

**WINELANDS RETREAT**

PHOTOS *Mark Serra* PRODUCTION *Sumien Brink* WORDS *Alma Viviers*



a manor comes of age  
classic



## Co-owner of the German Falke KGaA apparel company, Peter Falke, and his better half, Danièle Görtz, caught the South African bug almost 15 years ago and turned an old Cape wine farm into an expression of their unique style.

Green-and-white gabled Cape Dutch buildings etched against a backdrop of picturesque mountains and lush vineyards are a familiar sight in the Cape Winelands. Yet the stately homestead and outbuildings of Groenvlei Farm, which date back to the 1800s, belie a contrasting modernity within.

The chic interiors of the manor house and tasting room are a true reflection of Peter Falke and his partner Danièle Görtz, who have created a place where German precision meets French flair.

Peter, who has been doing business in South Africa since the 1969, always envisaged a place of his own in the Fairest Cape but never dreamt that he would own a wine farm. “I heard it was up

for sale and had only two days to decide before leaving for Germany,” he recalls. It was a done deal by the time Peter boarded the plane – a case of good luck and timing.

The manor had changed hands several times over the previous two decades and was in desperate need of attention, creating the ideal opportunity for Danièle to draw on her creative background in fashion and interior design.

The roof was repaired, electricity rewired and new plumbing installed. The kitchen was also opened up to let in more natural light and now spills out onto a breakfast patio under an ancient oak tree. “You can feel the heritage when you walk around here,” Peter says.

“We wanted to remain true to its style and tradition but at the same time wanted to translate the building into an expression of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and of ourselves.”

The generous spaces of the manor house bear testament to the influence of Danièle’s French heritage intermingled with finds from our own shores. She also had the extensive gardens planted with roses, lavender and agapanthus.

The couple live between France, Germany and South Africa and, with a son and grandchildren in San Francisco, a daughter in New York and another in Milan, the farm has become a haven for family gatherings. However it is more than a mere holiday home and continued to supply other wineries with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes until 2003, when Peter decided it was time to start making his own wine.

“We wanted to create wines we like to drink ourselves,” he says. As a complete winemaking novice, he enlisted the help of friends and seasoned vintners Jannie Engelbrecht and Kevin Arnold to produce the first Peter Falke vintage, which was released in 2008. Today, winemaker Tertius Naudé is at the helm and produces two ranges under the label: the easy-drinking PF range, which is Peter’s personal favourite, and the Peter Falke signature range.

**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT** Danièle combined dramatic chandeliers with wine barrels to create a striking focal point in the wine cellar; An outbuilding beside the swimming pool now functions as a guest house for friends and family who congregate from all over the world; The influence of Danièle’s Vietnamese heritage can be seen in the red lacquered urns in the tasting room. **OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT** Small Colon figures in the guest house add a touch of Africa; Peter Falke and Görtz have successfully combined their lives between France, Germany and South Africa. The dead tree Danièle painted red can be seen in the background; The loft room in the guest house features a selection of America-inspired decor accessories. **PREVIOUS SPREAD, LEFT** The winery prides itself on being the best sundowner spot in the Helderberg. **PREVIOUS SPREAD, RIGHT** Extensive rose and lavender gardens bring to life Danièle’s philosophy of designing with all the senses.

Both Peter and Danièle are passionate about sharing what they have created with other people, which inspired them to open an elegant tasting room on the farm.

Here, Danièle again applied her philosophy of “designing with the senses”. The result is a tasting room that is a sensory delight: bursts of red accents captivate the eyes while hands are seduced to touch smooth wood, chrome and cork inlays, taste buds are tempted with the fine wines and the fragrances of rose and lavender drift in from the lush garden.

Danièle’s impeccable taste and creative vision permeate every aspect of the business. She not only designed and commissioned all the furniture and had the special hand-blown tasting glasses made, but also designed the labels for the two wine ranges with the help of eldest son Michael, a creative director.

“Few people have the chance to create something of their own,” says Peter. “We have this opportunity and want others to share in our lives and what we have achieved.” **V**

- Peter Falke Wines 021 881 3677, [www.peterfalkewines.com](http://www.peterfalkewines.com)
- Cellar open for tastings Tuesday to Sunday from 11 am to 7 pm Mondays and after hours tastings can be booked.



## HOW TO create an outdoor room

Danièle has created several outdoor “rooms” throughout the property. We picked up these tips on how to make the most of an outdoor space.

**FLOORING** Differentiating an outdoor room from the surrounding area can easily be achieved with a surface treatment. Concrete pavers such as those used outside the tasting room (opposite) are inexpensive and create the same effect as a rug or carpet by tying everything together.

**CREATE A CEILING** This is another good way to define the space and does not have to be a permanent structure: a tree, pergola, canopy or umbrellas will also do the job.

**LIGHTING** As with interiors, lighting is crucial to create the right ambience. Danièle uses plenty of candles, lanterns and soft ambient lighting.

**FURNITURE** Combine outdoor pieces with indoor furniture. Choose from a selection of materials such as wood, cane, steel, concrete and woven plastic polymers. Danièle uses colourful soft furnishings as accents. Remember that your outdoor room is an extension of the interior and will probably form part of your view. Colour schemes should therefore be complementary.

**VISUAL INTEREST** We don't all have access to a spectacular view but it is easy to create visual interest by installing a water feature or sculpture. Danièle, for example, created a striking focal piece by painting a dead tree trunk bright red.

**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT** The manor house's African living room displays an informal collection of South African artefacts, many of which come from family friend and antiques dealer Gilles de Moyencourt; The interior of the tasting room combines crystal, chrome, wood and cork; A gleaming piano makes a striking impression in the manor house's entrance hall. **OPPOSITE** Danièle believes in treating an outside space in the same way as an interior, as can be seen in this outdoor room leading from the tasting area. **NEXT SPREAD, LEFT** Clever use of indoor and outdoor lighting adds drama to the cellar entrance **NEXT SPREAD, RIGHT** Another outdoor room where languid summer evenings are spent enjoying good wine and conversation.

**EXTRA  
PHOTOS!**

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