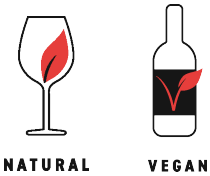
Thorne & Daughters

2022

'SNAKES & LADDERS'

Sauvignon Blanc | *Olifants River - South Africa*



Stats

Grapes: 100% Sauvignon Blanc
Vineyard: Three Skurfberg vineyards
Vine Age: Average: 28-years-old
Soil Type: Deep red sands over gravel
Viticulture: Conventional
Fermentation: Native – neutral 228-300L barrels (whole-bunch pressed)
Aging: 10 months in neutral 228-300L barrels
Alcohol: 14%
pH: 3.22
Total Acidity: 7.1 g/L
Total SO2: 47 ppm
Total Production: 167 cases
UPC: 781718144643

Reviews

Tim Atkin MW | 95 points
Wine Advocate | 92+ points
The WineMag | 92 points

About

John never really thought Sauvignon Blanc would enter his portfolio, least of all his fermenters. Nothing against the grape, but he never found the 'right' site that would meld nicely with the textural ethos of his wines. He still hasn't found that site...it found him. A phone call from good friend Chris Alheit stating he had a line on some fruit from the Skurfberg (from the site Chris gets his fruit for 'Magnetic North' and Eben Sadie's 'Skurfberg'). Without wasting any time John said 'yes' and hopped in the truck headed north on the 11-hour roundtrip to the remote reaches of the Olifants River Valley. When John arrived, he was surprised but equally excited, that it was Sauvignon Blanc on the vines for him. This vintage comes from three vineyards in the Skurfberg planted on the western plateau over the valley. 'Snakes and Ladders' name takes its inspiration from the wild nature of these bushvine vineyards high up in the mountains, along with the highs and lows of farming these incredible parcels in such a challenging climate.

In its fourth release, John again stuck to his winemaking basics focusing on texture rather than fruit. The grapes were hand-picked and whole-bunch pressed without any additions. The juice was then settled overnight in stainless before being roughly decanted to wood. The wine fermented without any additions in a mixture of old 228L and 300L French barrels. The wine remained on the gross lees throughout all of maturation and malolactic fermentation. A dose of sulfur in the winter and then again at bottling and that is the only small addition. After ten months the wine was racked to tank and bottled with crossflow filtration and just another small addition of sulfur. No fining.

Tasting Note

Wild blackberry, juicy guava, and flinty smoke shape a bold, complex nose. The palate is dense and structured, with notes of green papaya, toasted brioche, forest floor, and sun-dried fig, all sharpened by a streak of coastal acidity.