

# ROAD 31 WINE CO.

*grin-inducing pinot*

## Green Truck Cellars 2001 Pinot Noir Carneros (Napa)

**Harvest date:** September 28, 2001

**Brix at harvest:** 24.9

**PH at bottle:** 3.53

**TA at bottle:** 6.02 g/l

**Alcohol at bottle:** 13.7%

**Total production:** a whopping 22 cases

**Time on oak:** 9 months (50% French, 50% Hungarian, 2yr old)

**Release date:** December 2002

**Vineyard:** The 2001 Green Truck Pinot Noir comes from the epicenter of the famed Carneros region/appellation of Napa: a plot of land called Haire Vineyard owned by third generation vine-farmer John Haire. If you stand at the top of this one particular, small, Southwest facing, hillside Pinot Noir block, you can look South at the San Francisco bay, Sonoma extends up to the Northwest, and Napa extends up to the Northeast. It's pretty groovy. What's even groovier is that when you ask around Carneros about the type of dirt found in the region, the wine-folks will always allude to two different soil profiles: "Diablo," and "Haire." Yup, John Haire's family and vineyard have been around long enough to have a soil type named after them (if only I can one day be so blessed). This was Haire's last remaining block of the classic "Martini" Clone (i.e. "Clone 13")—which is a rare breed in these days of newfangled Dijon clones. In fact, due to yields so low they don't pencil out economically, Haire had decided this would be this block's last vintage. I'm honored to have gotten the chance to make the farewell fermentation of this classic fruit.

**Winecrafting:** The harvest crew was small (which made picking slow), so I was able to sort as the clusters came off the vine. The fruit came in with glorious color, and quite cool from the morning hour (5:30am). Fermentation was done in small T-bins, smooth and clean over about 14 days, hitting 90 wonderful degrees (good extraction). The little red basket press performed admirably again this year. The wines went to barrel with quite a few solids, and I think that helped ML complete by December. The first racking in March was a clean one, and the wines remained very stable and fresh before a final racking and bottling in late July. The oak used for cellaring was in its third year of use, and the wine reflects this in a wonderful texture and softness, without being marred by over-toast. The fact that every part of the crafting of this wine was done by hand has resulted in a wonderfully clean, honest Pinot. The bouquet is true to the earth from which the wine comes, and the mid-pallet/finish not only have great fruit, but solid acidity and backbone too, which simply makes for better dinner. Try the 2001 with sesame encrusted Ahi whenever possible, because that's what we did to celebrate the release and, well, we had a ball. If you like your wines with more acidity, this Pinot is beautiful upon release. However, with it's backbone, earth, and fruit, it will only improve with an additional 1 to 3 years of bottle age. Perhaps even more...

**Mojo:** There was one obvious exception to an otherwise bless-filled 2001: namely, some towers in New York were felled by an unspeakable act of evil. But, 9-11 gave me the time and the desire to get back to focusing on something as simple, pure and honest as making wine. This vintage also brought David and Leslie up to our first home to help turn the hand-crank on the crusher (I owe you one). Cousin Bob stopped by to punch things down a couple times in my absence. Bob also managed (finally) to marry my cousin Karen while this wine was in barrel. Our old, pugilistic cat Wooke died this year, but his ashes seem right at home under our new landscaping (he would have upset to no end being confined to a wooden box). This year, the '66 green truck itself made a glorious homecoming trip from Jackson Hole, Wyoming—only my wife could have found so many antique stores in Idaho along the way. It's been an eventful and good year, with a memorial nod to 9-11 (and thank goodness Don-the-college-Nintendo-expert-turned-Navy-fighter-pilot came home safe and sound from dropping bombs on Afghanistan).



NAPA VALLEY