

DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

Sancerre Les Chailloux

THE ESTATE

Based in the village of Sury-en-Vaux, the Stéphane Riffault works 33 different parcels in 8 different lieu-dits spread across 4 villages. The 13.5 hectares of vines are plowed and no synthetic material is used and starting in 2017 the property has been certified organic by ECOCERT and biodynamic by BIODYVIN. 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, site-expressive and vertical bottlings. All of the parcels are vinified 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.



THE DETAILS

Les Chailloux is a unique site in the village of Sury-en-Vaux. While *silex* soils (Flint) are common in the neighboring Pouilly-Fumé and the eastern edge of Sancerre, it is fairly scarce in the northwestern part of Sancerre. Stéphane Riffault farms about 1 hectare of vines in this lieu-dit, a more profoundly mineral, smoky and tightly-wound wine capable of aging gracefully for many years.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Sancerre

ELEVATION

300 meters

VARIETIES

Sauvignon Blanc

SOIL

Kimmeridgian limestone (Flint)

VINE AGE

15–45 years old

FARMING

Certified organic and biodynamic (ECOCERT & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

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

AGING

Aged 10 months in neutral 600L French oak demi-muids

FOR THE RECORD

2019 Sancerre Les Chailloux – *Vinous Media* – 94

2019 Sancerre Les Chailloux – *Wine Advocate* – 95

2016 Sancerre Les Chailloux – *Wine Advocate* – 94

EUROPEANCELLARS.COM

**JON-DAVID
HEADRICK
SELECTIONS**