

Littorai

2019 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 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

Tones of black cherry, baking spices, pastry dough, fig, salumi, orange zest and hard candies. On the palate, lovely richness, but not surprisingly for Mays. The tannin takes over and drives the palate to a very powerful expansive finish. Patience is required here, but this will be a great bottling of Mays Canyon Pinot Noir.

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

1.55 tons per acre in 2019

CLONES

Dijon 777, Swann and 3 proprietary clones

WHOLE CLUSTER

50% in 2019

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

206 cases

ALCOHOL

13.0% abv

