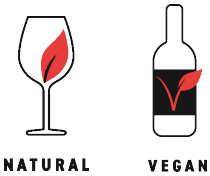
Thorne & Daughters

2021

'SNAKES & LADDERS'

Sauvignon Blanc | *Citrusdal Mountain - South Africa*



Stats

Grapes: 100% Sauvignon Blanc
Vineyard: Arbeidsend Vineyard - farmed by Basie Van Lill
Vine Age: 23-years-old
Soil Type: Iron riddled red sand over clay
Viticulture: Sustainable – dry-farmed
Fermentation: Native – whole-bunch pressed to stainless-steel for overnight settling then decanted with gross lees to old French barrels
Skin Contact: None
Aging: 9 months in neutral French 225L and 600L barrels
Alcohol: 14.14%
pH: 3.19
Total Acidity: 6.5 g/L
Total SO2: 62 ppm
Total Production: 150 cases
UPC: 781718144643

Reviews

Tim Atkin, MW | 95 points
Vinous | 91 points
The WineMag | 92 points

About

John never really thought Sauvignon Blanc would enter his portfolio, least of all 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 Skurfberg/Citrusdal Mountains. When John arrived, he was surprised but equally excited, that it was Sauvignon Blanc on the vines for him. '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 this third 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 is then settled overnight in stainless before being roughly decanted to wood. The wine fermented without any additions in a mixture of old 225L and 600L 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 nine months the wine is racked to tank and bottled with crossflow filtration and just another small addition of sulfur. No fining.

Tasting Note

Crushed blackcurrant leaf, opulent exotic fruit and smokey mineral notes form an intensely complex nose. The palate is rich and structured with green mango, sourdough, earth and ripe fig cut by saline acidity.