

# Putting the 'B' in boutique wine

*This month, we take our Flamingo readers along our own Tamasa Trading wine route experience, this time, we head out along the R 44 heading away from Somerset West, about half way to Stellenbosch, you turn off onto the Annandale Road and find what can only be described as old world charm meets modern sophistication – Peter Falke Wines.*

**By: Phil Ruimte Photographs by: Mark Pettipher**

Much has been written about the Peter Falke Winery, and judging from the plethora of articles and promotional material on their website the jury is unanimous, this traditional 18th century gabled Cape Dutch cellar is a must visit on any wine tasting tour, BUT, don't take the website at its word – when you're in the area, do yourself a favour, experience the Falke hospitality and let your senses be entertained.

The winery gives off the feeling of exclusivity as it nestles against the rugged slopes of the Helderberg Mountains. When you think of Stellenbosch, you must think of the University and its fame for producing

some of the country's finest wine makers, many of whom travel abroad to gain international experience before returning to South Africa, where they bring accolades to the wine establishments that they become attached to.

Stellenbosch is home to many of the county's finest wine estates, Groenvlei (Peter Falke Wines) is certainly numbered amongst them.

Since German born Peter Falke (*of Falke hosiery fame*) bought Groenvlei Farm in 1995, he and his French born wife Danièle have transformed the old homestead and traditional buildings into something that is quiet unique,





*THIS PICTURE: Frans-Peter Falke, relaxed and at home on Groenvlei.  
BELOW: Wine maker Werner Schrenk.  
OPPOSITE: Danièle Falke - passionate about the five senses that the estate portrays.  
BELOW OPPOSITE: Tranquillity and harmony abound, the tasting, rooms, cellar and homestead viewed from the fertile vlei.*



awe inspiring and at the same time tranquil, a 'boutique' winery with a contemporary wine tasting room and luxurious outdoor lounge.

We were fortunate enough to meet up with Peter, Danièle and Werner on a sunny summer Friday afternoon. Firstly welcomed by Lize-Marié Nieman, the estate's marketing manager, we were introduced to the estate's wine maker, Werner Schrenk (better known as Wolf to his friends) and ushered through the tasting room and across lush lawns, surrounded by majestic shady trees and well maintained buildings adorned with cascading bougainvillea, splashing dark and vibrant reds as a contrast against their leafy greens.

Peter had been coming to Cape Town since 1969, looking after the family's hosiery business, but it was in late 1994, when on a visit to introduce a new Managing Director, that Peter's dream of owning a wine farm came true. He had a choice of three wine farms to choose from, Kleine Zalze, Delaire and Groenvlei, all three were of a similar size and price.

It was 'love at first sight' and in spite of the then caretaker not letting Peter in to view the Groenvlei homestead, Peter had a weekend to make up his mind.

In February of '95, Peter bought the farm and in April, Danièle saw the farm for the first time.



After Danièle's initial disappointment, *she was expecting a long drive through vineyards that would eventually get to the homestead*, instead she found a short trip along the Annandale Road and less than a 100 metre drive to the main house. What filled her senses were some 9000 rose bushes, shady jacarandas and brilliant blue and purple hued agapanthas. Once on the veranda the view across the vlei was breathtaking, and although the homestead and out buildings were run down, she soon put her expertise as an interior designer and her passion to good use.

Peter admits that he had no clue about wine making and knew even less about vineyards, after all being German he was a beer drinker. Shortly

after the purchase he met Kevin Arnold - Waterford Wine Estate and Neil Ellis from Neil Ellis Wines.

A synergy was formed, with Peter's history of successful Brand Management (he is also the President of Germany's Brand Association) coupled with the wine growing expertise of his new friends, saw Peter selling his grapes to Kevin and Neil until 2003, a lasting friendship has ensued ever since.

Realising that the farm had originally been set up to mass produce grapes that would be sold to co-ops and therefore producing an inferior quality produce, Peter under guidance removed all the varietals on the farm and over a five year period, a series of ground cover crops were planted, this was to encourage and rejuvenate the *terroir*, before planting anew.

The soil on the slopes of the farm is decomposed granite with a high clay content, which covers the more fertile soil some 900cm to a metre below, ideal for the slow release of moisture, which is perfect for growing varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon.

Taking a long term view, which is a reflection of the Falke hosiery family tradition, Peter says, "to be successful in this business you need to be patient, passionate and above all, curious," he goes on to say "curious because you need to be open to experimentation, to





*TOP and BELOW LEFT: Brand attention to detail from glassware to fun and quirky, in the form of a corkscrew. ABOVE and OPPOSITE: The entrance to the wine tasting rooms. OPPOSITE TOP: Lush lawns and cool shady areas abound. MIDDLE: Guests learn about the wines from JC Kruger the tasting room assistant. BELOW: Families and friends relax on a balmy summer evening.*

feel the *terrior* and ‘listen’ to the grapes dictating what you are going to do.”

“We need to grow only the best grapes, aiming for grade A, to produce a quality wine, after all we are in the quality not quantity business,” says Werner, echoing Peter’s sentiments.

Talking about the Peter Falke wine brand, Peter said, “it’s not the product that makes a brand, it’s the consumer,” he goes on to explain, “you can have the best product in the world, but if you cannot get it recognised you cannot build it, it takes time and patience, you need to be consistent, and your quality has to be on par with that consistency.”

“We have the privilege to have a unique venue, we are also in the fortunate position of being in an area that has favourable growing conditions,” says Werner, “we must dedicate ourselves to helping and nurturing the vines. We know from years of experience when to prune, stress and harvest our grapes, we know which areas ripen first and which areas will bring the best yields.”

Qualifying that statement, Werner, who has been on the farm since 2007, comments, “to be a good wine maker you must take the time to understand the land, the cultivars on it and experience nature’s seasons as they



## SIGNATURE PETER FALKE MÉTHOD CAP CLASSIQUE 2011



A combination of 50% Chardonnay and 50% Pinot Noir, has gone into this first vintage MCC wine and a limited amount, 1200 bottles, were produced.

NB. *This wine is only sold at the tasting room.*

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	12%
RS	7.5g/l
TA	7.0g/l
pH	3.03

### Taste

Yeasty with elaborate characters, brioche and biscuit flavours overwhelm the palate, a very elegant wine with great linearity.

## SIGNATURE PETER FALKE MUSCAT D'ALEXANDRIE



The grapes are picked from the estate's Hanepoot block in the early morning and then whole bunch pressed. The wine is then fortified, to an alcohol adjustment of 17%, and given a higher residual of sugar of 187g/l, this is to balance the intense Muscat flavours. The wine is left to settle and then transferred to old 225L barrels for a further year of maturation.

This sweet non vintage wine was released in December 2015 from the winery and was bottled in November 2015.

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	17.5%
RS	187.0g/l
TA	5.2 g/l
pH	3.26

### Taste

Light amber in colour with aromas of orange blossom with deeper notes of jasmine and rose.

### Palate

Apricot flavours with lingering aftertaste.

### Drink with

Serve as an apéritif or as a sweet wine after dinner, to be enjoyed on its own or paired with a selection of cheeses.

*All wines are available for enjoyment by the glass, carafe and bottle.*

*Visit Peter Falke Winery to try their award-winning wines, the estate is open from 11h00 until 19h00, Tuesday to Sunday.*

*Bookings for groups of 10 or more is essential.*

*Alternatively, place your order on-line via [www.peterfalkewines.com/store](http://www.peterfalkewines.com/store)*

*For order enquiries, pricing or additional information, please contact Charné Maree on 021 881 3677*

*or [tasting@peterfalkewines.co.za](mailto:tasting@peterfalkewines.co.za)*

## SIGNATURE PETER FALKE EXCLUSIVE BLEND 2013



The Exclusive Blend is the flagship of Peter Falke Wines and comprises Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

Only berries of premium quality were hand-picked in the vineyard, leaving all sun burnt grapes on the vine. Once de-stemmed, the grapes underwent a second, hand sorting selection process. No crushing of the grapes have taken place, only the introduction of yeast to start the fermentation process. Once completed, cold soaking took place for one day at 15°C. The grapes were left on the skins for 21 days. Punch-downs and pump-overs occurred regularly to ensure a velvety smooth tannin structure. Finally the wine was lightly pressed and matured for 18 months in French oak barrels. 20% went into 1st fill French oak and the rest into 2nd and 3rd fill. Bottled in November 2014.

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	14.67%
RS	2.6 g/l
TA	5.9 g/l
pH	3.73

### Taste

Dark garnet hue, full and rich aromas of Cabernet Sauvignon dominate the nose.

### Palate

Cassis and sweet red fruits enhance this well balanced wine with superb lingering tannins on the palate.

### Drink with

This bold wine pairs well with flavoured roasted or grilled lamb or beef and a creamy sauce.

## SIGNATURE PETER FALKE SYRAH 2013



Only grapes of premium quality were hand-picked in the vineyard, leaving all sun burnt grapes on the vine. Once de-stemmed, the grapes underwent a second, hand sorting selection process. No crushing of the grapes have taken place, only the introduction of yeast to start the fermentation process. Once completed, cold soaking took place for one day at 15°C. The grapes were left on the skins for 21 days. Punch-downs and pump-overs occurred regularly to ensure a velvety smooth tannin structure. Finally the wine was lightly pressed and matured for 18 months in French oak barrels. 20% went into 1st fill French oak and the rest into 2nd and 3rd fill. Bottled in November 2014.

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	14.63%
RS	2.3 g/l
TA	5.5 g/l
pH	3.82

### Taste

The bouquet reveals intense notes of black currant berries, cherry, white pepper with hints of vanilla.

### Palate

The palate is full-bodied with a delicate spiciness and silky tannins.

### Drink with

Leaner red meats, stew and mildly spicy ethnic foods, such as slow cooked lightly spiced beef brisket, grilled rack of lamb, Indian curry or mild Mexican stew.

## PETER FALKE RUBY BLEND 2013



An initial sorting and selection took place in the vineyards, leaving sun burnt grapes on the vines. Once de-stemmed, the grapes underwent a second sorting, to further remove excess stems, raisin berries and leaves, before proceeding to whole grape fermentation in wooden vats. A soft tannin structure was achieved through regular re-montage of the wine (*A French term for the process of pulling out wine from underneath the cap of grape skins and then pumping it back over the cap in order to stimulate maceration.*) The total maturation of the skins was 15 days and once malolactic fermentation was completed, the wine further matured in 225 litre French oak barrels for 18 consecutive months.

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	14.38%
RS	2.5 g/l
TA	6.0 g/l
pH	3.61

### Taste

Deep notes of spice and red berry fruits with subtle flavours of plum, rhubarb and cloves.

### Palate

A well rounded wine with soft tannins and a velvety finish.

### Drink with

Rack of lamb or pot roasts.

## PETER FALKE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2013



Only grapes of exceptional quality are selected and sorted in the vineyard, leaving sun burnt grapes on the vines. At the cellar the grapes go through another manual selection process before de-stemming. No crushing of the grapes takes place and fermentation starts naturally after 3 - 4 days of cold soaking at 15°C. The grapes are left on the skins for 25 - 35 days to create velvety smooth tannins. The wine is lightly press and then matured in new French oak barrels for 18 months.

### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	14.14%
RS	2.7 g/l
TA	6.1 g/l
pH	3.52

### Taste

Raspberry infused with mulberry and hints of floral spices on the nose.

### Palate

Very fruity flavours, well-structured with soft luscious tannins and a lingering finish.

### Drink with

Beef steak with a hearty peppercorn or dark mushroom sauce.

*Walking around the estates's grounds, you will discover people of all ages enjoying the 'luxurious outdoor lounge', some sitting romantically together, others in family groups and some enjoying a simple cheese platter whilst savouring a fine wine.*



#### PETER FALKE PINOT NOIR 2014



An initial sorting and selection took place in the vineyards, leaving sun burnt grapes on the vines. Once de-stemmed, the grapes underwent a second sorting, to further remove excess stems, raisin berries and leaves, before proceeding to whole grape fermentation in wooden vats. A soft tannin structure was achieved through regular pump-overs and punch-downs. The total maturation of the skins was 15 days and once malolactic fermentation was completed, the wine further matured in 225 litre French oak barrels for 14 consecutive months. Bottled May 2015.

##### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	14.43%
RS	2.6 g/l
TA	5.6 g/l
pH	3.62

##### Taste

Aromas of red fruit cherry spice and wet leaves on the nose.

##### Palate

Intense raspberry and strawberry flavours, an elegant wine with soft lingering tannins.

##### Drink with

Grilled salmon or tuna. Lighter mildly prepared beef or pork.

#### PETER FALKE SAUVIGNON BLANC 2015



Only grapes of exceptional quality made it to the cellar, leaving all rotten and sun burnt grapes on the vines. A further manual selection ensured that only the best grapes passed through the de-stemmer and crushing press. In the press, the pulp was left for 6 hours skin contact, optimising flavour extraction. Once settled, the clean juice was fermented in stainless steel tanks with 'Vin 7' yeast. Following fermentation and while the wine still appeared cloudy, the wine was extracted from the gross lees. A further 2 - 3 months contact on fine lees enhanced the complexity of the finished product. In advance of bottling, the wine was protein and cold stabilised.

##### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	13.30%
RS	4.2 g/l
TA	6.8 g/l
pH	3.23

##### Taste

The wine dazzles with intense aromas of William pear and citrus fruits.

##### Palate

The palate bursts with passion fruit and citrus flavours with hints of fresh cut lemon grass and nettle. Refreshing with a great crisp finish.

##### Drink with

Crayfish with a cucumber dill salad or fresh bread and goats milk cheese.

#### PETER FALKE BLANC DE NOIR 2015



Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were used to make the Blanc de Noir. Once these grapes reached the cellar, they were de-stemmed and lightly pressed. Pressure in the press was kept at a minimum and to prevent excessive colour extraction. To avoid prolonged skin contact, the juice is instantly drained, which creates the light onion skin shade. After 2 days of settling, the clean juice is extracted leaving the sediment behind. The juice was fermented at 14°C in stainless steel tanks. Finally the Cabernet Sauvignon was protein and cold stabilised before bottling. Bottled May 2015.

##### Technical Analysis

Alcohol	12.96%
RS	6.0 g/l
TA	5.6 g/l
pH	3.39

##### Taste

Hues of light onion colour, with intense flavours of red fruits and honey comb.

##### Palate

The palate is well-rounded with a creamy fullness and ends with lovely strawberries on the aftertaste.

##### Drink with

Enjoy on its own or paired with sushi, curry or desserts such as berry Pavlova. A refreshing summer wine.



***Given the ambiance, passion and dedication to excellence, it is not surprising, that Peter Falke Wines have been awarded accolades that include:***

- *Veritas Awards 2015*  
Signature Peter Falke Syrah 2013  
**Double Gold Medal.**
- *PAR Wine Awards South Africa 2015*  
Signature Exclusive Blend 2013  
**Top Gold Medal.**
- *Michelangelo International Wine and Spirit Awards 2015*  
Signature Peter Falke Syrah 2013  
**Gold Medal.**
- *Michelangelo International Wine and Spirit Awards 2015*  
Peter Falke Pinot Noir 2014  
**Silver Medal.**
- *Michelangelo International Wine and Spirit Awards 2014*  
Signature Peter Falke Syrah 2012  
**Gold Medal.**
- *Michelangelo International Wine and Spirit Awards 2014*  
Peter Falke Ruby Blend 2012  
**Gold Medal.**
- *Michelangelo International Wine and Spirit Awards 2014*  
Peter Falke Sauvignon Blanc 2014  
**Silver Medal.**

come, this takes years,” he goes further, “if you try and follow trends you’ll find that by the time you are there you’ll have missed it, so our aim is to make our own patterns based on knowledge and experience, we

strive for the best and take our lead from using the best grapes and have developed a style of wine making using the least intervention possible.”

“Our approach is classic, with a modern touch, we get the basics right and then we go on to blend and experiment, this and keeping to our philosophy of capturing the essence of the yearly harvest coming from the *terroir* is what we strive for. We hand select our grapes in the vineyards and once in the cellar we release their true inner character in a traditional way combined with modern techniques, by applying natural and minimalistic processes,” said Werner. “I am fortunate to have a family that has given me my head, I can pretty much do as I please when it comes to making the wine, my only constraint is to make it the best!”

Going back to the marketing of the Peter Falke wines, it is easy to see that no effort has been spared, Danièle is equally passionate about the image that is portrayed, “it is important to understand the five senses, The Element, The Emotion, The Land, The Light and The People.”

**The Element**, is clear for all to see, the reds, purples and blues are all reflected in the surrounds, non more so than in the tasting room, where you get a sense of modern and complimentary uniformity. It is clean and crisp yet relaxed, it draws you comfortably in.

**The Emotion**, all the wines bottled on the estate are traditionally corked. The first emotion that is triggered when you open a bottle of Peter Falke wine is the sound of the cork popping, it brings with it an expectation of something that is going to tantalise your palate. Everything you see around you from the easy lounges, to the white linen napkins through to the clearcut and simple branding on the wine labels, gives you a feeling of value and tranquility, something to be treasured.

**The Land**, what is immediately apparent, as you sit and soak up the landscape, you see that the vlei is lush with vegetation, you know and feel that the *terrior* is ‘happy’ and then the first mouthful of wine confirms that mother nature has once again been bountiful.

**The Light**, seeing is believing, we were fortunate to have visited Groenvlei on a Friday afternoon in mid summer, and although the temperature was in the low 30’s, we sat amongst the shade of the trees, we did not feel the heat, the deep blue sky above us giving a perfect light, a photographers dream, high contrast greens, complimented by deep reds and stark whites, giving way to hidden shadows, you know the environment is alive.

Then there are **The People**, having grabbed my camera, I wandered around the grounds, to discover people of all ages enjoying the ‘luxurious outdoor lounge’, some sitting romantically together, others in family groups and some enjoying a simple cheese platter whilst savouring a fine wine – a reflection of Danièle’s French culture, of the languages spoken, one could detect, German, French, English and locals too. Enjoy!!

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