

KUMEU RIVER

2023 KUMEU RIVER CHARDONNAY, HUNTING HILL

WINERY

Family owned and operated since 1944 by the Brajkovich family, Kumeu River was one of the early pioneers in Auckland, New Zealand and helped establish its reputation as a world-class wine region. Still family owned and run, Kumeu River continues to pioneer new frontiers: winemaker Michael Brajkovich became New Zealand's first member of the prestigious Institute of Masters of Wine, London.

WINE

Named after the hillside farmland where Maté Brajkovich used to hunt rabbits and pheasants for the home kitchen. Originally planted in 1982, and replanted in 2001. Soils are heavy clay over sandstone. The site also has an iron pan about 12 inches below the surface, which none of the other vineyards have and imparts a unique minerality to the wine.

VINEYARDS

Hunting Hill is a vineyard that was first planted in 1982 and became a significant part of the original Kumeu River Chardonnay blend. Occupying the slope overlooking Maté's Vineyard, it has always contributed lovely ripe and rich fruit to the Estate Chardonnay. Hunting Hill was replanted in 2001 and is now even better than before, giving beautifully ripe fruit with a distinctive mealy minerality.

VINTAGE NOTES

Everything looked good for vintage until January 27, when heavy rain caused flash flooding and minimal vineyard damage, with water in the cellar for an hour. The main issue

was the rain just before harvest, leading to downy mildew as we couldn't spray the vineyards. Some Chardonnay vineyards were defoliated, so we harvested earlier than usual, but the wines still have zesty minerality.

Everything was hand-harvested to ensure high-quality fruit. No new oak was used for fermentation, but the higher proportion of 1 and 2-year-old barrels gave a similar oak feel to a normal vintage.

A few weeks after vintage, the wines looked very good, though lighter in texture than the previous 4 vintages. The 2023 vintage shows strong vineyard terroir characters, giving a strong sense of place.

WINEMAKING

Fruit was hand-harvested, whole bunch pressed and fermented with wild yeast in older French Oak barrels. After malolactic fermentation is complete, the wine is then matured for 11 months in French oak.

TASTING NOTES

Hunting Hill is very distinctive in its terroir typicity, with piercing lemon/lime fruit lift and florality on the nose, richness and volume in the mouth followed by lingering acidity and minerality on the finish. This is an absolute classic example of how great the Chardonnay grape can be: A beautifully powerful, yet elegant and complex wine with long term aging ability.



VINEYARD

Region:	New Zealand
Appellation:	Kumeu
Soil:	Heavy clay over sandstone
Age:	Planted 2001
Eco-Practices:	Sustainable; Vegan
Clone:	15
Exposure:	Varying aspects, majority south and west; more exposed to cooling westerly winds
Trellis:	Lyre

WINEMAKING

Varietals:	100% Chardonnay
Aging:	This wine was matured for 11 months in French Oak.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Yeast:	Indigenous
Alcohol:	12.8%