

LANGUEDOC

DOMAINE DE CREYSSELS
PINET

OVERVIEW | The domaine, centered around a 16th century fortified farm, was bought by the Benau family in 1980. For almost 20 years they sold their viticultural production to the local Co-op. In 1999, when their young daughter Julie returned to the domaine, they bottled part of their production for the first time. At Julie's insistence, the Benau's have set their sights on putting only the highest quality wines in bottle. In 2001, they bottled a mere 2,000 cases at the domaine (2 cuvées of Picpoul de Pinet, a VDP Red and a Rosé). They are adapting their vineyard work and are making investments in the cellar with the goal of increasing the quality and as the quality merits, bottling more wine.

VINEYARD AREA: 15 hectares

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 7000 cases

SOIL TYPES: sand, marl, limestone

GRAPE VARIETIES: picpoul

The appellation of Picpoul de Pinet is composed of 6 communes in front of the bay of Thau near Sète between Bezier and Montpellier. The vineyards are planted only with Picpoul which Jancis Robinson says comes from "pique poul" meaning "lip stinger" due to the high acidity in the grapes. James Wilson, in his very dry academic tome *Terroir*, disputes this and suggests that piquepoul is in fact another name for the Folle Blanche of Armagnac and Cognac – another 'lip stinging' grape. In any case, Picpoul is known for its high acidity and since at least the 17th century it was blended with Clairette to give that grape some spine. All of the vineyards in Picpoul de Pinet share a southern exposition, are sheltered by inland hills from the NW wind, enjoy lots of sunshine and the moderation of summer heat by humid ocean breezes. The soil is sand, marl, and limestone. Picpoul is well-adapted to the soil and the climate, but is prone to excess vegetation and high yields.

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES | The local co-op which dominates the market has been content with high yields and high acidity, which they consider as something of the signature of the grape. As they had no trouble selling most of the production to the tourists who descended on the region during the summer, there was little incentive to improve quality. In recent years a few domaines have made efforts to produce wines of quality – reducing the yields and waiting for some ripeness before picking. In various recent tastings of what are the 5-6 domaines considered by the French press to be the best of Picpoul Domaine de Creysseles often rises to the top of the group with much more color, more aroma, more flavor and less SO₂ than the others – excessive SO₂ being a common flaw in many of the Picpoul wines. Julie Benau has said that in making the wines she is essentially looking for the expression of terroir. This is real wine.



trriage wines

4755 Colorado Avenue South, Ste A
Seattle, WA 98134
206. 763. 5994
fax 206. 883. 0215

2210 North Lewis Street
Portland, OR 97227
503. 236. 6262
503. 236. 3660 fax