

Littorai

2020 The Return Anderson Valley 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

In 2016 we purchased this exceptional site (also home to our One Acre) from Rich Savoy to ensure that this beautiful property will be part of the Littorai family forever. The far southwest of the property has three blocks, which share a common westerly exposure. The vineyard elevation rises from 1550 to 1750 feet in one very steep, very straight, hike up the mountainside. These are the steepest blocks we work with amongst all our wonderful sites. Over the many years visiting One Acre, I often looked across to that steep hillside, wondering what the wine quality might be like. The Return is the name we have given to this new block bottling.

2020 Vintage Information

The 2020 year was yet another tragic year for wildfires in Napa and Sonoma counties. The presence of many weeks of smoke damaged our crops on the Sonoma Coast. We did not produce any Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs in 2020 except for Mays Canyon Pinot Noir, which was picked before the fires affected the vineyard. We made this decision early, opting to leave the fruit unpicked on the vines. We are in the business of producing world-class wines and that is our commitment to you. 2020 was the first year we have decided not to harvest such a large portion of our production. While initially the crop in 2020 was relatively abundant, the combination of extensive crop drops due to the effects of heat waves and drought, as well as our attempt to accelerate ripening due to the fires, reduced the crop levels dramatically. Additionally, we sorted aggressively at the winery. We declassified much of the fruit from Savoy, Cerise, One Acre, The Return, and Roman into the Les Larmes bottling. All of these efforts paid enormous dividends in the final bottlings of the vineyard designated wines. The path was tortuous, but we are delighted in the results.

Tasting Notes

Lots of aroma volume: floral notes, red rose, potpourri, juicy fruit, rhubarb, a hint of tobacco and a bright citrus note all lend complexity. The attack is velvety and rich followed by a slow build towards velvety tannin and great acidity. This is Pinot Noir made for fish and poultry dishes.

APPELLATION

Anderson Valley

SOILS

Bear Wallow loam over marine origin sandstone

FARMING

Farmed using organic materials and biodynamic methods, not certified

VINE AGE

Re-Planted in 2005

CLONES

Dijon 114, 777, 828 and Swann

WHOLE CLUSTER

0% in 2020

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

98 cases

ALCOHOL

12.9% abv

