

DAMASCENE

DAMASCENE FRANSCHHOEK OLD BUSH VINES SEMILLON 2024

WINEMAKER

ORIGIN

VARIETALS

Jean Smit

Franschhoek

100% Sémillon



It's that transformative moment. A singular experience of shifting perspective. DAMASCENE is about seeking out memorable vineyards and sites that showcase the incredible diversity of character in the various terroirs around the Western Cape.

TASTING NOTES

A wine of quiet confidence, the 2024 Sémillon opens with lemon zest, apple blossom, and a dusting of white chalk, unfolding to a subtle beeswax richness. There's a cool, stony undertone, giving the nose its crystalline edge.

On the palate, the wine is tight and focused, carrying flavours of Meyer lemon pith, nectarine, melon rind, and a hint of unripe tangerine. A waxy texture runs through the core, providing gentle weight without heaviness. Over time, white chalk dust and lime notes appear, while the fruit remains finely drawn rather than exuberant. A textured, restrained wine, with surprising depth.

NOTES ON THE FRANSCHHOEK 2024 VINTAGE

The 2024 season in Franschhoek was shaped by contrast. A cold, wet winter provided excellent dormancy and even budburst, while September rains of over 180 mm caused widespread infrastructure damage but were largely beneficial for our well-drained Sémillon vineyards.

Early summer was dry and hot, creating conditions that ripen Sémillon well. However, strong winds and the September downpours reduced fruit set, resulting in lower yields. Ultimately, grape clusters were small but healthy, translating into a wine of focus and purity. Picking took place between 10 and 14 February 2024.

VINEYARD

Our Sémillon vineyards lie 22 km due east of our Bottlery Chenin Blanc vineyard, on the edges of the Franschhoek Valley. These ancient bush vine vineyards are rooted in alluvial soils—predominantly decomposed Table Mountain sandstone—with the oldest block planted in 1932. The second block, planted in 1962 against the Franschhoek Mountain foothills, has a rockier subsoil. Roughly 15 percent of the vines have naturally morphed into the rare Sémillon Gris mutation, which we preserve with careful pruning.

WINEMAKING

In the cellar, whole clusters were sorted and pressed using a delicate champagne cycle. The juice settled overnight before transfer to 1000L Austrian oak foudres for fermentation.

As with our Chenin Blancs, all the lees that remained in suspension (a mixture of both heavy and light lees) were retained to increase turbidity naturally. No sulphur or enzymes were added during the winemaking process, and only native yeasts carried the fermentation. Most batches only saw sulphur for the first time shortly before bottling in early December.

Malolactic conversion was deliberately prevented to preserve the wine's remarkable natural acidity. The wine then matured sur lie for 11 months in 1000L Austrian oak vats at 6–8 °C.

MATURATION

Best enjoyed within three to five years, but with careful cellaring will continue to evolve for more than a decade. With extended bottle age, expect tertiary flavours to intensify, showing the true character of old-vine Sémillon.

TOTAL PRODUCTION

2746 × 750ml
75 × 1500ml

BOTTLING DATE

5 December 2024

Aic: 12.8% Vol
pH: 3.14
TA: 5.9 g/L
RS: 2.2 g/L