

PLATINUM SERIES

Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

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." After gathering opinions and drawing inspiration from some of the world's greatest wine producers, the duo concluded that it could indeed be achieved.

What is a true "wine of origin?" According to LIOCO, "it's a wine that successfully portrays the voice of the vineyard through unique flavors and aromas tied inextricably to the soil." In short, it is a wine with a clear representation of where it came from. Thus is the philosophy behind LIOCO's vineyard-designated wines and French-influenced, gently treated Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays.

Co-founder Matt Licklider, who had his wine epiphany during the winter of 1995, got his start in the industry by going to work for Boulder, Colorado-based boutique wine distributor, The Maxwell Company, where he soon became a leading sales person. He went on to represent Napa wine importer Dalla Terra, and finally the esteemed North Berkeley Imports, for which he represented some of the classiest French and Italian producers in the United States.

His friend and colleague Kevin O'Connor of Irish-Italian descent, found his calling at a much younger age, when his parents served "Old World" wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux at the dinner table growing up. With a great-grandmother who single-handedly made Italian Trebbiano d'Abruzzo two generations prior, it seems that O'Connor was pre-destined to a career in wine.

After a series of high-profile sommelier positions, an experience as wine director at Spago-Beverly Hills, and a winemaking stint at Rancho Sisquoc in Santa Maria Valley, O'Connor joined forces with his friend Licklider and together, formed the principles and philosophy that made LIOCO a reality.

LIOCO, which cleverly enough is a fusion of the cofounders' last names, LI-cklider and OCO-nnor, finally laid its foundation in August of 2005. The duo produced their first vintage of 1,200 cases of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from vineyards that included Michaud in the Chalone appellation and Stuhlmuller on the edge of the Alexander and Russian River valleys. LIOCO has since been an escalating success, with sommeliers and top industry periodicals raving about

the winery's unique point of view and refreshing take on California winemaking. *Wine & Spirits* magazine even wrote, "consider LIOCO as a concept and you'll find what's arguably the best Chardonnay being produced on the West Coast."

And their Pinots are hitting all the right marks as well. In fact, their latest vintages have been called a "revelation" and they're only slightly influenced with oak, also reflecting the team's minimalist winemaking approach.

When asked what distinguishes LIOCO from other wineries, aside from their "building wine from the ground up" credo, the response is their philosophy on the production process:

"We buy fruit from independent growers throughout California and make the wine in a state-of-the-art cooperative in Santa Rosa. We do not own any vineyards, nor do we own a winery. All of our resources are directed toward the sourcing of grapes from the state's premier vineyards."

LIOCO's dedication to finding California's most compelling and best-suited vineyard properties ensures their wines represent authentic flavors and aromas. They seek out

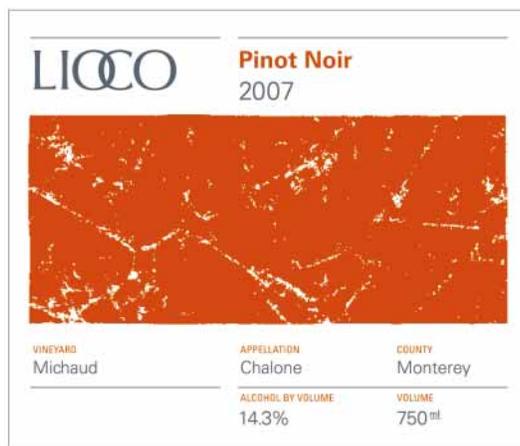
vineyard sites with tougher soil, older vines, and some stress-producing aspect (altitude, extreme temperature, or poor soil), and then shepherd the grapes from bud to bottle in the least intrusive way possible.

LIOCO knows their vineyard selection is critical, and the team has been fortunate in building relationships with some of Sonoma County's most exceptional growers. Since their standards for grape quality is so high, their wine offerings do tend to change year to year as different opportunities change or present themselves.

Licklider and O'Connor are accompanied at LIOCO by diligent winemaker Kevin Kelley, who gained his formal education at UC Davis. Kelley also resided in Burgundy for a period of time, which gave him an intimate perspective on the philosophy and history of traditional Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. When he returned to California, his experience landed him into top winemaking opportunities, before finding a home at LIOCO.

Today, LIOCO has grown to a modest 7,000 cases with no immediate plan to significantly raise the ceiling.

With a remarkable following for their portfolio of distinctive, vineyard-expressive wines, LIOCO stands as an excellent example of a winery that truly, and successfully, produces "wines of origin."





TASTING NOTES

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362 Cases Produced

LIOCO's 2007 Michaud Vineyard Pinot Noir comes from a dynamic vineyard site on a remote, arid hilltop in Monterey County's Chalone appellation. At the high altitude of 1,600 ft, the Michaud Vineyard is perched just at the base of an extinct volcano (Pinnacles National Monument) and its extreme microclimate produces stressed vines and wines of unusual complexity. This Pinot Noir was produced with harmony and balance in mind, and the "hands-off" winemaking approach allowed natural compelling aromas of dried cranberries and sassafras, with flavors of dark bitter chocolate and juicy, fresh raspberries to develop in the finished wine. *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar* rated the LIOCO 2007 Michaud Vineyard Pinot Noir **93 Points**: "Hazy red. Red currant, strawberry and raspberry on the nose. Light in body but potent, offering sweet red berry and bitter orange flavors and an exotic nose of rose pastille. The mineral-driven finish leaves zesty strawberry and floral notes in its wake." Try pairing LIOCO's Pinot with grilled salmon or roasted pork chops with wild herbs. 100% Pinot Noir. Aged 10 months in oak. Enjoy now until 2015.



ADDRESS
11151 Missouri Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90025

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,
We are proud to share these wines with you and we welcome you to our story. My partner Kevin and I met five years ago. At the time, I was selling European wine and Kevin was the wine-buyer at *Michelin Two-Star Spago* Beverly Hills. We shared at once a fascination with the traditional wines of Europe, and a mild antipathy toward the often-homogenized wines of California. We wanted to see more **soul** from the wines here at home. And so in the summer of 2005 we founded LIOCO (a blend of our surnames LLecklider + OConnor) to explore exactly that: could California produce honest wines that spoke of the soils they came from?

Leveraging Kevin's Spago contacts, we partnered with some of the state's premier Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vineyards, specifically those being farmed sustainably, organically, or biodynamically. In the cellar, we committed ourselves to **natural wine**, or to wine made without commercial yeasts, additives, or filtration. The net result: wines that are transparent, pure, distinctive.

LIOCO's path-breaking Chardonnays—inspired by those made in the North Burgundian hamlet of Chablis—are made in stainless steel tanks (**NO OAK**). They are unadorned in style and allow the unique characteristics of the soil to shine through (and what soil there is at Durell!). The Durell Vineyard was planted 30 years ago on a dried up river bed in the Sonoma Valley—the soil so strewn with cobble stones that to farm it was to do so manually. Vineyard manager Steven Hill—cast as a maverick for his decision to locate the vineyard on this impossibly tough soil—knew something that his neighbors did not. He knew that like many of the greatest vineyards in Europe, vines planted in tough Californian soil, in "marginal climates," had a capacity for making world-class wine. There are just 200 acres of this now prized "creek-bed soil" in all of Sonoma Valley—Durell occupying most it. Brace yourself for a truly exotic expression of Chardonnay. Tie on some bibs, crack open some Dungeness crab, and let the corks fly!

The Pinots could be described as "nostalgic" in style, hearkening back to the days when California Pinot was more about balance than power. Remember when Pinot Noir actually improved with age? This one from the Michaud Vineyard in Monterey's Chalone Pinnacles, will surely reward patient cellaring. It speaks of the impossibly high and dry climate, the rare blend of granitic and limestone soils, and the indefatigable farmer who tends his vines. If you must drink it now, we recommend letting it sit in a decanter for an hour or so. Then enjoy this soil-driven Pinot Noir with chicken thighs cooked in duck fat (as I did last night at Frasca Food & Wine in Boulder, Colorado).

Cheers,

Matt and Kevin

liocowine.com



REORDERS

LIOCO's 2007 Michaud Vineyard Pinot Noir is truly a revelation in the world of California Pinot, with a minimalist approach to winemaking and a stunning expression of site. This Pinot is an excellent achievement and ranks among the highest rated of LIOCO's admirable portfolio.

The **LIOCO 2007 Michaud Vineyard Pinot Noir** retails winery-direct for \$48.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

- 2-Bottle Members \$40.00 /bottle*
- 4-Bottle Members &
- Multi-Series Members . . . \$38.00 /bottle*
- *2 bottle min. order [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888
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 Website: www.GoldMedalWine.com