

HUNTER | MCKIRDY

VIN DE FRANCE 'SAMARES ET STROBILES'

ORIGIN

Zellenberg, Alsace, France

WINE TYPE & VARIETIES

Still dry red, Pinot Gris

VINEYARD

Different sites depending on vintage

SOIL

Limestone marl

AGE OF VINES

Planted 2003

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, maceration and indigenous yeasts fermentation for 29,5 days (one full moon cycle), 12 months aging in used barrels, assembled in tanks for bottling (by gravity), no fining or filtration, small addition of SO₂ at bottling only for stabilization.

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 SO₂ 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.



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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.

There can be few grape varieties as misunderstood as Pinot Gris. The simple fact that it is officially classified as a 'cépage gris', rather than 'cépage blanc' is often forgotten - a significant oversight considering its dark pigmentation when fully ripe. In truth Pinot Gris has more in common with Pinot Noir than is commonly realised.

For Jolene and Paul it's natural to make a red wine from Pinot Gris. 'Samares et Strobiles' is exactly that, a red wine made in the same way in which they make their Pinot Noir. The Samare is the fruit of an Elm tree, a Strobile is the fruit of a Larch. The name references the tress which grew on the terroirs from which the grapes are sourced.

It's sapid, tannic and savoury. It is a living wine which reveals layers of complexity in the glass.