

Thorne & Daughters

TIN SOLDIER SEMILLON

TASTING NOTES

Tin Soldier is a skin-fermented wine made from Semillon gris, which is almost unique to South Africa, and a vestige of a time when Semillon was the grape on which the South African wine industry was built. The vineyard has been established from a sélection massale of Semillon gris cuttings taken from an adjacent vineyard of Semillon that was planted in 1964.

The colour of the wine is unusual, having taken some bright copper tones from about a week's fermentation on skins. The wine shows aromas of ripe apricot, Thai basil, nutmeg and toasted pistachio, redolent of baklava. Over the past couple of years, we have dialled the ripeness up a notch, making for a more complete and "grown-up" wine.

The interplay between savoury and sweet is a key point of interest in Tin Soldier, and makes for a subtle and engaging wine. The palate has a fresh and salty olive brine quality to compliment richer bitter citrus tones.

TIN SOLDIER NUTS & BOLTS

Semillon gris – Swartland
9 years old – granite sands

Wine of Origin Swartland
Vintage 2022

Alcohol – 12.8%
Residual sugar – 2.3 g/L
Total acidity – 5.9 g/L
pH 3.24

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ABOUT THE WINE

If we go back 100 years, Semillon was responsible for probably 95% of the wine made in this country. Tim James' research on the variety suggests that the red mutation may at one time have been even more common than the white. I'm really fascinated by the idea of the kind of wines that would have been made in the old days using these mixed vineyards, and this led me to the idea of fermenting the grapes on their skins for a few days.

The one thing we wanted to avoid here, was making a 'gimmick' wine. In the run up to our first harvest of this wine, we were still considering what our approach might be to this unique varietal. While sampling the vineyard and tasting the grapes, we hit on the idea of fermenting it on skins to bring out the wonderful skin tannins and hopefully extract some of that beautiful colour. The extraction is managed very carefully to retain a delicacy in the wine, while bringing out a lot of complexity. Through the years we have also included a portion of the wine that is directly whole-bunch pressed with no skin fermentation. This portion helps to lift the aromatic profile of the wine, and achieve this wonderful interplay of fruit and savoury tones. It is truly a wine we love.

All of our wines take their names from archetypal childrens' toys, and Tin Soldier takes its name from Semillon's status as the old footsoldier of the South African industry. Much like the old toy soldiers buried in the garden, Semillon has been reduced to a mere shadow of its former glory days in the Cape.

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