

ROAD 31 WINE CO.

grain-inducing pinot

Dear Truckers (Spring 2024):

Greetings from Napa, where the hillsides are green, so is the truck, and it's time to offer up some wine. The vintage on the table is 2022. Let me take you back to two years ago: Pete Davidson and Kim Kardashian were a thing, Musk bought (then eventually re-named?) Twitter, and Maverick flew again.

On the winegrowing front, we finally had an end to a nearly decade-long string of dry, dusty — and, in one horrible instance, smoky — vintages. The skies absolutely opened up early in 2022, filling reservoirs, making skiers giddy, and satisfying the vineyards' extreme thirst. Then, come March, we winemakers shifted from a rain dance to a winegrowing dance, and, miraculously, all precipitation stopped, allowing for perfect early bud break. The summer weather was glorious: fleece in the morning and shorts in the afternoon. All was set for an easy and blissful harvest.

But Mother Nature rarely does easy. A heat wave — a big one — suddenly loomed in the September forecast. I've never been happier to be in Pinot Noir (early ripening) because I basically pulled perfect fruit off the vine just hours before five days of 110-degree temperatures, followed by five days of not-insignificant rain. A hot mess of harvest conditions for those with grapes still on the vine. I have a little survivor's guilt, but I was blissfully in tank, cave, and barrel while my Napa Cabernet brethren were scrambling to figure out what to do. (And between you and I...some figured it out, some didn't.)

This 2022 Road 31 Pinot Noir Carneros has an intricate delicacy and evolving elegance that amazes even me, and I made the wine. This is a Cate Blanchett Oscar-winning performance. Beautiful, of course. But also mysterious, perhaps slightly haunting. Demands revisiting, again and again in an attempt to fully decipher and comprehend its glory. It rises well above Kardashian, Elon, and Top Gun. It also has a hint of timelessness: This vintage might improve for a decade, or even more.

Thus, I am immensely excited to offer this wine to you. As long-time Truckers know, I only make one wine, not much of it (850 cases this vintage), and I only offer it by allocation this one time per year. If you want to add this treasure to your cellar, the enclosed card provides instructions on how to log in to see and secure your allocation.

This year we are trying something new (modernization!): I am shipping without delay the Monday after you order, rather than holding all the orders for shipment at the end of the release window. Or you can request a later ship date at checkout. I still cover shipping on a case (12 bottles) or more. The order window will be open through March 31. As always, while I try to allocate carefully, it's ultimately first come, first served. I'd urge you not to dally.

Whether you are bathing in the glory of the Chiefs win or drowning your 49ers sorrows (note that I, as a product of Kansas, but now living within view of S.F Bay, am doing both); whether you are buckling down for eight months of presidential election mayhem, or just enjoying a Tuesday; I have a hunch you need more Pinot Noir in your life. I'm here for you.



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



NAPA VALLEY