

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grin-inducing pinot

Spring 2014

Dear Truckers:

Ah, it is time for the release of the 2012 Road 31 Pinot Noir Napa Valley. I am so glad this day is finally here.

For one, the 2011 — last year's release — was such a minuscule vintage. Thanks to Mother Nature, I crafted about half my usual production, which meant a lot of Truckers missed out (though those who got it seemed to agree the results were fantastic; I am so proud of the wine I made from that challenging year). There simply was not enough to go around.

But here comes 2012, and Mother Nature shows she also has a sense of fairness. Not only was 2012 a bountiful harvest (about 20 percent above normal, and I crafted nearly 900 cases), but it was also a beautiful harvest in terms of quality. The growing season was spectacularly unremarkable: mild spring, no frost, no rain, no mildew, long summer, friendly September, no rot ... heck, I didn't even have to fix the tractor once in 2012. At the risk of stirring the wrath of the enological gods, I dare say 2012 was easy.

If you've been collecting Road 31 Pinot Noir for a few years, I would compare this release to 2005 and maybe 2007. It is a friendlier wine, generous with red fruits, a hint of earth, a touch of toasted oak, and creamy on the palate. It brings mouth-watering acidity to the dinner table, or go ahead and take a glass with you to the hot tub. Those older vintages are still drinking great, and I see 2012 having similar longevity (6-9 years from vintage date, perhaps longer).

The enclosed card provides instructions for securing your allotment via the Web. The order window closes March 31. To corral the chaos, I ship all orders at the same time during the week of April 7 unless otherwise requested. Though I work hard to allocate carefully — a task made easier with this bountiful vintage — the wine is still sold first-come first-served. So, don't dally. And I definitely make no promises after the window closes.

Before I sign off, I thought I might update you on my grandmother, the original owner of the green truck. My homage to her in my fall update seemed to strike a chord with many of you, and I've gotten quite a few inquiries about her since. About six weeks after I visited and wrote about her, my grandmother took a fall, and she passed a month later. In classic Grandma Mary fashion, she suffered just enough to give everyone a heads up and a chance to say goodbye; during that time she told me she'd had 94 glorious years and was ready to go. She then gracefully slipped away in the night, leaving me her Scrabble board. Rest in peace, Grandma Mary — you deserve it.

With all that said, I can't wait to share the 2012 Road 31 Pinot Noir with you. Thank you, as always, for your support of my dream.

Kent Fortner
(Winecrafter/Truck-Owner/King of the Road)



NAPA VALLEY