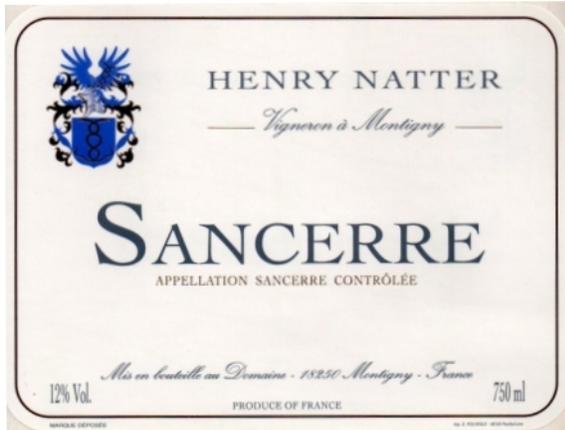


Domaine Henry Natter Sancerre (Montigny)



Henry and enologist Cécile Natter started their domain in 1974 from scratch, beginning with a family hectare in Montigny. They married, planted half of that hectare on a hillside running up behind the village, and started a family. This was in Sancerre's southwestern heights, an area widely planted to vines before phylloxera. Afterward, apart from a few scattered vineyards, the viticultural reconstruction generally passed these hillsides by and the area became a breadbasket for the local grain farmers. The Natter family domain was the first on this side of the modern appellation of Sancerre and remains the only winemaking domain in Montigny, a terroir noted for its preponderance

of *terres blanches*, or Kimmeridgian Marls. (Kimmeridgian is found on the hilltops curving around the western edge of the appellation; *Caillottes*, or Oxfordian limestone, is found in the center of the appellation; and flint or silex is found along the fault line running north-south through the town of Sancerre itself.) This soil gives great power to the wines, and a remarkable ability to age without oxidation. Stored properly, a top twenty-year-old Natter Sancerre retains astonishing freshness while evolving down to its elemental, mineral base. Almost no one thinks of old Sancerre, which is a shame because the good ones can amaze.

Today the domain farms 57 acres of vines. The breakdown is 47 acres of Sauvignon and 10 acres of Pinot Noir. From the beginning in 1974, organic composts and homeopathic applications have been used in place of chemical fertilizers. Fermentations can be spontaneous or done with neutral yeast (depends on health of the grapes), but they always take place in huge old casks, a.k.a., *foudres*.

In 2016 Henry retired and his son Vincent took over day to day responsibilities. He manages the vineyard work and works in the cellar alongside of his mother Cécile, aided by his sister Mathilde (the three of them can be seen in the photo below). In their employ is a Hmong. He is the nephew of a married couple who had been relocated from Laos to a Hmong refugee camp near Bourges in the 1980s. This couple originally came to the domain as vineyard workers, and they stayed on for nearly a decade before their nephew assumed their responsibilities. Many more Hmong come to help during the harvest.

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