

Littorai

2018 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

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

Like the 2018 Savoy, this wine is 50% whole cluster and has a particularly striking aromatic profile. Tones of raspberry, red licorice, sweet earth and a very mineral, granite and river rock component are all present and a slightly reductive quality that adds a very exotic note. The attack is fine and delicate, building slowly to plush tannin and mouth-watering acidity. Despite the tannin there is a silky feminine quality to the mid-palate of this wine, which is very seductive, and the finish is exceptionally long and harmonious.

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 2018

CLONES

Dijon 777, Swann and 3 proprietary clones

WHOLE CLUSTER

48% in 2018

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

245 cases

ALCOHOL

12.7% abv

