

Littorai

2019 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

The crop in 2019 was moderately large and required some crop load reduction. Malic acid numbers were much lower in 2019 compared to the high malics of 2018. Final alcohols on the wines were slightly less than in 2018, with only a single bottled wine over 13%. While ethanol levels may not matter to some, our ambition is to produce complex, physiologically ripe wines at modest alcohol levels as this has health benefits and creates wines which are more suitable as accompaniment to fine foods.

While the 2018 wines are structured and demand patience in the cellar, the 2019s are more floral, perfumed and delicate. This is not to say that they lack concentration or will not age and improve as much in the cellar as the 2018s. They are simply a different expression of Pinot Noir and are less tannic than the 2018s at a similar age.

Tasting Notes

Dried flowers, red roses, brandied cherry, red apple, black tea, redwood, and pine needle followed by medicinal notes. If Mays and Wendling are currently dominated by tannin this is a surprisingly balanced version of Hirsch. Fine grained, substantial tannin, but mouthcoating acidity and hidden richness which provide more charm now. Concentrated.

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
38% in 2019

YIELD
2.8 tons per acre in 2019

BARREL AGEING
16 months French Oak,
25% new

PRODUCTION
318 cases

ALCOHOL
12.5% abv

