

KUMEU RIVER

2023 KUMEU RIVER CHARDONNAY, MATÉ'S VINEYARD



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

Maté's vineyard is located next to an old creek, and is Kumeu River's lowest-lying vineyard and oldest vineyard site. It has a very sheltered position and faces north to the sun. Planted solely to Mendoza clone which has grapevine leafroll, leading to extremely low yields and slower ripening but a distinct character that the winery is quite fond of. A site that consistently gives intense confectionary characters to the Chardonnay, such as caramel and candied orange rind.

VINEYARDS

In 1990, Maté Brajkovich reworked the land and planted a new vineyard of Chardonnay vines on the site of the original vineyard that he and his family purchased in March 1944. The first grapes from this vineyard were harvested in March 1993, the year following Maté's death. The resulting wine was released in November 1994 to coincide with celebrations marking the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Brajkovich Family's arrival at Kumeu River.

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

Complex and bright. Notes of hazelnut, fig, fuji apple and lemon rind provide complimentary flavors to the intense minerality at this wine's core.

VINEYARD

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| Region: | New Zealand |
| Appellation: | Kumeu |
| Soil: | Heavy clay over sandstone |
| Age: | Planted in 1944; replanted 1990 |
| Eco-Practices: | Sustainable; Vegan |
| Clone: | Mendoza |
| Trellis: | Lyre |
| Exposure: | Sheltered; North-facing |

WINEMAKING

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

TECHNICAL DETAILS

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| Yeast: | Indigenous |
| Alcohol: | 12.5% |