

SAXUM CAYUCOS RIDGE VINEYARD

2022 CAYUCOS RIDGE VINEYARD

100% Syrah
ALC: 15.8%
Cases 750 ml: 1042
Cases 1.5 L: 20
AVA: Paso Robles, SLO Coast
Release: March 2026
Release Price: \$138
Drink: 2025 - 2045

REVIEWS:

Jeb Dunnuck, jebdunnuck.com, August 2025

Rating: 100

Drink: 2025-2045

The second vintage from this cool site just beside the Pacific, the 2022 Cayucos Ridge Vineyard is 100% Syrah, fermented with 43% whole clusters and aged 34 months in 68% new French oak (225-liter and 300-liter barrels). Spicy red and black fruits, California bay, pepper, sandalwood, and sage all emerge from this incredibly complete and complex wine. Medium to full-bodied, it's layered, pure, and seamless, with ultra-fine tannins, no hard edges, and flawless balance. It's an absolutely magical, singular wine that tops out my scale. I love it today, yet it should have 15-20 years of prime drinking.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Palate, September 2025

Rating: 99

Drink: 2027-2050

Deep garnet-purple colored, it struts out of the glass with an impressive perfume of lavender, rose oil, dark chocolate, and juicy blackberries, leading to a core of plum preserves, peppered salami, mossy tree bark, and fragrant soil. Full-bodied, the palate delivers a rock-solid structure of firm grainy tannins and seamless freshness to match the taut, muscular fruit, finishing long and perfumed. Stunning!

Matthew Luczy, Wine Advocate, October 2025

Rating: 94+

Drink: 2025-2032

The 2022 Cayucos Ridge Vineyard is the most distinct wine in the Saxum lineup, owing to its origins in the San Luis Obispo Coast and its position as the only single-variety wine in the roster. It opens with a quintessential, varietal nose of cracked pepper, beef jerky, olive tapenade and purple flowers. The palate is the clear product of the site's ultra-low yields, exuding a stunning density and concentration before releasing into a layered finish of firm tannins supported by a creamy core of new wood that impressively integrates into the overall savory profile.

2021 CAYUCOS RIDGE VINEYARD

100% Syrah
ALC: 15.1%
Cases 750 ml: 400
Cases 1.5 L: 30
AVA: Paso Robles, SLO Coast
Release: March 2025
Release Price: \$138
Drink: 2026 - 2040

NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The 2021 Cayucos Ridge Vineyard Syrah. It's unlike anything we've ever done, but also fits nicely into the Saxum family. It's black and brooding, tightly wound and in need of a few years cellar time. If you get antsy and pop a cork you'll be rewarded with an intense but beautiful core of black pepper and bay laurel. Imagine visiting Montana de Oro in the winter, searching for the monarch butterflies, walking through the damp eucalyptus groves. The scent of the sea wafting through the trees and the damp forest floor is a little extra because it just rained. Well that is what this wine is. To a T. Sorry I'm gushing here.

REVIEWS:

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Palate, June 2025

Rating: 96

Drink: 2027-2047

The nose really stands out as unique from Saxum's Paso Robles wines, offering beautifully cooler climate black pepper and baking spice aromas plus hints of violets, dried Provence herbs, and damp soil, opening out to a core of kirsch, red currant jelly, and underbrush. The full-bodied palate is so tightly wound with intense red and black fruit layers and great tension, framed by beautifully ripe, rounded tannins. It delivers loads of exciting mineral sparks, finishing with incredible length and depth. It's so very cerebral; you want to curl up in an armchair with it and watch it develop like a great novel.

Jeb Dunnuck, jebdunnuck.com, August 2024

Rating: (94-96)

Drink: n/a

Not yet bottled and coming from Smith's new Cayucos Ridge Vineyard located west of Paso Robles, within sight of the Pacific Ocean and at 1650 feet in elevation, the 2021 Cayucos Ridge is all Syrah from vines planted in 2018, aged mostly (all?) in barrel. This deep purple-hued beauty has a Cornas-like vibe in its peppery red and black fruits, game, wild herbs, and iron-like nuances. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, it's structured, has lots of tannins, terrific balance, and a great finish. It's another singular wine in the lineup with tons of character.

Eric Guido, Vinous, June 2025

Rating: 96

Drink: 2027-2038

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Matthew Luczy, Wine Advocate, June 2024

Rating: (93-95)

Drink: 2026-2036

From a San Luis Obispo Coast site planted to own-rooted Syrah in 2017 just 4.5 miles from the Pacific, the 2021 Cayucos Ridge Vineyard is a trio of firsts: Saxum's first foray outside Paso Robles, the inaugural release from this vineyard and their first single-variety wine. Tasted as a finished blend just before bottling, the nose is exquisite, perfumed and alluring, with a level of poise and elegance altogether different from the rest of the Saxum roster. The texture is fresh and ethereal, with a wonderfully spry, lifted energy that carries through to the finish. The site's youth makes this stellar showing even more promising and offers a fascinating first look into a storied producer breaking ground in a region that is quickly gaining momentum.

While there is no shortage of Paso Robles producers who hang their hats on going for the biggest and boldest wines in the area, Saxum's ability to craft powerful wines that deliver opulence and complexity while remaining balanced and authentic is second to none. Proprietor and winemaker Justin Smith's influence in the region is inescapable, as many other premier winemakers in the area either grew up with him, have hired him as a consultant, worked stints at Saxum, or any combination thereof. The wines are a true reflection of the region and, as such, are unapologetically bold and intense. However, they consistently offer nuance and elegance that are fleetingly rare in wines of their size and stature.
