

Littorai

2017 Charles Heintz Vineyard Chardonnay

History and Philosophy

Littorai Wines is a small, family-owned and operated winery producing vineyard designated Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the true north coast of California: the coastal mountains of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Proprietors Heidi and Ted Lemon are lifelong Winemakers. Ted Lemon began his career at the age of 22 by working for four years in the heart of Burgundy and in 1982, was the first American hired to manage a property in Burgundy at Domaine Guy Roulot in Meursault. Where some see technology as the route to great wines, we see farming. We derive our sustainable farming techniques from the fertile cross currents of permaculture, agro-ecology and biodynamics. Our winery is situated on a 30 acre integrated biodynamic farm where we produce as many of the vineyard and farm needs on site as possible. Our Estate produced compost is our “fertilizer” of choice.

Expressed in acreage terms, beginning in 2017:

- 100% of Littorai’s vineyard sources is farmed using only organically certified materials
- 85% is farmed using biodynamic methods (all sites we own or lease and most others)
- 49% is estate production

The goal of winegrowing is to produce the finest wine, and that such wine should be a product of the vineyard, not the cellar.

Vineyard

This site lies at 800’ elevation on a gently rolling plateau one half mile east of Occidental and seven miles west of the Pacific. It was planted in 1983. The Littorai section is farmed using only organic materials. Littorai was the first winery to single-vineyard bottle chardonnay from this site with the 1994 vintage and we have been sourcing the same seven rows ever since.

Vintage Information

The 30th and September 1st were cool but followed by 3 days of 100 + degree weather. The high daily temperatures were accompanied by extremely low overnight humidities and record-breaking high lows. This is something we are not used to in coastal CA. Canopies in rocky soils or stressed vineyards began to fail and disappear. We picked all the locations which had been on the cusp of being ready. Once it was clear that the heat would break on September 4th we decided to stop all picking for several days to see if and how, the vines would recover. We had only picked approximately 35% of the pinot noir acreage. All of the whites except for Charles Heintz Chardonnay were picked after the heat wave. For Chardonnay, we aggressively sorted out sunburn affected fruit in the vineyards so that it was not necessary to sort the fruit at the winery.

Tasting Notes

Great aroma volume! Lemon-lime, white pineapple, pear blossom, chestnut and hazelnut, beeswax and a flinty note. On the palate the wine is rich and concentrated at first and then gradually the acidity emerges to dominate the palate on a long, bright finish. Lovely, understated mouthwatering wine.

APPELLATION

Sonoma Coast

SOILS

Gold Ridge loam over Franciscan shale; the top layer is sandy loam

FARMING

Farmed using only organic materials but not certified

VINE AGE

Vineyard planted in 1983

ACREAGE

26 Acres of Pinot Noir, 3 acres of Syrah, 25 acres of Chardonnay of which Littorai receives 1.5 acres

CLONES

Wente of unknown origin

BARREL AGEING

11 months French Oak, 25% new; 5 months stainless steel before bottling

YIELDS

4.19 tons/acre in 2017

PRODUCTION

305 cases

ALCOHOL

13.3% abv

