



CLAUDE RIFFAULT

Sancerre Les Desmalets

Based in the village of Sury-en-Vaux, the Stéphane Riffault works 33 different parcels in 6 different lieu-dits spread across 4 villages. The 13.5 hectares of vines are plowed and no synthetic material is used (the property is in the process of being certified organic). Unlike most Sancerre producers, the entire harvest is carried out by hand and an extensive sorting takes place before the grapes are crushed. Stéphane's wife, Benedicte, leads the harvest team while Stéphane manages the sorting and press during harvest.

Most of the domaine's holdings are planted on the soft limestone soil called Terres Blanches with some parcels on calliottes and silex. Small, judicious uses of oak help to add length to the already precise and vertical bottling. All of the parcels are vilified separately and with the exception of the rosé, all the wines are bottled unfiltered.

Having studied and worked in Burgundy (and closely with Olivier Leflaive), it's easy to see the Burgundian influence in Stéphane's wines. The mastery of minerality standing shoulder-height with the wood is rarely duplicated in Sancerre. Regardless of the exposition of his parcels (many are south-facing), Riffault's wines are always crisp and high-cut with a jeweled sort of delineation that speaks to the precision and attention these wines get. These are not your daddy's (or his daddy, Claude's) Sancerres.

Les Desmalets and Les Chassiegnes are adjoining sites with superficially similar topsoils and profoundly different subsoils. The secret of Les Desmalets is buried about a meter below the surface where the rocky clay changes to large, limestone blocks.

ORIGIN

France

APPELLATION

Sancerre

SOIL

Kimmeridgian limestone (Terre Blanches)

AGE OF VINES

25-45

ELEVATION

230 meters

VARIETIES

Sauvignon Blanc

FARMING

Conversion to certified organic (ECOCERT)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation in neutral 600L French oak demi-muids

AGING

9-10 months in 600L French oak demi-muids

ACCOLADES

93 – 2015 Sancerre Les Desmalets – Wine Advocate

93 – 2013 Sancerre Les Desmalets – Wine Advocate

90+ – 2013 Sancerre Les Desmalets – International Wine Cellar



JON-DAVID HEADRICK
SELECTIONS