

Littorai

2018 Wendling Vineyard Block E 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

Located in the coolest part of Anderson Valley, and, is really is not in the valley at all. It is the most northwesterly vineyard in the AVA and the closest to the coast. Littorai was offered the first choice of parcels on the property. We decided on a steeply sloped, dramatic block which faces due south. We chose the (over 14!) rootstock and clonal combinations for the Littorai section, with most of the bud wood coming from our own vineyards. The vineyard has been farmed biodynamically with extraordinary care from the very beginning. We have added the “Block E” designation to the label of this wine to highlight the exceptional quality of this special Littorai block.

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

Aromatically very expressive and fresh: candied notes, blackberry and cherry, violets, licorice, a field of flowers. Subtle, gentle attack with lovely acidity and more silky, fine, integrated tannin than previous vintages of Wendling. Having said that, this is a structured wine with lots of focus which will require some time to integrate. Slow building to a chewy, long, harmonious finish with a hint of under ripe tones which adds freshness. If previous vintages of Wendling have been impressive, like the strong man on Venice Beach, this is more Brad Pitt in the movie Fight Club.

APPELLATION

Anderson Valley

SOILS

Bearwallow-Wolfey complex: red to brown well-drained, shallow sandy loam, sandstone and shales with only 6” to 12” of topsoil

ACREAGE

22 acres total. Littorai receives 5.5 for E Block and one acre of C and G blocks which blend into Les Larmes.

FARMING

Farmed using organic materials and biodynamic methods, not certified

VINE AGE

Planted in 2010

CLONES

11 different selections

YIELD

2.63 tons per acre in 2018

WHOLE CLUSTER

32% in 2018

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak,
25% new

PRODUCTION

668 cases

ALCOHOL

13.4% abv

