

Littorai

2019 Thieriot Vineyard Chardonnay

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

West of the town of Occidental, on the south shoulder of a 1200’ ridge. This is the cooler side of the hills around Occidental yet the vineyard is protected from the northwest winds and fog by a ridge to the north. It overlooks the fog filled gap in the Sonoma hills, which leads to Petaluma. Littorai Wines has a long term lease on this site and it is farmed using organic and biodynamic methods, but is not certified.

Vintage Information

2019 saw lower malic acid numbers than 2018 with final pHs ranging from low (Thieriot and The Tributary) to moderate (Charles Heintz and Mays Canyon), just like 2018. Cluster and berry size in 2019 varied from small to large depending on clone and site. Despite the very challenging weather in the spring, through careful vineyard work and the good fortune of little late season fog, botrytis, was not a great concern. We were able to sort out and remove any mildew affected clusters directly in the vineyard, a good indicator that the harvest was not compressed. Malolactic fermentations finished early in 2019, by mid-March for all lots.

Tasting Notes

Chamomile, lemon verbena, green banana, fennel, ocean spray. On the palate this is, as usual, tighter and more linear than either Charles Heintz or Mays and it possesses a touch of phenolics which lends a pithy quality to the finish. Crackling acidity on the finish. This is all about precision and length.

APPELLATION

Sonoma Coast

SOILS

Gold Ridge Loam over Sandstone

FARMING

Farmed using only organic materials and biodynamic methods, but not certified

VINE AGE

Vineyard planted in 1996

ACREAGE

3.5 total acres, of which Littorai farms 2 acres

CLONES

Dijon 95, Hyde and Dutton Selections

BARREL AGEING

11 months French Oak, 25% new; 5 months stainless steel before bottling

YIELDS

2.19 tons/acre in 2019

PRODUCTION

220 cases

ALCOHOL

13.0% abv

