

Robert Foley Vineyards, Merlot, Napa Valley, California, USA 2018

My Wines



SINGLE TASTING

98

Tasted by: Jonathan Cristaldi
(at Angwin, California, 30 Jul 2025)
Drinking Window: 2025 - 2040

The nose is perfumed and alluring, with dark fruit, dark chocolate, liquorice, and scorched herbs. On the palate, it is fabulously rich and full-bodied, with pure black fruit, loamy earth, and heady toasty oak and vanilla, beautifully woven around the fruit character. Supple, cocoa-powder tannins frame the wine, which finishes with exceptional length, supported by bright acidity that carries all the richness and spice. Quite simply, liquid Nirvana. The Merlot comes from a site in Calistoga's Dutch Henry Canyon and from Robert Foley's property on Howell Mountain. It is 100% Clone 3 Merlot—Bob's favourite clone—which he describes as highly expressive, producing wines with big, round richness that age effortlessly in the bottle. Fermentation occurs in stainless steel before the wine is racked into a blend of one-third new French oak and neutral barrels. For the Merlot, he favours Radoux, along with some Nadalie cooperage from central France, medium-plus toast, tight grain, and thin staves, all of which he believes suit the variety. The wine remains in barrel for 18 months. Robert Foley has been making wine in Napa Valley since 1977, learning under Joe Heitz and André Tchelistcheff before shaping the styles at Markham and Pride Mountain, and founding his own Howell Mountain estate in 1998. Known for patient, long-lived reds, he insists that real winemaking begins in the vineyard.



Producer	Robert Foley Vineyards
Brand	Merlot
Vintage	2018
Wine Type	Still
Colour	Red
Country	USA
Region	California
Appellation	Napa Valley
Sweetness	Dry
Closure	Cork
Alcohol	15.30%
Body	Full
Oak	Yes
Grapes	100% Merlot