Leeu Passant

This wine offers a pure expression of Helderberg terroir , showcasing Stellenbosch's potential for world-class Cabernet through elegance and precision.

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Alcohol :14,00 %

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

Swartland, South Africa

Region and Vineyards

The 2022 Leeu Passant Cabernet Sauvignon hails from the mid-slopes of the Helderberg Mountain in Stellenbosch, a region revered for its ability to produce structured, yet elegant Cabernet Sauvignon. These vineyards benefit from iron-rich and sandstone soils that encourage deep rooting, and their positioning on the Helderberg's maritime-influenced slopes ensures cool conditions and extended ripening. This slow maturation process enhances aromatic purity and freshness, while preserving the natural acidity essential to long-lived, balanced wines.

The microclimate—tempered by ocean breezes from False Bay—yields grapes with moderate sugar levels, restrained alcohol, and vibrant phenolic maturity. The result is a wine that reflects both **site-specific intensity** and a **Bordeaux-style finesse** that has come to define Stellenbosch's best reds.

Winemaking

This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested between March 10th and 17th, 2022, at yields ranging from four to six tons per hectare—translating to 32 to 38 hectolitres per hectare. Grapes were destemmed upon arrival at the Leeu Passant cellar in Franschhoek, with only a minimal addition of sulphur.

The wine was fermented with **indigenous yeasts**, using controlled pump-overs and maintaining temperatures below 26°C. This gentle fermentation, lasting around 14 days, was followed by **extended maceration** to further enhance complexity and mouthfeel. After pressing, the wine matured first in **500L French oak barrels**—a third of which were new—for the initial phase. It was later racked and blended into **larger format oak** for a further sixteen months of élevage before bottling in November 2023.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep ruby with a garnet rim, signalling concentration and vibrancy.
- **Aroma**: Intense notes of blueberry and sapphire plum, lifted by indigenous Cape fynbos (notably fragrant Kapokbos) and subtle cocoa bean undertones.
- **Palate**: A plush entry of ripe black fruit, followed by sleek, polished tannins and a mineral-driven core. The wine finishes with finesse, length, and a cooling herbal freshness.

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Did you know?

Kapokbos, a wild rosemary native to the Cape floral kingdom, is often found growing near vineyards in the Helderberg. Its aromatic presence is frequently echoed in the wines, contributing to the distinctive herbal lift that sets Stellenbosch Cabernet apart from its New World peers.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled venison loin with rosemary jus** – mirrors the wine's herbal finesse and dark fruit core.
- **Beef Wellington with mushroom duxelles** – complements the wine's savoury depth and refined tannins.
- **Lamb tagine with prunes and almonds** – a rich, spiced pairing that enhances the wine's fruity dimension.
- **Mature cheddar or Comté cheese** – matches the wine's structure and mouth-coating texture.

95

Robert Parker (RP) : 95 Points (2022)

The Leeu Passant 2022 Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon comes from dry-farmed bush vines. The vineyard is one kilometer from the Chardonnay and 100 meters lower in elevation. This slight difference makes for a very different growing environment that is dictated by ocean breezes and wind. Strong winds are, in fact, part of the terroir, says Andrea Mullineux. That's why bush vines are so low in South Africa. This vineyard nook remains a little warmer during the last phase of ripening, resulting in rich and concentrated flavors. Tannin management is very important to UC Davis-trained winemaker Andrea Mullineux. She seeks tannins that are "buildable with chalky silkiness." She does extended macerations to polymerize the tannins. She ages in 500-liter barrel for the first year (with 30% new oak) followed by upright 5,000-liter wooden vats. "The tannins go in a better direction once the wine goes into barrel," she says. This is a velvety Cabernet Sauvignon with fresh fruit tones, spice and crushed stone. It delivers a long-lasting, medium-plus texture, and you definitely will remark on the elegant chalkiness of the tannins.

94

Robert Parker (RP) : 94 Points (2021)

Dark ruby in color, the 2021 Leeu Passant Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon displays a dusty edge in the glass, with tones of dark red and black fruit and herbaceous notes of roasted red pepper, dusty cherry and dark plum blossoms. Medium-bodied, the wine uncoils on the palate, revealing a firm tannic edge with a fresh beam of acidity that drives the mid-palate. It will undoubtedly age like a champ but will need additional time in the bottle to come around. Until then, if you enjoy young, cool-climate Cabernet, this is for you. I would instead give it a few more years and enjoy it with food. Your patience will be rewarded.