

2024 SLS CHARDONNAY / *Les Granitiers* / MONTEREY COUNTY

TERROIR

“Granitier” is the French term for a granite quarry worker, therefore an apt term for this wine hailing from primarily granitic sites of Monterey County. At an average elevation of 1,200 ft in the 2024 vintage, *Les Granitiers* combines stone and citrus fruits with salty maritime freshness.

Coastview Vineyard (44%) is situated on a ridgetop 2,300 ft up the Gabilan Mountains, and is one of the most dramatically beautiful sites on the Central Coast. Here, thin soils of decomposed granite with veins of limestone are planted to a smattering of cool-climate Burgundian, Rhône, and Bordelais varietals. Planted in 1999 and organically farmed, it produces wines with crunchy freshness and elegant structure.

Fogstone Vineyard (43%) is located in the northern section of the Santa Lucia Highlands, an 18 mile-long northeast facing bench in the windswept Salinas Valley. The mountainside appellation divides the Santa Lucia range to the west from the Salinas Valley floor to the east. Its granitic loam and incredibly cool climate thanks to nearby Monterey Bay make it a great place to grow crisp chardonnay.

Pelio Vineyard (10%) is located just west of Laureles Grade in Carmel Valley, in what is soon to be known as the *Carmel Coast* AVA. At 1,000 ft and seven miles from Monterey Bay, this site pushes the boundaries on cool-climate viticulture. Clay loam is littered with diatomaceous shale, evidence that this area was under the sea until about 12 million years ago. Planted in 2003 and organically farmed.

Spear Vineyard (3%) is a young and very exciting site in the heart of the Sta. Rita Hills. Planted in 2014 and farmed organically by Ofer Shepherd, its northern border and steep north-facing slopes hug Highway 246. Varied elevation reaches 900 feet, and soils are comprised of marine sedimentary clay and sand. Our chard block is primarily sedimentary clay with bits of chert, better known in France as *silex*.

TASTING

Pale yellow. Lemon and lime pith, white flowers, and green mango are supported by oyster shell, toasted vanilla bean, and toasted coconut. The light-medium body is wrapped in a very bright acidity and lightly chalky texture.

TECH

Alcohol 12.3%

pH 3.16

Native fermentations started by pieds de cuve from the vineyards

Alcoholic fermentation and 65% malolactic conversion occurred in barrel

11 months élevage in 24% second-fill French oak, 56% neutral French oak, and 20% stainless steel barrels

14 barrels • 353 cases produced

Unfined & gently filtered

PRESS

95 WE

98 JD

2024 VINTAGE

The Central Coast of California had another good water year. Though it didn't get as cold and wet as quickly as in 2023, we eventually got what we needed. And after soils being rinsed and replenished, our earliest sites came out of dormancy the second week of March. The last rain event of the growing season was early May, followed by the typical "May Gray" and "June Gloom" for which the Central Coast is known. With temperatures hovering in the average range through the end of spring, flowering commenced mid-May and finished mid-June. Along with beautiful weather early June came healthy fruit sets, followed by the increasingly common warm weather starting around the 4th of July. Temperatures were consistently a bit above average in July and August, followed by

heatwaves at both the beginning and end of September, and the last one in early October. The *SLS* harvest started on August 27th with chardonnay from Coastview Vineyard in the Gabilan Mountains, and ended on October 10th with syrah from Lester Vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Consistent with the warm weather and timely picking decisions, the '24 reds are characterized by rich fruit and spice intensity, backed by elegant structure, moderate alcohols, and fresh acidity. The whites are fairly lean, very fresh, and quite fruit-driven. Perhaps a bit less ethereal than 2023, and a bit more elegant than 2022- a classically Californian vintage.

SAMUEL LOUIS SMITH

SLS is a micro-négociant based in Santa Cruz, CA, focused on some of the coolest sites of the Central Coast. Mountainous terroir, organic viticulture, and minimal intervention in the cellar are tenets of the brand. *SLS* presents a compelling cross-section of the Central Coast, focusing on chardonnay, gamay noir, pinot noir, and cool-climate syrah from Santa Barbara, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties. The brand embodies a neoclassical style where lower alcohol and higher acidity, stem inclusion in the reds, and native fermentations with little to no additions create wines of place and purity, aroma and structure. Over the course of his career, Sam has worked in Santa Barbara (Brander, Tres Hermanas, Margerum), Australia (Mitchelton), the Willamette Valley (Tendril), the Northern Rhône (Villard), and Champagne (Nowack & Sélèque). Until recently, he was head winemaker of Morgan Winery, a pioneer of organic viticulture in the Santa Lucia Highlands. *SLS* produces about 1,600 cases annually.