

KUMEU RIVER

2025 RAYS ROAD CHARDONNAY, HAWKE'S BAY

WINERY

Kumeu River, one of the first wineries in Auckland, New Zealand, helped establish the reputation of Kumeu as a world-class wine region. Founded in 1944 by the Brajkovich family, immigrants from Croatia, the estate has grown and flourished over the years through the dedication to producing benchmark-quality Chardonnay, influenced heavily by Burgundy (and often confused as such in blind tastings). Its array of single-vineyard Chardonnays represents some of the finest examples of this grape anywhere in the world, the Côte d'Or included.

WINE

Rays Road is one of Kumeu River's 4 single vineyard Chardonnays. This wine is produced from Kumeu River's only single vineyard located outside of the region of Kumeu. They purchased the Rays Road vineyard in 2017, which was established in 2008 by Pascal Jolivet from Sancerre, France and Trinity Hill of New Zealand.

VINEYARDS

This limestone hillside in the Hawke's Bay wine region is at 180 m altitude, with a northerly aspect. The site is quite exposed to the elements but these conditions seem to perfectly challenge the vines. It is dry-farmed to yield high quality grapes for wine under the Rays Road designation.

VINTAGE NOTES

Vintage 2025 was an outstanding season for Kumeu River, marked by warm, dry conditions, moderate yields and a welcome return to normal harvest volumes after two smaller vintages. Temperatures remained consistently warm throughout the growing season, with only two peaks above 82°F, creating ideal conditions for the development of fruit aroma, flavor and concentration. The dry conditions and balanced yields contributed richness and texture across the wines. The single vineyard Chardonnays displays strong site expression while Pinot Noir continues to improve.

WINEMAKING

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

TASTING NOTES

Rays Road continues to improve each year, with 2025 showing greater ripeness, peachier aromas, flinty limestone character, and more density and concentration than previous vintages. This is a very promising Chardonnay that will benefit from bottle age.



VINEYARD

Region:	New Zealand
Appellation:	Hawke's Bay
Soil:	Limestone
Age:	Planted 2008 - 2017
Exposure:	North
Trellis:	VSP
Clones:	95, 15, 548
Eco-Practices:	Sustainable; Vegan

WINEMAKING

Varietals:	100% Chardonnay
Aging:	11 months in used French oak barrels

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Yeast:	Indigenous
Alcohol:	13.5%