



# DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

## Sancerre Monoparcelle 538

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.

Monoparcelle 538 is the cadastral plot number for a 0.44 hectare plot of 47 year-old, massale selection Sauvignon Blanc planted on a shallow and gravelly soil 30 cm deep in the lieu-dit of Les Desmalets. Les Desmalets is potentially the fullest-bodied terroir Stéphane Riffault farms, so much so that he blends most of it into his village Sancerre and reserving its oldest vines for this profoundly expressive and age-worthy micro cuvée.

### ORIGIN

*France*

### APPELLATION

*Sancerre*

### SOIL

*Kimmeridgian limestone  
(Terre Blanches)*

### AGE OF VINES

*47*

### ELEVATION

*260 meters*

### VARIETIES

*Sauvignon Blanc*

### FARMING

*Certified organic and biodynamic  
(ECOCERT & BIODYVIN)*

### FERMENTATION

*Hand harvested, natural yeast fermentation  
in French oak foudres*

### AGING

*AGED 18 months in French oak foudres*

### ACCOLADES

*(94-96) - 2022 Monoparcelle 538 – Vinous Media*

*93 - 2021 Monoparcelle 538 – Vinous Media*

*96 - 2020 Monoparcelle 538 – Vinous Media*

**JON-DAVID  
HEADRICK  
SELECTIONS**

