

# SAXUM SOMNUS

## 2022 SAXUM SOMNUS

Red Wine Blend  
ALC: 15.9%  
Cases 750 ml: 567  
Cases 1.5 L: 19  
AVA: San Luis Obispo County  
Release: November 2026  
Release Price: \$159  
Drink: 2028 - 2055

### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

OK, here we have quite the anomaly. This wine defies the stereotype often associated with the warm 2022 vintage. This is a serious wine. It grabs your attention not from being the loudest in the room, but because of what it's saying. It's seductive and cerebral at the same time. It's textural, both fruit and spice driven. I love it because the Somnus is a wine only the Central Coast of California could make. It's a one of a kind.

### REVIEWS:

**Jeb Dunnuck, August 2025**

**Rating: 96-98**

**Drink: 2028-2040**

*blend of Syrah, Petite Sirah, Graciano, and Touriga Nacional from the James Berry, Cayucos Ridge, and G2 vineyards, the 2022 Somnus was vinified with a healthy amount of stems and brought up in a mix of new and used 225-liter, 300-liter, and 600-liter French and Austrian barrels. It displays a pure, deep purple hue and offers ripe black and blue fruits, white pepper, cedary spice, and graphite. Full-bodied, complex, layered, and pretty, with a great finish, this is a smoking good effort that will benefit from 3-4 years of bottle age and drink well for 15+ years.*

**Eric Guido, Vinous, April 2026**

**Rating: 95**

**Drink: 2027-2038**

*The 2022 Somnus is lively in the glass, with a burst of raspberry, sweet sage and a dusting of autumnal spice. It presents silken textures and a sensation of liquid stone, somehow weighty yet spry, as mineral-infected red fruits saturate the senses. It leaves grippy tannins and nuances of candied citrus offset by a bitter tinge of clove as a blackberry concentration fades.*

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## 2021 SAXUM SOMNUS

Red Wine Blend  
ALC: 15.5%  
Cases 750 ml: 575  
Cases 1.5 L: 30  
AVA: Paso Robles  
Release: November 2025  
Release Price: \$159  
Drink: 2025 - 2055

### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

The '21 has a large percentage of Syrah with the lion's share harvested from our Cayucos Ridge Vineyard and smaller components of Graciano, Petite Sirah, and Touriga Nacional

primarily harvested from James Berry Vineyard and Heart Stone Vineyard. Compared to the 2019 version, this one is brighter and more lifted, with great spice and dark, ripe fruit tones complemented with a nice savory herbal undertone. It's definitely not as bombastic, much more classy and sophisticated. I really dig it and think it's one that will gain great complexity with a little time (3-30 years) in bottle. One for the ages!

### REVIEWS:

**Jeb Dunnuck, August 2025**

**Rating: 100**

**Drink: 2025-2055**

*Still inky purple-hued to the rim, the 2021 Somnus reveals absolutely sensational aromatics of cassis, darker currants, pepper herbs, cured meats, and graphite. It's deep and powerful, with full-bodied richness, massive mid-palate depth, ripe, polished tannins, and blockbuster length. Brought up in French oak (86% new, 14% neutral) for 44 months, it's going to have two to three decades of longevity. It's Saxum's answer to Guigal's famed La Las, and it delivers the goods!*

**Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Palate, September 2025**

**Rating: 100**

**Drink: 2027-2050**

*The 2021 Somnus is mainly Syrah with just over half of the blend coming from Saxum's relatively new Cayucos Ridge Vineyard—a cooler site in San Luis Obispo. It was aged 44 months in French oak, 86% new. Deep garnet-purple colored, it offers up the most evocative perfume of kirsch, warm plums, and blackberry pie, interspersed with nuances of rose buds, fragrant soil, mint tea, and anise. The full-bodied palate is mind-blowing with its layers of fragrant blue, black, and red berry flavors and floral nuances, supported by firm yet super-fine tannins and amazing tension, finishing long and minerally.*

**Matthew Luczy, Wine Advocate, October 2025**

**Rating: 96+**

**Drink: 2026-2041**

*The second iteration of this release and one of the more extreme bottlings produced at Saxum, the 2021 Somnus combines the most tannic lots from Cayucos Ridge Vineyard with a co-fermentation of Syrah, Petite Sirah and Graciano from James Berry Vineyard. It matures for an additional year beyond the already lengthy élevage of the block designates, making for a full 44-month élevage in 86% new 225-liter barriques. The bouquet is a kaleidoscope of spice, anise and black fruit aromas, introducing a fittingly dense, fleshy, enveloping palate padded with savory nuance and a creamy core of oak that works impressively well despite its prominent presence. It closes with a refined, three-dimensional finish, lingering with endless richness, chalky tannins and succulent energy. This wine occupies a rare nexus of being overtly treated while retaining an unmistakable expression of place, and I look forward to seeing the layers it develops with time in the cellar.*

# SAXUM SOMNUS

**Eric Guido, Vinous, June 2025**

**Rating: 97**

**Drink: 2028-2038**

*The 2021 Somnus is impossible to ignore, offering a spice box bouquet of black tea leaves, cedar and pine, dried blackberries, cardamom and clove. More lifted and energetic than anticipated, it presents saturating depths of red and black fruits, complicated by savory herbal tones and a bitter cocoa tinge as edgy tannins saturate toward the close. Long and structured yet remarkably fresh, the 2021 finishes with impressive length and a subtle balsamic nuance as graphite mineral tones fade slowly.*

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## 2019 SAXUM SOMNUS

33% Petite Sirah, 33% Syrah, 17% Graciano, 13% Touriga Nacional, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon

ALC: 15.9%

Cases 750 ml: 450

Cases 1.5 L: 60

AVA: Paso Robles

Release: March 2024

Release Price: \$159

Drink: 2025 - 2040

### NOTES FROM JUSTIN:

I finally get to introduce you to this new cuvée, Somnus, named after the Roman god of sleep, because this wine gets to sleep an extra year in barrel! 44 months it's been slumbering away. Back in 2019 we had a couple of amazing lots in our cellar that were so unique, and so incredible, I really wanted to showcase them. The problem was they were also extremely structured. The original plan was to give them the 33 month élevage like Bone Rock and Rocket block, but when it came time to bottle it last year it was still too beastly. Think velvet glove in a iron gauntlet. We tucked it back in and let it sleep another whole year, and when it woke up this time, it blew us all away. It is something unique for sure. Still a beast, but something very special. Something that I believe could only happen here on the Central Coast. It is another wine in this line up that has to be tasted to be believed, but understand, it's not for the faint of heart. It is Paso.

These 2019 wines have a little something for everyone, which is why I think I like them so much. Lifted, fresh aromatics of sage and spice and fruit. Along with lots of rich California fruit, deep textures, smooth tannins and lively acids that keep it all harmonizing so well. These days there are so many great wines out there that have one or the other. Rich, smooth tannins, or fresh, spice/fruit driven aromatics. I find it rare to have both, and frankly, that's my holy grail. What really piques my interest.

### REVIEWS:

**Jeb Dunnuck, August 2024**

**Rating: 97**

**Drink: 2024-2039**

*A new wine that spent 44 months in 87% new French oak, the 2019 Somnus is named after the Roman god of sleep (hence this wine sees a longer élevage)... from a mix of James Berry and Heart Stone vineyards. Its saturated purple hue is followed*

*by a huge, Cornas-like nose of meaty black fruits, cedarwood, white pepper, cured meats, and iron. With full-bodied richness, a dense, concentrated mouthfeel, gorgeously polished yet building tannins, and a great finish, this singular, exotic, incredibly compelling beauty will continue drinking spectacularly well for 15+ years if well stored. It's another testament to the genius of Smith, and if you get a chance to buy a bottle, don't miss it.*

**Eric Guido, Vinous, July 2024**

**Rating: 98+**

**Drink: 2028-2040**

*The 2019 Somnus is exotic and impossible to ignore with its beguiling spice-box bouquet. White pepper and clove come together with dried roses and blackberries. It smooths over the palate with ripe red and black fruit yet quickly builds in tension as a liquid floral concentration and a bitter tinge of cedary spice and cocoa saturate toward the close. It finishes impossibly long and tannic, but the tannins are sweet and round. Violet inner florals and a saturation of salted licorice linger for ages. The Somnus underwent an extra year of barrel-aging (44 months, 87% new). It's a co-ferment of Syrah, Graciano, Touriga Nacional, and Petite Sarah, with 16% whole clusters. This is not to be missed.*

**Matthew Luczy, Wine Advocate, June 2024**

**Rating: 97+**

**Drink: 2025-2040**

*The first release of this co-fermented, extended aging cuvée that collects the most spice-driven, tannic blocks of James Berry Vineyard and Heart Stone, the 2019 Somnus is impressive in its ability to deliver monstrous size and refined intrigue in nearly equal proportions. ... it was aged a full 44 months in 87% new 225-liter barrels. The nose is seemingly endless in its dense opacity, showing off a plethora of sumptuous, dark fruit, black pepper and exotic spice aromas that continuously elevate and morph in the glass. The palate continues this lavish profile with a rich, extracted yet muscular texture that provides welcome vibrancy against the immense concentration of the palate. The finish is explosive and multidimensional and impressively continues to gain layer after layer of dark-fruited, chocolate-laden nuance with time in the glass.*

*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.*

## SAXUM SOMNUS

**Jeb Dunnuck, Sept 2022**

**Rating: 96-98**

**Drink: n/a**

*The 2019 (Somnus) comes mostly from the James Berry Vineyard but includes some Cabernet Sauvignon from the Heart Stone Vineyard. There are roughly 600 cases of this full-bodied, powerful wine, which offers terrific cassis and darker berry fruits, some white pepper, graphite, and chalky minerality, ripe, fine, polished tannins, and a great finish. It's straight-up gorgeous at this point.*

*I was able to taste three vintages from Saxum, the late release 2019s from bottle, the majority of the 2020 lineup from barrel, and a handful of 2021 barrel samples. As I wrote last year, the 2019s are just brilliant, ripe, hedonistic, magical wines, and these late releases only reinforce that opinion. Looking at the 2020s, this is clearly a challenging vintage, with many wines having subtle smoky nuances and firmer yet still ripe tannins. Justin commented that the lab numbers regarding smoke taint were very low, so I think these are safe wines that will offer plenty of pleasure, although this is not a vintage to hide in the cellar. The 2021s that I was able to taste were terrific, and this will clearly be another terrific vintage here. In addition, they've planted a new vineyard located just four miles off the Pacific, the Cayucos Ridge Vineyard, and I expect we'll see more releases from that site in the future.*

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