

Robb Report

The Best Wines We Uncorked This Year

By JANICE O'LEARY, SARA L. SCHNEIDER
BEST OF THE BEST

If making a \$500 bottle of wine is a kind of benchmark, Jeff Cole has just reached it. As head winemaker at Sullivan Rutherford Estate in Napa Valley, Cole created a one-of-a-kind Cabernet Sauvignon from the best parcels in the vineyard for the 2019 Premiere Napa Valley, a futures auction for wine industry retailers. His exclusive, five-case lot sold to a buyer for \$30,000, or \$500 per bottle. The estate's top-tier reserve wine, James O'Neil, usually sells for about \$250 per bottle, but even that Cab drinks like a more expensive example and is one of the best being made in the Rutherford AVA right now. Before joining Sullivan six years ago, Cole honed his craft at Schramsberg, starting in the cellar and working up to making the juice himself, learning every step for both still and sparkling wines. He takes what he gleaned there about adding finesse to high-acid wines and applies it to mouthwatering reds that have substantial cellaring potential.

UP-AND-COMING WINEMAKER:
Jeff Cole at Sullivan Rutherford Estate

