

2024 SLS CHARDONNAY / *Spear Vineyard* / STA. RITA HILLS

TERROIR

Spear 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*. Spear lends itself to wines with tons of fresh fruit, florality, richness, and acidity.

TASTING

Pale yellow. Almond skin, brioche, and meyer lemon are supported by hints of pineapple, gun flint, and chamomile. The light-medium body is wrapped in electric acidity and elegant texture.

TECH

Alcohol 12.4%

pH 3.17

Native alcoholic fermentation, started by a pied de cuve from the vineyard, occurred in tank

50% malolactic conversion occurred in barrel

11 months élevage in 28% new French oak, 52% neutral French oak, and 20% stainless steel barrels

6 barrels • 153 cases produced

Unfined & lightly filtered

PRESS

96 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.