



Bigger Than Your Head

eating & drinking: the good, the bad, and the rest of it

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Wine of the (Mid)Week

Posted by Fredric Koeppl under [California](#) , [Pinot noir](#) , [Santa Barbara County](#) , [Wine of the Week](#)
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When I first started trying a lot of wines in the early 1980s, among the most impressive were zinfandels and petite sirah wines from Fetzer Vineyards, launched when Barney Fetzer, who bought acreage in Mendocino County, released a zinfandel and a cabernet sauvignon from the 1968 vintage. Fetzer expanded hugely over the years and was in

the forefront of several movements, for example, organic farming on the one hand, white zinfandel on the other. The family sold the winery and its brands to Brown-Forman in 1992; that company sold Fetzer and related labels to Vina Concha y Toro, the large Chilean producer, in 2011 for a reported \$238 million. The wine under consideration today is the Five Rivers Pinot Noir 2012, Santa Barbara County; Five Rivers is a Fetzer brand that was created in the early 2000s. I will say right here that the Five Rivers Pinot Noir 2012 is one of those wines that performs above its station in life. The color is dark ruby with a magenta rim; enticing aromas of black cherries and plums, pomegranate and cola are woven with hints of cranberry and



sassafras and traces of smoke, leather and loam. The texture is lovely, lithe and supple and handily supports real presence and personality; vivid black and red fruit flavors are highlighted by touches of cloves and cinnamon, lively acidity and a moderate element of graphite minerality. It's true that this wine falls a tad short in the finish, but in every other respect it's worthy of My Readers' attention. You could sell the hell out of this wine in restaurant by-the-glass programs. 13.5 percent alcohol. Drink now through 2015. Very Good+. About \$15, representing **Great Value**.

A sample for review.