

Thorne & Daughters

SNAKES & LADDERS SAUVIGNON BLANC



TASTING NOTES

Snakes and Ladders' name takes its inspiration from the wild nature of these elevated bush vine 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. 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.

SNAKES & LADDERS NUTS & BOLTS

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

Wine of Origin
Citrusdal Mountain
Vintage 2021

Alcohol – 14.14%
Residual sugar – 1.50 g/L
Total acidity – 6.5 g/L
pH 3.19

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ABOUT THE WINE

The Skurfberg never saw much of the rainfall that fell over much of the Western Cape during the 2020/2021 season, and remains on the fringes of viability for vineyards, but this is what makes picking here so rewarding. Cool conditions during flowering meant that we drove up for a very small crop this year, which is always a bit disappointing, but we always have the concentration of the resulting wine as compensation.

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. The 2021 grapes came in at a really good level of ripeness and we have a 2021 wine that is more in the line of the opulent and complex 2019 wine that was our debut from this vineyard.

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 SO₂ 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 SO₂ in the early winter. We are looking for wines that show tension without losing their suppleness, and wines that will reward time in the cellar.

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