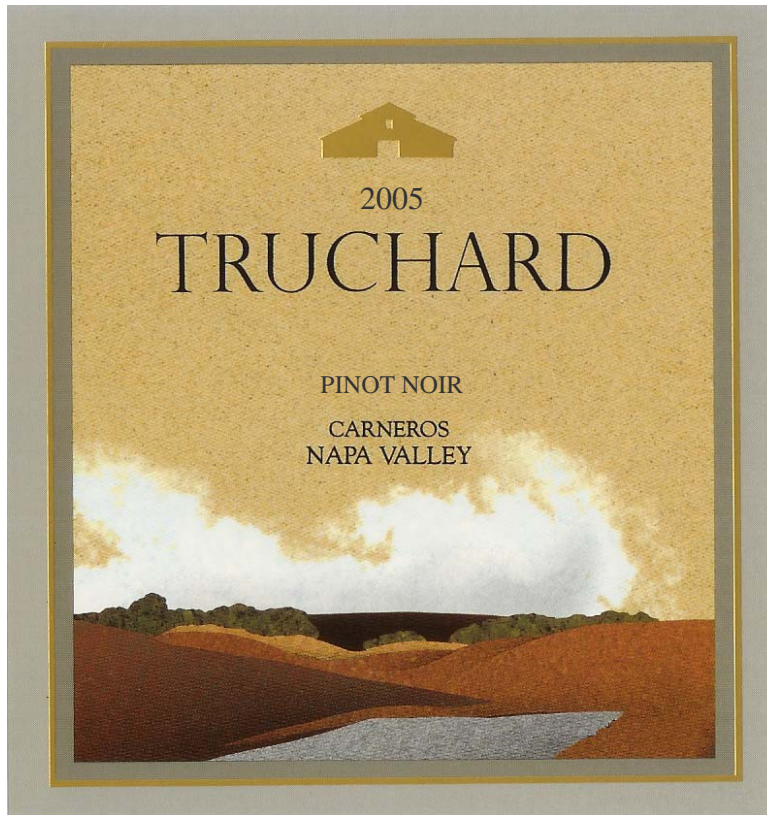


KOEPEL ON WINE



Truchard Vineyards

Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros 2005

EXCELLENT – Those whose palates dote on the red wines of Burgundy rightly gripe that pinot noir wines from California (and sometimes Oregon) can be too deep and dark, too extracted, too ripe and spicy and brown-sugary, too high in alcohol, and, to boot, flabby from lack of acid. Notice that I say “can be,” because not all of California’s pinot noirs are velvety-flocked blockbusters, one example being this elegant, ethereal yet earthy Pinot Noir 2005 from Truchard. The color is an entrancing medium ruby shading to pale violet at the rim; smoky black cherry scents and flavors hint at cranberry and touches of watermelon and rhubarb for a wild aspect. In the mouth, the wine slides like satin, though it’s satin that carries a sense of vibrant acid and dense earthy-minerally-mossy qualities. Just lovely.