

Littorai

2021 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.

2021 Vintage Information

The 2021 vintage Pinot Noirs are among the most concentrated and structured wines we have ever produced. They are on the riper end of the spectrum of the Littorai style. The concentration is not due to small berry size or a very low yields, neither of which were true in 2021. Fermentations and total tank times were longer than usual, so that contributed. The total number of punch downs was greater than average simply because the time in tank was longer, so that would be a factor. But for me the answer is simple, that is the style of the vintage. We did not intentionally aim for this result. This is a vintage with ample youthful fruit expression and relatively high pHs (lower acidity) and while the tannins are firm, they are not massive. The resulting wines are seductive and should please a wide range of palates. A few of the wines tilt more to the hedonistic side of the spectrum while others are more sober and reserved.

Tasting Notes

The Return just seems to get better every year. These blocks are located on a series of very steep west facing blocks on the same property which produces One Acre. Rhubarb, red apple, Bing cherry, red beets, black tea, candlewax. Silky and generous on the palate, this is one of the most hedonistic wines in 2021. There is plenty of tannin present, but the richness carries the day. Hard to resist the corkscrew on this wine...

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

ACREAGE

1.9 acres of Pinot Noir

YIELD

1.59 tons per acre

CLONES

Dijon 114, 777, 828 and Swann

WHOLE CLUSTER

0%

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

153 cases

ALCOHOL

13.8% abv

