

# JEB DUNNUCK

## California, Santa Cruz Mountains: The High Quality, yet Tiny Production 2015s

featuring Big Basin Vineyards  
as reviewed by Jeb Dunnuck

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*Bradley Brown's Big Basin Vineyards is certainly one of the top estates in the Santa Cruz Mountains. In addition to his sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains, he also pulls from numerous cool-climate sites in Monterey County as well. These latest Pinot Noir see plenty of stems and mostly neutral barrel, and are going to benefit from short term cellaring.*

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Chardonnay Coastview Vineyard**

Leading off with two whites and coming from a higher elevation site (2,300 feet above sea level) in the Gabilan Mountains, east of Monterey, the 2015 Chardonnay Coastview Vineyard (100% Chardonnay aged 12 months in 25% new barrels) is rock-solid and offers notes of white peach, citrus peel, matchstick and green herbs. With medium-bodied richness, good acidity, plenty of depth and a clean finish, it will improve with a year or two and keep for a decade or more. **(91 points)**

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Roussanne Homestead Block**

The 2015 Roussanne Homestead Block was brought up mostly in 600-liter Amphora, with the balance in barrel. It offers lots of lees character in its buttered lemon and orange blossom aromas and flavors. Exotic, well-made, and with good acidity, drink it over the coming 3-4 years. I'm sure it will have an interesting evolution beyond that as well. **(89 points)**

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Homestead Red Blend**

Moving to the Rhône blend releases and made from 43% Mourvèdre, 16% Syrah, 14% Grenache, 14% Carignan, and the balance Cabernet Sauvignon, mostly from the Gabilan Mountains, the 2015 Homestead offers a peppery, savory, spicy, meaty style as well as medium to full-bodied, richness, solid complexity and a clean finish. It's shut down slightly since I tasted this last year, so give bottles another year or three. **(90+ points)**

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir Alfaro Family Vineyard**

I loved the 2015 Pinot Noir Alfaro Family Vineyard from Big Basin and this beauty was fermented with 100% whole clusters and spent 15 months in 25% new French oak. It's a dark fruited, smoky, earthy Pinot Noir that offer lots of blackcurrant, black raspberry, smoked herbs and earth in a medium-bodied, rich, structured, slightly chunky style. I love its fruit, but it needs short term cellaring. **(92+ points)**

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard**

The 2015 Pinot Noir Lester Family Vineyard saw a touch of destemming (there's 70% stems) and was brought up in 25% new French oak. Its medium ruby color is followed by terrific notes of red currants, raspberries, spice and underbrush aromas and flavors. Lightly textured, elegant, and silky, with impressive balance, it's a touch mid-weight, yet has impressive length on the finish. This is a beautiful Pinot Noir I suspect will evolve nicely. **(94 points)**

### **2015 Big Basin Vineyards Pinot Noir Coastview**

Another terrific 2015, the 2015 Pinot Noir Coastview's deep ruby/purple tinged color is followed by classic notes of black cherries, dried herbs, earth and spice-cabinet. With medium-bodied richness, bright acidity, present, chewy tannin, and plenty of length, give it a few years to come together and enjoy bottles through 2030. **(92+ points)**

### **2014 Big Basin Vineyards Syrah Coastview Vineyard**

The 2014 Syrah Coastview Vineyard (96% Syrah and 4% Viognier, not destemmed and aged in one-third new barrels) is a more classic, cool-climate beauty that offers textbook notes of black raspberries, white pepper and hints of bacon fat. It's medium-bodied, elegant and seamless on the palate, with enough chalky tannin on the finish to warrant short term cellaring. **(91+ points)**

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