



# Leeu Passant

A strikingly elegant Chardonnay from Stellenbosch, exuding mineral freshness and coastal refinement from the Helderberg's elevated gravel slopes.

Leeu  
PASSANT



## Stellenbosch Chardonnay 2022

Swartland, South Africa

### Region and Vineyards

Stellenbosch, a historic cornerstone of South African viticulture, provides a unique matrix of terroirs, among which the Helderberg stands out. Located near False Bay, the Helderberg slopes are famed for their maritime influence and diverse soils. The vineyard for the 2022 Leeu Passant Chardonnay is planted at 400 metres above sea level, benefiting from consistent ocean breezes that moderate temperatures throughout the growing season. These cool conditions ensure a long ripening period, which promotes vibrant acidity and complex flavour development.

The soils here are gravelly and well-draining, forcing the roots to dig deep, which contributes to the wine's structure and mineral backbone. This combination of high altitude and coastal proximity yields Chardonnay fruit with remarkable aromatic lift and tension. The site's exposure and altitude are pivotal in crafting a wine that speaks clearly of place, with precision and finesse as hallmarks of its character.

### Winemaking

The 2022 vintage is composed of **100% Chardonnay**, hand-harvested in mid-March during cool morning hours to preserve natural acidity. Yields were deliberately kept low—about 5 tons per hectare—resulting in a concentrated base must of approximately 34 hectolitres per hectare.

Upon arrival at the cellar, grapes were gently whole-bunch pressed to extract only the finest juice. The must was allowed to settle overnight before being racked to barrel, where it underwent **spontaneous fermentation**, followed by **natural malolactic fermentation**. This unhurried, wild-yeast process lasted just over 60 days, ensuring complexity and balance.

Aged for a total of 23 months, the wine spent its first year in **tight grain 225L French oak barrels**, one-third of which were new. After racking and blending, it matured for an additional 11 months in the same barrels, enhancing its texture and integrating the oak seamlessly without overshadowing the fruit.

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay



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### Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Pale gold with green hues, reflecting its cool-climate origin.
- **Aroma:** Crushed lime, yellow grapefruit, and hints of tangerine peel, intertwined with delicate notes of struck flint and a touch of sea spray.
- **Palate:** A vibrant entry of citrus and white pear evolves into a rounded mid-palate with subtle salinity, crystalline acidity, and a long, textured finish featuring a chalky grip and gentle creaminess.

### Did you know?

Leeu Passant is the Franschhoek-based project of Andrea and Chris Mullineux, among South Africa's most celebrated winemakers. Their Leeu Passant range is crafted to showcase exceptional Cape heritage vineyard sites with Burgundian precision and reverence for place. The Stellenbosch Chardonnay is a contemporary South African interpretation of great white Burgundy, yet distinctly expressive of its Helderberg origins.

### Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled lobster with lemon butter** – complements the wine's saline minerality and citrus core.
- **Roast chicken with tarragon and cream sauce** – matches the richness and layered texture.
- **Pan-seared scallops with cauliflower purée** – echoes the wine's elegance and enhances its subtle nuttiness.
- **Butternut squash risotto with sage** – a vegetarian pairing that resonates with the wine's roundness and spice.



#### Robert Parker (RP) : 96 Points (2022)

*The Leeu Passant 2022 Stellenbosch Chardonnay comes from 1.2-hectares of vines planted at 400 meters in elevation on the Helderberg Mountain, only four kilometers from False Bay. You can see the ocean from this site, and the area is prone to marine winds that blow all summer long to keep these 35-year-old vines healthy. Stellenbosch is where you want to go for cool-climate Chardonnay. The area is dry farmed, and summer temperatures do not exceed 27 degrees Celsius. These conditions help to retain the natural acidity of Chardonnay, as do iron-rich koffie klip soils. Vintner Andrea Mullineux says Chardonnay and oxygen work well together, and the manner in which this grape reacts to oak is harmonious and beautiful. Her job as winemaker is to make those connections. After a slow and long fermentation, this organic wine lives in blonde barrel for 22 months. Thirty percent of the oak is new. This gorgeous Chardonnay delivers a seamless quality with pastry cream, orchard fruit and sweet spice. What stands out most, however, is the careful balance of the fruit weight, which is caressing and rich but also lifted thanks to high-pitched minerality.*



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### **James Suckling (JS) : 95 Points (2021)**

*I like the gentle flint, pastry and hazelnut elements here, along with apricots, salted almonds and hints of rosemary. It's medium- to full-bodied, beautifully flinty and saline making it so fresh and drinkable. Very textural and long. Drink or hold.*



### **Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 93 Points (2021)**

*From vines in the Helderberg at 420m altitude, the 2021 Chardonnay Stellenbosch is a climactic driven cuvée that grows in a cool and relatively breezy location. It is oxidatively handled in the winery, matured in 225-liter barrels for the first year without SO2, blended, then spends another year in barrel, and finally sulfured after 18 months. It has a focused and intense bouquet with orange pith, orchard fruit, and hints of hazelnut and saffron. The palate is beautifully balanced with a lot of purity. It's a very "sunny" Chardonnay, vivacious, bright and lively, with impressive tension and mineralité percolating through on the finish. Stylish.*



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