

Littorai

2021 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.

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

As is typical for this site, blue fruit tones dominate the aromas: plum, blackberry, Mission fig with a hint of licorice and citrus fruit (kumquat.) On the palate the wine has great fruit intensity and acidity but the tannins are tightly wound for now and will require some time to integrate. This is a very impressive package with a long finish. Tilts to the “sober” side of the dial rather than the hedonistic, due to the tannins.

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

2.82 tons per acre

WHOLE CLUSTER

38%

BARREL AGEING

16 months French Oak, 25% new

PRODUCTION

536 cases

ALCOHOL

13.7% abv

