

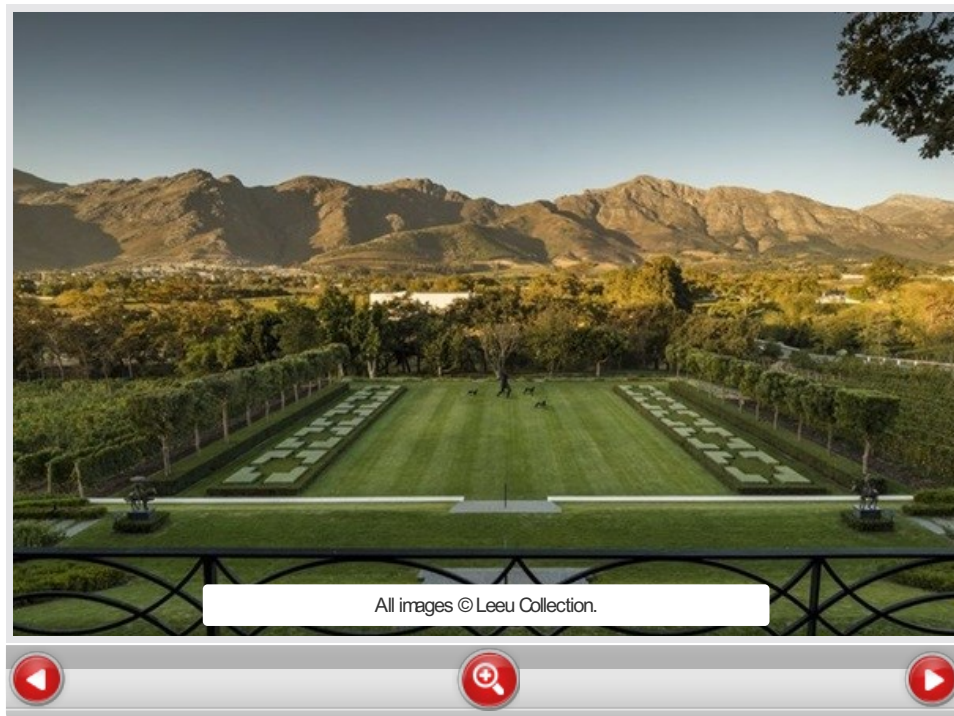
# Loving the lazy luxury of Franschhoek's Leeu Estates

 By Leigh Andrews

29 Aug 2017

Warmth, comfort and elegance are top of mind when I think back to our recent winter stay at Franschhoek's luxury gem of the Leeu Collection, Leeu Estates. It's the very definition of refined five-star relaxation where every whim is catered for, and more.

We entered the La Provence road just outside the main town of Franschhoek on a rainy winter afternoon, where we were warmly met at the gate and told they were expecting us at reception, then shown where to park. Bags collected, we were promptly presented with a cappuccino on check in and taken on a quick recap tour of the grounds, as our last visit was before their official opening. We had just a moment to store our bags in our suite and snap a few pics before rushing back to reception and being golf-carted to the on-grounds wine studio.

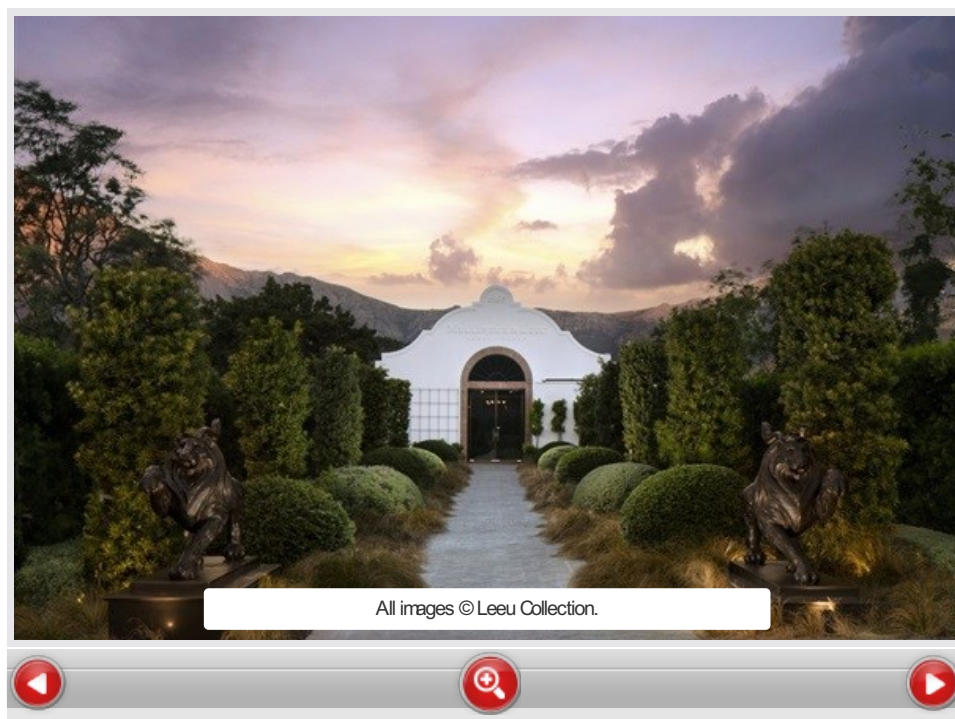


The signature wine tasting at the wine studio at Leeu Estates, now the home of Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines, is reason alone to visit Leeu Estates. It opened in June 2016 based on the success of the established Mullineux and Kloof Street brands, but feels like the secret home of the Estates. You walk into warmth, with neutral wine tones and a blazing fireplace adding a rich glow, as do several new artworks installed by Leeu Collection founder Mr Singh himself – in the week before our stay these included a perpetual motion sculpture and tall giraffe to greet guests at the door – I dare you not to pose right there for a height comparison photo! But I digress. Once firmly ensconced in those buttery leather panelled fireside chairs, it was time to hear the wine farm's charming tale.

Co-owners Chris and San Francisco-born Andrea Mullineux met at a wine festival in Champagne, France and have been a successful husband-and-wife wine-making team ever since. They farm sustainably from the 110-hectare Roundstone Farm in scenic Swartland's Riebeek-Kasteel. Part of their winemaking operation was moved to the 200-ton cellar at Leeu Estates in time for the 2015 harvest, and they've been creating magic together with the Leeu Collection ever since. Little wonder that they were named *Platter's* 2016 winery of the year with Andrea herself cinching the title of 2016 winemaker of the year by US magazine *Wine Enthusiast*.

Suitably impressed and lulled into a lazy state by the perfect winter setting, the signature tasting began with their Kloof

Street Chenin Blanc 2016. It's the only one on the tasting list to ferment partly in tank and partly in French oak barrel, with the rest all barrel-fermented and matured. It's a soft, smooth wine with a subtle pear nose.



Next up was the Mullineux Old Vines White 2015. Surprisingly clove-spicy for a white wine, this is a Chenin Blanc-based blend with touches of Clairette Blanche, Viognier, Semillon Gris and Grenache Blanc. A rich, multi-layered, elegant blend that's at times salty and floral on the tongue, this was my favourite.

Ready for red, we sampled the Kloof Street Swartland Rouge 2015. A blend of Syrah, Cinsault, Carignan, Tinta Barocca and Grenache, this specific blend is said to remind its makers of the wines they tasted when they first fell in love. Light in texture yet strongly perfumed and a bright cherry colour with food-friendly palate, it is their fresh entry-level red. Last on the tasting list is the Mullineux Syrah 2015, their flagship among a constellation of wine awards. A very dark purple red, this is 100% Syrah but a blend of terroirs, it's a dry, deep dark red and more refined than other Syrahs we have sampled, this is dry, deep and dark, just the thing for sitting at the fireplace, as we were.

Knowing it was soon to be our anniversary, we were also presented with a surprise sample of the 2016 Straw wine. So named because wine-making legislation had to be amended in 1996 to allow for the grapes to lay on straw once harvested and dry out there, with the golden wine made from those desiccated grapes a few weeks later. The Swartland is hot and dry so as they couldn't make a Noble Late Harvest, this offers all the sweetness without the acidity. Awarded 96 points on its first tasting, the Mullineux Straw Wine is what got the international community asking, "Who are these Mullineux and where is the Swartland?"

All served in slender Gabriel Glas glassware, with skinny bread sticks to nibble on between glasses and a choice of still or sparkling water to clear the palate, this is a wonderful wine tasting experience – especially in winter with those grey skies out in full force just beyond the windows.

## Winter swims and sauna sessions

Those grey skies were the perfect backdrop for a stroll back to the main Leeu Estates Manor House through the Bokkie Garden – sadly the real, live bokies that once bounded through the vibrant green grass themselves were eaten by *rooikatte* that came down the mountains a while ago. They're still quite the sight to behold, especially as the Leeu Collection's art is not limited to the indoors. We wandered around in awe of the manicured gardens, bright flowers and beautiful sculptures like Angus Taylor's Reflective Resonance and Lady on a Donkey.

“



Our love of the #arty #sculptures on the grounds of @leeucollection's #LeeuEstate knows no bounds.

💎💎💎 All this and more on my blog this week, link in bio! #artyfarty #weekendaway #gymbunnies  
#greengreengrass #winterbreak #openforeiner #besouthafrica #travelsouthafrica #shotleft  
#franschhoekmoments #mysouthafrica #travelreview #visitwinelands #garden #franschhoek  
#celebratelife #travelcapetown

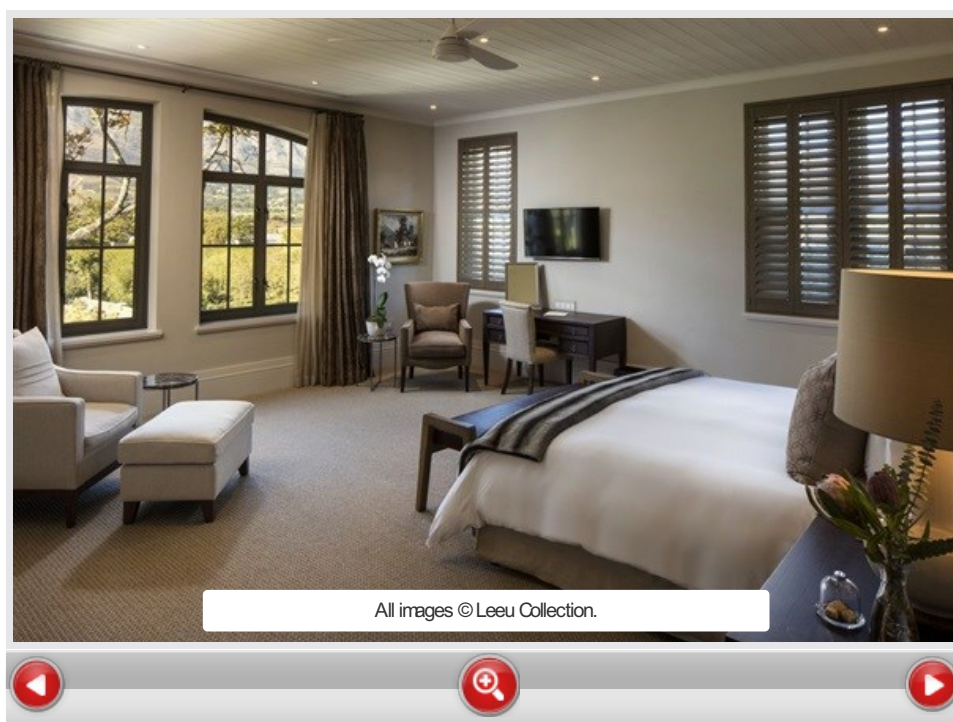
*A post shared by Leigh Andrews (@ramblinglitchi123) on Aug 18, 2017 at 10:17am PDT*

”

Despite stopping to sit on various benches along the way, before long, we were back in our warm, spacious, elegant space for a quick nap and refresh. On choosing from the endless stock of teas, Nespresso pods and complimentary alcoholic minis in the bar fridge, my husband was pleased to find a sachet of chamomile tea as he had a scratchy throat. We then settled in on the full balcony to take in that almost overwhelming view of the navy, charcoal and emerald Franschhoek mountain backdrop, with coral and yellow leaves and pale green vines in the foreground. The sounds of babbling streams and distant birdsong only enhancing the storybook quality of the afternoon.

There's also a writing desk stocked with a selection of the latest magazines, as well as a TV on swivel arm for optimal viewing, underfloor heating throughout and remote-powered gas fireplace if you'd rather spend some quality time indoors – your every comfort is truly catered to.

Suitably refreshed, we decided on a quick dip in the heated pool before our dinner shuttle, which is an experience in itself. Don't let the 'heated' bit fool you, this is sun-heated through the glass wall so still quite shiver-inducing if you take a dip in winter, but highly recommended if you follow our hack and alternate sitting in the Durban-in-December level steam room, so that those quick icy dips get your circulation flowing.



Before we knew it, over an hour had passed. Back in our suite, we passed up the inviting claw-footed bath set by shuttered windows and instead tested the shower – one of the highest shower heads we've seen and good water pressure that erupted to almost volcanic in seconds. We noted quite a bit of water seepage out under the glass door into the main marble-floored bathroom, so were very careful in stepping out.

Dry and dressed, we headed down to the Manor House reception area for our shuttle to Leeu Collection's Tuk Tuk Microbrewery. Fires were blazing in the lounge, reading room and dining room and we had the chance to take a quick tour of the cellar downstairs before our shuttle purred to a stop to escort us to our dinner destination.

Tuk Tuk Microbrewery is also part of the Leeu Collection through its partnership with the Cape Brewing Company (CBC), and situated just across the road from Leeu House, roughly 2km from Leeu Estates.



## The regal French feel of Leeu House

Leigh Andrews 2 Aug 2016



## Beer comparing and sweet endings



With cosy indoor and outdoor seating options, it was positively pumping when we got there and many international accents mingled around us. They had sadly already run out of the CBC Lager when we got there, clearly the most popular option on the night. We didn't go for the full beer tasting, having done so before, but my husband happily accepted the opportunity to sample the CBC Pilsener against Tuk Tuk's own lager and was pleased when the Tuk Tuk brand came out tops. A darker colour due to the caramelised hops, we learned it takes eight weeks to make and my husband described it as "the beer equivalent of honey" – or the Mullineux Straw wine, from our wine tasting.



Service was speedy and food was Tex Mex at its best. Thin, crispy taco-style nachos with all the fixin's for me, topped with stretchy cheese and a tub of pulled beef – with pulled pork such a trendy food we are surprised pulled beef isn't more of a thing yet as it really made the dish, which was beautifully plated with arty swirls of sour cream and a lemony guacamole. My husband went for the Tex Mex burger, which may have been a little small in size but sure delivered on its promise of spiciness. Despite having munched my way through the full nacho plate I couldn't pass on a cappuccino and the cinnamon churros with rich, drippy hot chocolate dipping sauce as dessert to end the meal. Bellies full, we hopped across for this year's photo at Egon Tania's 'Mandela' bronze, requested our shuttle back to Leeu Estates and hey presto, within minutes we were firmly ensconced back in our suite.

We hadn't yet noticed that this magical suite resets itself to 'factory settings' each time you leave, restocking all the consumables. So don't feel bad about downing all those moreish chocolate malt balls, mango slices and nuts – there's plenty more to come. The room fairies had also arranged the gowns and slippers invitingly, left a handy card showing what weather would be like the next day, left a sweet treat beside the bed and a pre-anniversary bottle of bubbly with bites of praline to end the night on an even sweeter note. In full-on relax mode we were delighted by the 'night light' option to light the way to the bathroom once the main lights were off.

Rising before the sun was fully over the mountains the next morning, we made our way through the fresh breeze to the main Manor House to the Dining Room and seated ourselves for breakfast on wide, comfy chairs nestled between the fireplace and the glassed-in conservatory for the best of the heat and the morning view.

We started off at the fresh fruit station, topping up with the seasonal exotics like pineapple, granadilla and kiwi, along with bowls of nutty honeyed granola and double-thick yoghurt, with cappuccinos and freshly squeezed orange juice to start. Yes, just to start, as the a la carte breakfast also offers a selection of hot favourites. My husband relished his spicy masala omelette and I thought the mini blueberry flapjack stack with purple syrup was just gorgeous. We followed up with a few pastries – no ordinary muffins and croissants here, we went for *pain au chocolat* and *pasteis de Nata*, thank you very

much – to keep us going and swiftly packed up, with one last glance at that breath-taking view before checking out. I'm a little shellshocked that it passed so quickly. It really feels like a dream.

The best part? We were connected to the Wi-Fi throughout – in our room, at the pool, in the Manor House, in the wine studio and even when we were over 2km away from Leeu Estates, at the Tuk-Tuk Microbrewery – that's truly amazing. [Click here](#) to see the memories of our stay I loaded to my blog.

*\*Leigh Andrews was a guest of Leeu Estates and Tuk Tuk Microbrewery. Leeu Estates is situated on Dassenberg Road, Franschhoek. Contact the Leeu Collection on +27 21 492 2222 or [reservations@leeucollection.com](mailto:reservations@leeucollection.com) for rates and availability.*

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

- Make Ocean Eleven luxury guesthouse your Hermanus homebase - 20 Mar 2020
- Savour Hemel-en-Aarde's harmoniously matched food and wine at Creation Wine Estate - 18 Mar 2020
- Next-level pairings with Stellenbosch Hills' popcorn-and-Polkadraai - 30 Jan 2020
- Haute Cabrière brightens Franschhoek mornings with breakfast - 15 Jan 2020
- Feel charmingly rejuvenated at Kove Collection's renovated The Marly - 14 Jan 2020

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>