

2024 SLS PINOT NOIR / *Montañita de Oro* / MONTEREY COUNTY

TERROIR

Montañita de Oro highlights the best of Monterey County's mountain pinot sites. At an average elevation of 1,100 ft in the 2024 vintage, high-toned aromatics and rich fruit are framed by persistent freshness and elegant structure.

Pelio Vineyard (51%) is located just west of Laureles Grade in Carmel Valley, in what will soon officially be the Carmel Coast AVA. At 1000 ft and seven miles from Monterey Bay, this site pushes the boundaries on cool-climate viticulture. Up to a few feet of clay loam topsoil, littered with diatomaceous shale, sit over shale bedrock- evidence that this area was under the sea until about 12 million years ago. Planted in 2003 and organically farmed, Pelio lends itself to wines exploding with fresh fruit, dusty herbs, and bright acidity.

Michaud Vineyard (27%) was planted by Michael Michaud in 1995, after he spent 19 years as head winemaker for Chalone Vineyard. The vineyard sits at 1550 ft in the northwest corner of Chalone AVA, located at the foot of Pinnacles National Park in the Gabilan Mountains, immediately east of the Salinas Valley. The appellation is characterized by an arid, high desert climate, where hot days are followed by cold and generally clear nights. Decomposed granite soil is the norm here, though pockets of limestone are also found. Wines from Michaud lend themselves to elegant structure and distinctive earthiness.

Double L Vineyard (22%) was planted in 1997 and is Morgan Winery's estate vineyard, and to this day is the only certified organic site in the SLH. The Santa Lucia Highlands is a mountainside appellation that divides the Santa Lucia range to the west from the Salinas Valley floor to the east. Located between 200 and 600 ft in the cool, northern section of the AVA, the vines at Double L are planted in sandy and clay granitic loams, and are blasted by afternoon wind and sun. Wines from Double L burst with rich fruit and spice, bright acidity, and silky texture.

TASTING

Bright red. Wild cherry, cherry cola, garrigue, and pine forest are followed by raspberry hard candy and sassafrass. A medium body is supported by fresh acidity and elegant, almost weightless tannins.

TECH

Alcohol 13.3%

pH 3.61

60% whole cluster fermentation

Native fermentations started by pieds de cuve from the vineyards

11 months élevage in 22% new, 10% second-fill, and 68% neutral French oak barrels

15 barrels • 364 cases produced

Unfined & lightly filtered

PRESS

94 WE

94 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.