

DAMASCENE

DAMASCENE SWARTLAND SYRAH 2024

WINEMAKER

ORIGIN

VARIETALS

Jean Smit

Swartland

100% Syrah



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

The densest and most brooding of the trio, the 2024 Swartland Syrah leans into dark fruit and savoury nuance.

Aromas reveal themselves slowly: black olive and rocket leaf at first, followed by tarragon and star anise, orbiting a wild blackberry core. The palate is riper and more muscular, with lush blackberry and mulberry fruit balanced by a brightening lift of red plum. Suede-like tannins frame the velvet fruit, matching structure with density.

With air, the wine deepens further — black fruit takes on a roasted edge, and herbal notes move toward dried spices. The 2024 vintage, in particular, reflects the Swartland's innate gravitas and tension between generosity and restraint.

NOTES ON THE SWARTLAND 2024 VINTAGE

Swartland's 2023 post-harvest rains and cold winter delivered excellent reserve accumulation and even early budding. September's wet, cool conditions slowed growth and reduced fruit set, while October winds further limited yield. Véraison came early, and January heat accelerated ripening without excessive sunburn. The resulting fruit was small-berried and intensely flavoured. The grapes were harvested between 16 and 26 February.

VINEYARD

The fruit for this wine comes from three markedly different Swartland sites. The first bush vine block is situated on the foothills of the Paardeberg, on Jakkalsfontein farm, and is rooted in free-draining decomposed granite soils. It makes up 10% of the blend and brings perfume, spice, and purity.

The second vineyard sits on the western foot of the Kasteelberg at 340m above sea level. This east-facing slope of exposed schist provides structure and fruit depth.

The final vineyard lies in the heart of the Swartland, facing east. These trellised vines are planted on Malmesbury shale and schist, lending the wine its mineral edge and structure. The Damascene team planted a further 2ha on this site in 2023.

WINEMAKING

This Syrah shows the kind of concentration typical of low-yielding vineyards in Mediterranean climates. The site provides formidable structure, so a high degree of whole-berry fermentation and the submerged cap technique ensures that tannins stay soft without losing intensity.

Approximately 75% of the fruit was fermented as whole clusters, across a mix of tulip-shaped concrete fermenters and 1000L conical oak vats. The fruit from granitic parcels received gentle pump-overs — never more than twice daily — to preserve perfumed aromatics and purity of fruit. In contrast, fruit from shale and schist-derived soils was fermented under submerged cap. This far more gentle technique keeps tannins soft and brings breadth to the palate. Both primary fermentation and malolactic conversion occurred spontaneously. The wine was matured in 2000L Austrian oak vats for 11 months and bottled without fining to ensure a more complex and authentic expression of Syrah.

MATURATION

This wine will continue to evolve and mature for more than a decade.

TOTAL PRODUCTION

4230 x 750ml
96 x 1500ml

BOTTLING DATE

10 January 2025

Alc: 12.84% Vol | pH: 3.66 | TA: 4.9 g/L | RS: 1.8 g/L