



## SNAKES & LADDERS SAUVIGNON BLANC



### TASTING NOTES

Snakes and Ladders' name takes its inspiration from the wild nature of these elevated bushvine vineyards high up in the mountains, along with the highs and lows of farming these incredible parcels in such a challenging climate. It is this heat and water scarcity that keeps the roots of these vines searching for every ounce of nutrients they can extract from their deep red soils.

The wine that comes from these pristine grapes is deeply complex and we vinify it as simply as we can from whole bunch pressing the grapes to months of cool maturation in old oak barrels. Blackcurrant leaf, ruby grapefruit and Chinese guavas form an intensely complex nose. The palate is rich and structured with lemongrass, gooseberry and sumac cut by saline acidity.

### SNAKES & LADDERS NUTS & BOLTS

Sauvignon blanc – Citrusdal Mountain  
27 year old vineyard on red sand over clay

Wine of Origin  
Citrusdal Mountain  
Vintage 2020

Alcohol – 13.62%  
Residual sugar – 1.40 g/L  
Total acidity – 6.7 g/L  
pH 3.13

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## ABOUT THE WINE

Little of the season's rain reached our Skurfberg Sauvignon blanc vineyard in the 2020 growing season, so we were still dealing with a very dry growing season up there. That said, it seems the timing of the rain was able to help support a very healthy canopy of leaves on the vineyard, and the dryness provides a good limit on the natural vigour of the Sauvignon blanc vines.

This vineyard never seems to fail to deliver wildly concentrated fruit, and it's hard to contain the excitement we all feel when this makes it into the cellar. It's a difficult pick as we need to balance the big fruit ripeness we get from the less vigorous part of the block with the pungent green-ness that we get from the more vigorous vines. That being said, I think we walked the knife-edge of ripeness well during the 2020 season and delivered some great wines.

This is a vineyard of compulsion for me as I just couldn't turn down the opportunity to work with grapes from this area. I'm continually delighted to see the kind of complexity and texture that Sauvignon blanc can deliver on the right sites.

Our key focus during harvest is picking times. If we can pick grapes at the right time, we can achieve tension and ripeness in the wine without the need to manipulate and "dress-up" the wines.

We have stuck to our winemaking basics here, eschewing primary fruit in favour of the deeper characteristics of the wines. The grapes are whole-bunch pressed in our old Vaslin basket press with no SO<sub>2</sub> or other additions. The juice is then wild-fermented in a mix of 225 litre old oak barrels where the wines remain on their gross lees for 9-10 months before blending and bottling. We favour malolactic fermentation over early additions of sulphur dioxide, and the wines only see a first addition of SO<sub>2</sub> in the early winter. We are looking for wines that show tension without losing their suppleness and core, and wines that will reward time in the cellar.

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