamy saltine note and some almond character. (RH) Drink 2015-2025
16
- Summerhill Pyramid, Cipes Blanc de Noirs 2008 Okanagan Valley *100% Pinot Noir*. Bright acid, hard-cheese and green-apple flavours with a simple, crisp refreshment factor. Slightly bitter finish. (RH) Drink 2015-2020
15.5
- Summerhill Pyramid, Cipes Ariel 1998 Okanagan Valley *Disgorged 2017. 59% Pinot Noir, 40% Chardonnay, 1% Pinot Meunier*. Creamy, buttery a touch of sweet coffee and milk chocolate. Dried apple fruit. Not the hugest complexity. (RH) Drink 2017-2020
16
- Summerhill Pyramid, Cipes Rosé NV Okanagan Valley *Pinot Noir. Dosage 4 g/l*. Simple, frothy, raspberry fruit with a soft, smooth palate. (RH) Drink 2017-2019
15.5
- Summerhill Pyramid, Cipes Blanc de Franc 2011 Okanagan Valley *Mid-salmon pink. Fresh redcurrant aroma, simple and delicate and dilute. Fun and frivolous.* (RH) Drink 2015-2017
15
- Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling Brut 2014 Okanagan Valley *Dosage 6-8 g/l*. Light froth, oily nose, attractive lemon-juice fruit and a fantastic combination of bright acid and soft fleshy mouthfeel. The effervescence fits really well; doesn't seem arbitrary. (RH)13% Drink 2017-2023
17
- Tantalus, Blanc de Noirs Brut 2014 Okanagan Valley *Very pale salmon pink. Smoke, strawberry, fleshy and autolytic with excellent brioche and bakery character. Wonderfully ornate finish - yeasty and rich.* (RH) Drink 2017-2024
17

RIESLING

- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 3 Riesling 2016 Okanagan Valley *TA 10.1 g/l, RS 14.8 g/l. 10% fermented in neutral French oak*. Lovely youthful citrus fruit with rose-petal and lime-pickle character. The sweetness really doesn't show on the palate. Limited aromatic complexity, but it has the fruit purity and weighty texture to develop well in bottle. (RH)10.5% Drink 2018-2022
16+
- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 3 Riesling 2015 Okanagan Valley *TA 7.6 g/l, RS 10.3 g/l. 20% fermented in neutral French oak. Very hot year*. Quite closed on the nose, some cereal notes, then full body, lots of honey and a slightly oxidative quality which seems as if the fruit hasn't aged brilliantly well. Perhaps that's the fault of the warm vintage? (RH)12% Drink 2017-2018
14.5
- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 3 Riesling 2014 Okanagan Valley *TA 9 g/l, RS 8.2 g/l. 20% fermented in neutral French oak. Aged for six months on lees in steel tank. Made in the model of the Grosses Gewächs, in collaboration with Fritz Hasselbach*.

Riper, peachier fruit than the 2013 and 2012 and a touch of honey too. Lovely texture and weight on the palate. Much more interesting and sophisticated than the preceding vintages. (RH)12% Drink 2017-2025

17

- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 3 Riesling 2013 Okanagan Valley TA 12.3 g/l, RS 15 g/l. Warm vintage.

Oily, rubbery nose which works in the context of the variety, and typical lime fruit. The acid is very punchy and threatens to upset the balance, and it feels almost too much like a caipirinha! (RH)8.8% Drink 2015-2019

15

- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 3 Riesling 2012 Okanagan Valley TA 12.1 g/l, RS 24.9 g/l. Cool vintage.

Showing quite an oily character on the nose, then light lime fruit concentration on the palate. The acid and sugar come close to cancelling each other out, which is probably a good thing! Ageing quite nicely, although it is probably best enjoyed soonish while the fruit is still lively. (RH)8% Drink 2014-2018

16

- Culmina, Decora Riesling 2016 Okanagan Valley Intense lime and floral aromas. Clean and polished with rounded body but cutting acidity on the finish. (RH)13.5% Drink 2017-2020

16

- Little Farm, Pied de Cuve Riesling 2016 Similkameen Valley Aged seven months on lees in old barrels. Unfiltered and unfiltered.

Lemon sherbet aromas, lovely ripeness on the palate giving weight and flesh. More complete and satisfying than their regular 2016 Riesling. (RH) Drink 2018-2026

16.5

- Little Farm Riesling 2016 Similkameen Valley Orange pith on the nose - very tangy acid, bitter and saline on the palate. Clean, linear and precise. Flirts with sourness on the length.

(RH) Drink 2018-2023

15.5

- Little Farm Riesling 2015 Similkameen Valley Ginger and crystallised citrus peel. Lovely honeyed touch and a very lifted mint and herb character, which is unusual and delicious. Then the finish has just a touch of hamster cage. (RH) Drink 2017-2019

16

- Little Farm Riesling 2012 Similkameen Valley Gorgeous dried-orange and oily aroma with a touch of oxidation on the nose that is not a distraction yet, but suggests drinking soon. Light and savoury on the palate, with a lovely lime-juice clarity on the finish. (RH) Drink 2014-2018

16.5

- Martin's Lane, Fritz's Vineyard Riesling 2014 Okanagan Valley 10% fermented in German oak cask. RS 6 g/l.

Perhaps a little bit less fruit on the nose on the palate than their Naramata Ranch Riesling, but then much more slaty character on the palate and a long, lemon-sherbet finish. Excellent salinity. (RH)13.9% Drink 2017-2024

17.5

- Martin's Lane, Naramata Ranch Riesling 2014 Okanagan Valley First vintage. 900 cases made. RS 13 g/l.

Pure, honeyed nose with ice-fresh lime fruit. Such wonderful fruit, with a succulent and fragrant palate. Superb concentration yet it has a Mosel (or perhaps Rheingau) mode of balance, with acid that frames the wine tightly but retains balance throughout. (RH) 13.5% Drink 2016-2024

17.5+

- **Nk'Mip, QwAM QwMt Riesling 2016 Okanagan Valley** TA 9.2 g/l, RS 8 g/l. *Eight hours of skin contact.*
Pure lime and loads of intensity of fruit which zings on the finish. Brightness and purity. (RH) Drink 2017-2022
16.5
- **Orofino, Hendsbee Vineyard Riesling 2013 Similkameen Valley** Candied citrus aromas, white currant and laser-guided lime fruit. Precise but not skinny – there is some textural breadth on the palate and length. (RH) Drink 2017-2027
16.5
- **Orofino, Hendsbee Vineyard Riesling 2015 Similkameen Valley** Bright, youthful mandarin fruit and a touch of floral lift on the finish. There's a herbal leafy note too – but nothing underripe. (RH) Drink 2018-2025
16.5
- **Orofino, Home Vineyard Old Vines Riesling 2013 Similkameen Valley** Honeyed, sweet lime fruit, attractive caramelised note on the palate. Medium body, integrated acid with bite but soft edges. Tangy, refreshing, absolutely delicious. (RH) Drink 2016-2027
17
- **Orofino Riesling 2006 Similkameen Valley** Clone 21B. *Planted 1989.*
Lovely mature aromas – soft cheese, lime curd, something verging on putrid in a good way. Charming and fleshy and dry but not austere, with plenty of ripe fruit still intact on the palate. (RH) Drink 2008-2022
17
- **Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling 2014 Okanagan Valley** Youthful, fresh fruit that deserves longer in bottle to unfurl its petals. Gentle despite the punchy acidity, and the long finish displays great purity. (RH) 12.7% Drink 2018-2028
17+
- **Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling 2012 Okanagan Valley** Orange and peach on the nose, no oily character, touches of quite exotic fruit like mandarin and starfruit. Winemaker David says this is one of his least favourite vintages because it was so easy. Very attractive and classic but perhaps not as expressive as their other vintages. (RH) Drink 2015-2022
16.5
- **Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling 2011 Okanagan Valley** Cool vintage. Citrus peel on the nose, subtle smoke character and loads of body and fruit power on the palate. Intense, chewy length with tremendous fruit, awesome concentration. Just a touch of honey to pretty up the finish, though the lasting impression on the finish is dry. (RH) 12.9% Drink 2015-2031
17.5
- **Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling 2008 Okanagan Valley** Honeyed, stony nose with lime-pickle fruit. Wonderfully balanced palate in terms of flavour profile – ripe but tart, fresh fruit yet showing developed oily notes. Long, aromatic finish. Punchy acidity, long and fragrant finish. (RH) 13% Drink 2013-2024
17
- **Tantalus, Old Vines Riesling 2006 Okanagan Valley** Warm vintage. Waxy, oily nose, orange peel and gorgeous floral complexity. Fleshy palate that is zipped up by excellent acidic frame. Superb purity with a honeyed, lengthy finish. Shares something of the Clare Valley character, with that slight smoky note. (RH) 13% Drink 2008-2022
17
- **Tantalus Riesling 2016 Okanagan Valley** Wonderful floral perfume on the nose with lime juice and a touch of salinity on the finish. Fleshy, full, broad, creamy. Impressive – combines volume with gracefulness. (RH) Drink 2018-2028
17+

- **Tantalus Riesling 2012 Okanagan Valley** Much more compact and precise on the nose compared with the 2010. Straightforward, classic Riesling style on the palate – citric, some tropical notes (pineapple?) and a simple finish. (RH) Drink 2015-2025
16.5
- **Tantalus Riesling 2010 Okanagan Valley** Cool, long vintage. Fantastic fresh orange-juice aroma and sumptuous sweetness on the finish. Reasonably full body, mouth-watering acidity and excellent persistence. Such crystalline fruit – really shines. (RH) Drink 2015-2025
17
- **Tantalus Riesling 2009 Okanagan Valley** Warm vintage. Honeycomb and caramel on the palate with just a slight hint of bruised citrus on the finish. Very lovely, but not likely to improve further in bottle. (RH) Drink 2012-2018
16
- **Tantalus Riesling 2007 Okanagan Valley** Cordite, smoky, cooked-lime fruit, a lick of sugar on the finish makes this very easy drinking and with impressive persistence, although the complexity isn't quite up to the best Old Vines bottlings. (RH) Drink 2009-2020
16.5
- **Upper Bench Riesling 2016 Okanagan Valley** *RS 9 g/l.*
Zippy apple, lime and lemon finishes with a salty seasoning giving a savoury finish. Linear, precise, classic. (RH) Drink 2017-2021
16.5

CHARDONNAY

- **Checkmate, Fool's Mate Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley** Strong lactic character on the nose, giving a buttery character that is rich and powerful. Ripe, cooked fruit in accompaniment. (RH) Drink 2016-2018
16
- **Checkmate, Little Pawn Chardonnay 2013 Okanagan Valley** Popcorn, cream, and citric fruit that sits apart a little bit, cutting over the oak and dairy notes. (RH) Drink 2014-2018
16
- **Checkmate, Queen Taken Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley** Very buttery nose, and that dairy character dominates right through to the finish. There is lots of ripe fruit too, but the butter flavour is rather too overwhelming on balance. (RH) Drink 2016-2018
16
- **Culmina, Dilemma Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley** *100% Chardonnay. Aged for nine months in 36% new French oak, 16% used French oak and 48% stainless steel.*
Nutty, stewed apple with some apricot aromas too. Lovely hard cheese and cereal character – there is a lot of savoury umami appeal in this wine. (RH) 14% Drink 2016-2020
17
- **Little Farm Chardonnay 2016 Similkameen Valley** Raw apple fruit aroma, with something a little wild and nutty about it. Has a slight mustiness on the finish which perhaps indicates the low sulphur addition? I would be inclined to drink this relatively early to enjoy the youthful fruit. (RH) Drink 2017-2018
16
- **Little Farm Chardonnay 2011 Similkameen Valley** Caramelised fruit with good freshness, apple fruit with a hint of stalkiness perhaps. Dry and vibrant with a touch of soft cheese on the finish. (RH) Drink 2014-2019
16.5
- **Little Farm, Pied de Cuve Chardonnay 2016 Similkameen Valley** Lightly cloudy appearance. A

touch of yeasty aroma on the nose. Dry and punchy with a linear, salty finish. Has greater freshness and unity than their regular 2016 Chardonnay. (RH)Drink 2017-2020

16.5

- Meyer Family, McLean Creek Road Vineyard Chardonnay 2015 Okanagan Valley Stylish, powerful nose with some trendy sulphidic reduction giving smoke aroma over delicious ripe citrus fruit. Generous and rich but all within a well-balanced acidic tension. (RH)Drink 2017-2020
17
- Meyer Family, Tribute Series Old Main Road Vineyard Chardonnay 2015 Okanagan Valley Tight, smoky palate with tangy acidity which gives a mouth-watering, bright acidity. Strong citrus element, but it doesn't go bitter. Sophisticated, lengthy, mealy persistence. (RH)Drink 2017-2021
17
- Mission Hill, Perpetua Chardonnay 2010 Okanagan Valley *30% aged in new oak, the rest in stainless steel. Cool vintage.*
Buttery, creamy, tropical fruit with a touch of caramel on the finish. Finishes just a little bitter – as if the fruit is drying out now. (RH)Drink 2012-2015
15.5
- Mission Hill, Perpetua Chardonnay 2012 Okanagan Valley *30% aged in new oak, the rest in stainless steel.*
Pretty flat palate and a rather subdued nose. On the palate, attractive tropical mango fruit leading to a bitter finish. (RH) Drink 2014-2016
15
- Mission Hill, Perpetua Chardonnay 2015 Okanagan Valley *60% aged in mostly old oak. Warm vintage.*
Mealy, leesy nose, tight structure, well-integrated oak spice. Lots of tension on the palate – vibrant, attractive. (RH)Drink 2017-2019
16
- Mission Hill, Tranquil Pine Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley Rich fruit plus a slight sickliness on the nose. Neutral fruit on the palate, but plenty of concentration. Dry with a light sour tang to finish. (RH)Drink 2016-2017
15
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Secret Mountain Chardonnay 2016 Okanagan Valley *Fermented in concrete egg. Partial malolactic. Aged eight months on lees.*
Relatively neutral nose, then lovely fresh tropical fruit with a metallic, steely edge adding complexity. Light bodied with soft, fluffy texture. (RH)12.5% Drink 2017-2019
16.5
- Painted Rock Chardonnay 2016 Okanagan Valley *80% aged in French oak of which 55% was new.*
Ripe, fleshy, full and mealy with a lot of baked-apple fruit and a lovely mealy texture. The alcohol warms the finish, and makes it quite a formidable glassful – but there is certainly enough flavour to match. (RH)14.8% Drink 2017-2019
16.5
- Poplar Grove Chardonnay 2016 Okanagan Valley *20% fermented in French oak.*
Lemon butter, nutty, glossy and fresh and very well made. Very canny internationally styled winemaking – just the right amount of oak. (RH) 12.9% Drink 2017-2020
16.5
- Quail's Gate, Rosemary's Block Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley Lovely smoky reductive note with struck-match character and baked apple fruit. Lovely toffee notes, but there is no dominance by oak. Great persistence and poise on the finish. (RH)Drink 2015-2018

17

- Quail's Gate, Stewart Family Reserve Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley Ripe, generous nose with a saline, fine-grained mineral character to the palate. Has a lean character without being too thin, and in fact the body is fleshy and generous. Excellent judgement and balance on the palate – has a sense of restraint yet no meanness. (RH) Drink 2016-2020

17.5

- Tantalus Chardonnay 2015 Okanagan Valley Youthful, fleshy nose with lots of mealy cereal character and dry, savoury extract. Quite restrained fruit overall – perhaps some apricot and lime with a little smoke on the finish. (RH) 13.6% Drink 2017-2022

17

- Tantalus Chardonnay 2014 Okanagan Valley Flint, smoked bacon, clove and vanilla, chalky texture and a dry finish that has an almost European austerity. Serious, balanced, sophisticated. Should be worth ageing for a good few years. (RH) 14.2% Drink 2016-2020

16.5+

- Tantalus Chardonnay 2010 Okanagan Valley Tropical fruit – pineapple, watermelon fruit. Some buttery character. More savoury and flinty on the palate than expected, with a lovely dry, lengthy finish that has an attractive mealy note. (RH) 14.2% Drink 2013-2018

16.5

- Upper Bench Chardonnay 2016 Okanagan Valley Much more citrus fruit than their 2015. Herby, green notes on the palate. Salty character on the finish with enjoyably grainy mouthfeel. (RH) Drink 2017-2021

17

- Upper Bench Chardonnay 2015 Okanagan Valley Tropical fruit on the palate – peachy, rich, and fleshy. Has an attractive caramel note and a reasonably warm finish. (RH) Drink 2017-2020

16.5

WHITES OTHER THAN CHARDONNAY AND RIESLING

- 50th Parallel Pinot Gris 2016 Okanagan Valley Mid-gold. Honeyed, generous, a bit of spice. Quite a bit of residual sugar? Good acidic support though. Straightforward stone-fruit character and quite warm alcohol. (RH) 13.5% Drink 2015-2019

16

- Arrowleaf Pinot Gris 2016 Okanagan Valley Neutral yet still quite interesting – there's a lot of concentration and juiciness here, and lovely persistence too. Good stuff – balanced, rich, concentrated. (RH) 13.9% Drink 2017-2019

16.5

- Bench 1775 Sauvignon Blanc 2016 Okanagan Valley The best of the four vintages, with a youthful, tight citric character and nice fleshiness on the palate. (RH) Drink 2017-2019

15.5

- Bench 1775 Sauvignon Blanc 2015 Okanagan Valley Rather neutral fruit – maybe this hotter vintage burned off the expected citrus character? Soft, smooth, drinkable. (RH) Drink 2016-2017

15

- Bench 1775 Sauvignon Blanc 2014 Okanagan Valley Reductive flinty nose, currant leaf, soft texture despite the relatively high acidity. Quite a candied style to the fruit. (RH) Drink 2015-2017

15

- Bench 1775 Sauvignon Blanc 2013 Okanagan Valley Lemon, creamy texture, grapefruit. Glossy texture and a touch of oxidation to the fruit which is slightly diminishing the freshness.

(RH)Drink 2014-2016

15

- **Bench 1775 Viognier 2016 Okanagan Valley**Very reductive, which compromises the varietal expression. Better fruit clarity on the palate, with jammy apricot character. (RH)13.5% Drink 2017-2020
15.5
- **Blue Grouse Pinot Gris 2016 Vancouver Island**Slightly bruised apple fruit, rather generic in terms of flavour profile and while there's plenty of concentration, it isn't especially fresh. (RH) 13.5% Drink 2016-2017
15
- **Cedar Creek Ehrenfelser 2016 Okanagan Valley***Sylvaner x Riesling. RS 19 g/l.*
Tastes more like Viognier and Gewürztraminer than Riesling. Very aromatic and rich. The sweetness is totally logical. Peachy fruit – very enjoyable. (RH)13.4% Drink 2017-2018
15.5
- **Clos du Soleil, Growers Series Pinot Blanc 2016 Similkameen Valley***TA 7.1 g/l, RS 5.7 g/l.*
Pear juice, peach and green apple – plenty of fruit for this often neutral variety. Attractive bitter-almond note on the finish. Lovely restraint on the finish without any lack of flavour, and lovely fluffy grain to the mouthfeel. Great persistence too. (RH)12.2% Drink 2017-2019
17
- **Clos du Soleil, Capella 2015 British Columbia***TA 8.3 g/l, RS 1.9 g/l. 80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Smillon. Fermented and aged in barrel (55% wood, 45% steel).*
Graphite, smoke, lemon curd. Waxy texture on the palate, but the overall impression is quite light. Tight palate with plenty of core fruit – and apparently, it can mature for many years. (RH)13% Drink 2017-2020
16.5
- **Clos du Soleil, Capella 2014 British Columbia***TA 6.6 g/l, RS 1.8 g/l. 88% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Smillon.*
Waxy, intense lemon fruit with some crystallised ginger. Plenty of body and weight on the palate – yet finishes with nimble delicacy and well-integrated acid. (RH)12.5% Drink 2016-2020
16.5
- **Clos du Soleil, Estate Reserve 2015 Similkameen Valley***TA 6.98 g/l, RS 2.5 g/l. 96% Sauvignon Blanc, 4% Smillon.*
More oak influence than on their Capella cuvée, and lovely creamy richness to the palate. Honeycomb and caramel notes on the finish. Really attractive – subtle yet complete, with lovely grapefruit bitterness to finish. (RH)13.3% Drink 2017-2022
17
- **Culmina, Unicus Grüner Veltliner 2016 Okanagan Valley***100% Gruner Veltliner. From vines planted in 2011 and 2012.*
Crunchy green apple and lime juice with a leesy, grainy mouthfeel. Straightforward, refreshing, attractive weight, neutral sort of finish. (RH)14% Drink 2017-2018
16
- **Gray Monk Pinot Gris 2015 Okanagan Valley**Very slight pinkness – as if ramato style? Slightly reductive fruit on the nose but there's better definition on the palate and it has good weight and savoury bite on the finish. (RH)13.4% Drink 2016-2019
16
- **Laughing Stock Vineyards Pinot Gris 2016 Okanagan Valley***TA 6.2 g/l. 48% fermented in neutral French oak, 46% in stainless steel, 6% in concrete egg.*
Rounded, plump, neutral fruit with a nice leesy character on the finish. Should be a versatile food match with quite full body but no dominant fruit character. (RH)14% Drink 2017-2018

16.5

- Laughing Stock Vineyards Viognier 2016 Okanagan Valley 40% fermented in stainless steel, 35% in neutral French oak, 25% in concrete egg. TA 5.3 g/l.
Wonderfully peachy – absolutely spot-on varietal expression on the nose. Attractive vanilla and cream aromas too. Has an attractive herbal-brush sort of aroma too. Oily and rich, and a good pretender to the northern Rhône throne. (RH)14% Drink 2017-2019

16.5

- Mission Hill, Bluebird Passage Viognier 2016 Okanagan Valley RS 7.7 g/l.
Rich, ripe, fleshy and gloopy – very much Viognier and proud of it. A bit blousy but true to type. (RH) Drink 2017-2019

15.5

- Mission Hill, Southern Cross Sauvignon Blanc 2014 Okanagan Valley Partially barrel-fermented (approx 40%).
Ripe, tropical fruit without especially apparent oak influence. Some leafy bitterness on the finish. Attractive fleshiness on the mid palate. (RH) Drink 2015-2017

15

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire The Bub 2015 Okanagan Valley 50% Pinot Noir, 50% Chardonnay. No dosage.
Simple, fresh, ripe apple nose, then a lovely salty and yeasty character on the palate that gives fantastic complexity. Reasonably light body, excellent savoury finish. (RH)12% Drink 2017-2019

16.5

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Waters & Banks Sauvignon Blanc 2016 Okanagan Valley RS 5.3 g/l.
Youthful citrus fruit and white flowers on the nose. Much more restrained and broad than the Marlborough style of Sauvignon Blanc, which gives lovely complexity. Effortlessly juicy and glossy. Moderate length. A lovely, Loire-esque style. (RH) 13.5% Drink 2017-2019

16.5

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Free Form Sauvignon Blanc 2016 Okanagan Valley Skin contact for ten months. Tank sample.
Cloudy appearance (but this should settle before it's bottled). Banana and mango fruit, plus a light herbal character. Really interesting and valid, perhaps not recognisably Sauvignon, but delicious. (RH) Drink 2017-2020

16.5

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Free Form Sauvignon Blanc 2015 Okanagan Valley Typical orange wine thanks to skin contact, with strong orange peel and spicy clove character. (RH) Drink 2016-2018

16.5

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Switchback Pinot Gris 2016 Okanagan Valley Tank sample.
Attractive ripeness to the stone fruit here, and there is more intensity and flesh than in their 2015. Great concentration and fleshy mouthfeel. (RH)13.1% Drink 2018-2019

16.5

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Switchback Pinot Gris 2015 Okanagan Valley Slight herbaceousness on the nose, apple and pear on the palate. Dry, savoury and quite restrained for Pinot Gris. (RH)13.6% Drink 2016-2017

15.5

- Poplar Grove Pinot Gris 2016 Okanagan Valley RS 3 g/l.
Pear fruit, generous and fleshy with ripe fruit and rounded, satisfying balance. Classic, good stuff. (RH)13.1% Drink 2017-2019

16

- La Stella, Vivace Pinot Grigio 2016 Okanagan Valley Green apple, perhaps a bit of free sulphur giving a very slight eggy stink, light palate, dry and simple finish. (RH)13.1% Drink 2017-2018
15
- Le Vieux Pin, Ava 2012 Okanagan Valley 61% Viognier, 21% Roussanne, 18% Marsanne. 45% aged in French oak barrels of which 33% were new. Peach, banana, honey, caramel aromas. Reasonably light palate. Moderate persistence, good blend of varietal characteristics. (RH)14% Drink 2014-2018
15.5
- Le Vieux Pin, Ava 2016 Okanagan Valley 50% Viognier, 32% Roussanne, 18% Marsanne. Soapy aromas, less fleshy and stone fruit character than their 2012 but still pretty full bodied. The soap aroma is quite dominant throughout. (RH) Drink 2017-2018
15

ROSÉ

- 50th Parallel, Rosé Pinot Noir 2016 Okanagan Valley Slightly candied fruit, straightforward, simple. (RH) Drink 2017
15
- Culmina, Saignée Rosé 2016 Okanagan Valley 73% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc, 13% Malbec. Very pale salmon colour. Confectured fruit, simple and primary and candied. (RH)14% Drink 2016-2017
15
- Niche Wine Co, Blanc Pinot Noir 2016 Okanagan Valley RS 9 g/l. Pale rosé, quite sweet and candied on the palate. Simple, refreshing. (RH) Drink 2017-2018
15
- Quail's Gate, Lucy's Block Rosé 2016 Okanagan Valley 50% Pinot Noir, 50% Pinot Meunier. Light but pure aromatic profile with simple, candied red fruit and a gentle, reasonably long finish. (RH)13% Drink 2017-2018
16

GAMAY

- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Gamay 2016 Okanagan Valley Compact nose but beautifully vivid fruit on the palate with purest strawberry fruit and some spice which tastes like slight oak influence (yet there is none, we are told). Gorgeous violet character on the length. An absolute charmer. (RH)13% Drink 2017-2021
17
- Orofino Gamay 2016 Similkameen Valley Beautifully crisp wild raspberry aroma plus some gorgeous herbal notes. So much clarity! Excellent drinkability - but not at all simple, there is lovely floral perfume and a touch of anise and fennel. Absolutely great. (RH) Drink 2017-2019
17
- Quail's Gate, Cailleteau Gamay 2016 Okanagan Valley Crunchy, crisp, shot through with green herby notes. Some liquorice and floral character too. Plus fennel, maybe? Good stuff. (RH)14% Drink 2017-2021
16.5

PINOT NOIR

- 50th Parallel Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Lovely oak spice, and lots of volume and grip on the palate. Formidable and serious. Lovely medicinal notes on the finish. Deserves time. (RH) Drink 2019-2029
16.5+
- 50th Parallel Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Tight, light. Rosehip and redcurrant aromas. Slightly herbal finish. (RH) Drink 2017-2022
16
- Baillie-Grohman, Reserve Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Sweet, big redcurrant and raspberry fruit which is much less nuanced than their 2013. Smoke and spice and fruit, fruit, fruit. (RH) Drink 2019-2025
16.5
- Baillie-Grohman, Reserve Pinot Noir 2013 Okanagan Valley Great fruit definition, smooth and fragrant with just enough tannin to shape the palate. (RH) Drink 2017-2027
17
- Blue Mountain Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Spicy nose, full body. Creamy texture with a bit of coffee character on the finish. The fuller side of Pinot. (RH) Drink 2020-2025
16
- Blue Mountain, Reserve Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Black cherry, firm but very light-grained tannin and a bit of smoke on the finish. (RH) Drink 2018-2022
16
- Blue Mountain, Reserve Pinot Noir 2010 Okanagan Valley Slightly tired fruit, it seems to me. Some quite sour notes on the finish. Not ageing well, I'm afraid. (RH) Drink 2013-2017
14.5
- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 4 Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Very intense fruit on the nose, topped with spicy oak and creamy texture. Chewy texture, glossy and medicinal with bitter hints. (RH) 13.9% Drink 2017-2021
16.5
- Cedar Creek, Platinum Block 2 Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Lighter and more fragrant than the Block 4 with liquorice and bitter herby tang. Elegant but slightly pinched. (RH) 13.6% Drink 2017-2021
16
- Foxtrot Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Gorgeous, sumptuous fruit, pinpoint acid balance on the palate, very fine tannin. Great concentration and core intensity. (RH) Drink 2020-2030
17+
- Foxtrot, Reimer Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Super clarity of fruit – simple and fruit-driven but beautifully balanced. Just enough crunch to give shape. Light and lovely. (RH) Drink 2017-2020
16.5
- Foxtrot, The Waltz Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Overripe but not candied fruit. Enough intensity to give weight without being hefty. (RH) Drink 2017-2024
16.5
- La Frenz, Desperation Hill Pinot Noir 2015 British Columbia *From the Naramata Bench subregion.* Sweet, rich fruit yet quite lean body. Dainty finish. (RH) Drink 2017-2020
16
- La Frenz, Reserve Pinot Noir 2015 British Columbia Slightly reductive nose leaves a hard, rubbery impression on the nose. Firm tannin and light body on the palate. Is this just trying too hard? Some milk chocolate aromas but the fruit is austere. Heavy finish. (RH) Drink 2017-2021
15.5
- Joie, En Famille Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Red fruit in abundance, furry tannin, more

weight than their basic Pinot Noir but still on the elegant side. Tannin needs time. (RH)Drink 2020-2025

16

- Joie Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Light, red fruit and furry tannin. A touch of chocolate and violet. Well balanced. (RH)Drink 2016-2018
15.5
- Laughing Stock Vineyards Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Lovely fragrance: spices, chocolate, smooth tannin. Quite big-boned but still authentic to the variety. (RH)Drink 2018-2022
16.5
- Laughing Stock Vineyards Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Less fragrant than the 2015, and more red fruit. Chewy tannin. Tense, quite warm. Lovely fruit clarity. (RH)Drink 2018-2024
16.5
- Laughing Stock Vineyards Pinot Noir 2008 Okanagan Valley Truffle, earth, milk chocolate. Pretty firm tannin. Wonderful breadth: mushroom, soy, just enough grip to shape. (RH)Drink 2014-2024
17
- Martin's Lane, Fritzi's Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Clone 115. Compact nose which seems a bit shut down. Better fruit clarity on the palate – cranberry mainly – and there is firm grippy tannic texture. Sufficient fruit concentration on the palate to age as well, so this really deserves cellaring. (RH)14% Drink 2019-2029
17+
- Martin's Lane, Naramata Ranch Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley 12% whole-cluster fermentation. Tremendous fragrant lift on the palate – very sophisticated and opulent with pure, crystalline cranberry and redcurrant fruit. Some smoky notes on the finish. Very soft tannin, yet it gives enough fur on the finish to make it a serious and food-worthy wine. Light in body, with serious savoury length and some juniper to finish. (RH)14% Drink 2018-2024
17
- Martin's Lane, Simes Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley 20% whole-cluster fermentation. Less obvious fruit than their Naramata Ranch bottling on the nose. Light palate, sneaky tannic grip that emerges towards the finish, leaving a good chomp of texture to last. Structurally more serious and taut than their Naramata Ranch – but without as much flavour complexity. Suspect this will open further with some bottle age. (RH)14% Drink 2018-2024
16.5++
- Meyer Family, McLean Creek Road Vineyard Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Quite fungal and funky on the nose, with firm tannin on the palate. Gawky. Too young? Seems a bit reductive and raw. (RH)Drink 2018-2025
15.5
- Meyer Family, Old Block Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Black cherry, grainy tannin with lots of toughness. Needs time but has enough core fruit power to last. (RH)Drink 2019-2029
16.5
- Meyer Family, Old Block Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Relatively stinky nose, black fruit with dry firm tannin and pretty warm alcohol. Shame about the reductive stink – needs air? (RH)Drink 2017-2027
15.5+
- Meyer Family, Reimer Vineyard Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Closed nose with slightly bitter chocolate flavours on the palate. Rounded and soft. (RH)Drink 2017-2025
16.5
- Mirabel Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Strawberry and smoke. Plenty of primary flavour with

supple tannin. Balanced, fresh. (RH)Drink 2017-2020

16

- Mission Hill, Reflection Point Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley *Volcanic soil. 30% whole-bunch fermentation.*
Compressed fruit, a little rubbery hint, generic red fruit. Possibly a bit of reduction which is subduing the character? Some violet perfume. Fine, sandy tannin. (RH)Drink 2016-2018
15
- Moraine Pinot Noir 2016 Okanagan Valley Tank sample. Vivid red fruit – youthful, complete, subtle tannin with a touch of rosehip and juniper. (RH)Drink 2019-2024
16.5
- Moraine Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Glossy with a touch of acetic volatility. Not exactly overripe, but certainly bold, yet still quite light in body. (RH)Drink 2017-2020
16
- Moraine Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Bright red fruit, lightly chewy tannin. Simple fruit on the palate with a lovely rosehip scent on the finish. (RH)Drink 2016-2026
16.5
- Niche Wine Co Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Strange blue cheese note, then taut red fruit, light body and a short, easy finish. Unexpected flavours, but the palate is clean. (RH)Drink 2017-2018
15
- Nk'Mip Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Light, simple fruit and delicate smoke on the finish. It's commercial and rudimentary but very pluggable. (RH)Drink 2017-2019
15.5
- Nk'Mip, QwAM QwMt Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Full-on, ripe and rich and not quite soupy but certainly a very weighty style. Long finish too. (RH)Drink 2017-2025
16.5
- Noble Ridge, King's Ransom Pinot Noir 2013 Okanagan Valley Bright and beautiful with a smoke and chocolate aroma plus firm tannin that gives way to crisp acid on the finish. (RH)Drink 2015-2020
16.5
- Noble Ridge Pinot Noir 2008 Okanagan Valley Milk chocolate, firm tannin that isn't softening even with bottle age – all a bit tough and austere. (RH)Drink 2012-2022
15
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Free Form Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley *100% Pinot Noir. No sulphur addition.*
More tannic punch than their Waters & Banks Pinot Noir, and more fruit concentration too. Attractive violet lift on the finish. Finishes with a liquorice note and furry tannic persistence. (RH)13.8% Drink 2017-2022
16.5
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Canyonview Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley *30% whole-bunch fermented.*
Sweet, not quite confectioned but certainly with a candied edge. Simple, light palate. (RH)13% Drink 2016-2018
15
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Waters & Banks Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Compact, closed nose. Simple, transparent fruit with light concentration and there's some unexpected heat on the back palate. Slight, soft tannin. (RH)13.5% Drink 2017-2020
15.5
- Okanagan Crush Pad, Haywire Waters & Banks Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Esoteric and expressive, with stone and cheese aromas, bitter fruit and hard tannin. Not a style I love, but

certainly distinctive. (RH)Drink 2015-2018

15

- Stoneboat Pinot Noir 2013 Okanagan Valley Milk chocolate, raspberry, cherry, lovely delicacy and purity and just enough tannic chew to give some grip to the finish. (RH)Drink 2016-2028
17
- Stoneboat Pinot Noir 2012 Okanagan Valley Subtle mushroom, earth, strawberry and milk chocolate aromas. Shows nice maturity. Fleshy palate. (RH)Drink 2015-2022
17
- Summerhill Pyramid, Single Vineyard Pinot Noir 2013 Okanagan Valley Jammy, overripe fruit with spice on top. Very tart acid. (RH)14.5% Drink 2015-2018
14
- Tantalus, Juveniles Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Closed nose followed by smooth tannin giving a lightly chewy texture. Light red fruit intensity. A quaffer. (RH)Drink 2018-2022
15.5
- Tantalus Pinot Noir 2015 Okanagan Valley Red fruit with a slight candied edge. Smoky and spicy finish with violet and a touch of tart cranberry fruit giving freshness on the finish. Crunchy tannic grip on the aftertaste - this needs some bottle age. (RH)13.4% Drink 2019-2025
17+
- Tantalus Pinot Noir 2014 Okanagan Valley Glossy, with a touch of furniture polish on the nose plus black cherry fruit. Sieved tannin with chalky texture on the finish. Savoury and smoky. (RH)13.9% Drink 2018-2024
16.5
- Tantalus Pinot Noir 2013 Okanagan Valley Bright red berries, very furry tannin. Super extraction that grips the palate well. Needs more time, but has the core fruit to last. (RH)Drink 2017-2027
16
- Tantalus Pinot Noir 2012 Okanagan Valley Black fruit, very chewy tannin with loads of structure and tension that will take a long while to soften. Locked down. (RH)Drink 2018-2028
16
- Tantalus Pinot Noir 2010 Okanagan Valley Strong violet and black cherry aroma. Very fine tannin, lifted floral aromatic character and reasonably subtle fruit intensity. Silky texture, savoury finish. (RH)13.4% Drink 2013-2018
16

SYRAH

- Bartier Bros Syrah 2015 Okanagan Valley Medicinal, with some acetic influence giving a heady polish aroma. Better fruit clarity on the palate with bright red fruit and a twist of black pepper seasoning. (RH)13.5% Drink 2018-2021
16
- Bartier Bros Syrah 2013 Okanagan Valley Plentiful floral aromas and black plum with a tar and liquorice note. Medium body, refreshing acid and soft tannin. (RH)13.5% Drink 2015-2019
16.5
- Black Hills Syrah 2015 Okanagan Valley Baked fruit, like a currant pudding. Also has a lovely meaty character. A touch of rubbery reduction on the palate, but nothing too intrusive. Dry, savoury, milk chocolate finish. (RH)14% Drink 2018-2023
16.5
- Black Hills Syrah 2013 Okanagan Valley Black cherry and pepper that comes through especially

on the finish. Fragrant violet character with lovely persistence. Excellent aromatic definition. Long-lasting, open and impressive without being overwrought. (RH)13.9% Drink 2016-2023
17+

- **Burrowing Owl Syrah 2015 Okanagan Valley** Candied fruit aromas, juicy and fresh and soft on the palate. Very rounded and plush. Perhaps lacking a bit of complexity on the length, although that could well emerge with age, as there is sufficient fruit purity to mature in bottle. (RH)14.5% Drink 2018-2025
16.5+
- **Burrowing Owl Syrah 2013 Okanagan Valley** Vanilla and sweet spice, gorgeous cherry and bramble fruit. Dry yet not entirely savoury – there is a generosity and flesh to the fruit which is really charming. A lovely touch of dark chocolate and smoked meat on the finish. (RH)14.5% Drink 2015-2022
17
- **C C Jentsch Syrah 2014 Okanagan Valley** 91% Syrah, 9% Viognier. The Viognier character is really influential here, and there is definite apricot flavour with the black plum fruit. Fine but firm tannin and a pure black peppercorn finish. Accurate, generous, powerful and heady. (RH)14.4% Drink 2017-2024
17
- **C C Jentsch Syrah 2013 Okanagan Valley** 100% Syrah. Has that classic meaty aroma that is especially Syrah (rather than Shiraz). Pencil shavings, blackcurrant, chocolate and lovely peppery persistence. Absolutely charming – the pepper, meat and black fruit mingle brilliantly. (RH)13.9% Drink 2016-2023
17
- **Laughing Stock Vineyards Syrah 2015 Okanagan Valley** 97% Syrah, 3% Viognier. 60% fermented in stainless steel, 20% in French oak tank, 20% in French oak puncheons. Aged for 14 months in 35% new French oak. Youthful blueberry fruit, black cherry and some violet notes. Smoke and meat on the finish and plentiful body, thanks in part to warm alcohol. Dark, bitter chocolate finish. (RH)14.9% Drink 2018-2025
17
- **Orofino, Wild Ferment Syrah 2016 Similkameen Valley** Meaty, black cherry, smoked bacon, damp earth. Sumptuous, silky plum fruit on the palate which fades into a very savoury, dark chocolate finish with a twist of sappy herbal character on the finish. Excellent. (RH)14.3% Drink 2018-2028
17.5
- **Orofino, Scout Vineyard Syrah 2015 Similkameen Valley** More obviously oaked than their Wild Ferment Syrah with a glossy spice overlay above the black fruit. Chewy tannin on the palate and a lovely savoury charred black fruit character on the finish. (RH) Drink 2018-2025
17.5
- **Painted Rock Syrah 2014 Okanagan Valley** Wow – simply extraordinary peppery aromas with gorgeous fruit purity – absolutely superb. This has all the volume of the Barossa and all the perfume of Hermitage. Watch out, world! This is one of the best Syrahs out there. (RH)15.1% Drink 2019-2034
17.5
- **Painted Rock Syrah 2008 Okanagan Valley** Loads of vanilla and coconut spice, plus mature earthy black fruit then a long black pepper note on the finish – generous and classic, with loads of flesh on the bones. Chocolatey finish – very good. (RH)14.3% Drink 2012-2022
17
- **Poplar Grove Syrah 2014 Okanagan Valley** Very perfumed violet and sweet hickory smoke aroma. Black cherry, floury tannic grip with meat and pepper aromas just starting to emerge.

There's a lot of complexity to come here - needs time, but this could be a top contender in future. (RH)14% Drink 2018-2024

17++

- **Le Vieux Pin, Cuvée Violette Syrah 2015 Okanagan Valley***Hot vintage - required some tartaric acid addition (the only vintage they have done this).*

Rubbery reductive aroma. Jammy fruit, grainy tannin, cooked fruit - this has less precision and style than the 2011, but it is at least an honest reflection of a warmer vintage! (RH)13.8%

Drink 2017-2020

15

- **Le Vieux Pin, Cuvée Violette Syrah 2011 Okanagan Valley***Aged 14 months in French oak, of which 22% was new. Cool vintage.*

Herbal notes on the nose, plus pure, glossy plum fruit. Good peppery definition on the length.

Supple, fluffy tannic quality. (RH)12.9% Drink 2014-2020

16.5

- **Le Vieux Pin, Cuvée Classique Syrah 2011 Okanagan Valley***Tar, granite and pepper on the nose - very traditional Syrah with a European sensibility. Very savoury and spicy on the palate - this is real Rhône-inspired wine, with excellent violet and spice on the long finish. (RH)12.7%*

Drink 2014-2021

17

- **Le Vieux Pin, Equinoxe Syrah 2013 Okanagan Valley***Dense black fruit and a strong floral element with quite warm alcohol on the palate. Not quite as much promise as their 2010, but should have similar ageability. (RH)Drink 2020-2035*

16.5+

- **Le Vieux Pin, Equinoxe Syrah 2010 Okanagan Valley***Cool vintage. Dark, bitter palate with a basil and bay note and a sour, taut black fruit on the finish. It's a formidable, powerful style but it really works, and still has loads of compact fruit - this is a wine to age for decades. (RH)Drink 2020-2040*

(RH)Drink 2020-2040

17+

BORDEAUX VARIETIES

- **Bench 1775, Nouveau Malbec 2016 Okanagan Valley***Bright purple colour, very youthful fruit which gives the classic plum and violet character of the variety, but in a light, delicate style. Also has tobacco smoke, superb juiciness and absolutely flawless drinkability. Virtually no tannin. High acid. Light body but no lack of fruit concentration. (RH)12.3% Drink 2017-2018*

16.5

- **Bench 1775 Cabernet Franc 2013 Okanagan Valley***Clone 214.*

A flash of green pepper, lovely tender tannic chew, clean and fresh fruit with a lovely bramble character. Light but balanced with well-integrated acid and decent persistence. (RH)12.2%

Drink 2016-2018

16.5

- **Bench 1775 Cabernet Franc/Malbec 2014 Okanagan Valley***50% Cabernet Franc, 50% Malbec. Black cherry, black pepper. Light body, fresh and easy drinking if a bit light in concentration. Finishes with a lovely violet scent. (RH)Drink 2015-2018*

15.5

- **Burrowing Owl Merlot 2014 Okanagan Valley***Restrained fruit but with no underripeness. Very punchy tannin. Attractive bitterness. Expressive and smooth. (RH)14.8% Drink 2018-2028*

17

- **Checkmate, Black Rook Merlot 2013 Okanagan Valley***Lovely smoke, plum and chocolate nose.*

Excellent freshness and ripeness, with chalky texture and great persistence. Pretty big tannin on the finish. (RH)14.4% Drink 2017-2025

17.5

- *Clos du Soleil, Estate Reserve 2013 Similkameen Valley* TA 6.6 g/l, RS 2.1 g/l. 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot, 1% Malbec. Aged for 17 months in French oak barrels.

Tremendous purity – absolutely ripe blackcurrants with a touch of red fruit too, and a lovely violet scent. Leather and liquorice notes – this is very Bordelais, but without the austerity. The tannin is very supple and yielding. Great pencil lead and smoke persistence. Exciting and utterly delicious. (RH)13.2% Drink 2018-2033

17.5

- *Clos du Soleil, Estate Reserve 2012 Similkameen Valley* TA 7.1 g/l, RS 2.3 g/l. 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc. Aged 17 months in 100% French oak barrels. More black fruit than the 2013, but with great balance of flavour giving spice and dark chocolate on the length. Great core fruit without over-extraction – this has a canny balance of fruit power with lovely savoury olive character to finish. (RH)13.2% Drink 2018-2032

17.5

- *Clos du Soleil, Signature 2013 Similkameen Valley* 51% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec.

Perhaps less fruit definition than their Estate Reserve, and a bit more tannin on the palate.

This is a young and slightly raw wine at present, and should improve with a few years of maturation. Even so, the perfume is already promising and bodes well for the future.

(RH)13.8% Drink 2019-2029

17++

- *Clos du Soleil, Signature 2008 British Columbia* Includes a small percentage of Okanagan fruit – hence not labelled Similkameen.

Deep garnet colour. Beetroot, earth, black cherry and violet. Still quite grippy tannin on the palate and loads of aromatic perfume with tobacco smoke and spice giving lovely long persistence. (RH)14.5% Drink 2013-2028

17.5

- *Culmina Cabernet Franc 2014 Okanagan Valley* Violet, black cherry, furry tannic grip, fairly light body and short to finish. Herbal bitterness on the brief length. (RH)14% Drink 2016-2018

15

- *Culmina Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Okanagan Valley* Fairly closed, very savoury, punchy tannin, compressed fruit on the mid palate. Intense syrupy fruit with strong structure and dark, bitter blackcurrant finish. (RH)14% Drink 2020-2028

16

- *Culmina, Hypothesis 2013 Okanagan Valley* 38% Merlot, 36% Cabernet Franc, 26% Cabernet Sauvignon. Aged for 16 months in French oak of which 60% was new.

Understated nose, compact fruit and high, furry tannin. Foursquare and stocky. The structure makes it hard to drink now, but there is enough fruit to evolve in bottle. (RH)14% Drink 2020-2025

16

- *Culmina, Hypothesis 2012 Okanagan Valley* 57% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Cabernet Franc. Aged for 16 months in French oak, of which 70% was new.

Fruit cake, loads of tannin on the palate that really attacks on the finish, leaving the balance disjointed. The structure requires significant ageing. (RH)14% Drink 2020-2024

15.5

- *Culmina Merlot 2014 Okanagan Valley* Quite closed on the nose. Milk chocolate flavour on the palate, then loads of tannin and weight. Well balanced but way too young. (RH)14% Drink

2020-2028

16

- Intersection, Silica Merlot 2013 Okanagan Valley Very slightly bretty? Black fruit and hard tannin. Hard work – austere. (RH)14.8% Drink 2018-2024

15

- Laughing Stock Vineyards, Portfolio 2014 Okanagan Valley 49% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 2% Malbec, 1% Petit Verdot. Aged 19 months in French oak of which 40% was new.

Black cherry, lovely fragrant sage character (the vineyard is surrounded by sage and they believe the oil gets into the wine). Sweet fruit yet savoury, and the tannin is nicely handled with just a touch of bitterness on the finish, then warm alcohol on the length. (RH)14.9% Drink 2018-2028

17

- Macintyre Heritage Reserve, Ardua Merlot 2012 Okanagan Valley Quite earthy and chocolaty with loads of flavour and promising development. Pretty grippy tannin and a suitable amount of bitter pith on the finish. (RH)15.5% Drink 2018-2028

17

- Meyer Family, The Connemara 2014 Okanagan Valley 55% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc.

Strong aromatic lift and loads of mint, black cherry and supple tannin. Wonderful richness without cooked character. Bold and beautiful. (RH) Drink 2020-2030

17.5

- Mission Hill, Oculus 2014 Okanagan Valley 50% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Franc, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot. To be released in 2018.

Much more subtle and less oppressive than the 2013 in terms of flavour. Fiercely tannic though, and this deserves plenty of bottle age (and decanting). Impressive glossy texture and very fine polish. Perhaps a little 'air-brushed' but the purity of flavour is undeniable. (RH)14.5% Drink 2022-2034

17

- Mission Hill, Oculus 2013 Okanagan Valley 51% Merlot, 23% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot. Released 2017.

Coffee, smoke, plush black fruit, some green pepper hints and very furry tannic texture that dominates the finish. Very much a typical bold blockbuster Merlot blend, but impressively big in every dimension. (RH) 14.5% Drink 2020-2033

16.5

- Mission Hill, Oculus 2009 Okanagan Valley 50% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot.

Jammy fruit with some bitterness. Grippy and grainy finish. Tight, taut. Warm finish. (RH)14% Drink 2016-2022

15.5

- Mission Hill, Oculus 2007 Okanagan Valley 50% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot.

Chocolate, black cherry jam, lots of warmth on the palate, leaving a bitter, sour touch on the finish. Doesn't seem to have aged harmoniously – it has a lack of unity. (RH)14.5% Drink 2012-2022

15

- Mission Hill, Oculus 2005 Okanagan Valley 42% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Cabernet Franc, 10% Petit Verdot.

Cooked black fruit, a touch of green pepper, tar and dark chocolate. Plenty of freshness still apparent on the palate, with a good emerging complexity. Lightly chewy tannin and very

savoury to finish. Not over-extracted and gross, as so many top new world Merlot blends can be – but hardly a shrinking violet either. (RH)13.5% Drink 2010-2020

16.5

- **Orofino, Pozza Vineyard Cabernet Franc 2016 Similkameen Valley**Wow. Tremendous fruit on the nose with the most wonderful rhubarb, redcurrant and milk chocolate combination on the flavour. Very light and delicate, yet not at all dilute. A beautifully elegant style with blooms of floral aroma on the length. (RH)12.1% Drink 2018-2022
17.5
- **Painted Rock Merlot 2016 Okanagan Valley***Aged 18 months in 100% new French oak.* Minty, black cherry, handles the oak spice really well on the nose. Juicy, fresh palate with chocolate and really fine, chewy tannin. Lovely fresh acid – very impressive, and showing proper development. (RH)14.7% Drink 2013-2023
17
- **Painted Rock Merlot 2013 Okanagan Valley**Plummy, glossy and chocolaty with a peppery note on the finish. Big and powerful. Very much a premium style, and it certainly has ageing potential. (RH)14.8% Drink 2020-2033
17
- **Painted Rock Merlot 2009 Okanagan Valley**Softer and more herbal than the 2007, with crunchier tannin structure – counter-intuitively from a warmer vintage, yet it has many of the qualities of a cooler one. Not as harmonious and complete as the 2007. (RH)14% Drink 2012-2020
16.5
- **Painted Rock Cabernet Franc 2015 Okanagan Valley**Like the 2014, this has stunning aromatic quality. Wonderfully pure and pristine and powerful. Expertly manicured tannin and the weight and fruit intensity holds up to the alcohol. Really charming youthfulness but should be cellared to allow the maturity to develop. (RH)15.3% Drink 2018-2028
17+
- **Painted Rock Cabernet Franc 2014 Okanagan Valley**Stunning aromatic quality – tomato, violet, red cherry, milk chocolate and a twist of coffee grain. Very fine-grained tannin, juicy and savoury. A real showboater. (RH)14.5% Drink 2018-2028
17+
- **Painted Rock, Red Icon 2014 Okanagan Valley***33% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc, 19% Malbec, 16% Petit Verdot, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon.* Black cherry, heady floral perfume, chewy palate with fruit that is still incredibly primary. Much like good young bordeaux, this requires many years to reach its optimal drinking phase. Lovely peppery aftertaste. (RH)14.3% Drink 2022-2034
17
- **Painted Rock, Red Icon 2011 Okanagan Valley***30% Malbec, 27% Cabernet Franc, 20% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon.* Blackberry jam, intense flourey tannic feel that has plenty of grip. Formidable, savoury, tight and compressed. Needs much longer in the bottle. (RH)14.5% Drink 2020-2031
17+
- **Painted Rock, Red Icon 2010 Okanagan Valley***39% Cabernet Franc, 21% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Petit Verdot, 11% Malbec.* Black fruit, chocolate, plenty of fine tannin on the palate, maturing nicely with an emerging earthy character. (RH)14.5% Drink 2015-2025
17
- **Poplar Grove Cabernet Franc 2014 Okanagan Valley**Attractive charcoal and green-pepper character on the nose. Blackcurrant fruit with very fine tannic weave that gives a floury grip on the finish. (RH)13.9% Drink 2016-2019

16.5

- Painted Rock Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 Okanagan Valley Blackcurrant, green pepper, fleshy and generous and piquant. Super-smooth balance, even though it's a very youthful wine at present. Powerful but not overwhelming. (RH)14.6% Drink 2020-2030

16.5

- Poplar Grove Merlot 2016 Okanagan Valley Suppressed nose, black cherry and bitter chocolate with liquorice and aniseed and juniper. Supple tannin that gives grip but doesn't dominate. Finishes with a eucalypt and menthol character. (RH)13.9% Drink 2017-2021

16

- Poplar Grove, Legacy 2013 Okanagan Valley 35% Cabernet Franc, 23% Malbec, 22% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. Aged for 21 months in French oak.

Black cherry, slightly muddy flavour which doesn't quite have the same definition as their single varieties. Some pencil lead on the finish. Has a long way to go in bottle, but the fruit intensity is very good. (RH)13.5% Drink 2020-2030

16.5+

- La Stella, Fortissimo 2015 Okanagan Valley 63% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Sangiovese, 9% Cabernet Franc.

Milk chocolate, blackcurrant, some herbal notes on the palate, gentle tannin giving just a hint of grip on the finish. Notes of coffee on the length. (RH) Drink 2018-2030

17

- La Stella, Fortissimo 2014 Okanagan Valley 57% Merlot, 21% Sangiovese, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc.

Less definition on the palate than the 2015, and much firmer tannin with strong bitterness on the finish. Austere! (RH) Drink 2017-2022

16

- La Stella, Espresso 2015 Okanagan Valley 55% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 5% Sangiovese.

More red fruit character than the 2014. Still has a bitter tang to it, and the same chewy yet tender texture. (RH)14.8% Drink 2020-2030

17

- La Stella, Espresso 2014 Okanagan Valley 55% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 5% Sangiovese.

Creamy, spicy, flashes of bitterness on the palate, dry and chalky texture. Lovely restraint here - the fruit is clearly ripe but not allowed to be overindulged. (RH)14.5% Drink 2018-2024

17

- La Stella, Maestoso 2014 Okanagan Valley 100% Merlot.

Blackberry, blackcurrant, very aggressive tannic fuzz on the palate. Tight and heavy, yet the fruit isn't as satisfying as some of their blends. Clearly very ambitious, and perhaps just needs time to shine? (RH) Drink 2022-2030

16+

- La Stella, Maestoso 2012 Okanagan Valley 100% Merlot.

Rather closed on the nose, furry tannin, and seems underpowered on the palate. Needs more flesh. (RH) Drink 2018-2024

16

- Summerhill Pyramid, Grasslands Merlot 2014 Okanagan Valley Lovely, charming, plush black fruit, a touch of liquorice, blackcurrant and plenty of heat on the finish. Concentrated, dense. (RH)15% Drink 2017-2024

16.5

ICEWINE

- Bench 1775, Whistler Viognier Icewine 2015 Okanagan Valley *RS 200 g/l*.
Very sweet, of course, with a gloopy, thick texture and apricot fruit. Could use a drip more acidity. (RH)11.7% Drink 2016-2018
15
- Martin's Lane, Riesling Icewine 2014 Okanagan Valley *Picked November 14. Fermented in a new German oak cask (by necessity as it was their first vintage). RS 250 g/l. TA 14 g/l*.
Absolutely stunning lime fruit and juicy honeyed character, plus jasmine and caramel and ginger and all the good things. Delicious floury texture on the palate. (RH)Drink 2018-2038
19
- Tantalus, Riesling Icewine 2015 Okanagan Valley *RS 280 g/l. TA around 15 g/l!*
Honey, candied citrus and ginger, super-fresh acidic finish. Full-bodied, rich and generous – impressive and voluminous. (RH)Drink 2017-2035
17
- Tantalus, Syrah Icewine 2015 Okanagan Valley *RS 230 g/l*.
Pale orange-pink colour. Very interesting redcurrant and herbal notes, plus treacle and honey and tropical fruits. Incredibly lengthy, and the character of the variety genuinely comes through on the palate. (RH)Drink 2017-2037
17.5