



Wine and design at Peter Falke's Groenvlei Farm

From socks to wine – the fashion manufacturer Peter Falke owns a secret spot in Stellenbosch

If you are European, there's a good chance that you have some socks from Franz-Peter Falke. Falke is known worldwide for socks and has factories in South Africa too. Now he is also known for wine and there's no reason for you not to have some Peter Falke wines in your collection. The 58 year old German entrepreneur bought the Groenvlei Wine Farm in 1995 and can show off with the small 120m2 boutique style winery in Stellenbosch.

Don't let the old fashioned Cape Dutch buildings fool you though. This wine farm is not rustic and in contrast with the biodynamic way of farming and the pretty rose garden the design style is definitely not traditional. If you're looking for some artistic designs with your wines, you've come to the right place. Welcome to Peter Falke's stylish winery.

German & French Fusion - Groenvlei is Lifestyle

France has some fine wines and even finer women. Danièle Görtz from Paris is Peter Falke's partner and a passionate interior designer. The Groenvlei farm gushes with French flair and typically refined French taste. Danièle is responsible for this. The reception resembles a barrel, a metaphor for the wine - but of course there is no wine inside, only welcoming girls that know all about the Peter Falke wines.

For Danièle lifestyle means: "The way we are and we would like to share it with others".

The furniture you see at the Groenvlei Farm was produced in Germany. The design is clean. Yin and Yang play a role; the lamps look like barrels; the designer table in the tasting room is long and inspired by a German Beer Garden. Danièle is delighted with the feedback from locals and visitors alike: "People are amazed. When we opened in 2008, people didn't expect what they saw when they came in. They saw the latest contemporary accessories connected to wine."

Danièle was involved in many grand projects in Europe including LeGrand in Paris next to the Louvre. She is a storyteller and loves sharing her ideas. This sounds like a lot of work, but she says "Oh, I love it" with the typical congenial accent. On the wide lawn, you find huge bottle openers stuck in the grass, a real eye catcher. Strijdom van der Merwe was the man who made them. The art bottle openers also mark umbrellas with "bean bag" cushions. Peter says "They don't do it anywhere else and our guests love to sit on a cushion on the lawn."

Peter Falke Wines and Wine grower Tertius Naudé

A working wine farm since 1669, Groenvlei is one of the oldest in the surroundings. At 20 hectar the farm is surrounded by the slopes of the Helderberg mountains. In 2003 the first Peter Falke wine was born. Since then he has been exporting to Europe and the USA.

You can experience two lines of wine. The PF range is an easy drinking unformal wine, a light all-rounder. This includes a Sauvignon Blanc, a Blanc de Noir and a Cabernet Sauvignon. "We try not to

make it too strong.“ says Danièle. After visiting many restaurants in Europe and the rest of the world, Peter and Danièle got a certain sense what they like: excellent light food and light wine. Light wines are easy to enjoy and won't make you tired. "That's the personality of the wine, that's the personality of Peter Falke. This is how we are," concludes the successful German businessman.

The signature Peter Falke range is for wine connoisseurs and includes different Sauvignon Blancs and a Cabernet Sauvignon. In the near future there will also be a Shiraz and a Bordeaux Blend available.

"It's all about the grape“ says wine grower Tertius Naudé. He prefers the term 'wine grower' to 'wine maker' since it's the quality of the grapes that counts most. "We have a philosophy of doing it the environment friendly type of way. It's not about the wine making actually. Wine making is a natural process. I don't like to add stuff to make it better, the grapes must be good! It's all about the natural flavours.“ Tertius describes his work as looking after the soil, the environment and the vineyard. A good climate, the wind that blows through the vineyards and the light are all factors that come together to create excellent Peter Falke wines.

Tertius calls Groenvlei "A hidden gem, when you come from outside you can't really imagine that it's like that. Go inside to explore it. You will be astonished.“

Philosophy and the Five Senses

Peter Falke's winery creates an experience that makes people feel good using the five senses. See the vineyards and the landscape framed by the Helderberg Mountains. Listen to the sounds of the vine leaves rustling, the fresh breeze and the birds outside. Smell and taste the wines. To truly discover a place you must feel it with all your senses. Peter Falke requires that you leave your worries behind, come to Groenvlei and experience peace and pleasure.

Five to six times a year the entrepreneurial couple, Peter and Danièle, visits Stellenbosch and always try to be there for the Helderberg festival. For the celebration they also open their wine cellar to visitors. Then, as always, the gate of Groenvlei wine farm is open and smokers are more than welcome, says Peter.

Wine tastings are possible seven days a week and can be combined with cheese platters, dried fruits, olives and nuts or four different cheeses, fresh breads and good olive oil from the area.

You can buy whatever you see, from the wine glasses (with a glass rim on the inside to help the wines decant and 'open' better) to the paintings on the wall and even the cushions on the ground and the sculptures. Just don't forget the wine!

Groenvlei is a product of Peter and Danièle's passion: "We want to be a boutique, we don't wanna cater for the volume. We will never be quantity but quality.“

It's a lifestyle, it's Groenvlei....

by Lize de Kock and Antonia Heil