

Littorai

2020 Charles Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast 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

This site lies at 800’ elevation on a gently rolling plateau one half mile east of Occidental and seven miles west of the Pacific. It was planted in 1983. The Littorai section is farmed using only organic materials. Littorai was the first winery to single-vineyard bottle chardonnay from this site with the 1994 vintage and we have been sourcing the same seven rows ever since.

2020 Vintage Information

The yields are very low of Chardonnay in 2020. This was unrelated to set at flowering but rather to our efforts to ensure that there would be zero chance the wines would be affected by the wildfires. We shortened our press cycles, pressed whole cluster, and made earlier (lower pressure) press cuts sending more wine to the Sonoma Coast Chardonnay bottling than usual. In the end, that was not necessary as all the Chardonnays, including the Sonoma Coast, are exceptional with complex bouquets and lovely intensity. Malic acid numbers were somewhat lower in 2020 compared to 2019 and the tartaric acid numbers were higher. You might want to think of tartaric acid as being the backbone, the structure of the wine. At bottling, the pH and alcohols of 2020 and 2019 were within shouting distance of each other. There was no botrytis presence in 2020. They possess a grace in the mid-palate and yet are not fat or rich, thus “silky” is the word that has come to my mind all during their aging process in barrel.

Tasting Notes

Lime, lemon, green apple, Anjou pear, hazelnuts, roasted almonds, and a hint of new wood. Beautiful stone fruit lingers on the finish. This is the most forward and giving of the Chardonnays in 2020 and was much appreciated by the team during our pre-bottling tasting. It shares a gentle richness on the mid-palate and driving acidity on the finish.

APPELLATION

Sonoma Coast

SOILS

Gold Ridge loam over Franciscan shale; the top layer is sandy loam

FARMING

Farmed using only organic materials but not certified

VINE AGE

Vineyard planted in 1983

ACREAGE

26 Acres of Pinot Noir, 3 acres of Syrah, 25 acres of Chardonnay of which Littorai receives 1.5 acres

CLONES

Wente of unknown origin

BARREL AGEING

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

YIELDS

3.55 tons per acre in 2020

PRODUCTION

234 cases

ALCOHOL

12.7% abv

