

Littorai

2021 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.

2021 Vintage Information

Chardonnay yields were much improved compared with 2020. The harvest occurred over an unusually long period, with the pick at Charles Heintz and part of Mays Canyon around the 10th of September but the rest all occurring during the fourth week of September. Brix (sugar level) at harvest were in the typical range for Littorai but like the 2020s, the 2021s were not as high in acidity as the 2018s and 2019s. Malolactic and primary fermentations were very slow in 2021 with Thieriot finishing primary and malolactic only in November of 2022. Charles Heintz was barely ahead of it, finishing in October. Hence it took quite a bit of time for the vintage character to come clearly into focus. The 2021s are floral wines with very good richness, like their 2020 brethren, and excellent freshness. The initial palate impression is of richness but this yields to a muscle core of acidity. They have more than sufficient concentration for aging, but like 2020 have excellent charm for those who prefer to drink Chardonnay very young. 2021 and 2020 pair at the richer end of the Littorai style.

Tasting Notes

Stone fruits, orange zest, Eureka lemon and Bosc pear all come together with a hint of new wood. Lightning bolt acidity pushes an endless finish on the wine. The 2021 version is more concentrated and backward than the 2020 and will greatly improve with time in the bottle.

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

3.73 tons per acre in 2021

PRODUCTION

291 cases

ALCOHOL

12.7% abv

