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California Winery's New Pinot Honors Friend Killed in an Avalanche

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By [Daniel Sogg](#)

While bottling their 2001 Carneros Pinot Noir last January, Scott and Marta Rich, owners of California's **Talisman Cellars**, learned of the death of a dear friend, one of seven skiers killed in an avalanche in British Columbia.

The friend, Kathy Polucha-Kessler, had loved the outdoors, so the Richs decided to devote the proceeds from their Pinot sales to a cause she embraced, the Truckee Donner Land Trust, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving open lands in the Tahoe area of California.

The Richs named the wine "Kathy's Cuvee." The 80 cases made, priced at \$40 per bottle, will help finance construction of a footbridge on the Donner Lake Rim Trail, a 23-mile circuit straddling Nevada and Placer counties, north of Lake Tahoe. The trail is open to hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians.

"Kathy had been involved with the land trust, working with water-quality issues," said Scott Rich. "When we first approached people from the trust at her memorial, we said, 'Why not consider something tangible like a bridge?', and it happened that they needed to build two on the trail."

The wine was made with grapes from Las Brisas Vineyard, a 50-acre site on the Sonoma side of the Carneros appellation. Talisman, which uses custom-crush facilities at Bouchaine Winery in Carneros, currently produces a total of 900 cases of Pinot Noir a year.

For more information about Kathy's Cuvee Pinot Noir, contact Talisman at (707) 258-5722 or by e-mail at info@talismanwine.com. www.talismanwine.com

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