

Thorne & Daughters

2024

'CAT'S CRADLE'

Old Vine Chenin Blanc | *Swartland - South Africa*

NATURAL VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 100% Chenin Blanc
Vineyard: 75% two blocks from Langkloof Farm (Aprilskloof, Paardeberg) - 25% single block from Nuweland Farm (Malmebury)
Vine Age: 41-45-years-old (Langkloof Farm) - 42-year-old (Nuweland Farm)
Soil Type: Weathered granite over schist with sandy loam (Langkloof) - Iron-rich sand (Nuweland)
Viticulture: Practicing organic - dry-farmed
Fermentation: Native – whole-bunch pressed to old 600L French barrels
Skin Contact: None
Aging: 9 months in old 600L French barrels
Alcohol: 13.5%
pH: 3.4
Total Acidity: 5.6 g/L
Total SO2: 59 ppm
Total Production: 250 cases
UPC: 606110152433

Reviews

Tim Atkin, MW | 95 points
The WineMag | 96 points
James Suckling | 94 points

About

Swartland Chenin Blanc needs no introduction, having long assumed its place among the world's key expressions of this variety. Langkloof, where John sources the majority of the grapes for this wine, is an old bush vine Chenin Blanc vineyard planted on the granite slopes of the Paardeberg that belongs to the Rossouw family. The vineyard is situated between parcels owned by Eben Sadie and Chris Alheit, which says something about its aptitude for greatness. John first bottled this site as a single-vineyard wine in 2017 and this year felt a new site to him would complement the vintage quite well and added a small bit of 42-year-old vine fruit from a block John shares with Chris Alheit off of the Nuweland Farm just north of Malmesbury. Here the iron-rich granitic sands bring a honeyed fruit component to the blend that gives added texture and weight to the nervy granitic Paardeberg fruit. The 2024 vintage was characterized by a dry and hot lead into harvest and John made the decision to wait a bit, sacrificing a touch of acidity for more flavor and phenolic development. The 24s have about .5% more alcohol than the previous few vintages, but flavor and texture in abundance.

As with all of the wines...the winemaking is pretty simple. Handpicked, whole bunch basket-pressed direct to old French barrels, larger ones in this case, with the gross lees. No sulfur addition and fermentation kicked off naturally with ML following right after. A tiny hit of sulfur was added in the winter for light protection and then the wine aged for nine months. After this maturation time, the barrels were racked to tank where the wine settled naturally without fining. It was bottled with a crossflow filtration and just a small sulfur addition.

Tasting Note

Profound and yet brash Chenin with ripe aromas and flavors of orchard fruit, beeswax, hay, lemongrass, toasted almonds, and white flowers with light layers of honey. The interplay between breadth and tension is remarkable with a savory minerality and waxy texture carrying through a relentless, energetic finish.