

DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

Sancerre Les Chasseignes

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

Locations called "Les Chasseignes" are common in Sancerre. This local name designates *cailiottes* soil: shallow limestone soil and subsoil containing overlapping stones. Stéphane's lieu-dit of this name is located north of his home and cellars in the village of Sury-en-Vaux. Released in late spring along with Les Boucauds (*terres blanches*), Les Chasseignes shows the *nervier* style of wine typical from this distinct terroir.

COUNTRY

France

APPELLATION

Sancerre

ELEVATION

260 meters

VARIETIES

Sauvignon Blanc

SOIL

Kimmeridgian limestone (Cailiottes)

VINE AGE

25–50 years old

FARMING

Certified organic and biodynamic (ECOCERT & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation in stainless steel (50%) and French oak barrels (50%)

AGING

Aged 7-8 months in stainless steel tank and neutral French oak barrels

FOR THE RECORD

- 2019 Sancerre Les Chasseignes – *Vinous Media* – 92
- 2019 Sancerre Les Chasseignes – *Wine Advocate* – 93+
- 2017 Sancerre Les Chasseignes – *Wine Advocate* – 92

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