

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grin-inducing pinot

Road 31 Wine Co. 2019 Pinot Noir Napa Valley

Harvest dates: Sept 20th and Sept 23rd
Oak: 33% new; (50% French, 50% Tokaji/Hungarian)
pH at bottle: 3.61
Alcohol at bottle: 13.9%

Brix at harvest: 25.1 to 25.3
Time on Oak: 11 months
TA at bottle: 5.53 g/L
Total production: 865 cases

Vineyard: Four plots across two vineyards contributed to this wine. From the Green Island, at the southern mouth of the Napa River, where the water spills into the San Pablo/San Francisco Bay, comes the prettiness of clone 115 and power of clone 667. Stanly Ranch, in Carneros just northwest across the Napa River from Green Island, provides clone 114 structure and robustness of clone 777.

Vintage: The 2019 calendar year started out wet, with soggy soils lingering into late March for the first time in recent memory. This delayed bud-break, but a near-perfect mild growing season allowed ripening to progress along at a good clip, and we harvested during the typical mid-September timeframe. Enjoying mild temperatures and some foggy mornings during pick and crush, this was a quality and relatively-leisurely harvest (if harvest could ever be called “leisurely”).

Winemaking: A three-day cold soak preceded 15-17 days in the fermenter. The even growing season provided sufficient yeast nutrition, and the fermentations, while starting slowly due to the colder ambient temperatures, were clean and smooth. Run to barrel before the finish of fermentation, the wine sat on its gross lees (without oxygen nor racking) for the entire year of aging, which adds a creamy texture and significant weight to an already substantial wine. A mixture of Tokaji (Hungarian) and Mercurey (French) oak contributes a nice blend of spice (particularly nutmeg) and vanilla to the profile.

Wine: This wine has been a fun wildcard as it evolved in barrel, sometimes showing more mellow dark-fruit flavors, and other times seeming to have a red fruit zip reminiscent of some of my more-lively past vintages. But as we approached bottling, the wine settled into an elegance of vanilla and ripe fruit on the nose with an incredibly-pleasing dark-fruit weight on the palate. Slightly lower acid than previous vintages, it's still a wine designed for food, but this vintage maybe warrants a glass in the afternoon before the feast too.

--Kent Fortner (Winemaker/Truck Owner)



NAPA VALLEY

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