

Kumeu River versus Burgundy Chardonnay



First of all, we selected 1 bottle of each of Kumeu's four Chardonnays in four different vintages - Estate 2012, Coddington 2010, Maté's 2009 and Hunting Hill 2007. Then we assembled a range of Premier Cru and Village Burgundies from the best producers - Leflaive, Lafon, Sauzet, Niellon etc from the same vintages.

We then invited a panel of experts to take part in a blind tasting where the wines were served, decanted, in random order and scored before they were discussed. Our experts included Jancis Robinson MW, Derek Smedley MW, Neal Martin (of The Wine Advocate), Matthew Jukes (Daily Mail), Tina Gellie (Decanter Magazine), Jamie Goode (Wineanorak.com) and Will Lyons of the Wall Street Journal.

The flights were as follows with market prices for each wine (GBP per doz in bond) shown in brackets:

Flight 1

- 2012 Meursault Clos du Cromin - Javillier
- 2012 Puligny Montrachet - Sauzet
- **2012 Estate Chardonnay – Kumeu River**
- 2012 Puligny Montrachet – Dom Leflaive
- 2012 Chassagne Montrachet – Niellon



Kumeu River, Estate Chardonnay 2012 17.04 points

Sauzet, Puligny-Montrachet 2012 **16.54 pts**,

Javillier, Clos du Cromin, Meursault 2012 **16.25 pts**

Leflaive, Puligny-Montrachet 2012 **16.04 pts**

Niellon, Chassagne-Montrachet 2012 (corked)

Flight 2

- 2010 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Champs Gains – Niellon
- 2010 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Les Boudriottes – JN Gagnard
- 2010 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Les Vergers – Fontaine-Gagnard
- **2010 Coddington Chardonnay – Kumeu River**
- 2010 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Morgeot – Marquis de Laguiche



Kumeu River, Coddington Vineyard Chardonnay 2010 17.42 pts

Fontaine-Gagnard, Les Vergers 1er Cru, Chassagne-Montrachet 2010
16.83 pts

Marquis de Laguiche, Morgeots 1er Cru, Chassagne-Montrachet 2010
16.54 pts

JN Gagnard, Les Boudriottes 1er Cru, Chassagne-Montrachet 2010
16.25 pts

Niellon, Champs Gains 1er Cru, Chassagne-Montrachet 2010 **16.21 pts**

Flight 3

- 2009 Meursault – Domaine des Comtes Lafon
- **2009 Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay – Kumeu River**
- 2009 Meursault Perrieres – Bouchard Pere et Fils
- 2009 Meursault Narvaux – Vincent Girardin
- 2009 Meursault Perrieres - Joseph Drouhin



Kumeu River, Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay 2009 17.17 pts

Bouchard Père et Fils, Perrières 1er Cru, Meursault 2009 **17.17 pts**

Domaine des Comtes Lafon, Meursault 2009 **16.79 pts**

Joseph Drouhin, Perrières 1er Cru, Meursault 2009 **16.75 pts**

Vincent Girardin, Les Narvaux, Meursault 2009 **13.17 pts**

Flight 4

- 2007 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru les Referts – Fichet
- 2007 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Hameau de Blagny – Sauzet
- **2007 Hunting Hill Chardonnay – Kumeu River**
- 2007 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru – Dom Leflaive
- 2007 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Les Pucelles – Joseph Drouhin
- 2007 Puligny Montrachet 1er Cru Champ Canet – Louis Carillon



Kumeu River, Hunting Hill Vineyard Chardonnay 2007 17.04 pts

Sauzet, Hameau de Blagny 1er Cru, Puligny-Montrachet 2007

Fichet, Les Referts 1er Cru, Puligny-Montrachet 2007 16.58 pts

Louis Carillon Champ Canet 1er Cru, Puligny-Montrachet 2007 16.54 pts

Joseph Drouhin, Les Pucelles 1er Cru, Puligny-Montrachet 2007 15.92 pts

Domaine Leflaive, Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru 2007 12.38 pts

The results of this tasting were quite extraordinary, and a stunning victory for Kumeu River!

In flight one the comfortable winner was the Estate Chardonnay with an average score of 17.04 followed by the Sauzet in second place with 16.54.

In flight two the Coddington Chardonnay was a runaway winner with an average score of 17.42. The Fontaine Gagnard was in second place with 16.83

In flight three we had a tie for first place between the Maté's Vineyard and the Bouchard Meursault Perrieres, both scoring 17.17.

In flight four the Hunting Hill romped home with the highest average score of the entire tasting – 17.50. The Sauzet was second with 16.71.

Full tasting notes will, no doubt, appear soon in The Financial Times, Jancisrobinson.com, The World of Fine Wine, erobertparker.com, The Wall Street Journal, wineanorak.com, dereksmedleymw.co.uk and matthewjukes.com.

We then tasted a range of older Kumeu vintages back to my very last bottle of 1989 – now a deep amber colour but still alive. The best of all were the 2010's but the 2011's and 2012's were all showing really well. We also tasted the full range in 2013 – a very good but tiny vintage with around a third of the normal production.



Clockwise around the table: Stephen Browett, Thomas Parker, Hugh Phillips, Paul Brajkovich, Jancis Robinson MW and Neal Martin.