

Mandy 2003  
to wife

# Tasting notes

**Grey matters** A growing number of ABCs ("anything but chardonnay") are turning to pinot gris for relief. Easy to drink, this white cousin to pinot noir ranges from lightly spicy and fresh to rich, opulent and sweet. It flourishes in the cooler climates of French Alsace, Germany's Baden (dry versions are called grauer burgunder, sweet ones rülander), Switzerland, Austria and Canada. In northeastern Italy, where it is known as pinot grigio, the style is polished and pure: light and zippy, with spice, pear, citrus and mineral qualities. Producers like Marco Felluga (see the Consignment Pick below) wait for optimum ripeness to create fuller, more serious wines, but there's also room on the table for the light, fresh Pick of the Month—a bargain for the price.

## Pick of the month

**Bolla Pinot Grigio Delle  
Venezie 2001 ★★★★★**  
Charlton-Hobbs, 905-238-3222.  
363622, \$9.95. Northeastern  
Italy  
Fresh fruit (peach, citrus) in a  
medium-light body with a tasty  
finish. For salad, pasta or veggie  
lasagna. Interesting and light  
enough to quaff all evening.

## Cellar keeper

**Henry of Pelham Family  
Estate Merlot 1999 ★★★★★**  
Henry of Pelham, 905-  
684-8423 or 1-877-PELHAM7.  
V291120, \$24.95. Niagara  
Peninsula  
From a vintage with excep-  
tional potential for bordeaux  
varieties, this merlot shows  
true varietal character. Earthy,  
with pencil lead, smoky tobac-  
co and herb notes in a berry  
flavour—like a Right Bank  
bordeaux. Good, ripe fruit  
balanced by fine acidity; more  
finesse than power. Will show  
well for several years. Have  
with lamb.

**Masi Bonacosta Valpolicella  
Classico 2001 ★★★★★**  
Maxxium Canada, 416-  
535-7899. 285585, \$11.95.  
Veneto, Italy  
The new vintage lost supe-  
riore status due to its syn-  
thetic cork, but the DOC is  
lovelier than ever. Mainly  
corvina, with rondinella  
and molinara, all grown at  
the foot of the same slopes  
that provide for Masi's  
amarone. Harmonious,  
supple, with gentle  
cherry fruit. Medium  
bodied, well balanced  
and silky.

**Peter Lehmann  
Clancy's 2000 ★★★★★**  
Boka Wines & Spirits,  
416-488-4922.  
611467, \$17.95. South  
Australia  
Blend of shiraz, caber-  
net sauv and merlot,  
with an oaky bouquet  
and firm, oaky, intense  
fruit. Structured and  
full of berry fruit.  
Wood is a tad dominant.

**White wine  
Penfolds Rawson's Retreat  
Chardonnay 2001 ★★★★★**  
Southcorp, 416-504-3830.  
611202, \$10.95. Southeastern  
Australia  
A blast for the cash. Full bod-  
ied and generous, with rich,  
buttery ripe fruit that lingers.  
Serve with chicken à la kiev  
or roasted, cheesy pastas or  
white pizza.

**Spinelli Quartana Chardonnay  
Terre di Chieti 2001 ★★★★★ ½**  
Vinaio Wine Merchants, 416-  
249-4022. 474239, \$6.65.  
Abruzzi, Italy

Easy on the palate—and the  
wallet. Smooth and light bod-  
ied, with a gentle apple char-  
acter. Have with pasta salads,  
white fish. Good for cooking  
and quaffing.

**Tsantali Alexander  
Sauvignon Blanc-Roditis  
2001 ★★★★★**  
Dino's Vino, 416-444-9545.  
573170, \$7.95. Macedonia,  
Greece

Medium-light body  
with lovely aromatics  
and delicate flavours  
of fresh grape, or-  
ange blossom, can-  
taloupe. A pretty  
choice for light hors  
d'oeuvres, calamari,  
mild cheeses or Can-  
tonese fare.

**Sparkling wine  
Domaine Khan Krum  
Pinot Chardonnay  
Extra Brut  
1999 ★★ ½**

Lacey's International,  
416-690-2557.  
612432, \$10.45. Bulgaria

All chardonnay, made in the  
traditional method. Biscuit  
and petrol bouquet, with a  
frothy crisp-apple taste. De-  
cent, but Spanish sparklers  
remain better value.

**Consignment pick  
Marco Felluga Pinot Grigio  
2001 ★★★★★**

Halpern Enterprises, 416-  
593-2662. \$22. Friuli-Venezia  
Giulia, Italy  
Unoaked varietal from the  
Marco Felluga family's historic  
estate in Collio, which is sur-  
rounded by 130 hectares of  
predominantly white grape  
vineyards, part estate owned,

the rest estate managed.  
Golden yellow, medium-  
full bodied, with a lovely,  
fleshy, peachy fruiti-  
ness. Fruity bouquet  
has suggestions of aca-  
cia. Nicely balanced,  
with good intensity,  
it's a natural for fish,  
seafood or risotto.

For more than 40  
years, Halpern has  
searched out the best  
wines worldwide.  
Company patriarch  
Harold Halpern has  
passed the torch to  
sons Todd and Colin,  
and the portfolio re-  
mains a collection of the  
crème de la crème of wine pro-  
ducers. Many of their selec-  
tions appear in the Classics  
catalogue or Vintages, but  
private customers can reserve  
cases through Halpern. From  
Burgundy come Domaine de  
la Romanée-Conti, Domaine  
Dujac, Faiveley, Olivier Le-  
flaive, Comte Georges de  
Vogue and more. Big names  
from elsewhere in France in-  
clude Hugel & Fils (Alsace),  
Jean Marc Brocard (Chablis),  
Jaboulet (Rhône) and Gosset  
(Champagne). Famous Tuscan  
producers include Poggio  
Antico, Querciabella, Badia a  
Coltibuono and Castello di  
Ama. Italy also sends Maculan  
(Veneto), Arnaldo-Caprai  
(Umbria), Ceretto (Piedmont),  
and grappa from Nonino  
(Friuli). Among the Californi-  
ans are Mount Veeder, Vine-  
yard 29 and Chalk Hill; from  
Spain, Vega Sicilia; and the Oz  
wineries Lake's Folly, Torbreck  
and Mosswood.

These notes list producer-shipper,  
agent (and telephone), CSPC  
number (V indicates a Vintages  
bottle), price per 750 mL and  
region. Consignment bottles are  
generally bought by the case from  
the agent. Rating is on a five-star  
system that stresses quality for  
price: ★ (basic), ★★ (acceptable),  
★★★ (good), ★★★★ (very good),  
★★★★★ (exceptional).



**Red wine  
Wonambi Shiraz  
2000 ★★★★★**  
Wineworld, 416-  
487-7147. 599100,  
\$11.15. South Australia  
From the Limestone  
Coast's Heathfield  
Ridge (proceeds  
fund research at  
the Wonambi Fossil  
Centre). Straight-  
forward, zippy red-  
currant fruit with  
a smoky edge and  
oakiness that sug-  
gest chips or inner  
staves. Medium-  
light bodied.