

# Robb Report

FOOD & DRINK / DINING

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## 13 'Perfect' 100-Point Cabernets You Can Buy Right Now

How to get the best of the "King of Reds."

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Photo: Courtesy of Lail Vineyards; Courtesy of Continuum; ourtesy of Maybach Family Vineyards; Courtesy of Bevan Cellars

Say what you will about the soundness of wine critics' 100-point scale (and I have: Is a 94-point wine objectively better than a 93?), but when a respected taster goes all the way to 100, it's absolutely worth taking notice. A 100 is an unequivocal statement that, in that reviewer's mind, the wine—from that place and time—couldn't possibly be any better.

The descriptions backing critics' recent "perfect" scores for West Coast Cabernet Sauvignons make it clear that the wines manage seemingly incompatible disparities. They're immensely powerful but elegant. They're fresh and focused but rich and complex. They're built to age for decades yet tempting to drink right now. And they invariably have an indefinable quality beyond known descriptors that renders the reviewers a little breathless—unbelievable, possibly, considering that these critics taste thousands of wines every year, but also believable, ironically, because they do.

The most recent releases here are from 2018, a year James Suckling, of jamesuckling.com, calls "the new benchmark for [Napa Valley], producing so many harmonious and balanced reds that are reminiscent of some of the great wines from the 1970s and 1980s. The 2018 vintage shows the world that Napa's best wines can emphasize depth and richness without being overpowering." Jeb Dunnuck, of jebdunnuck.com, echoes the sentiment about Napa's 2018 Cabernets—"elegant wines," he says, "that shine for their purity and freshness while still bringing solid depth of fruit and concentration.... [wines that] at times can have an almost Bordeaux-like character in their tannins, acids and textures."

If this year has depleted the first-string bottles in your cellar a little faster than usual, these 100-pointers are poised to fill those vacancies, with supporting arguments in the critics' own words. Amazingly, they're available (the wines, not the critics).

## Lail Vineyards 2018 J. Daniel Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley



Photo: Courtesy of Lail Vineyards

The 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon J. Daniel Cuvée comes from a mix of terroirs (Howell Mountain, Stags Leap, Oakville, Calistoga) and is brought up in 75 percent new French oak. Heavenly notes of red and black currants, dried tobacco, sandalwood, flowers and spice give way to a full-bodied, concentrated, yet weightless texture that carries awesome tannins, no hard edges and just flawless balance. This majestic, regal wine is going to drink brilliantly for 25 years or more. —*Jeb Dunnuck*

**BUY NOW: \$265**

