

DAMASCENE

DAMASCENE SWARTLAND OLD BUSH VINES CHENIN BLANC 2025

WINEMAKER

ORIGIN

VARIETALS

Jean Smit

Swartland

100% Chenin Blanc



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 more tightly wound of our two Damascene Chenin Blancs, the 2025 Swartland bottling is built around salt, flint and a core of piercing citrus that never lets go.

The nose opens with orange blossom and jasmine, followed by lemon rind, white peach and mineral puffs of chalk. The palate brims with tension, delivering alternating seams of piercing citric attack and sterner saltpetre flashes. The wine carries tart elements of fresh grapefruit that fold over more subtle stone fruit. By day three, slightly more open notes of tart apricot emerge, but the saline, stony, savoury core stays true right into the lengthy finish of fresh-cut lemon slices with touches of salt.

NOTES ON THE 2025 SWARTLAND VINTAGE

The 2025 season in the Swartland started out wet and then took its time to get going. Winter rainfall ran above the long-term average, with July rains being especially heavy. Cold-unit accumulation also began slowly, but had more than made up for lost time by the end of August. Budburst followed seven to ten days later than usual, and came through even and complete. Despite arriving a little later again, véraison brought excellent colour and was even across all the blocks.

Summer brought one sharp rise in temperature at Christmas and then relented. Cool nights and exceptionally healthy vineyards let flavour build while sugar was in no hurry. Fruit was hand-harvested between 28 January and 11 February 2025, the last of it picked nearly two weeks later than in 2024, in step with a district running roughly ten days behind.

VINEYARD

The Swartland appellation offers a wide range of Chenin Blanc expressions, but this wine is rooted in the granitic outcrops of the Paardeberg. All three contributing vineyards lie roughly 37 km from the West Coast.

The first two sites sit on a hilltop at the north-western edge of the Paardeberg, planted in two phases — 1971 and 1979 — making those blocks 54 and 46 years old at the time of the 2025 harvest. Decomposed granite, forced to the surface by ancient dolomite, lends tension and a subtle acidic grip to the wine.

The third site, Jakkalsfontein, was planted in 1986 on a north-facing slope, making it 39 years old at the time of the 2025 harvest. Old bush vines here grow on decomposed granite over clay-rich subsoils, delivering fruit of depth and natural concentration.

WINEMAKING

Hand-harvested between 28 January and 11 February 2025, the grapes were chilled overnight to 8 °C. Whole clusters were hand-sorted and pressed on a delicate champagne cycle, then settled overnight. Fermentation took place in 1000L Austrian oak foudres.

All lees that remained in suspension were retained to maintain natural turbidity. No sulphur or enzymes were added during the winemaking process. Most batches saw sulphur for the first time just before bottling. Malolactic conversion was blocked to preserve the wine's vivid natural acidity, and no bâtonnage was performed. The wine matured sur lie for ten months in 1000L Austrian oak foudres at 6–8 °C.

MATURATION

The wine will show at its most expressive within three to five years of vintage, but with careful cellaring it will evolve for over a decade, developing layered tertiary notes that reveal the pedigree of old-vine Chenin Blanc.

TOTAL PRODUCTION

2484 x 750ml and 100 x 1500ml

BOTTLING DATE

13 January 2026

Alc: 11.83% Vol | pH: 3.17 | TA: 6.0 g/L | RS: 1.5 g/L