



# DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

## Sancerre Les Chailloux

Stéphane Riffault (Claude's son and now the owner of the estate) is turning out Sancerre bottlings that are the envy of many producers twice his age. As David Schildknecht put it, "Make no mistake: this address in the hamlet of Maison Salle (Sury-en-Vaux) is now one of the five or six most exciting estates in the Sancerre appellation." Given that Stéphane's holdings represent 4-tenths of 1 percent of the appellation, he is clearly doing something right.

Based in the village of Sury-en-Vaux, Stéphane Riffault works 33 different parcels in 8 different lieu-dits spread across four villages. The 13.5 hectares of vines are plowed, and no synthetic material is used. 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 extensive sorting occurs 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. Minor, judicious uses of oak help to add length to the already precise, site-expressive, and vertical bottlings. All the parcels are vinified separately, and except for 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 his parcels' exposition (many are south-facing), Riffault's wines are always crisp and high-cut with a jeweled delineation that speaks to the precision and attention these wines get. These are not your daddy's (or his daddy, Claude's) Sancerres.

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.

### ORIGIN

*France*

### APPELLATION

*Sancerre*

### SOIL

*Kimmeridgian limestone (Flint)*

### AGE OF VINES

*15–45*

### ELEVATION

*300 meters*

### VARIETIES

*Sauvignon Blanc*

### 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*

### ACCOLADES

(93-95) – 2022 Sancerre Les Chailloux – Vinous Media

93 – 2021 Sancerre Les Chailloux – Vinous Media

95 – 2021 Sancerre Les Chailloux – Wine Advocate

**JON-DAVID  
HEADRICK  
SELECTIONS**

