



2018 Hirsch Vineyard 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

Hirsch vineyard comprises a series of ridgetops, three miles from the ocean, northwest of the seaside town of Jenner. Rainfall is abundant between October and April, with the summer dry and desert-like. The climate can be erratic and unpredictable, with wide annual swings in moisture, temperature, storms, and wind. Elevation ranges from 1200 to 1550 feet. This is San Andreas Fault territory, resulting in varied and complex soils.

Vintage Information

It was clear during the harvest period that this was going to be a great vintage. The combination of fruit health, plenty of time to pick each site at the perfect ripeness with no weather pressure, and the inherent quality of the vintage all conspired to produce an exceptional result. The 2018 wines have ample richness, which, depending on the individual vineyard, may, for the time being, be hiding behind the significant tannins and lovely acidities. Yet none of the wines are truly driven by tannin. The tannins themselves are fine and generous, so that one is never left with a drying impression on the palate. This is the “holy grail” combination, particularly for Pinot Noir. The 2018s will show very well young and should age effortlessly for many years.

Tasting Notes

Rose petal, horehound, oak bark tea (only a biodynamic winemaker would use a descriptor like that...), tobacco, decaying leaves, orange zest and a hint of red licorice. Great aromatic complexity. For some reason this made me think of the wines of Nuits St. Georges. With air it opens to fresh tones of cherry, alpine strawberries and flowers. Very flamboyant, personality-driven wine. Excellent tannin and acidity concentration with a fine thread of whole cluster tannins throughout. Classic potential.

APPELLATION

Sonoma Coast

SOILS

Hugo very gravelly loam and Hugo-Josephine complex

FARMING

Farmed using organic materials and biodynamic methods, not certified

VINE AGE

Planted in 1995

ACREAGE

4 acres of Chardonnay, 68 acres of Pinot Noir. Littorai receives 2.5 acres of Pinot Noir.

CLONES

Dijon 114,777, Pommard and Swann

WHOLE CLUSTER

32% in 2018

YIELD

2.62 tons per acre in 2018

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

325 cases

ALCOHOL

12.5% abv

