

## A A Badenhorst, Secateurs Chenin Blanc 2009 Swartland

10 Nov 2009 by Jancis Robinson

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Some truly exciting wines are now being made by South Africa's new generation of wine producers, typically (though not always) people who used to make wine at more established addresses but are now setting up on their own. You can find a collection of tasting notes on about 50 of these wines at [Great new South Africans](#).

Long-haired, red-faced Adi Badenhorst has long been one of Cape wine's more colourful characters and most recently was known for his string of successes at Rustenberg. But last year he struck out on his own, or rather with his family (including his cousin Hein and his father), at A A Badenhorst Family Wines. They took over an ancient winery in the up and coming Perdeberg area that had been built in the 1800s and had last been used in the 1930s. This meant fashionable concrete tanks and, according to the 2009 *Platter Guide*, a sizeable bat population. Even more importantly, they acquired 35 hectares of mature, dry-farmed bushvines, which clearly deliver great quality and complexity.

Best value among the four wines I have so far tasted from this exciting new producer is **A A Badenhorst, Secateurs Chenin Blanc 2009 Swartland**, which just over-delivers in the most delightful way for a wine currently available at Handford Wines of London for £8.99 a bottle or less by the case. I'm assuming it's the produce of some of the many old Chenin vines that have done so much to establish Swartland's growing reputation for it is jam packed with honeyed, floral, dense and savoury character but, despite its 14% alcohol, is quite dry and refreshing enough to serve in the sort of circumstances you might serve a white burgundy.

I actually preferred it for current drinking to the more expensive and more complicated blend that is **A A Badenhorst White 2007**, which is made up of Roussanne with Grenache Blanc, Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc as well as Chenin. Mind you, the **A A Badenhorst Red 2006**, a blend of Shiraz, Mourvèdre and Cinsault that is labelled Coastal Region, so one assumes it contains fruit grown outside Swartland, is stunning. Presumably this was not made in the new cellar (so perhaps that's why it can't be labeled Swartland? As I said on my [South African hobby horse](#) recently, SA wine labelling regulations are mysterious). This wine can be found relatively easily online from around £22.95 or €29.95 a bottle in Europe - see the link above and below. London retailers Swig seem to have sold out of it.

I gave this delicious red blend 18 points out of 20 and wrote this tasting note:

Shiraz 92%, Mourvèdre 5%, Cinsault 3%. Seriously good South African red; I kept coming back to it. There is such confidence and complexity here (even after a week in an opened bottle). Some minerals, no greenness, not a hint of [burnt rubber](#)! Very serious, thoughtfully made wine that is still chewy but is SO sophisticated. Limpid and lovely texture. Layers. Leather, treacle, no sweetness, some minerality, schist? But it's cool overall. Not quite ready but a coiled spring. 14.5%

So, there you have a couple of great recommendations from one of the most obvious of the new generation of South African wine geniuses, but there are many more. Americans in particular might like to nag their local importers to take a trip to the Cape. Soon.

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