Just east of Sancerre is the village of Chavignol, home of Domaine Paul Thomas. It is a small estate on the slopes of the Les Mont Damnés, from which they produce beautiful wines from the deepest, purest outcropping of Kimmeridgean limestone in Chavignol. Their vineyards are located on the south-facing slopes of a steep hill, and at harvest, each basket of grapes must be carried by hand down the steep paths. The end result is worth the hard work however, as the vineyards yield wines with remarkable concentration and purity. The winery’s particular specialty is their Sancerre Blanc “Les Comtesses,” a 1.5 hectare monopole within Les Mont Damnés.

Domaine Paul Thomas is run by Raphaël Thomas, son of Paul. Raphaël originally intended to pursue a career in physics, but after his father tragically passed away at the end of the harvest in 2000, he made the decision to carry out his father’s legacy by returning to Chavignol and taking over management of the winery.

From just nine hectares of vines, Raphaël produces 90,000 bottles. 75% of the total production is Sauvignon Blanc (Sancerre) while the remaining 25% is Pinot Noir (either Sancerre Rouge or Rosé). After harvest, all the grapes are bladder pressed, then fermented in used oak barrels, and finally bottled off the lees in the late spring. Raphaël has a dedication to natural vinification and traditional barrel fermentation that, when combined with the Chavignol terroir, results in a finished wine of superior character and style.