

# ROAD 31 WINE CO.

Spring 2016

Dear Truckers:

Greetings from Napa, where the truck is green, the Pinot is Noir, and the tectonic plates meet.

As longtime Truckers know, I love a good story, and thus I'm thrilled to share with you the tale of the 2014 Road 31 Pinot Noir Napa Valley, otherwise known as the *earthquake wine*. As story timelines go, this one is both violently quick and the epitome of epic in its unfolding.

The more abrupt version is that at 3:20 in the morning, just days before harvest in 2014, the "West Napa" 6.0 earthquake hit, originating 7 miles deep *directly* below the three vineyards that comprise Road 31 Pinot Noir. Alas, my family and I were at Legoland that weekend in Southern California (yup), but we rushed home to find giant cracks in the vineyard ground, our kitchen cabinets spilled to the floor, and our cats and dog clinging together in a protective huddle.

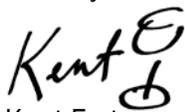
Ultimately, while many of my fellow winemakers tragically lost entire tanks and had barrels explode upon impact with the cellar floor, my barrels in the caves safely rode out the rollers. Besides losing our dishes and chimneys, my family and my wine were — thankfully — unscathed.

The quake and its aftermath were fascinating. This particular fault was previously unmapped. The local streams and water table instantly and mysteriously rose. UC Berkeley had been working on an earthquake early warning system, which was successful in giving five seconds' notice (not much help in saving our lath and plaster, but still...). And then there is the "post-seismic fault creep" (one of my new favorite phrases): The entire Napa area is expected to rise 6 inches over the next few years.

This epic, geological concept — tectonic plate travel — is truly what makes Road 31 Pinot Noir what it is. Over millions of years, the earth has shifted, and thin sedimentary layers, previously underwater, have become the shores of the San Francisco Bay. Cool marine breezes now blow across rolling, thin-soiled, limestone-infused hills ... perfect growing conditions for Pinot Noir. The 2014 is full and ripe, with dark fruits, a note of cola, and vanilla spice. But also—appropriately—this wine boasts a hint of earth and is extra lively on the palate.

The enclosed card provides instructions for securing your allotment of this release via the Web. The order window closes March 26, and I ship all orders at once during the week of April 4 unless otherwise arranged. Though I work hard to allocate carefully, I made only 800 cases, and orders are ultimately filled on a first-come, first-served basis. And I definitely make no promises on availability once the window closes.

To me, the 2014 is the *raison d'être*: Wine is ultimately a story of the land and the people, told in a bottle. The geology forms over millennia, the earth moves for 20 seconds, and people like me harvest with a sense of awe. The wine speaks to all that. As always, I thank you for making my dream a reality.



Kent Fortner

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

