

# PATRICK ALLEN SELECTIONS

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## Domaine La Croix Gratiot Picpoul de Pinet



### The Domaine at-a-glance

**Owner / Winemaker:** Anaïs Ricome      **First Vintage:** 2004  
**Soil:** Clay / Limestone soil  
**Size:** 30Ha      **Location:** Montagnac, Languedoc  
**Appellations Produced:** Picpoul de Pinet



*Anaïs Ricome and her father Yves*

The Ricome family has been farming the land around Pinet for generations. In 1982 Anaïs' father, Yves, took over the family domaine. Their principal business is the cultivation of the famous southern French melons (similar to small, very sweet cantaloupes). However, they also own 30 hectares of vineyards. During the 1990s they refurbished the vineyards and replanted with new, better, grape varieties. Of the 30 hectares, 25ha are planted in white grapes, of which 5.5ha are A.O.C.. Picpoul de Pinet in the commune of Mèze. Until 2004 all of the grapes were sold off in bulk.

In 2004 the family built a winery and began producing their own wine at the domaine. With aptitude and interest in winemaking, Anaïs studied viticulture and oenology. In 2006 she began to work at the family winery. Today she is solely responsible for all aspects of the winemaking at the domaine. Anaïs continues to learn as much as she can, studying with different winemakers, including working two harvests in New Zealand.



*La Croix Gratiot's Picpoul de Pinet vineyards with the oyster beds of the Bassin du Thau in the background.*

**About Picpoul de Pinet:** Known as the “Chablis of the South”, the Picpoul de Pinet is a crisp, bright and refreshing wine. Picpoul de Pinet is made from the grape variety, Piquepoul, which is spelled differently for an interesting reason. When the appellation was created they had to alter the spelling of the grape variety in order to include it on the label. For some reason, French wine law does not allow a grape name to be incorporated into the name of an appellation. The name Piquepoul, literally translates as “Lip Stinger”, referring to the grape's naturally bright acidity.

A line of hills protects the appellation of Picpoul de Pinet from the northwestern winds, while the coastal winds from the Mediterranean temper the summer heat. The appellation includes six communes: Mèze, Montagnac, Pinet, Florensac, Pomérols, and Castelnau-de-Guers. The vineyards face due south towards the Bassin du Thau. The Bassin du Thau is a large saltwater inlet from the Mediterranean, famous for the cultivation of mussels and oysters, which are fortunately a perfect food pairing for Picpoul de Pinet.



### **La Croix Gratiot, Picpoul de Pinet - Piquepoul Blanc 100%**

**Technical Notes:** The grapes for this wine are night-harvested. The cool night air helps to protect the Piquepoul grapes from oxidation, preserving the bright fresh fruit aromas for the wine. After harvest, the grapes are destemmed and pressed. The wine is then fermented in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. After fermentation the wine is aged in tank for 5 months before bottling.

**Tasting Notes:** As always, Anaïs has produced an exceptionally lush and well balanced Picpoul. The nose is very expressive with white peach aromas and delicate floral notes. In the mouth, unusually rich for a Picpoul. Peach and pear nectar flavors mix with bright citrus fruit in the finish. The classic food pairing for Picpoul has always been shellfish, especially oysters. However, we also like it with sushi, light fish dishes (like sole meunière), or as a refreshing aperitif. Enjoy!