

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grin-inducing pinot

A Special Release: Road 31 Wine Co. “20th Anniversary” Méthode Champenoise 2017 Blanc De Noir, Carneros, Napa Valley

Varietal: 100% Pinot Noir
Harvest dates: Aug 7 to 20.
Time En Tirage: 3 years
Disgorgement: May 2021
Dosage: .8%

Alcohol at bottle: 12%
pH: 3.0
TA: 8g/ml
Total production: 750 cases

Backstory: This was a triumph of bubbles over fire. In 2020, smoke damaged—beyond recovery—my traditional Pinot Noir. It was an enological and spiritual disaster of epic proportions, on what was to be my 20th anniversary of crafting Road 31 wine. After a good cry on the empty crush pad, I had an epiphany: there was Pinot Noir, from my same vineyards — though from previous vintages, when Mother Nature was in a friendlier mood —sitting in various friends’ cellars in the form of base wine intended for sparkling wine. I could buy it, finish it, make it my own...make sparkling—something I’ve always wanted to do—and celebrate 20 years.

Vineyard: This is a blend of multiple Pinot Noir vineyards throughout Carneros—vineyards that include and surround the sources of my traditional Road 31 Pinot Noir.

Vintage: A wet year after a series of dry, the vines held vigor, and thus acidity, through to the early August harvest, providing a perfect base wine for the subsequent tirage, disgorgement, and dosage.

Winecrafting: This sparkling wine was crafted with strict adherence to the traditional, labor-intensive, “Méthode Champenoise” process. It underwent a secondary fermentation in bottle to form its bubbles, sitting “en tirage” (on yeast lees, in bottle) for three long years. Blending trials—oh what fun—ensued, resulting in a “goldilocks” (just right) dosage of 8g/L. Riddling, disgorgement, and dosage were executed in May 2021.

Wine: As the name reveals, this “Blanc de Noir” is a white sparkling wine made from dark (Pinot Noir) grapes. In flute, the wine is brilliantly clear, with profoundly tiny bubbles providing a lively texture upon which the aromas and flavors of green apple, pear skin, graham cracker, and a hint of cherry play out. Underlying it all, and balancing out the acidity and bubbles, is an elegant fresh baked bread and brioche character from the wine’s time on yeast. I could not be more proud. Feel free to drink now, because you never know when you will be hit by a bus, but I project it will gain complexity well into a decade more of aging.

-- Kent Fortner (Winecrafter/Truck Owner)



NAPA VALLEY