

# HUNTER | MCKIRDY

## VIN DE FRANCE 'LE CHEMIN DES ÉPINES NOIRES'

### ORIGIN

Zellenberg, Alsace, France

### WINE TYPE & VARIETIES

Still dry white,  
50% Pinot Gris  
50% Auxerrois

### VINEYARD

Late ripening vineyard nestled in the valley between Grand Crus Froehn and Schoenenbourg

### SOIL

Early Jurassic limestone,  
270 m.a.s.l.

### AGE OF VINES

50 y/o

### VITICULTURE

Organic

### VINIFICATION

Manual harvest, rigorous sorting in vineyards, grapes picked into 10 kg cases, directly transported to winery, whole bunch pressed in wooden-caged hydraulic basket press over 8 - 10 hours, only moving marc once, achieving Champagne extraction rates (63,75%), must transferred by gravity to 10 + year old Burgundian pièces, indigenous yeasts fermentation, no racking, 9 months aging on full lees, assembled in tanks for bottling (by gravity), no fining or filtration, small addition of SO<sub>2</sub> at bottling only for stabilization

Hunter | McKirdy represents the lifelong search of Jolene Hunter and Paul McKirdy, a couple who settled in Alsace nearly twenty years ago. Their desire to expand their knowledge, experience, and studies brought them to this northern French region, where they honed their expertise in viticulture and oenology. While working with some of the most renowned domaines in the area, they began shaping their vision for the future: the creation of their own domaine.

After a long search for the right vineyards, Hunter | McKirdy was established in 2023. Their goal was to create a small human scaled estate where they could personally carry out all the vineyard work—entirely by hand. Their primary focus is overwhelmingly on viticulture, with particular attention paid to pruning, bud and shoot thinning, and plant and soil health. Located in the village of Zellenberg they currently farm 3,5 organically hectares of vineyards, primarily planted on rare early Jurassic limestone marl soils, often located on late-ripening sites at an altitude of approximately 300 meters. They consider themselves fortunate to have restored many old-vine vineyards, with an average age of more than 45 years with a diversity of massale sélections and low yielding rootstocks.

Jolene and Paul have chosen to work outside the appellation system. Their cuvée names are French translations of the lieux-dits they farm, and grape varieties do not appear on the label – their philosophy is that grape varieties are merely tools for expressing terroir and should take a supporting role to the characteristics of the land.

Harvest dates are determined by pH and acidity ripeness, with little or no consideration given to potential alcohol levels. The grapes are harvested by hand with extremely rigorous sorting in the vineyards. They are transported in small 10 kg cases to the winery, where they are whole-bunch pressed in a wooden-caged hydraulic basket press. This process is carried out very slowly, over 8–10 hours, with the marc moved only once. The result is Champagne-level extraction rates (63.75%) and remarkable purity, all while maintaining a low pH.

The must is transferred by gravity into 10+ year-old Burgundian pièces, where fermentation occurs with indigenous yeasts. The wines are left unracked and aged without SO<sub>2</sub> for as long as possible before being assembled in tanks for bottling. Bottling is done by gravity without fining or filtration, and a small amount of sulphur is added at this stage to stabilize the wines. Simply put, they farm Alsatian terroirs, press their grapes using Champagne techniques, and ferment and age their wines following Burgundian traditions.



These wines are simply outstanding – exuding verve, focus, purity, direction, concentration, and liveliness, all balanced with finesse, complexity, and delicacy. We believe these wines are a true testament to the extraordinary, meticulous vineyard work and the sensitive, thoughtful handling of the fruit from harvest to bottling, making them a rare collection of thought-provoking wines that will nourish both the soul and the palate as a new remarkable Alsatian discovery.

Formerly lined with Blackthorn bushes, and known locally as the Dornierweg (Chemin des Épinés Noires) is a gravel road which links the western reaches of Zellenberg to the Routes des Vins. At the very end of this path lies a small, unassuming vineyard nestled in the valley formed between the Grand Crus, Froehn and Schoenenbourg. This is the place to which the mineral rich, early Jurassic limestone- marl soils of the surrounding slopes were carried by the processes of erosion and solifluction.

‘Le Chemin des Épinés Noires’, The Path of the Backthorns, is a wine of texture, citrus acidity and positive bitterness.