

# ROAD 31 WINE CO.

*grain-inducing pinot*

Spring 2008

Dear Trucker:

Yes, a name change. It's true. Same guy, same truck, (same dog), same wine ... new name!

There were just too many other colored vehicles on bottles out there, and the green truck's story is too unique to be on that same track. So, a bit of inspiration hit me when I was doing a little family research around Kansas with my mother and sister last fall; I looked up, and there was the sign: "Road 31." It's a gravel road, overlooked by the likes of MapQuest, which runs right past *both* my grandparents' homesteads in Kansas. In its youth, before it moved to Napa to help me in the vineyard, my late grandfather's green truck traveled Road 31 often.

The name also holds symbolic significance for me. It was in my 31<sup>st</sup> year on this planet, seven years ago, that I decided to go down the "road" of making my own wine and working for myself. That was also the year that two planes crashed into two towers, and it seemed that life was too short to delay, for even a moment, the pursuit of one's craft/passion.

For those of you who have been truckers from the start—or close to it—be assured that this is the same wine (literally, just a change of a few words; the truck still adorns the label). And, I'm honored by your dedication and support. For those who might have come more recently to the party—perhaps having seen this year's Men's Journal or New York Times mentions—well, I apologize for the abruptness.

This has been a great year. Whenever I hear myself whining, I give myself a slap. At three years of age, our son just mastered kicking a soccer ball (as well as, occasionally, the door, the couch, or the dog...). We'll welcome our second child, a girl, into the menagerie about the time the order window closes on March 31. We also managed this year to complete a restoration of a turn-of-the-century home with our bank account and marriage intact. The drought seems to be over in California, which means no more worry over irrigation pond levels. And, I've got not only this beautiful wine to release (2006), but also some stunning wine aging in barrels in the cave as well. 2007 was indeed damn-near perfect.

Enough. Onto the task at hand. I present to you the 2006 Road 31 Pinot Noir Napa Valley. I'm struck that I can stay with my Star Wars theme here: with 2003 being Darth, 2004 more like Luke, and 2005 an obvious Han Solo, the 2006 completes the cast as a beautiful, slightly-surly Princess Leia. (For those of you keeping track, I have no intention of crafting a Chewbacca). On the reverse of this letter is much more information about the wine.

Assigning "allocations" is getting trickier every year. Based upon supply, past ordering history, specific requests, and relationships, I try hard to be fair about how I dole it out. But if you feel slighted, just pop me an email. Also note, the goal is to hold your allocation for you, but it is still *first-come, first-served*. On-line ordering is by far the best: directions attached.

This is my once-per-year offering, and I'm honored to have a chance to put it before you. It may carry a new name, but it is crafted with the same passion and care. Keep on truckin'...

Kent Fortner



NAPA VALLEY

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(Winecrafter/Truck-owner )



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