

Antonio Galloni
presents
vinous
explore all things wine

August 2017

Santa Cruz Mountains – The 2015s and 2014s

featuring Big Basin Vineyards

by Antonio Galloni

2015 Roussanne Homestead Block

The 2015 Roussanne Homestead Block is a super-expressive wine. In this vintage, most of the wine (80%) was fermented and aged in amphora, an approach that has worked beautifully here. Specifically, the 2015 has a bit more freshness and energy than has often been the case. The peach, apricot and exotic flower notes are very nicely delineated. **(91 points)**

2015 Chardonnay Coastview Vineyard

The 2015 Chardonnay Coastview Vineyard is deep, plush and super-expressive, all while retaining terrific energy. Lemon peel, flowers, slate and pear notes are pushed forward. I would give the 2015 at least six months in bottle, as it is very tight at this stage. Even so, the 2015 has a distinctly phenolic, saline feel. **(93 points)**

2015 Pinot Noir Coastview Vineyard

The 2015 Pinot Noir Coastview Vineyard is an attractive wine, but it possesses less depth, complexity and pedigree than that other 2015 Pinots in the lineup. Dried cherry, sweet herb, licorice and dried flowers are nicely woven together in an attractive, mid-weight Pinot Noir from Big Basin that is likely to offer its best drinking over the near and medium term. The 2015 was done with about 55% whole clusters. **(90 points)**

2014 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard

Big Basin's 2014 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard has developed very nicely over the last year. Spice, star anise and orange peel give the wine much of its distinctive personality. Early notes of aromatic maturity are starting to set in. **(91 points)**

2015 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard

Another highlight in this range, the 2015 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard speaks to precision, tension and translucence. Bright red cherry, chalk, white pepper and orange peel develop in the glass, but it is the wine's saline, mineral-driven personality that stands out most. This is an especially taut style, but it works, and beautifully. The 2015 was done with 70% whole clusters, a decision that proved to be spot on. **(93+ points)**

2015 Pinot Noir Alfaro Family Vineyard

A gorgeous wine, the 2015 Pinot Noir Alfaro Family Vineyard is absolutely terrific. The interplay of ripe, racy fruit and whole cluster savoriness is compelling. Pliant, open and totally seductive, the 2015 will drink well with minimal cellaring. The 100% whole clusters are nearly buried by the sheer richness of the fruit. This is a terrific Pinot with potential to grow. **(93+ points)**

2015 Pinot Noir Woodruff Family Vineyard

The 2015 Pinot Noir Woodruff Family Vineyard is laced with the essence of dried flowers, dried cherry, mint, pine and spice. Ethereal, lifted and gracious in style, with considerable whole cluster influence from the 100% stems, the 2015 shows the more delicate side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. This is very nicely done. **(91 points)**

2015 Homestead Red Blend

The 2015 Homestead, Big Basin's Mourvèdre-based blend, is very beautiful. Bright, open-knit and inviting, but with terrific brightness and verve, the Homestead captures the essence of the Big Basin house style. Succulent red cherry, plum, rose petal and lavender are all nicely delineated. In this vintage, the Mourvèdre is higher than normal, but that is not especially evident. **(92 points)**

2014 GSM Gabilan Mountain

The 2014 GSM Gabilan Mountain is one of the most potent wines in the range. Bold, punchy and forward, the 2014 exudes depth. Smoke, grilled herbs, gravel, chalk and cured meats add aromatic nuance to a core of intense dark fruit. Today, the 2014 is rich, vivid and impeccably balanced. The tannins could use a bit more time to soften, but this is an exciting wine in every way. **(94 points)**

2014 Syrah Coastview Vineyard

Another of the standouts in this range, the 2014 Syrah Coastview Vineyard is fabulous. Deep, rich and beautifully layered, the 2014 Syrah oozes personality. Cured meats, smoke, licorice, tobacco, plum and black cherry infuse this super-expressive, mid-weight Syrah. The 100% whole clusters are totally integrated. Bright floral notes add aromatic lift and intrigue. There is a lot to like here. **(94 points)**

