

GRAPE TALK

There is also a human element in the terroir

■ TERROIR

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may taste some of the nearby crops as notes in the wine.

There is also a human element in the terroir. Decisions made by the grape grower and the wine maker—from pruning to selecting the time of harvest—play a part and create the unique aspects of a region’s or even a vineyard’s terroir.

One of the exciting new components of terroir comes from a study in Napa Valley in 2011. University of California-Davis researchers examined bacteria and fungi on samples of grapes from 40

different northern California vineyards, then analyzed the wine before and after fermentation. They found that microbes influence a wine’s terroir and thus “can help predict the flavor profile of a finished wine” (www.npr.org). This study has shown that the terroir of certain vineyards has a biogeographic fingerprint component unique to where it is from and even what year the wine was made.

To find out more about the terroir of the Applegate Valley, I contacted grape growers in the Kubli Bench and Little Applegate Valley.

Kubli Bench

Greg and Debbie Schultz own Schultz Wines and Glory Oaks Vineyard and Farm midway up the Slagle Creek watershed on Slagle Creek Road. At an elevation of 1,515 feet, the creek-side vineyard grows tempranillo and malbec with more varieties to come. The

vineyard has a north-northeast to south-southwest orientation and captures both the early morning sun as it rises over Old Blue Mountain to the immediate east and the late afternoon sun before it sets behind Roundtop Mountain in the west. The soil in the vineyard is gravelly silt loam, slightly acidic, deep, well drained, and mixed with a granite and alluvial fan debris. The mountains surrounding the property on three sides act as a wind tunnel, helping the hot dry air blowing west to east keep the vines dry and minimize mold and mildew. At night the wind direction reverses, which helps cool the vineyard. Typical temperatures during growing season are morning lows of 50 to 55 degrees and afternoon highs of 90 to 95 degrees.

Little Applegate Valley

Cricket Hill Winery owners Duane and Kathy Bowman said that their vineyard, at 1,630 feet elevation, runs north-south with a two to seven percent south-southwest slope. The soil is well drained, gravelly silt loam with about 20 percent clay and quite a bit of weathered gravel and cobbles. It contains some iron and is moderately fertile.

The Bowmans chose their vineyard site because it is uniquely similar to the finest soils of the Pomerol appellation in the Bordeaux region of France. The varieties planted are merlot and cabernet franc, which are used to make Cricket Hill’s classic Right Bank Bordeaux. The

Bowmans have been making wine at Cricket Hill since 1991—they are one of the pioneers of the Applegate Valley AVA.



Debbie Tollefson

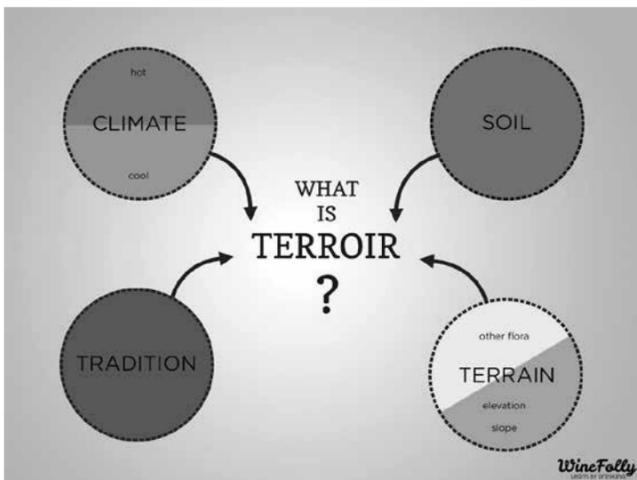
After examining some of the factors of terroir in our valley and looking at a world map, I can see why everyone is flocking our way to grow grapes. The terroir in the Applegate Valley, very similar to that in southern France, can produce a large number of grape varieties that help wine makers create many outstanding varieties of wine.

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Wine Enthusiast nod

Applegate Valley’s outstanding wine makers include Bill Steele of Cowhorn Vineyard and Winery, who received recognition in the August 2016 issue of *Wine Enthusiast* for his 2013 21 Grenache and 2014 Reserve Estate Grown Viognier.

Congratulations to Bill and Barbara Steele and all our Applegate Valley wine makers who do such an amazing job.



Enchanted Forest Wine Run to support Applegate School music program

Fairies, elves, and pixies will be pleased to learn that the Enchanted Forest Wine Run will be held on Saturday, September 24, at Wooldridge Creek Winery, 818 Slagle Creek Road (outside Grants Pass). Proceeds will support the Applegate School Strings Music Program.

The event features runs of 24K, 12K, and 5K, as well as a Kids’ Run. Start time is 10 am for the 24K and 12K runs, 10:30 am for the 5K, and 12:30 pm for the Kids’ Run. Courses will guide participants in and around the scenic Wooldridge Creek vineyards and through surrounding forestlands.

The top three female and male finishers of each race will receive awards. Each finisher will get a wine glass and a coupon to fill their glass with wine or beer.

Food, beverages, and live music will be featured, and, with luck, those present might glimpse an enchanted forest creature.

Sponsors are Wooldridge Creek Winery, Friends of Applegate School, Applegate Valley Artisan Bread, and Dutch Bros. For more information: thewinerun.com, race organizer Joseph Chick at josephchick@gmail.com, or call Wooldridge at 541-846-6364.