

Hail Me A Cab...

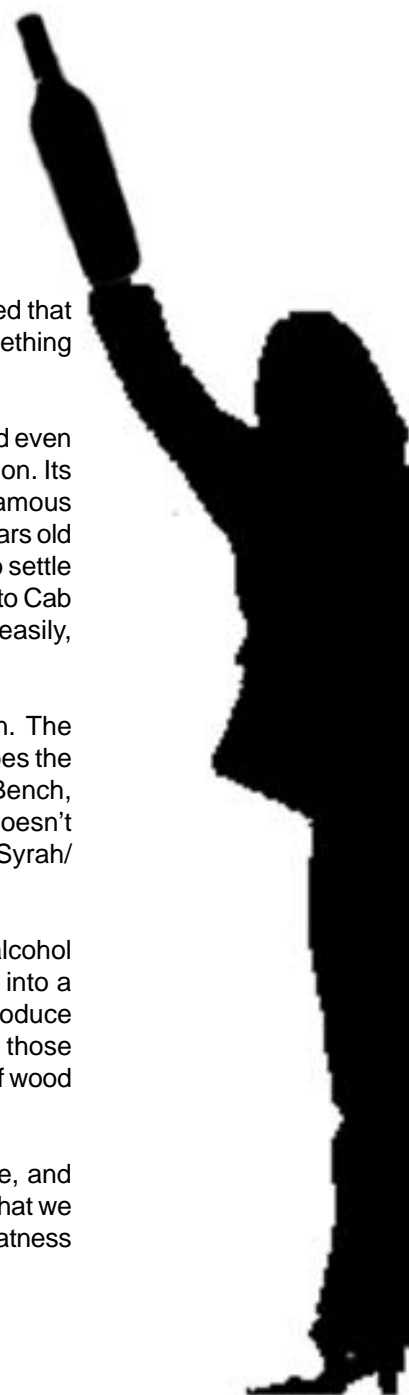
Just how did it happen? How did this upstart grape become the King? Who exactly decided that Cabernet Sauvignon made the finest wines in the world? Is it just hyperbole or is there something to this lust for Cab?

Grapes like Syrah and Sangiovese, Pinot Noir and Palomino, Riesling and Roussanne, and even relative newcomers like Zinfandel and Xynomavro were around before Cabernet Sauvignon. Its parents, **Cabernet** Franc and **Sauvignon** Blanc met, romanced and produced their famous offspring no earlier than the 16th century. Most of the grapes mentioned above were 1000 years old by then! But regardless of its age, when Cabernet moves into the neighborhood, it tends to settle in for the long haul. Bordeaux, Tuscany, Northern California, South Australia. All hospitable to Cab the Conqueror. Chile, Argentina, Spain, South Africa. Everywhere it's planted it grows, easily, plentifully and well.

And, uhm, I have to admit; it tastes pretty much the same no matter where it's grown. The blackcurrant fruit, with cedar-y notes, hints of leather, pencil shavings and tobacco describes the wine regardless of the soil type. Oh, for sure, one can taste the dust from the Rutherford Bench, the wet stones from Graves, the baked earth from South Africa, but Cabernet certainly doesn't exhibit the complex range of Pinot Noir or the weather driven chameleon-like flavors of Syrah/Shiraz.

However, many Cabs are indeed different. Picked early, and made into high tannin, low alcohol wines, Cabernet softens slowly, grudgingly giving up its acidic backbone and morphing into a silky, beguiling, rather light-bodied wine. Picked later, and riper, the abundant sugars produce higher alcohol and glycerin levels, the subsequent wines are bolder, thicker, fruitier. But those rambunctious wines fade quickly, often leaving just a memory of the fruit and a rough edge of wood and alcohol.

Perhaps the real charm of Cabernet Sauvignon lies in its reliability. Sturdy, recognizable, and comfortable, it's the grape and wine that one can trust. It shows up everyday and gives us what we expect. Maybe it doesn't thrill us with originality or charm us with its hidden charms. The greatness of Cabernet Sauvignon is in its steadiness. It's the Cal Ripken, Jr. of wines.



2004 Cousino-Macul Cabernet Sauvignon

Valle Del Maipo, Chile

Regular Price: \$9.99

The Wine Source Price: \$7.99

This wine is simply brilliant for the dollars. Aromas of black currant and ripe, sweet cherry rise from the glass and lead to a smooth fresh fruit palate ultimately finishing with moderate acidity and only a hint of tannin. Often times one finds rather green, unripe examples of Cabernet Sauvignon from Chile, especially at this bargain price range, however the 2004 Cousino Macul Estate bottled offering possesses uncommon balanced ripeness. Long thought to be a great region for top value wines, witness for yourself the surprising elegance of this beautiful steal of a Cab. (IAS)

1999 Charme Cos Labory

St. Estephe, France.

Regular Price: \$24.99

The Wine Source Price: \$19.99

The left bank of the Gironde River in the famed Bordeaux region yields some of the greatest expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon in the world. The distressing trend in Bordeaux, however, is the movement by many producers to riper, higher-alcohol wines, which mask the subtleties of truly inspiring Cabernet Sauvignon. So imagine our delight when we discovered this gem from the northern most commune of the Medoc, St. Estephe. Great wines reflect the place from whence they were born, and this 1999 second label bottling from Chateau Cos Labory displays the gravel soils of St. Estephe in both its nose and palate. The wine has aged gracefully, but still possesses youthful fruit with the added attraction of softened tannins that make it a wonderful partner to more traditional meat and potatoes fare. At \$20 this wine will not last forever - grab it while you can. (IAS)



DON'T FORGET:
FREE BEER AND WINE TASTING
featuring these wines and the
beers of Clipper City Brewing.

2003 Angus "The Bull" Cabernet Sauvignon

South Eastern Australia

Regular Price: \$19.99

The Wine Source Price: \$15.99

The 2nd vintage of this over-the-top Cab has a bit of a cult following. Winemaker Hamish MacGowan set forth to make a wine that pairs well with prime beef. No nonsense, no quibbling. Big wine, big steak. He succeeds enormously. Again. Concentrated, dense, teeth staining, enormous, intense. Yep, all those adjectives describe this wine. So...slaughter a steer, open a bottle and invite over the neighbors.(PW)

2002 Rutherford Ranch Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa, U.S.

Regular Price: \$31.99

The Wine Source Price: \$24.99

In some wine growing regions, the term 'reserve' has a legal definition. Wine laws in Chianti, as an example, dictate that a wine called 'Reserva' must be aged in barrel for a minimum of two years. Likewise, wine laws in Spain dictate that 'Gran reserva' wines must spend a minimum of two years in cask with three in the bottle before its release. *And* both governments employ inspectors to make sure that no cheating is going on.

In the US, however, no such rules exist. You can call any wine you want 'Reserve'. Your cheapest, most basic bottling can be a 'reserve' wine. For that reason, its value as an indicator of quality is perhaps questionable. This wine, however, is *really* a reserve wine! The grapes were picked in 2002 and then they spent two years in barrel and an additional 18 months in bottle before its release. The folks at Rutherford Ranch aren't just tacking on a marketing moniker, they've really *reserved* this wine! The result? Big bold cassis flavors embraced by toasty oak, the wine has enough age on it to make it delicious now. (PW)

2004 Joel Gott Cabernet Sauvignon

California, U.S.

Regular Price: \$16.99

The Wine Source Price: \$12.99

Joel Gott comes from a wine family. His mom started Montevina out of their basement. His dad co-founded Corbett Canyon, and then sold out after a couple of years. He was also the first cellar employee at Sterling, and went on to become the CEO. His wife is the winemaker at Joseph Phelps. OK, so maybe the Mondavis are not the first family of California wine. He may also be the hardest working man in the wine business. He owns burger stands, a carwash, and a specialty food market. Oh, yeah, he makes wine as well. He made his reputation making Zinfandel, but his Cabernet Sauvignon is the real deal. Named for his daughter's birthday (the 'blend 815' on the label), he sources ripe, but *not* overripe fruit from Napa, Sonoma, Lake County and Lodi, macerates slowly, lets the wine spend a year in older oak barrels and the resulting wine is perhaps the best Cab for the money produced on these shores. Don't age this wine; drink it; Sooner, rather than later.[PW]

2003 Lang & Reed Cabernet Franc

Napa, U.S.

Regular Price: \$24.99

The Wine Source Price: \$19.99

Will the real Cabernet Franc please stand up? No, not the overoaked, overripe, non-recognizable version that often comes from California, and not the green, harsh, unpleasant version found in many an inexpensive Loire Valley offerings. No, I am looking for that Cabernet Sauvignon's daddy, a varietal of both substance and complexity, containing just the right amount of bell pepper fragrance and bright berry flavor.

The 2003 Lang & Reed is a striking candidate for all of my Cabernet Franc desires. Full of the aforementioned berry fruit along with the welcome addition of balancing acidity and tannin, this is a rather well-endowed wine capable of standing up to big pieces of meat. The bonus of a hint herbs and spice only add to this wines food-friendliness. Light the grill and crack a bottle of Cabernet, Sr. (IAS)

Beers of the Week

Out of all the cool things about beer, one of the coolest is the seasonal beers that have become so common as the Earth wobbles around the sun. The heat of summer calls for the light characteristics of pale ales or weizens, while autumn brings about rich, malty oktoberfests, and the chill of winter is made bearable by the high alcohol and comforting warmth of the holiday brews. Now that it's spring, we have the arrival of the bock beers. Originally from Germany, a Bock is a strong beer; it is often the strongest of any one brewery. Many of the first Bocks were produced by monks over the fall and winter months and were rich in character because they provided nutrition to monks who were fasting. These monks called them Mai (May) Bocks because of the month in which they were often consumed. They were often high in alcohol because they had to travel some distance. In more recent times, Bocks have evolved into many different styles including weizenbock and eisbock, but they remain rich and full in character in order to keep the patrons of the outdoor beer gardens warm against the transitional air of spring.

New Arrivals For Spring:

Victory Brewing- St Victorious Doppelbock - \$9.99 6pk

Made in the tradition of the St. Francis of Paula Monks, and dubbed, "One of the best German-style Bocks in the US," by Micheal Jackson in *Ultimate Beer*.



Anchor Brewing- Anchor Bock Beer - \$9.99 6pk

First brewed in 2005, this is the first time Anchor Bock has been available in this part of the country. Rich and flavorful, it is slightly lighter in alcohol than other Bocks.

Dogfish Head- Golden Shower Imperial Pilsner- \$9.99 750ml

Just released with limited availability in 750ml bottles. These folks believe that Americans no longer know what real pilsner is, and they aim to show us.

Coming Soon:

Victory Brewing - St. Boisterous HellerBock

Traditional German - Style Mai Bock. Previously unavailable in bottles.

Fodham Brewing - Mai Bock

Maryland's own. Also previously unavailable in bottles.

Mark Your Calendar!

FREE WINE TASTING

Saturday, April 8, 1:30 - 5:30 pm
at The Wine Source

Free tasting of all the wines featured in
Unfiltered and the beers of Clipper City



WINE DINNER

Sunday, April 30, 5:30 pm
at Iggies, 818 N. Calvert St. (Mount Vernon)
\$40 per person, including tax
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

WINE DINNER

Spain is Hot! (and Dusty)

Monday, April 10, 7:30 pm
at b Bistro, 1502 Bolton St.
\$75 per person, including tax and gratuity
For reservations, call b at 410.383.8600

WINE DINNER

South African Wines

Tuesday, April 25, 6:30 pm
at Abacrombie, 58 W. Biddle St.
\$85 per person, including tax and gratuity
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777



For a complete up-to-date
listing of our events, check our website
at www.the-wine-source.com

THE WINE SOURCE

3601 Elm Avenue
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Comments from the Cheese Cave

Say hi to the Mozzarella Company from Dallas, Texas. Born in 1982 out of a desperate need for real, fresh mozzarella, the Mozzarella Company now makes a variety of traditional Italian cheeses as well as some really fine American originals. These cheeses are set to arrive on Friday so get out those cookbooks and plan a special weekend meal around these Wine Source exclusives!



Fresh Mozzarella: Milky-sweet and smooth. The perfect cheese to eat on a spring day.

\$10 per pound.

Capriella: Not your traditional fresh Mozzarella, Capriella has a hint of tangy goat's milk flavor. This cheese is 50 percent goat's milk and 50 percent cow's milk.

\$12 per pound.

Hoja Santa: These small little bundles of goat's milk cheese are wrapped in hoja santa leaves, prized in Mexican cooking for their aromatic spiciness.

\$15 per pound.

Blanca Bianca: A raw cow's milk cheese with an elegant, fruity flavor. Bathed in white wine for two months, this aromatic cheese has a soft, supple texture.

\$12 per pound.

Also new this week-in stock now:

Green Hill: If you like good things in small packages, then this cheese is for you! Lightly ripened cow's milk cheese with a silky, buttery texture.

\$13 each.

Banon: If you got hooked on St. Marcellin then you'll love Banon. Made in the Rhone Valley with cow's milk and wrapped up in chestnut leaves. Just like St. Marcellin, these guys are best when really ripe.

\$5 each.

Rochetta: A blend of fresh cow and sheep's milk gives this cheese a delicate, slightly sour flavor. Perfect for brunch!

\$15 per pound.

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