



Hot 20 2009: Jamie Kutch, Winemaker

by [Sarah Lynch](#)

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Photo by Erik Almás

Self-described “wine geek” Jamie Kutch left a career as a stock trader in 2005 to pursue his dream. Four years later, his Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs are on the menu at Gary Danko, French Laundry and Michael Mina.

Kutch’s success story combines destiny, determination and luck in the form of love. Growing up on Long Island, Kutch was always into hobbies: first tap dancing, then magic, then DJing. But success was first found on Wall Street, where he worked as a NASDAQ trader while cultivating his latest passion, wine. “I was closely following the progress of Pinot online, and when wine consumption in America surpassed beer around 2004, I decided to go for it,” says Kutch.

After Kutch wrote to several of his favorite winemakers, Michael Browne of Kosta Browne suggested he come out to Sebastopol for the next harvest to make a small batch. That year Kutch produced 150 cases of a wine that won 93 points from Wine Spectator. The following year, he moved to SF with his now-wife Kristen Green, a PR exec.

Kutch is now up to 2,100 cases a year, but the business is still 100-percent Jamie—he sometimes pitches a tent in Wine Country during the 18-hour workdays, handles all sales himself and has yet to be turned down after presenting his wine to some of the country's top beverage directors. “The real key is strict quality control,” he says. “I don't want to destroy what we've built.”

Photo assistance: Todd Hood and Audrey Rudolf. Hair + makeup: France Pierson for Artist untied.

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