

# DOMAINE du PRÉ SEMELÉ

**A**s you weave your way down from the hilltop town of Sancerre, world renowned for the region's wines made from Sauvignon Blanc, you pass Monts Damés, one of the most famous vineyards of Sancerre, go through the tiny town of Chavignol, famous for little goat cheeses called "crottin", you climb over the hill of Monts Damés and down into a little valley. There you will find Maimbray, Sury en Vaux, a little hamlet nestled at the foot of hillside vineyards. It is here that three generations of the family Raimbault have grown grapes and made wine. Grandfather Maurice worked the vineyards (3ha) with his brother Camille. Maurice's sons Claude and Rémy followed suit in 1988 expanding the holdings (12ha). In 2001 Rémy's son Julien stepped in as vigneron and the three created a new name, Domaine du Pré Semelé (pronounced *pray sem-ill-ay* it is the name of the plot of land on which the winery sits). Claude retired in 2009 and Rémy's son Clément became the winemaker. With Rémy nearing retirement, Julien and Clément manage the 18 hectares of vines across 45 different parcels, three quarters Sauvignon Blanc and the rest Pinot Noir.

The appellation of Sancerre lies on an outcrop of the chalky Kimmeridgian soils (Terre Blanche) that run from the White Cliffs of Dover down through Champagne, Chablis and the eastern edge of the Loire valley. These soils bring minerality, power and longevity to the wines. The vineyards of the domaine are 80% Terre Blanche and 20% limestone and clay. The limestone and clay soils, called les Caillottes, produce wines that are more elegantly balanced, fruitier and fuller. They are wines for earlier consumption. Vine age of the vineyards ranges from 5 to 50 years.

Julien's farming practices are *lutte raisonnée*. He uses no insecticides or pesticides in the vineyards. 90% of the vineyard rows are grassed to encourage a natural and healthy environment for the vines. Sauvignon Blanc is planted at 6500 vines per hectare. Pinot Noir is planted at 6500-9000 vines per hectare. Yields for the white wines are between 60-65 Hl/Ha. Domaine Rouge is 45-50 Hl/Ha and Camille Rouge is 30 Hl/Ha.

Looking to broaden his winemaking experience, Clément left his little enclave of Maimray to work in various wineries from 2004–2009. The wineries included Domaine Trapet in Gevrey-Chambertin, Te Mata in New Zealand and three producers in Sancerre, Domaine Pinard, Domaine Alphonse Mellot and Chateau de Sancerre. This experience is evident in the purity and balance of his Sauvignon Blanc wines and the depth and richness of his Pinot Noir wines. Finesse and balance are the targets of Clément's winemaking style.

The Sauvignon Blanc for the Sancerre Blanc is pressed long and slow. The juice is allowed to settle for 24 hours at a cold temperature. Fermentation is in stainless steel and enamel tanks at low temperatures for 10-15 days. The wine is then occasionally stirred on the lees for three to four months. The wines are lightly filtered prior to bottling.

Pinot Noir receives a 5-7 day cold maceration followed by gentle punching down and pumping over during the 25 day fermentation. For the Sancerre Rouge the must is pressed and the juice is racked to 50% stainless steel tanks and 50% to barrique 1-5 years of age.

Total winery production is around 7,000 cases per year.

Domaine du Pré Semelé is a fine example of the well trained younger generation with world experience taking over the family vineyards and winery to elevate the domaine to much higher level.



## WINES

Sancerre Rosé  
Sancerre Blanc  
Sancerre Blanc Le Chasseignes  
Sancerre Blanc Montée de St-Romble  
Sancerre Blanc Le Cotelin  
Sancerre Rouge Pinot Noir