



Big Basin Vineyards

As reviewed by Jeb Dunnuck

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I focused mostly on the 2014s during my annual trip through the Santa Cruz Mountains, and this is the third straight year of consistent, even weather and early pick dates that presented few challenges to winemakers. Yields were up over 2013 and the 2014s are softer, more rounded and open knit wines compared to the structured, focused 2013s. However, while the wines show sunny, upfront characters, they also possess good acidity and freshness, which is the hallmark of these mountain terroirs. In general, most Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays are already approachable and drinking nicely, yet there's no denying that the region makes some of the most age-worthy wines in California. Quality is also consistent across all of the varieties. In short, 2014 is a beautiful vintage for this incredibly diverse and world-class region.

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Chardonnay "Coastview Vineyard"

Juicy and lively, with racy acidity and medium-bodied richness, the 2014 Chardonnay Coastview Vineyard is 100% Chardonnay that spent 11 months in 22% new French oak. Giving up plenty of orchard fruits, hints of toasted nuts, buttered citrus and brioche, it benefits from a decant and will drink nicely for 4-5 years, if not longer. This is a classy Chardonnay that's made in a more lean, fresh style. **(90 points)**

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Roussanne "Homestead Block"

The 2014 Roussanne Homestead Block is terrific. Offering up beautiful purity and focus in its buttered citrus, toast bread, honeysuckle and white flower-laced bouquet, it hits

the palate with medium-bodied richness, vibrant acidity and a lively, layered, lengthy texture. This is an impressive Roussanne that can be enjoyed anytime over the coming 2-4 years, and I wouldn't be surprised to see it evolve for longer. **(91 points)**

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir “Coastview Vineyard”

Also seeing 100% whole clusters and 15 months in 75% new French oak, the 2014 Pinot Noir Coastview Vineyard is completely different in style, with the oak hiding some of the stem influence and adding another layer of wood tannin. Black raspberries, toasted spice, rose petals and a touch of barrique all flow to a medium-bodied, rich, tannic Pinot Noir that has solid concentration, nicely integrated acidity and a good finish, where the tannin is front and center. This has potential though, and needs 2-3 years of bottle age and will drink well over the following decade. **(90+ points)**

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir “Lester Family Vineyard”

The 2014 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard reveals a vibrant ruby color to go with lots of spice-box, garrigue, licorice and both red and black fruits. Like the other cuvées here, it saw 100% whole clusters followed by 15 months in 25% new French oak. Comparatively, the stems are better integrated here, and it has a sappy, medium-bodied, structured feel on the palate that will benefit from short-term cellaring and evolve gracefully for a decade or more. **(91 points)**

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir “Alfaro Family Vineyard”

The 2014 Pinot Noir Alfaro Family Vineyard reveals a ruby color as well as savory notes of smoked herbs, cured meats, pepper and savory cherry and currant fruit, with just hints of flowers coming through with time in the glass. Medium-bodied, rounded and textured on the palate, with building tannin and a beautiful mid-palate, it has lots of stem influence, but I like its core of fruit. Give bottles 1-2 years in the cellar and drink through 2024+. **(91 points)**

2014 Big Basin Vineyards Rhone Blend “Homestead”

The juicy, red fruited, spicy, meaty and leather-scented 2014 Homestead (35% Mourvedre, 27% Grenache, 19% Carignan and the rest Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon) is medium to full-bodied, nicely textured, balanced and loaded with character. It's beautiful already, but has the density and balance to evolve through 2024. **(92 points)**

2013 Big Basin Vineyards GSM “Gabilan Mountains”

A blend of 49% Grenache, 27% Syrah and the rest Mourvedre, the 2013 GSM Gabilan Mountains is a sexy, seamless, gorgeously textured red that offers tons of ripe black cherries, raspberries, blueberries, spice and floral aromas and flavors. Aged 21 months in mostly neutral oak, drink this pure, elegant 2013 over the coming 7-8 years. **(93 points)**

2013 Big Basin Vineyards Syrah Santa Cruz Mountains

Sporting a vibrant purple color that's mostly opaque, the 2014 Syrah Santa Cruz Mountains is 100% Syrah that saw 20% whole clusters and 11 months in neutral oak. It offers classy, cool climate notes of black and blue fruits, peppery herbs and crushed rocks in a medium-bodied, grippy, textured, fresh style. Drink it over the coming 4-6 years. **(89 points)**

2013 Big Basin Vineyards Syrah “Rattlesnake Rock”

Mulberry, blackberries, violets, and a savory dried pepper, graphite and crushed rock/dried soils characteristic all emerge from the 2013 Syrah Rattlesnake Rock. This wine is co-fermented with 6% Viognier and aged 21 months in 40% new French oak. Medium to full-bodied, nicely textured and balanced, it has notable tannin and a good finish. It will drink well through 2025. **(91 points)**

2013 Big Basin Vineyards Syrah “Old Corral”

Candied black cherries, black raspberry, violets and caramelized meats dominate the bouquet of the 2013 Syrah Old Corral (100% Syrah), which saw a small amount of whole clusters and 21 months in 10% new 300-liter barrels. Rich, medium to full-bodied, beautifully textured and layered, it will drink nicely for a decade. **(92 points)**



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