

2024 SLS SYRAH / *Sandstone Terrace* / SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

TERROIR

Sandstone Terrace is a blend of primarily SCM cool-climate syrah sites with the common thread of sandstone-derived soils. In most vintages, it embodies the sexy, spicy, and floral side of the varietal. Average elevation of the 2024 vintage is 1,100 ft.

Thomassen's Split Rail Vineyard (52%) located in the Corralitos district of the southern Santa Cruz Mountains, about seven miles from Monterey Bay. Planted in the mid-80s in sandstone and clay soils at 1,700 ft, the .75-acre dry-farmed vineyard is surrounded by redwoods and madrones. The '24 vintage was my first vintage farming this beautiful, organic, and quintessentially SCM site. The ridgetop vineyard lends itself to herbal, red-fruited, and floral cool-climate syrah.

Lester Vineyard (48%) is also located in Corralitos, though much lower down at 500 ft in Pleasant Valley, about five miles from Monterey Bay. Sustainably farmed by Prudy Froxx, the 14-acre vineyard is planted to chardonnay, pinot noir, and syrah. It is one of our coldest sites, usually ripening syrah around Halloween in a "normal" year. Lester's cool climate and sandy loam soils lend themselves to extremely peppery, dark-fruited, and acid-driven syrah.

TASTING

Medium purple. Brambleberry, garrique, and salty cured meat are followed by spring flowers and savory spices. A medium body is framed by fresh acid and elegant chalky tannins.

TECH

Alcohol 13.3%

pH 3.61

100% whole cluster fermentation

Native fermentations started by pieds de cuve from the vineyards

10 months élevage in 20% second-fill and 80% neutral French oak barrels

14 barrels • 344 cases produced

Lightly fined & lightly filtered

PRESS

94 WE

96 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.