

Littorai

2017 Mays Canyon Pinot Noir

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

Mays Canyon is home to the Porter Bass Estate. At 200-400 feet elevation, this site is somewhat unique as it is surrounded by the Russian River on three sides! Skirted by redwood trees, they help keep to form a protective barrier that warms the climate of the vineyard. The Hugo gravelly loam soils also help to capture and retain the heat of the day, offering the vines additional warmth as the fog begins to roll in. Re-planted in 1999, this site has been a vineyard since the late 1800s!

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. The key to wine quality in 2017 was rigorous sorting of the clusters in both vineyard and winery. In some sites we dropped the shriveled clusters or cut shriveled berries off the cluster in the vineyard. In other sites we harvested everything and then had the sorting table crew remove the affected fruit. In some blocks, there was not enough sunburned fruit to be concerned about. In some cases, we performed daytime select picks, harvesting only fruit which was affected by the heat (and therefore required a daytime pick for proper selection on the vine) and then that very night picked all the remaining, healthy fruit on the vines.

Tasting Notes

Alpine strawberry, Cointreau, and a waxy, gravelly quality are all present on the aromas. Lovely acidity. Not surprisingly, this is a very structured, tannic wine that requires patience.

APPELLATION

Sonoma Coast

SOILS

Hugo gravelly loam underlain by weathered fine-grained sandstone and shale

FARMING

Farmed using certified organic materials and biodynamic methods

VINE AGE

Planted in 1999, this site has been a vineyard since the late 1800s

ACREAGE

3.5 acres of Zinfandel, 6 acres of Pinot Noir of which Littorai receives 2.5 acres

YIELD

1.80 tons per acre in 2017

CLONES

Dijon 777, Swann and 3 proprietary clones

WHOLE CLUSTER

34% in 2017

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

260 cases

ALCOHOL

13.3% abv

