

**Bighorn Cellars****2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville Vineyard (Napa Valley)**

It's interesting, and amusing, that the alcohol percentages of various of Bighorn's wines, as listed on its Web site, are rated simply as "null." Many of Bighorn's wines are high in alcohol – well above the 14-percent mark - but somehow the property manages to produce wines that are amazingly in balance.

Richard Sowalsky, who is now the winemaker, but who didn't work with this wine, explains that in order for the alcohol to be integrated, the fruit has to be concentrated and have enough extract to create "a more seamless package." This Cabernet comes from the winery's Coombsville Vineyard east of the city of Napa, where it is said the Napa Valley's longest growing season for the variety resides. The result is a wine that is big and warm with tomato-y aromas and complex mineral, earth, not-too-sweet plums, and those same summer tomato flavors.

Through it all, the stated alcohol percentage, which is a whopping 15.5, seems to weave its way through the stream with nary a disparate note. Nonetheless, the wine, held back for release until recently, and which is probably one of the last 2003s from California to be placed on the market, is still big and unsettled at this stage. So, hold onto it for a year and drink over the next half-dozen years or thereabouts. There were 1,200 cases produced.

Reviewed February 20, 2008 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Bighorn Cellars](#)

Vineyard: Coombsville Vineyard

Vintage: 2003

Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation: [Napa Valley](#)

Grape: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

Price: \$40.00

THE REVIEWER**Alan Goldfarb**

Alan Goldfarb has been writing about and reviewing wine for 17 years. His reviews have been published in the *St. Helena Star*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, among others. Not once has he used a point system, star

system, or an iconic symbol to quantify a wine. What counts in Mr. Goldfarb's criteria when judging a wine is: how it tastes in the glass; is it well-constructed; its food compatibility; and presence of redeeming regional attributes.