Land and Wine: The French Terroir

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For centuries, France has long been the world's greatest wine-producing country. Its wines are the global gold standard, prized by collectors, and its winemaking regions each offer unique tasting experiences, from the spice of Bordeaux to the berry notes of the Loire Valley. Although grape variety, climate, and the skill of the winemaker are essential in making good wine, the foundation of a wine's character is the soil in which its grapes are grown. Who could better guide us through the relationship between the French land and the wine than a geologist, someone who deeply understands the science behind the soil? Enter scientist Charles Frankel.

In *Land and Wine*, Frankel takes readers on a tour of the French winemaking regions to illustrate how the soil, underlying bedrock, relief, and microclimate shape the personality of a wine. The book's twelve chapters each focus in depth on a different region, including the Loire Valley, Alsace, Burgundy, Champagne, Provence, the Rhône valley, and Bordeaux, to explore the full meaning of *terroir.* In this approachable guide, Frankel describes how Cabernet Franc takes on a completely different character depending on whether it is grown on gravel or limestone; how Sauvignon yields three different products in the hills of Sancerre when rooted in limestone, marl, or flint; how Pinot Noir will give radically different wines on a single hill in Burgundy as the vines progress upslope; and how the soil of each château in Bordeaux has a say in the blend ratios of Merlot and Cabernet-Sauvignon. *Land and Wine* provides a detailed understanding of the variety of French wine as well as a look at the geological history of France, complete with volcanic eruptions, a parade of dinosaurs, and a menagerie of evolution that has left its fossils flavoring the vineyards.

Both the uninitiated wine drinker and the confirmed oenophile will find much to savor in this fun guide that Frankel has spiked with anecdotes about winemakers and historic wine enthusiasts—revealing which kings, poets, and philosophers liked which wines best—while offering travel tips and itineraries for visiting the wineries today.

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