

Littorai

2020 Wendling Vineyard Block E 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

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.

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

Raspberry, plum, candied notes, floral (violets), orange peel, graphite, even Nebbiolo-like tar notes. There is much to admire in the aromas of this Wendling. The palate is dense and concentrated with great acidity and length. This should be laid in the cellar for at least a few years. To paraphrase Leonard Cohen, if “you want it darker”, this and Savoy are your ticket.

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

2.36 tons per acre in 2020

WHOLE CLUSTER

32% in 2020

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

543 cases

ALCOHOL

13.1% abv

