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Terroir: The Role of Geology, Climate, and Culture in the Making of French Wines

James E. Wilson

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Terroir: The Role of Geology, Climate, and Culture in the Making of French Wines James E. Wilson The French word *terroir* is used to describe all the ecological factors that make a particular type of wine special to the region of its origin. James E. Wilson uses his training as a geologist and his years of research in the wine regions of France to fully examine the concept of *terroir*. The result combines natural history, social history, and scientific study, making this a unique book that all wine connoisseurs and professionals will want close at hand.

In Part One Wilson introduces the full range of environmental factors that together form *terroir*. He explains France's geological foundation; its soil, considered the "soul" of a vineyard; the various climates and microclimates; the vines, their history and how each type has evolved; and the role that humans—from ancient monks to modern enologists—have played in viticulture.

Part Two examines the history and habitat of each of France's major wine regions. Wilson explores the question of why one site yields great wines while an adjacent site yields wines of lesser quality. He also looks at cultural influences such as migration and trade and at the adaptations made by centuries of vignerons to produce distinctive wine styles.

Wilson skillfully presents both technical information and personal anecdotes, and the book's photographs, maps, and geologic renderings are extremely helpful. The appendices contain a glossary and information on the labeling of French wines. With a wealth of information explained in clear English, Wilson's book enables wine readers to understand and appreciate the mystique of *terroir*.

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