

Thorne & Daughters

CAT'S CRADLE
CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES

Swartland Chenin blanc needs no introduction, having long assumed its place among the world's key expressions of the grape variety. Here we have pulled together a collection of old vine vineyards from the Swartland on predominantly granite-derived soils. Granite gives us a clear and pristine expression of Chenin blanc, while the more iron-rich soils bring waxy, yellow fruit and generosity.

An enormous amount of work goes into the vineyard during the growing season to ensure that the vines can carry a healthy and balanced crop. Picking is done with a clear eye on the acidity of the crop which can fall away dramatically during the harvest due to the paucity of the granite based soils.

The 2025 wines are rich and expressive, with aromas of apple tarte tatin, barley sugar, and frangipane florals. A rich, beeswaxy palate is full of salty almonds, light honey, ripe yellow fruits and elderflower. The finish is long, textured and full. This is a wine that will reward some time in the cellar to allow its full aromatic expression to develop.

CAT'S CRADLE NUTS & BOLTS

Chenin blanc – Swartland
42-46 year old vineyards on decomposed granite
44 years old on iron-rich sands

Wine of Origin Swartland
Vintage 2025

Alcohol – 13.62%
Residual sugar – 1.6 g/L
Total acidity – 6.3 g/L
pH 3.23

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ABOUT THE WINE

Wow, Chenin blanc can really hit the high notes in a season like 2025. A cool, dry growing season and a beautifully balanced crop has delivered some of the most exciting wines in the cellar this year. This year's Cat's Cradle is one of the most thrilling wines that I have produced from the Swartland. At a stage I thought that the wines were a little too perfect to the point where I suspected they lacked enough edge to be truly interesting. Now looking at the wines in bottle, I'm not sure why I was worried. They are beautifully poised, complete, deep and complex. It's great to feel like we can put a fitting tribute to the Swartland in bottle.

Chenin blanc on granite is something that we have worked with for all the years that we have been making our Thorne and Daughters wines, though Cat's Cradle was only first released in 2017 as a single vineyard wine from the granite soils of the Paardeberg. The vision for this wine has evolved a bit and we are bringing in other small bits of old vine fruit from other soils in the Swartland to include new dimensions to the wine. I've really enjoyed that extra layer of buttery yellow fruit that the Nuweland portion (more iron-rich red granite-derived soils) brings to the wine.

The approach in the cellar is pure simplicity. The grapes are whole-bunch pressed in our Vaslin press (a big horizontal basket with two plates). No SO₂ is added to the juice. A rough settling follows pressing after which the wines undergo natural alcoholic and malolactic fermentation in old oak barrels. We add some sulphur dioxide late in the winter, and then again at bottling, keeping the level of SO₂ as low as possible. The result is a wine that shows tension without losing its suppleness and core, and one that will reward time in the cellar.

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