

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grain-inducing pinot

Green Truck Cellars Pinot Noir Napa Valley

Harvest date: September 1

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

PH at bottle: 3.46

Alcohol at bottle: 13.9%

Brix at harvest: 24.3 and 25.4

Time on Oak: 11 months

TA at bottle: 6.42g/L

Total production: 480 cases

Vineyard: Three vineyards and four clones contribute to this vintage. From the Nord Vineyard, 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. From Suscol Ridge, sitting three hundred feet above and a mile north of Nord, comes a blend of clones 777 and Pommard. And this year I've added a third vineyard: Stanly Ranch, which lies just west across the Napa river from both Nord and Suscol Ridge and has supplied Pinot and Chardonnay to many famous producers of Carneros for three decades. My eight rows of clone 114 straddle the top of the highest rolling hill on the ranch. The site requires precision farming, yet yields fantastic results. Stanly completes Green Truck's "triangle" of vineyards that serve as the gateway for all the fog and wind that spills up into the Napa Valley.

Vintage: The '04 growing season was early. Bud break was about two weeks ahead of usual, as was harvest. A little heat blip at the beginning of August was the only ding in what was otherwise a cooler than average growing season (Pinot likes it cool). Suscol Ridge and Stanly, with their hillside aspects, seemed to be even earlier than Nord, which has more water retention in the soils, and thus stayed cool for a longer period of time in the spring. Nord's crop was light, however, and ripening accelerated in that vineyard such that we picked all three vineyards on the same, busy morning.

Winemaking: We picked at daybreak, so the fruit came in cool and clean. Suscol Ridge and Stanly vineyards were fermented together, to maximize extraction. As is typical with the Suscol Ridge fruit, it fermented fast and hot, focusing its already intense tannin and extraction. Nord took its own sweet time, and was even put to barrel before finishing primary fermentation. ML took forever, and it was not until March that we confirmed its completion. A long winter of worrying, that was. The wines stayed fresh and clean and thus were held separate without racking until a few days before bottling.

Wine: This wine is my brightest, prettiest, and best wine yet. Still "juicy," (a common descriptor of the Green Truck style), there is less earth in this vintage, and more intensity at the higher end of the spectrum: red fruits and floral characteristics. The tannins are particularly in balance on this wine, supporting the overall structure, but not burdensome on the palate. The Hungarian oak, from the Budapesti Kadar cooperage, contributes to the creaminess of the mouthfeel, and adds its signature Christmas spice to the nose and mid-pallet. Although delicate, this strong backbone of this wine certainly makes it eligible for an additional four to six years of aging from the vintage date.

Mojo: 2004 was a breakout year for me personally. I stepped down from my day job to focus on Green Truck full time. And about three days after I crossed the point of no return on that decision, my wife informed me we were going to have a baby. Shazam. Sometimes following one's dream requires a brief suspension of fiscal reality...

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 wonder-mutt).

Kent Fortner (Winemaker/Truck Owner)



NAPA VALLEY

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