

DOMAINE THOMAS-LABAILLE SANCERRE ROSÉ "L'AUTHENTIQUE"

2021 | \$19.99



DESCRIPTION

Years ago, we visited an old vigneron in Chavignol, in the Loire Valley of France, who had made fabulous Sancerre before his retirement, from old-vine vineyards in Monts Damnés (Sancerre's greatest vineyard site), with *élevage* in old *foudres* and unfiltered bottlings. We asked him who continued to work in that style, and he said "Cotat, and my friend Claude."

One thing led to another, and we were off to meet Claude Thomas, who was busy pruning his vines in the rain. His wife dragged him into his cellar where he stripped off mud-caked boots and served us several vintages. Thomas was then 73, and wished to retire, but he was holding on in the hope that his daughter and son-in-law would take over. This finally happened when Jean-Paul Labaille, his son-in-law, quit his civil servant job and became a full-time vigneron (for the previous ten vintages, he had taken his vacation during the harvest to be the assistant winemaker to Claude Thomas).

Only minimal changes have occurred. The vineyards remain among the best in Chavignol, with a considerable proportion of old vines. The old barrels are not in use anymore, but the vineyard and cellar work still follow the same time-honored techniques. The Monts Damnés plot is too steep a slope to ever consider machine harvesting, which is now the norm in the appellation, and it requires intensive, non-mechanized vineyard work, but this site is worth the trouble: drainage and exposure are excellent and ensure the best ripeness for the vintage. Labaille has tidied up Thomas' facilities, which used to be in sharp contrast to most cellars in the area; instead of a hyper-hygienic room, with wall-to-wall tiled floors and stainless-steel vats, his was a Burgundian type of cellar. The cuvées are still

aged in large concrete vats, others in stainless-steel, and the oak barrels have been replaced by newer ones, mostly second-hand, 2 to 3 years old, not to impart any oaky character to the wine, but to let it breathe and evolve slowly on its lees. The resulting wine is sensational: rich, fat, round, with layered aromas, a subtle nose, and a long finish. Not a typical bistro Sancerre, but a graceful wine meant for ageing and pleasure.

Domaine Thomas-Labaille Sancerre Rosé "L'Authentique 2021

The Thomas-Labaille Sancerre Rosé "Authentique" is from Pinot Noir grown on the limestone hills of Chavignol. The grapes are grown and harvested in clay and Kimmeridgian limestone soils from twenty-five-year-old vines. This 100% Pinot Noir rosé is a direct press wine and ferments with native yeasts in fiberglass and cement tanks. Then, it is aged in stainless-steel tanks for four to six months. It does not go through malolactic fermentation.

Tasting Notes

NOSE:

Lovely very pale pink color, pretty aromas of red raspberry, tart strawberry, citrus and melon with a bit of extra depth and ripeness due to the warm sunny conditions.

PALATE:

Crisp and fresh with candied red fruits, citrus, and stony acids that continue to the juicy and very mineral finish. This is one of the raciest rosés you can find, very elegant and refreshing.

PAIRING:

Serve quite cool on a hot day with anything grilled, or just sip and enjoy.

Fun Facts

**"Always the wine smells its terroir."
(French proverb)**

WINERY WEBSITE:

[Wines| Sancerre| Domaine Thomas Labaille](#)

