

Littorai

2019 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

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

Aromatic notes of mocha, baking spices, cherry, cranberry, antique drawer. Dense, mouth coating tannins are immediately apparent on the palate and initially obscure the excellent acidity which leave the palate salivating. This is a brooding, energetic wine which, nevertheless, deftly pulls off a more gentle and elegant finish than one might expect. This is a 2019 which will richly reward aging in bottle.

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

2.66 tons per acre in 2019

WHOLE CLUSTER

42% in 2019

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak,
25% new

PRODUCTION

678 cases

ALCOHOL

12.8% abv

