

From vineyard to wine glass



The search for sense of place

The hallmark features of Pic Saint Loup wines make them immediately recognisable by connoisseurs. Sense of place stems from the vineyard's climate and soils, but human factors and time are also essential. Three leading Pic Saint Loup consultant wine makers share their thoughts about typicality in the appellation's wines.

When passionate wine growers and an outstanding wine region fuse, the resultant wines invariably reveal a strong sense of typicality, a term used to describe sense of place in the glass. The question is, do Pic Saint Loup wines tick these boxes? As soon as Jean Natoli began making wine here in 1992, he remembers being struck by the less opulent character of the wines compared with other Languedoc growths at the time. His explanation is, "Vineyard elevation, between 150 and 300 metres above sea level, has a tangible impact in terms of acidity, aromatic freshness and minerality." Aside from the aromatic suggestions and nuances that stem from specific sites and blends, consultant wine maker Sandrine Boesch from the Co-operative Wine Institute (ICV) describes "aromas ranging from red fruit to black olive paste and liquorice with menthol and garrigue

notes," due to the predominance of Syrah. Sensitive to water and heat stress, the varietal enjoys ideal growing conditions here. Fellow consultant wine maker, Jean-François Vrinat, explains that the wines therefore offer up some clear similarities with Côte Rôtie and Saint Joseph. There is just one slight difference: "Pic Saint Loup wines have a more powerful structure on the palate yet without heaviness." The same is true of the rosés: "Nowadays, they are made along the same lines as reds, with precise harvest dates and ripeness levels and from specific vineyard plots. They therefore display highly unusual aromas and great elegance." Due to a trend towards lighter-coloured rosés, most of them are now made using the direct-press method rather than 'bleeding'. According to Sandrine, "They are also expected to show fresh fruit aromas of strawberry, raspberry or citrus."