

# ROAD 31 WINE CO.

*grin-inducing pinot*

Dear Truckers (Fall 2025):

Greetings from Napa, where the truck is green, the leaves are turning gold, and I'm remembering the time Robert Redford drank my red wine from a coffee cup.

Let me preface this by saying that I am a huge Redford fan—so much so that I feel moved by his recent passing to pen a little ode in this fall update. I find skiing religious (*Downhill Racer*), am known to dirtbag around the great outdoors (*Jeremiah Johnson*), have flogged many a river with a fly rod (*A River Runs Through It*), and hold more than a passing interest in history and politics (*All the President's Men*). Most of the time, I watched the relevant Redford movie after taking up the pursuit. But, if I'm being honest, there are at least a few instances where it was the other way around.

Also, I was a kid who—by virtue of growing up in landlocked Kansas and through a series of unfortunately timed minor soccer injuries—never managed to take swimming lessons. I learned to tread water much, much later in life. So, the moment when Redford's Sundance Kid refuses to jump off the cliff into the river to escape the relentless posse, and reluctantly confesses to Paul Newman's surprised Butch Cassidy, "I can't swim," followed by Butch's quip, "Ah, hell, the fall will probably kill ya!"—is one of my all-time favorite movie moments.

Ultimately, when I depart this earth and am hopefully worthy enough to pass through the pearly gates, I'm assuming what awaits me on the other side will be Sundance Resort in Utah (which Redford founded). In many years, the resort has been my biggest account in the country for Road 31. It's a bountiful arrangement: not only do they pay me for the wine, but their clientele is my kind of people (and they often look me up later to become Truckers). And the true boondoggle: I get to write off my trips to the resort. If you've never been to Sundance, well... go. The Owl Bar on the property is—and I say this with a beverage professional's wealth of experience—the ideal watering hole (and a stellar tiny music venue). The trail to Stewart Falls in the autumn is three miles of hiking perfection. Add in Utah's legendary snow (some of which is serviced by beloved, vintage two-person ski lifts that give my old bones time to rest), a multi-mile zipline in the summer, and that whole film thing. There's even a glass-blowing studio on the property, where empty wine bottles (including more than a few from Road 31) are crushed, melted, and blown into new works of art. Magical.

To finally get to the coffee-cup story, I have done many staff tastings with the Sundance Resort servers over the years. These are typically rather formal affairs—seated, fine stemware, waitstaff taking notes, the works. At one of these, Robert Redford himself suddenly walked in.

~ Over please



NAPA VALLEY

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Despite having met a few celebrities in my time, I was—as the earlier paragraphs might indicate—a wee bit starstruck. The waitstaff, on the other hand, didn't seem too affected; Redford, after all, owned the place, lived there, and thus a “Bob” sighting was not unusual. Redford flashed his famous 1,000-watt grin and asked, “What are you all up to?” The manager explained who I was. Robert Redford then actually spoke these words: “Oh, I love that wine.” Which basically made me pee slightly in my pants and left me unable to speak. The manager inquired if Redford might want a taste, to which Redford nodded yes. The manager offered to go fetch a fresh wine glass because there were no extra clean wine stems in the room. “No need,” Redford said, and he walked over to the sink, gave a perfunctory rinse to the coffee mug he was holding, and held it out for me to pour wine into. Which I did. Without further ado, “Bob” said, “Thanks,” and headed off to another corner of Sundance with a coffee cup full of Road 31 Pinot Noir in hand. I had not uttered a word.

Okay, moving on to the actual fall update: I just finished what was a wonderfully agreeable harvest. 2025 was marked by a very cool growing season, and the late crush unfolded at an unusually manageable pace throughout the first two weeks of October. We did see just enough of a flash of rain one night to make the steep vineyard dirt road too slippery for the flatbed, so I had to wait for the sun to dry things out in the morning before I could drive out with the grapes (that was a first—but in the grand scheme of harvest, it barely registers as an annoyance). Fermentations were super clean and smelled like fresh-brewed tea—a telltale sign of quality. Malolactic is underway and looking to be finished by December, which is the ultimate Christmas present. I'm anticipating a fantastic 2025 wine to share with you in spring 2027.

In the meantime, I have 2024 in bottle, and that offering will be coming your way this upcoming spring (March 2026). It's good. Really good. Actually, really, really good. Hell, it might just change your life.

And for those of you with Road 31 in your cellar, I recently received these kind words from respected wine critic Jeb Dunnuck: *“...the 2023 Pinot Noir Carneros Napa has a light ruby hue and offers ripe cherry and strawberry fruits as well as spice and savory herb nuances. Medium-bodied, pure, and impeccably balanced on the palate, this pretty, elegant effort will drink nicely for 5–7 years. 91 pts.”*

Having shared that piece of flattery (of which I am proud), and with all due respect to Jeb, I'll tell you this: in my nearly 30 years as a winemaker, the best review I ever received had no points and no flowery description attached to it. It came from the late great Sundance Kid—and he was drinking it out of a coffee mug.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all out there. It's the holiday made for Pinot Noir. And as always, I hope Road 31 finds its way onto your festive table, no matter what vessel you decide to drink from.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent" followed by a stylized monogram that appears to be "E" and "I" intertwined.

Kent  
(Winemaker / Truck Owner / King of the Road)

P.S. I probably should have mentioned this up front, but as per usual, there is no wine release with this fall update (I'm sold out). Just me droning on about a Robert Redford sighting. Apologies—and look for the next wine offering in the spring.