



THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY



Château La Rabotine - Alban Roblin • Sancerre

Alban and his wife took control of Château La Rabotine and its vineyards in 2010. What seems like a new wine venture is actually a continuation of an old one. The Roblins have cultivated this land in the northern Sury-en-Vaux sub-region of Sancerre since the 1920s. Alban is the grandson of celebrated vigneron, Georges Roblin, of the former Château de Maimbray. When Georges retired, Alban took over his family's vines, and he and his wife settled in at Château La Rabotine. The terrain of the domaine is a blanket of rocks and stones, exposed gentle hillsides, and old vines (well over 40 years). The region is singular due to its higher altitude (~280m) and the wind that funnels through the valley, acting like a hair dryer to the vines, minimizing problematic rot and disease. This remarkable setting allows Alban to farm organically without sacrificing the fitness of his fruit. Conversion to full organic certification will be in 2025.

Sancerre Blanc 2023

Alban sources his fruit from four different lieux-dits vineyards in his unique pocket of Sury-en-Vaux: Les Perrieres, Le Canard, La Rabotine and Côte de Valliens. Year in and year out, the finest Sancerres come from vineyards composed of two different kinds of soil: *Terres Blanches* (Kimmeridgian limestone clay) or *Caillotes* (Portlandian limestone). Alban's four vineyards are evenly split between the two. In 2023, each lieu-dit contributes equally to the final wine.

You've heard about the tough weather in the Loire in 2023, I'm sure. Well, that tough weather was somewhere else. In the eastern Loire things were excellent, much like 2022. In fact, if you liked the Alban's 2022 Sancerre Blanc, you'll love his 2023. The hand-picked fruit came in at nearly identical level of ripeness, very healthy and easy to sort. After bladder pressing, cold settling, temperature-controlled fermentation and then six months rest on the fine lees, the wine was bottled in April before shipping to California. Not to get too geeky, but pH levels were very similar to 2022, along with total dry extract. As always, the acidity is completely natural; Alban never acidifies with any of the allowed products like citric or tartaric acid. The one appreciable difference between the two vintages is that 2023 crop was smaller by about 10% making the fruit, and ultimately the wine, more concentrated. So, Alban's 2023 shows all the juicy white-fleshed pit fruits that we loved in his 2022, just more so. While the wine is quite expressive right now, it is still young and will only gain in depth and complexity. Just like with Alban's Sancerre Rosé and Sancerre Rouge "Cuvée des Dames," his Blanc will develop remarkably with the magic of time on the cork.



Summer 2023 in Alban's stony vineyards, Les Perrieres and La Rabotine