

# ROAD 31 WINE CO.

Spring 2017

Dear Trucker:

Greetings from Napa, where the truck is green, and so are the hillsides.

Holy cats and dogs, we've had a lot of rain this winter. After four years of drought, suddenly we've got dams busting, folks kayaking through vineyards, and 53 feet of snow has fallen on the family's favorite ski hill. It is an astonishing reversal of aqueous fortunes.

But to those dry conditions of a few years past is exactly where I now invite you. The 2015 Road 31 Napa Valley Pinot Noir is ready. Boy, is it. This is a special wine, partially because it is so damn tasty, and partially because there is so little of it.

These two things (scarcity and quality) are related; an inconvenient truth of the wine world is that low yields are awesome for wine intensity. 2015 was the culmination of four years of bone-dry soils. Though vines are drought-tolerant, and we have come a long way with irrigation techniques, 2015 was the year when the stress reached a crescendo. Darwin and Mother Nature are stunning dance partners. A vine's core purpose is to nurture its offspring (grapes/seeds). Stress the vines to the limit with four years of drought, and they focus *all* their energy into very *few* grapes. If I do my job right, that intensity goes into the fermenter, the barrel, and eventually the bottle.

So here it is: 2015 is lush, bold, and yet — somehow — still pretty. It is a Bond girl (in a little black dress). It's Elvis (in his early years). It is a Ferrari Testarossa (red, of course). It is still Pinot Noir, and it is still Road 31, but the dial is on 11, even while it arrives for dinner with less than 14% alcohol. I find the whole vintage, and this wine, remarkable, and am eager to share.

The enclosed card provides instructions for securing your allotment of this release via the Web. Apologies that the allotments — in some circumstances — aren't as high as they have been in years past; the small vintage is forcing that. The order window closes April 10, and I ship all orders at once during the week of April 24 unless otherwise arranged. Though I work hard to allocate carefully, orders are ultimately filled on a first-come, first-served basis. And I definitely make no promises on availability once the window closes.

I mentioned "kayaking in the vineyard," and luckily it isn't my vineyards that are under water. But even if they were, the vines aren't too bothered; they are dormant. So long as their soils don't erode away (and you don't hit them with a paddle), they will emerge from slumber later this spring and just be glad to have something to drink after four really long years. I think that pretty much sums up how all of California feels right now.

As always, I am grateful for your support of my dream, and I am honored to share wine with you.



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

