

2022 SLS BLANC DE BLANCS / *Pelio Vineyard* / MONTEREY COUNTY

TERROIR

Pelio 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. Our chard block is a very shaly, north-facing hillside, perfectly suited to sparkling wine production.

WINEMAKING

This is the second vintage of SLS bubbles, inspired by the great grower champagnes of the Côte des Blancs, as well as by close friends in California who were also similarly inspired. In order to achieve the style and quality desired, we pick early but not underripe, ferment in steel, and age in barrel to add layers of complexity before “tirage”- bottling with yeast and sugar, transforming the still wine into sparkling wine. It then ages for nearly three years in bottle on the lees, building even more layers of complexity, before riddling and disgorging. Everything is done by hand, with precision and love.

TASTING

Light straw. Notes of fresh peach, lemon blossom, and oyster shell are followed by hints of toast and sea breeze. Light bodied with fine bubbles and electric acidity.

TECH

100% chardonnay

Alcohol 12.0%

pH 2.92

No malolactic fermentation

Native alcoholic fermentation in stainless steel, started by a pied de cuve from the vineyard

6 months élevage in 100% neutral French oak barrels

33 months tirage

Hand disgorged January 2026 with 2.2 g/L dosage

3 barrels • 70 cases produced

Unfined & unfiltered

PRESS

94 WE

96 JD

2022 Vintage

Record December rains, a cold and dry January, and a warm and dry first few weeks of February preceded below-freezing temperatures later in the month. This was the first hurdle, as soil temps had risen and bud break commenced the first and second weeks of March (about one week early). Some rain late March helped to cleanse soils and quench vines, yet another shock to the system was looming. A succession of heatwave, frost, and rain confirmed that 2022 was going to be anything but easy. Weather through flowering was cool and windy per usual. This, paired with low nutrient and groundwater availability due to the drought, lead to below-average cluster counts and widespread shatter. Average to above average temperatures, along with less marine layer through the summer, confirmed that 2022 would be an early year. A week-long heatwave starting Labor Day Weekend hastened ripening and further diminished crop loads. Thankfully, weather for the remainder of harvest was average to below average, though the heatwave and tiny yields forced most parcels to ripen simultaneously - shifting the stress from vineyard to winery. At first glance, 2022 seems to be a combination of 2014 and 2017. Regardless, the end result for the vintage was clean, fruit-driven, and fairly opulent wines with personality determined by pick date (before, during, or after the heatwave). This is a vintage that truly tells a story.

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.