

CAMBERLEY

Small. Very small actually. Camberley comprises about five acres with another twelve or so leased on adjacent slopes. In the tiny cellar, bottles line the walls surrounding three small fermentation tanks and some thirty barrels. This is the extent of the Camberley cellar - it is all Johnny Nel needs for his couple of acres of vines.

Located on the Helshoogte Pass in Stellenbosch, Camberley is situated in one of the most prestigious terroirs of the Cape. Frequently referred to as the “Platinum Hills of Helshoogte”, the soil is an unbelievably deep, rich, red Hutton. Helshoogte translates as “hell’s height” and was once a treacherous pass through the mountains of Groot Drakenstein - or “great dragon rock”. Camberley commands an elegant position on the slopes, beneath the shadows of dramatic mountains and overlooking the extensive valley to the ‘mountains of Africa’ on the horizon.

In the early 1990’s, Johnny and Gael Nel bought the farm, which was covered in plum trees, and set about pursuing the dream they coveted since their university days together. Johnny is a quantity surveyor by profession and Gael, a gourmet chef and caterer. They tend the vineyards after work and take time off at harvest. At vintage, Johnny nurses his wine with total absorption. Gael puts her catering skills aside and joins him in the cellar where her highly honed palate and nose go to work.

From humble beginnings in the old garage converted to their cellar, they have grown to now occupy the garage that was built to replace the first garage-turned-cellar. They’ve also added a real entrance door - just last year, the only way to the cellar and the tasting room was through Gael’s kitchen!

This winery has an unbelievable reputation for EXCEPTIONAL wines. The expansive fruit on the palate is balanced with fine tannins and savoury acidity. The nose has some earthy notes reminiscent of some fine Bordeaux, which is an acquired taste. This is an amazing wine - honest in its reflection of terroir and nature. You can taste the genuine-ness with which it is made. Don’t miss this winery...it is an icon.

Production of Camberley cabernet / merlot is only about 800 cases a year. This was the only wine produced on the estate until 2003. A wonderful shiraz is grown on the adjacent leased land, along with cabernet franc and more merlot. The pinotage grapes are bought from a neighboring farm.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON-MERLOT 2001

79% cabernet - 21% merlot

Color: Deep purple with tinges of dark red

Nose: Earthy forest notes with berry and lavender underneath

Palate: Black currant, smoky plums and cassis with a minty-chocolate so characteristic of Camberley. Spice and a savoury acidity backed by a fine tannic structure.

Reviews:

4 1/2 star John Platter 2004/5 : “Great charm and elegance, sweet fruit supported by fine, firm tannin, savoury acidity. Has flavor complexity (violets, Parma ham savoriness interplay with fruit) and thoroughbred lines, excellent balance. Well oaked. The finest vintage to date.”

Gold medal, Veritas 2004

Winemaking: Trellised vineyards on the north slopes of Jonkershoek. Vines are 10 years old, yielding an average 2.4 tons/acre. The juice spent 10 days on skin and was matured for 14 months in French (75%), Russian (15%) and American (10%) oak, of which 60% were new barriques.



Total production: 800 cases (600 cases 12x750, 200 6x500)

Alc 13.94% RS 3.19 g/L TA 6.2 g/L pH 3.50