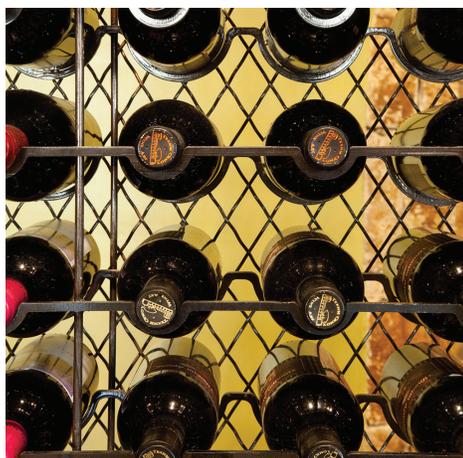


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4 AFFORDABLE SUBSTITUTES FOR THE \$2,000 CULT WINE SCREAMING EAGLE

BY VINEPAIR | FEB 25 2015



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Of all the Cabernet Sauvignons with cult followings that are made in California's Napa Valley, it often appears none is more famous than Screaming Eagle. The wine consistently receives rave reviews from critics, and it is often the most sought-after wine made in America. The problem is, with its average cost of around two-thousand dollars a bottle, and the extremely small quantity at which it's produced, most of us are never going to drink even a few drops of this wine in our lifetime.

But that's ok, because for the cost of one two-thousand dollar bottle of Screaming Eagle – which we have to admit, is due to buzz as much as it is to the quality of the wine – you can procure yourself a few cases of great Cabernet Sauvignon, at a fraction of the cost. So forget about Screaming Eagle and its obscene price, and look for these great bottles of wine instead – now you can have a delicious bottle of Cabernet and continue making those house payments!

1. Conn Creek Napa Cabernet Sauvignon

This bottle of Napa Cab is a steal at around thirty bucks a bottle, and it's not just the low price that should cause you to give it a try. This is a great wine that gives people all the flavors they crave from a Napa Cab. Unlike Left-Bank Bordeaux blends, whose heavy dose of Cabernet tends to also produce aggressive tannins, what people love about California Cabernets is how rich and luscious they can be – like being draped in velvet, as George Costanza would say. Let Robert Parker have his "silky" Screaming Eagle, you grab this bottle instead.

2. Oberon Napa Valley Cabernet

This wine is made by the Mondavi Family, so they're able to use their scale in order to find really great quality grapes at affordable prices. Which is why you can normally find this wine for around \$18. The wine is dry, rich and perfect for a steak, giving off the smooth tannins and blackberry flavors that are really classic for Napa Cabs. It's the same flavor the critics were raving about in their Screaming Eagle reviews.

3. Cabernet from California's Central Coast

While all the hype and jaw-dropping prices are firmly attached to Napa, if you're looking for quality California Cabernet for well under half the price you pay for a bottle in that area north of San Fran, head south and look for wines from California's Central Coast. These wines, made in and around the cities between Los Angeles and San Francisco, such as Paso Robles, Monterey and Santa Barbara, are affordable and delicious, displaying that the future of affordable California wine is in good hands.

Try the Cabernet from Broadside Wines for a great bottle under twenty bucks.



And if you think there is no way you'd ever venture outside of Napa for Cali Cabernet, chances are you already are without knowing. According to First We Feast, roughly 39% of vineyards in the Paso Robles region are planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, and an estimated 50% of those grapes are sold to regions outside of Paso—namely: Napa and Sonoma. While regulations strictly state that winemakers could never sell you 100% Paso Robles grown Cabernet as Napa Cab, that doesn't mean there can't be any Paso Cabernet grapes in that Napa Cabernet blend you enjoy.

4. Cabernet from Virginia

If you read our predictions for 2015, you know we think Virginia is America's next Napa Valley. While a few wineries in the state have already begun to achieve cult status similar to that of their California counterparts, for the most part the price of the bottles is still quite affordable. If you want to get in on a good thing early, we'd suggest grabbing all the wine you can from here. See our full guides on both Virginia's Northern and Monticello wine regions for the wineries we recommend.