



DOMAINE CLAUDE RIFFAULT

Sancerre Rouge 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 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.

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. Stéphane's Rouge shows his Burgundian-trained touch with this variety, one that preserves the light and delicate style of Pinot from Sancerre, but layered with a depth of red fruit and black tea flavors.

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, pre-fermentation
maceration, natural yeast fermentation
in tank, some tanks bled depending on
vintage*

AGING

*Aged 15/16 months in tank and neu-
tral 600L French oak demi-muids*

ACCOLADES

92 - 2020 Sancerre La Noue – Vinous Media

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**JON-DAVID
HEADRICK
SELECTIONS**

