

TASTING NOTES

BRAND OVERVIEW

LIOCO (pronounced lee-oko) is the result of a years-long-conversation between Matt Licklider, (a seasoned wine import specialist) and Kevin O'Connor (wine director at the esteemed Spago-Beverly Hills) about whether or not California could produce a true 'Wine of Origin'. The focus is on naturally fermented, (stainless-steel) Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from some of California's most pedigreed soils.

VINIFICATION

This wine was hand picked on Oct. 27th. Our hopes for making a dry wine were abandoned due to the extraordinarily high brix. The fruit was sorted on the vine, so that only those clusters affected with Botrytis were taken. It was whole cluster pressed and then barreled down immediately into 50% new and 50% neutral French oak barrels for 17-months. The wine was bottled without fining or filtration. 80 cases were produced.

VITICULTURE

The Charles Heintz Vineyard is situated within three prestigious wine appellations (Green Valley, Russian River Valley, and Sonoma Coast). Its location, a mere 4-miles from the Pacific Ocean, personifies what is known locally as the extreme Sonoma Coast. It sits at an elevation of 1,000 feet in soft, sandy loam soil known locally as "goldridge." Proximity to sea and its constant fog means it is often the last Chardonnay vineyard in all of Sonoma County to be harvested.

NOTES

A late-September rain squall set off a fire-storm of Botrytis in this region, the likes of which is seen only once every 25-years. Growers unprepared to meet these obstacles with vigorous work and a willingness to sacrifice produced marginalized wines. Charley's meticulous approach throughout the year prepared the vineyard for a fight. He saw opportunities where others saw challenges, and opted to let a few rows of vines ripen until late October. At this late stage, nearly every cluster had contracted Botrytis. Perfect! We would make a fully Botrytised Chardonnay from the Sonoma Coast. This is a wine for extreme hedonists. It boasts exotica usually reserved for forbidden Asian kingdoms—jasmine flowers, candied ginger, and mandarin peel. One swirl of the glass reveals other layers too—apple skin and freshly crushed cinnamon sticks. The wine's flavors are delivered with a surprising amount restraint. The warm lemon honey, baked apples, and toasted nuts coat the palate with a deftness more akin to Old World sweet wine. You can actually sit down and drink a glass of this stuff. What makes it work—and what makes all sweet wines work—is the precise balance of sugar and acid. This wine has it. And further, it has a beguiling mineral character working in concert with all those pâtisserie elements.

DETAILS

Vineyard: Charles Heintz
 Appellation: Sonoma Coast
 County: Sonoma
 Winemaker: Kevin Kelley
 Production: 80 cases
 Ph: 3.26
 Brix: 35
 Total Acidity: 1.07
 Residual Sugar: 133 g/l
 Alcohol: 13%
 Yeast: wild
 Yield: miniscule
 Clones: Clone 4
 Harvest dates: October 27th
 Bottling date: April 3rd, 2008

