

# The Dirt on the Wallas

**Physical terroir of the Walla Walla AVA**




This is a participatory exercise.

Dictionary

participatory



par·tic·i·pa·to·ry

/pär'tisəpə,tôre/ 

*adjective*

involving or characterized by participation.  
"a highly participatory approach to teaching and learning"

# L'Ecole No 41, Luminesce, 2015

50% Semillion, 50% Sauvignon Blanc

Seven Hills Vineyard

- 2015 was warmest vintage on record
- At Harvest: Brix 24.8, pH 3.4, 6.99 g/L
- Final Wine: pH 3.42, TA 6.3 g/L, Alcohol 14.5%
- 30% ML, fermented in neutral French oak, aged sur lie four months in French oak then to steel tanks

Tasting Notes:

Lemongrass, kiwi, white peach and tropical fruit with lingering citrus and mineral elements



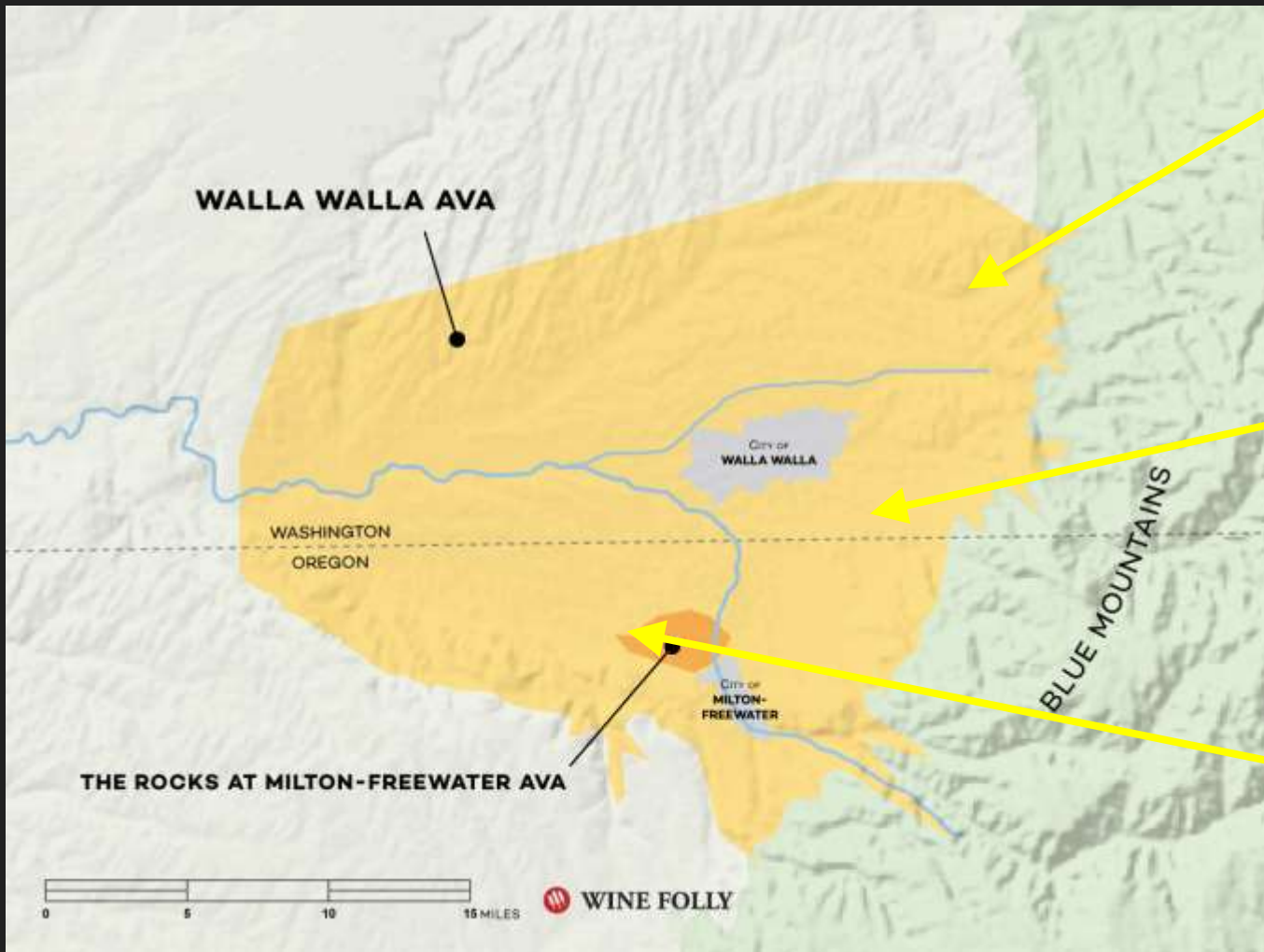
Terroir: the environmental factors (physical, cultural, biological) that affect the sensory components of an agricultural product (wine). Its sense of place.

Physical terroir: Location, Climate, Soils



- Puget Sound
- Yakima Valley
- Red Mountain
- Columbia Valley
- Walla Walla Valley
- Willamette Valley
- Umpqua Valley
- Rogue Valley
- Applegate Valley





Spring Valley

Les Collines,  
Morrison Lane,  
Pepper Bridge

Seven Hills Vineyard,  
Cougar Hills

# Cougar Crest Dedication Ten 2012 - “Don’t be a Snob”



Weight	3 lbs
Dimensions	2.8 x 2.8 x 11.5 in
Type	Red

The dedication and sacrifice of the medical professionals of Doernbecher Children’s Hospital of Oregon Health and Science University in Portland, Oregon who saved their daughter’s life.

## WINE AWARDS:

- Gold Grand Harvest Awards
- Gold Pacific Rim Wine Competition

Varietals; 55% Syrah, 20% Cabernet Franc, 17% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot.

Tasting Notes: Lush, ripe plums, red currants, black cherries, and a hint of dried roses and herbs on the nose are balanced by acidity and tannins that are smooth and graceful, not overbearing. Rich on the palate and long on the finish, the overall effect shows balance and finesse, a hallmark of Cougar Crest wines. A deeply satisfying wine that is versatile and can be paired with bold, smoky meats, grilled chicken or salmon, or pizza. Enjoy!

# Right by the Rocks



## Dirt

Ritzville loam, mixed with layers of gravel and river rock. All of this vineyard was underwater during the “Bretz Floods”. Therefore it received silt loam from Ritzville and gravelly layers from each successive flood. In addition, a few feet below the surface, is a massive layer of river rock deposited eons ago by the rivers that poured out of the Blue Mountains. A layer of volcanic ash is also present about 3 feet below the surface and is a valuable source of nutrients for the vines. Geological experts say the ash came from Mount Mazama when it blew up and created Crater Lake. The loam layer has good water and nutrient retention, while the gravel and river rock layers allow good drainage for the roots.

# Cougar Hills Vineyards

Cougar Hills Vineyard is a stone’s throw from the site of the original Seven Hills Vineyard planted more than 30 years ago, that began the Walla Walla legacy of quality vineyards. Tucked into the southwest corner of the Walla Walla AVA, as the name implies, there is a hill at Cougar Hills. The elevation averages 800 feet at the base and rises to 845 at the top of the hill. The slope of the hill faces north, which in the summertime is facing the sun. Having a hill in the vineyard promotes good air flow, especially when we are fighting frost.



# Climate

- Average growing season temperature of 63 F
- 18 inches of rain per year. The number of days with any measurable precipitation is 46.
- On average, there are 188 sunny days per year in Walla Walla, Washington. The July high is around 89 degrees. The January low is 29.
- The Walla Walla region enjoys two hours more of summer sunlight than in California wine regions.
- It's nice there, hot, good for growing onions, too.

# Growing Degree Days

**AVA**

**Cumulative GDD**

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Red Mountain

3442

Walla Walla Valley

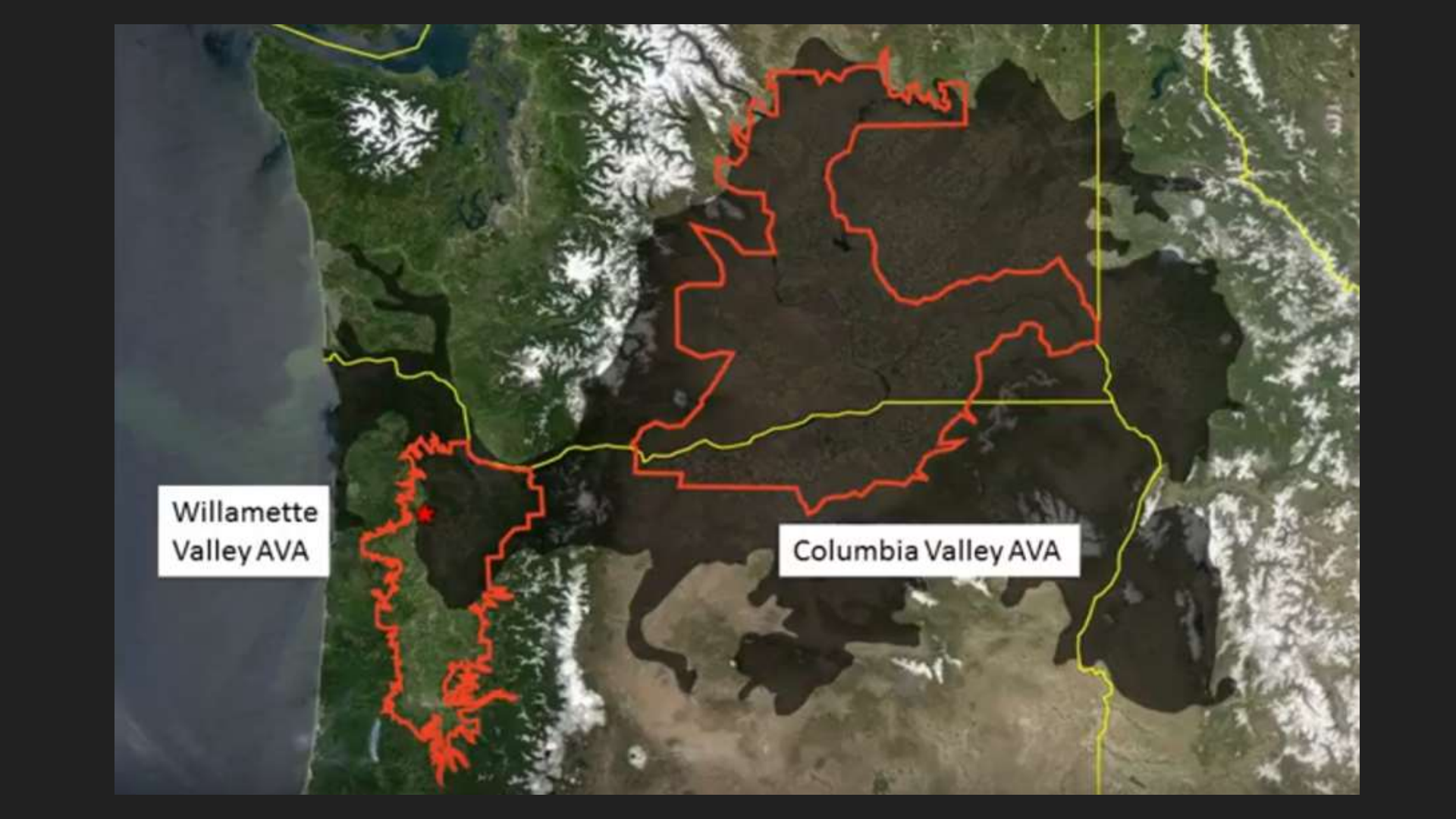
3094

Yakima Valley

2768

Lake Chelan

3159

A satellite map of the Pacific Northwest region of the United States, showing the Willamette Valley and Columbia Valley. The Willamette Valley AVA is outlined in red and is located in the western part of the image, near the coast. The Columbia Valley AVA is outlined in red and is located in the eastern part of the image. A yellow line represents the border between Oregon and Washington. The map shows a mix of green forested areas, brownish-tan agricultural or developed land, and white snow-capped mountains in the background.

Willamette  
Valley AVA

Columbia Valley AVA



**Missoula flood  
cobbles/gravel at Terra  
Blanca Vineyard**

# Otis Kenyon, 2014 Syrah

100% Syrah

Tasting Notes:

Wonderful layered aromas of fig, hazelnut and loam. Flavors of blueberry, boysenberry and baking spice lead to a smooth finish. Wonderfully complex and well-balanced.



# Geology & Soils

## **1. Wind-deposited silt (loess) overlying Missoula flood sediments**

Location: Valley floor (below 1200 ft)

Example vineyards: Pepperbridge, Lower Seven Hills

## **2. Thick loess overlying basalt bedrock**

Location: Foothills

Example vineyards: Les Collines, Spring Valley, Sevein

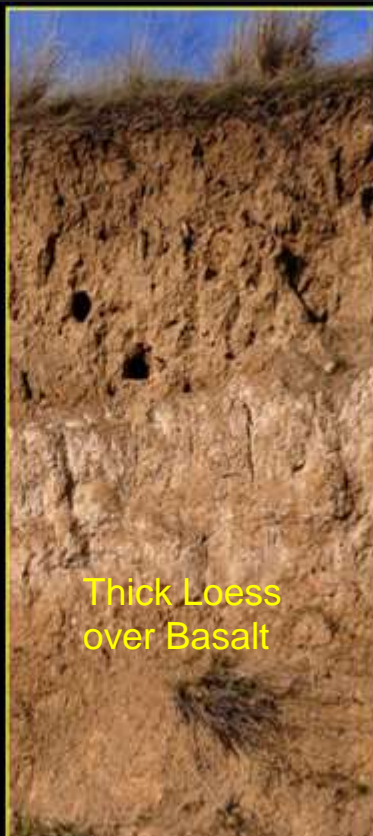
## **3. Basalt cobblestone gravels**

Location: floodplains of Walla Walla River and Mill Creek near cities of Milton-Freewater and Walla Walla

*Basalt cobblestone gravels is the primary soil type of The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater AVA.*

## **4. Very thin wind-deposited silt (loess) on basalt bedrock**

Location: Steep slopes in foothills and canyon



# Spring Valley Vineyard, Uriah, 2013

45% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Franc, 8% Petit Verdot, 8% Malbec,  
5% Cabernet Sauvignon

## Spring Valley Vineyard

- Final Wine: pH 3.95, TA .54 g/100ml, Alcohol 14.1%
- Aged 18 months in 100% in French oak, 45% new

## Tasting Notes (from the winemaker):

The nose is terroir driven with hints of wheat, basalt dust and herbal notes. The palate is very rich and soft with cherries, cassis and pomegranates. The finish is long and velvety







Loess

Basalt

# L'Ecole No 41, 2013 Estate Syrah

100% Syrah

Seven Hills Vineyard

- At Harvest: Brix 26.4, pH 3.57, 6.4 g/L
- Final Wine: pH 3.82, TA 6.6 g/L, Alcohol 15.0%
- Cleanly racked to 100% small oak barrels, 40% new, with four rackings over 18 months

Tasting Notes:

Savory aromas of bacon fat and black pepper with floral notes of violet. The rich mid-palate shows flavors of dark plum and dense blackberry that give way to earthy, mineral finish





**Loess**

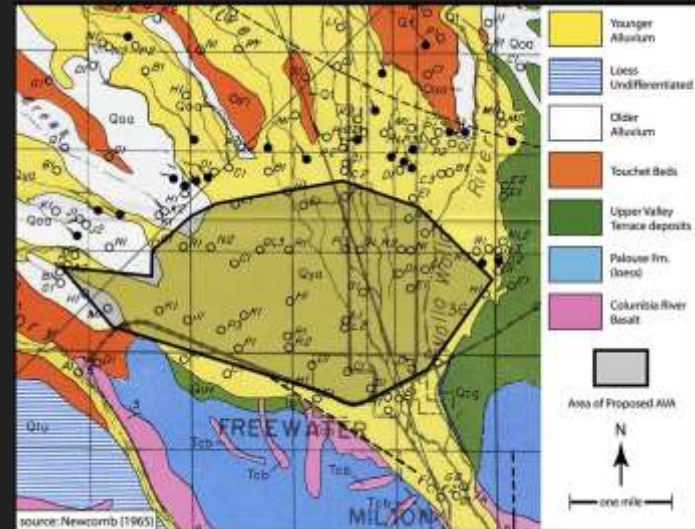
**Basalt**

# The Rocks at Milton Freewater

Boundary is based on distribution of soil

Alluvial fan: rocks deposited by the Walla Walla River on the bottom of the old river channel

Entirely made up of basaltic cobbles



# K River Rock 2013

**VINTAGE** The warmest vintage since 2003 cooled off just in time for harvest. The resulting wines were less likely to tip over into overripe favors or high alcohol levels, and picking proceeded at a normal pace. Total tonnage was up about 5 percent over 2012, a record for the state. 2013 made us thank Sweet Baby Jesus that our white wine vineyards are cool sites at higher elevation. The very warm vintage cooled down in midSeptember allowing us to pick at the perfect moment in the first week of October. This gave us generous full favored wine while still keeping focus.

**PRODUCTION** Yield: 1.8 Tons per Acre Yeast: Native 41 Days on Skins 25% New French Oak 20 Months Barrel-Aged

**WINE ANALYSIS** 6.0 g/L Titratable Acidity 4.07 pH 14.5% Alcohol



# The Wine

## **Wine Advocate: 93 Points**

A wine that just screams “The Rocks” is the 2013 Syrah River Rock Vineyard and it is about as classic a representation of this terrific terroir located around the town of Milton Freewater as I could imagine. Medium to full-bodied, fresh, focused and with fine, polished tannin, it has tons of pepper, bloody meats, olive and ripe dark fruits all soaring from the glass. I like it today, but it will keep for a decade. - June 2016



Is that a wig, Joe?

# Pepper Bridge Estate Merlot 2013

Seductive aromas of red cherries, ripe black currant, violets and exotic spices mingle delicately with rich, melting dark chocolate. The mouthfeel is wonderfully plush with silky tannins, an appetite-encouraging level of acidity and impressively restrained minerality. Rich and concentrated, this expansive Merlot finishes with a smooth, refined elegance

## THE 2013 VINTAGE

The summer of 2013 marked the warmest summer on record for us here in the Walla Walla Valley. Spring was cool and moist, as is typical here, with bud break occurring right on time in mid-April. Once it started warming up, it didn't stop - our thermometers rose over 100° quite often! The first week of September brought relief: dramatically cooler days and nights which allowed for the development of our trademark Walla Walla Valley acidity. Harvest began around this same time, with the cooler temperatures allowing us to finish right on schedule at the end of October.

## Details

Varietal(s): 78% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc, 9% Malbec

Vineyard(s): 48% Seven Hills, 45% Pepper Bridge, 7% Octave



# Pepper Bridge - The vineyard

Pepper Bridge Vineyard is one of our three estate vineyards located in the Walla Walla Valley Appellation. The original 10 acres were planted in 1991. Since then, the vineyard has been expanded to almost 200 acres (170 acres as of January 2011). Pepper Bridge Vineyard has gained an outstanding reputation with winemakers throughout the state of Washington and especially the Walla Walla Valley. Tom Waliser has been the Vineyard Manager since its inception.

The soils in this vineyard are Walla Walla Silt Loam, which consists of wind-blown glacial loess that is young and full of minerals. This silt loam contains one-third sand and is very porous.







In closing...

Favorite wine of the night?

Least favorite?

Most common varietal grown in Walla Walla?

Any thoughts?

