



THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR QUALITY



CHATEAU LA RABOTINE

Alban Roblin, Viticulteur, Sury-en-vaux (Cher)

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.

Sancerre Blanc 2022

Nature seldom gives you all you want as a farmer: too little, too much, sometimes way too much, it's always something. Hard frost in 2021, high heat in 2020, the challenges in recent vintages have been real, and still Alban made delicious Sancerres. Well, in 2022 nature did cooperate, and Alban made perhaps his most attractive and savory Sancerre Blanc ever. We could not be happier to announce the arrival of his 2022 Sancerre Blanc made exclusively for APS Wine & Spirits. Folks who love Sancerre simply must drink this wine.

Alban sources the Sauvignon Blanc for his APS Cuvée Sancerre from four lieux-dits vineyards called 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. Add to that, excellent hillside drainage and ideal sun exposure, and you have the makings of benchmark Sancerre. Perhaps Alban's own words help situate his vineyards even better:

"The care and attention that we bestow on our vines are based on the idea of minimal intervention, and on the continual observation of each parcel throughout the year. Out of respect for nature and the environment, our parcels are grassed over. We work our soils to ensure they maintain a healthy biological life, that is essential when growing high quality fruit."

Maybe it should go without saying, but Alban's whole estate is in the process of conversion to complete organic practices with just one year to go.

As in years past, Alban allowed his Sauvignon Blanc fermentation in 2022 to begin with the native yeast that came in on the fruit from the vineyards. Sorting was easy this year because all the fruit that came in was so healthy and just perfectly ripe. Cold settling of the juice and vinification in temperature-controlled stainless steel tank was followed by five months refinement on the fine lees with occasional stirring, "*en remuant*" as the vignerons say. The last bit of the fermentation was a partial malo-lactic in the spring, just to lend a bit of softness to the wine. From there, it was bottling in April followed by a month of rest before finding its way into a refrigerated container for its timely arrival for us to enjoy at its peak!

One more time, Alban has the right words for his wine:

"A pale yellow brilliant color with a nice brightness. The nose reveals aromas of white flowers, boxwood and citrus fruits. The palate shows a dynamic presence with a fine expression of pit fruits and overtones of a very elegant minerality. An expressive, well-balanced wine."

We all agree. Bravo, Alban! You nailed it!