Tembela Wines

2024

CHENIN BLANC

Stellenbosch - South Africa

NATURAL VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 100% Chenin Blanc
Vineyard: Geluksoord Vineyard
Vine Age: 41-years-old
Soil Type: Decomposed granite
Viticulture: Sustainable - dry-farmed
Fermentation: Native — used 500L oak barrels (100% whole-bunch pressed)
Skin Contact: None
Aging: 10 months in used oak barrels on the lees
Alcohol: 13.5%
pH: 3.63
Total Acidity: 5.4 g/L
Total SO2: 42 ppm
Total Production: 265 cases

Reviews

The WineMag | 94 points
Tim Atkin, MW | 93 points
Vinous | 92 points

About

Banele is quickly making a name for himself in the South African wine scene since the first release of his wines five vintages ago. Having passed through the Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé program, and then working for Duncan Savage, Banele has received some serious training. Again in 2024, this Chenin Blanc comes from old, untrellised vines on the Geluksoord Vineyard which sits near the Bottelary ward of Stellenbosch. It was a good year; Banele says he was able to harvest everything at the right time without any rot. He calls this vintage "splashy" — think bright acid rounded out by layers of fruit and highly drinkable. As for the watercolor label, Banele wanted a simple painting that commemorated his mother, not just by her name, but by her image. Tembela is in the foreground with a basket on her head, and after much back and forth with the artist, Banele decided to add a second woman in the background to symbolize connections to community and place.

The grapes were 100% whole-bunch pressed and then the juice was allowed to settle overnight. The clear juice was racked off the solids, and then was sent to old oak barrels to ferment. The wine stayed there 10 months of aging, after which the wines were racked to tank and bottled with a gentle sheet filter and a small dosage of sulfur. No fining.

Tasting Notes

White flowers, golden apple, ripe pear, and a splash of citrus peel jump out of the glass. The palate is smooth and layered but stays tight and focused. A hit of savory depth carries it long.