

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grin-inducing pinot

Spring 2012

Dear Trucker:

Greetings from Napa, where the caves are cool, the truck is green, and the Pinot is Noir...

I'm happy to report that I have officially recovered from the 2011 totally-nuts-but-made-phenomenal-wine-though-little-of-it harvest. Indeed, I now find myself looking back on the whole experience with a hint of nostalgia. Part of this recovery is due to the stellar quality of the 2011 in barrel. But mostly, my current state of giggles and giddiness owes to the fact that the 2010, which I get to release to you now, is grin-inducing indeed.

If you recall, 2010 was a year when the earth shifted. In Chile and Haiti, it was a literal shift (earthquakes). In Iceland, that unpronounceable volcano erupted. Snowmagedden descended on D.C. that winter. And astronaut Buzz Aldrin—the second person to walk on the moon—was the second person to be eliminated from *Dancing with the Stars*.

But in the Bay Area, 2010 brought two particular causes for celebration. For one, the rag-tag San Francisco Giants won the World Series (I write that with an apologetic nod to my father-in-law, a rabid Dodger fan). And apropos this offering, 2010 was the year that rain finally fell in Napa, ending a three-year drought.

That precipitation not only filled up our desperately low aquifers and reservoirs, but it provided a cool, long, and delayed growing season; I picked all the way into October for the first time ever. Cool is good for Pinot Noir, particularly in Carneros and Napa where we trend a shade warmer than other regions. Cool emphasizes elegance over power, delicacy over bluntness. The resulting wine from 2010 is a winemaker's wine: sidestepping the obvious to fuel the imagination. If the 2009 was Raquel Welch, the 2010 I offer to you now is a beautiful little Japanese woman in a kimono (equally sexy, but for completely different reasons).

The enclosed card provides instructions for securing your allotment via the Web. As always, contact me if your allotment seems out of whack. Allocating is far from a perfect science. The order window closes March 29, so lollygagging is not advised. With only 800 cases crafted, I make no promises about availability after that. To try to tame the chaos, I ship all the orders at the same time during the week of April 9 unless otherwise requested.

As always, I am honored that you even read my letters, let alone put my Pinot Noir in your cellar. These days, with two kids under the age of 7, the Fortner dinner table is dominated by the likes of chicken nuggets and milk. So know that every time you pop a cork on a bottle of Road 31, my wife Janet and I are dining and quaffing vicariously through you. Thanks for that.

Kent Fortner
(Winemaker/Truck-Owner)



NAPA VALLEY

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