

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grin-inducing pinot

Green Truck Cellars 2003 Pinot Noir Napa Valley

Harvest date: September 16 and 18

Oak: 80% French, 20% Hungarian (30% new)

PH at bottle: 3.76

Alcohol at bottle: 13.9%

Brix at harvest: 24.8 and 25.5

Time on Oak: 10 months

TA at bottle: 5.9g/L

Total production: 400 cases

Vineyard: The base for the '03 is once again the "Nord Vineyard" at the southern mouth of the Napa River, where the water spills into the San Pablo/San Francisco bay. That site, one of the southernmost and coolest in the Napa appellation—even more south than Carneros—is perfect for producing the prettier side of Pinot. The addition this year is Pommard clone from "Suscol Ridge." The remnants of an old caved-in volcano, this site lies just a mile northeast of the Nord Vineyard, and from its volcanic, north facing, nearly-no-fog slopes comes a Pinot with power, density, dark color and heavy tannin.

Vintage: The '03 growing season was a gift from the gods with a mild summer followed by some mild heat spikes at the end of August. The final heat allowed sugars to be dialed in via adding or withholding water as the physiological ripeness approached. The two vineyards came ready within two days of each other, far enough apart to allow for a methodical and careful picking of the fruit, yet close enough together to really watch the two resulting component wines develop their separate identities.

Winemaking: We picked at daybreak, so the fruit came in cool and clean. The Suscol Ridge vineyard continued to focus its already substantial tannins and extraction by fermenting fast and hot, being pressed after only twelve days. The Nord Vineyard stayed true to its roots as well—although on the other end of the flavor spectrum—by fermenting cool and slow, being pressed on day eighteen. ML fell right in line, completing by early-January. The wines were racked together at month three for a true melding of flavors. As I always strive to do, this wine was bottled unfined/unfiltered.

Wine: This wine reflects two distinctively different vineyards. From the Nord Vineyard comes a hint of cola and cherry on the nose, while the Suscol Ridge vineyard gives the wine dark color and darker fruit aromas with a touch of earth. Suscol Ridge gives the wine power, lushness and jam in the mid-pallet. The hint of Hungarian oak gives the wine enough savory spice to build character, and the French oak contributes friendly toastiness. Ultimately, the Nord vineyard provides the acid structure as well as keeping the finish from being too tannic, yielding instead a soft, protracted memory in the mouth.

Mojo: With the prior vintage's passing of Ben, the ultimate chocolate lab and assistant wine-barker, we anticipated being canine-less this vintage. But then my wife asked me to come help with a rescue: the Madera, CA animal shelter was overloaded, and it was time to grab those on death row and bring them back to the Marin Humane Society—my wife's employer—for adoption. Long story short, Annie the wonder-mutt, with a forty-pound heart in her thirty-nine-pound frame, was so grateful that we rescued her from her 7x7 foot pen filled with five Dobermans that she has never left my side. She is now learning the vineyard side of the business "from the ground up."

Green Truck Cellars produces tiny batches of handcrafted Napa Valley Pinot. The label pays homage to the green '66 Ford Truck willed me by my grandfather, a farmer from Kansas, where I too was born. I cannot describe to you the actual *hue* of green of the truck; I'd simply have to show it to you sometime, which I'd be happy to do. The green truck and I oversee farming, harvest and hauling of the grapes to cave space borrowed from some friends up in Stag's Leap district of Napa. My hands oversee every step of the crafting: fermenting, barrel aging, bottling, and peddling. I am a one-man show (with a little help now and then from my wife, my cousins, and Annie the dog).

Kent Fortner
Winemaker/Truck Owner



NAPA VALLEY

1175 Azuar Drive, Quarters U Mare Island, California 94592 707.649.1200 www.road31.com