



Napa Valley's 'Super-Seconds'

A review by Antonio Galloni The Wine Advocate (December 2012)

There is no way to ignore it; prices for Napa Valley's top wines are high. Screaming Eagle is \$850 a bottle, a 13% increase, the 2009 Harlan Estate is \$750 a bottle, a whopping increase of 50% over the 2008. Napa Valley's top estates now face the same problem as Bordeaux; the wines have become too expensive for restaurant wine lists. A \$500 bottle at the standard 2.5x restaurant markup is, well, you can do the math. That is not a business with a sustainable future, at least not in this country and in this generation. At the same time, producers know they have to have a presence on restaurant wine lists, hence the explosion over the last few years of wines that retail in the \$80-90 price range and that can therefore be sold in restaurants in the \$250 price range, still a lot of money, but doable. The best of these wines, which I call Napa Valley 'Super-Seconds' are in fact, super. In top vintages, the best second-wines from top wineries are better than the vast amount of main labels. These are my favorite 'Super-Seconds.' All but two retail for less than \$100.

Napa Valley's Best 'Super-Seconds'

Araujo Altagracia

Blankiet Prince of Hearts

Bryant DB 4

Dominus Napanook

Futo OV

Harlan Estate The Maiden

Screaming Eagle Second Flight