



Brant Ward / San Francisco Chronicle 2014

**“For me, Pinot Noir should represent beauty. Purity. It’s a finesse grape. I’m not keen on producing it in a style of it showing power and intensity.”**

## Jamie Kutch

**Age:** 40

**What he does:** Crafts bright, intensely structured Pinot Noir primarily from coastal Sonoma sites.

**Backstory:** Kutch traded a Wall Street job for the chance to chase a dream out West. After apprenticing at Kosta Browne, in 2005 he launched his own label in that mold of wine. Over time, however, he became disenchanted with the riper, high-impact style of Pinot and turned toward marginal coastal sites like the McDougall vineyard near Cazadero. Today, while his wines are more modest in alcohol, they’re far more intensely structured, thanks to his fondness for fermenting whole grape clusters. The style puts Kutch on the forefront of Pinot pioneers in California.

**Harvest fuel:** Bob’s Donuts. “And usually once or twice during harvest, my family back east ships out fresh New York bagels with jalapeño cream cheese.” High West 21-year-old rye with a session or IPA back.

**Dream project:** “To own, farm and produce Pinot Noir from Chalone Vineyard in Monterey.”

**From the notebook:** Kutch’s cypress-accented **McDougall Ranch Pinot Noir** (\$59) is the most whole cluster-dominant and polarizing of his wines, but also the most gratifying. The blended **Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** (\$39) is friendlier in the near-term, packed with fresh black cherry fruit.