



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

Country: France

Region: Languedoc

Appellation(s): Languedoc,
Languedoc Pic Saint Loup

Producer: Xavier, Pierre, and
Jean-Marc Ravaille

Founded: 1992

Annual Production: 8,300 cases

Farming: Biodynamic (since 1999),

Organic (since 2009)

Website: www.ermitagepic.fr



Legends seem to converge at the Ermitage du Pic St-Loup. The hermitage dates back from the Middle Ages, as the former home of the bishops of Maguelone. The limestone peak or “pic” perched above the vineyards was named for the legendary Saint Thieri Loup, one of three pious, crusading, brothers and suitors to the beautiful Bertrade—after her untimely death, Loup became a hermit. In 1992, the Ravaille brothers (Xavier, Pierre, and Jean-Marc) joined forces to plant a vineyard in what has traditionally been land dominated by sheep farming and cheese production. The Ravaille family has been in the Languedoc for over one thousand years, long enough to have known Saint Loup personally. These brothers have been on a noble quest of their own to create serious wine that expresses the complexity of their *terroir*. The three fish on the label’s emblem therefore not only evoke the story of Saint Loup, but also their fraternal collaboration. Within the first few years, the Ravailles came to the conclusion that introducing biodynamic farming practices would allow them to make the wine they wanted. Though they have been using this methodology since 1999, they have also started the complicated three-year process of having their vineyards certified as organic.

According to James E. Wilson, in his fabulous book, *Terroir*, the complexity and variety of soil types in the Languedoc is attributed to the geological phenomenon known as the “Languedoc-Roussillon Symphony.” This slowly evolving collision of continents and bodies of water has perpetrated upheaval, creasing, and erosion, leaving a medley of sedimentation. Soils from the Ravaille’s higher-altitude vineyard slopes vary between the dominant marly limestone and dolomite, to red and white clay, to sand, schist, and round *galets*. The microclimate in Pic St. Loup is also particularly unique in this otherwise dry region. Though the summers are typically very dry, cool nights and winter rainfall allow for long ripening of the grapes and sufficient water supply. The brothers keep their vinification as non-interventionist as possible. All of these special elements of their philosophy and methodology translate into wines with a purity of fruit, extraordinary delineation of layers, and a distinct sense of place.

Their personal wine cellar is filled with masterly bottles from the likes of Coche-Dury, Raveneau, Tempier, among other gems. They aim high.



ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Languedoc Blanc “Cuvée Sainte Agnès”	50% Roussanne 30% Grenache Blanc & Gris 15% Marsanne 5% Clairette	15 – 80 years	Clay, Limestone, Dolomite	8 ha
Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Rosé	40% Syrah 30% Mourvèdre 20% Grenache 10% Cinsault	10 – 50 years	Red Clay, Marly Limestone	4 ha
Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Rouge “Tour de Pierres”	50% Syrah 40% Grenache 10% Mourvèdre	30 – 40 years	Red Clay	20 ha
Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Rouge “Cuvée Sainte Agnès”	50% Syrah 40% Grenache 10% Mourvèdre	40 – 50 years	Limestone	10 ha
Languedoc Pic Saint Loup Rouge “Guilhem Gaucelm”	50% Syrah 50% Grenache	85 years	White Clay, Round Stones	2 ha

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

In 2001, the *vignerons* of Pic Saint Loup pleaded their case to the I.N.A.O., asking for the right to their own A.O.C. As of yet, the request is still pending, however in 2007, Pic Saint Loup *was* granted its own denomination within the A.O.C. Languedoc (formerly known as A.O.C. Coteaux du Languedoc). Finally, as of the 2016 vintage, rosés and reds from Pic Saint Loup are entitled to full A.O.C. status.

- Natural fermentation for all wines
- Rosé undergoes malolactic fermentation and is made by direct press
- Whites are fermented and aged in *foudres* and *demi-muids* for 10 months
- Reds are aged in *foudres* and *barriques*
- “Tour de Pierres” and “Sainte Agnès” *Rouges* are aged for 12 months
- “Guilhem Gaucelm” is aged for 36 months
- Wines are bottled unfiltered