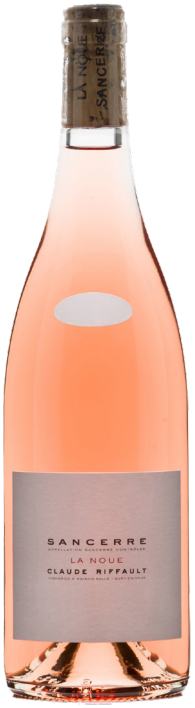

DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

Sancerre Rosé La Noue

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 Stephane'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.

La Noue is a 2.5 hectare plot of Pinot Noir on clay limestone and marl. Divided into seven plots and ranging in age from 10 to 60 years old it is the source for both the Noue Rosé and Rouge. The rosé is a combination of juice bled off the Sancerre Rouge after a 6-12 hour maceration combined with direct press Pinot Noir.

ORIGIN
France

APPELLATION
Sancerre

SOIL
Kimmeridgian limestone (Terre Blanches)

AGE OF VINES
10–60

ELEVATION
250 meters

VARIETIES
Pinot Noir

FARMING
Certified organic and biodynamic (ECOCERT & BIODYVIN)

FERMENTATION
Hand harvested, a combination of saignée and direct press wine, natural yeast fermentation in tank

AGING
Aged 4 months in tank

ACCOLADES

92 - 2023 Sancerre Rosé La Noue – Decanter

92 - 2022 Sancerre Rosé La Noue – Wine Advocate

90-92 - 2020 Sancerre Rosé La Noue – Wine Advocate

JON-DAVID HEADRICK SELECTIONS