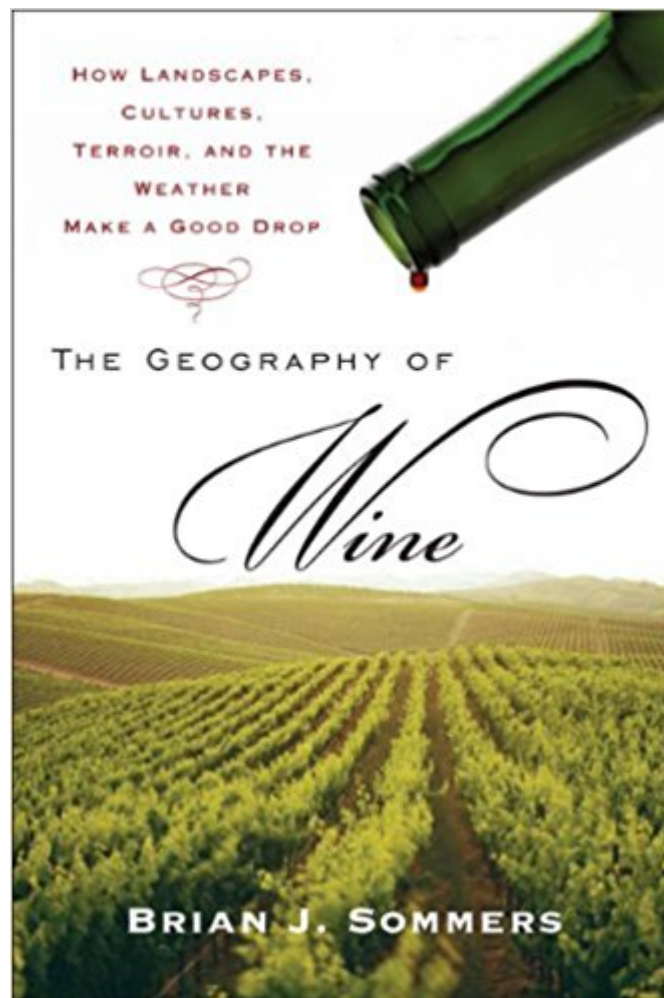




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# The Geography Of Wine: How Landscapes, Cultures, Terroir, And The Weather Make A Good Drop



## Synopsis

Wine is more than taste, smell, and appearance—it is a reflection of a place and its people. Why is Bordeaux a great place for red wines? Why do some places produce Rieslings and others produce Chardonnay? A fun and fascinating examination of *terroir* (the French word for the geography of a vineyard) this book takes connoisseurs and potential connoisseurs on a tour of wine regions, and explains the principles geographers use to understand the critical factors that make up the wine character of a place. From the Loire Valley to Napa Valley, Madeira to South Africa, Australia to Chile, *The Geography of Wine* is an entertaining and informative introduction to viticulture for worldly wine lovers everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

W. J. E. Sommers, a professor of geography, explains the role that landscape, history, economics and culture play in wine regions from Burgundy to Australia to California. Historical factors such as colonialism, trade and urbanization also determine what wines are cultivated and where. As well, the economic geography of contemporary vineyards is ever-evolving: retail venues and the marketability of a product vary enormously, the Internet has broadened the market for wine and conglomerates are an increasing presence. In his wide-ranging analysis of the obvious and imperceptible elements that characterize a wine region and its rewards, Sommers tips his glass to the steadfast amour between viticulture and geography. Publishers Weekly Draws together a number of valuable perspectives on wine, wine culture, and the wine business into one place. For

wine consumers whose education on the subject has been hit and miss”and again, that would be most of us”it’s a productive read.”Vinography.com”An interesting study of humanity’s long and varied relationship with *Vitis vinifera*. Wine enthusiasts will find this book of value, and by reading it, some may well come to a greater appreciation of the geographical perspective.”David M. Cochran, Jr., Southeastern Geographer

Dr. Brian J. Sommers is the Assistant to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences and Director of the International Studies program at Central Connecticut State University. He has a Ph.D in Geography from the University of Arizona. His research and teaching interests are in cultural geography and heritage landscapes. Dr. Sommers’ interests in wine are as a result of work done while pursuing his master’s degree at Miami University (Ohio). He is the author of *The Geography of Wine*.

A very intriguing idea. Even more so, when you consider the fact that ALL of the grapes in the world, except those in the United States. Our grapes were saved from the world-wide plague/virus by the strict vegetation import restrictions imposed by law-makers doing the bidding of their bosses. All grapes outside the U.S. today may have once originated elsewhere, but at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, they all came from this country! So there really is something to the idea that the locales have some serious effect(s) on the grapes grown there.

A really great lens with which to look at wine and viticulture. Highly recommended to anyone considering starting a vineyard. Not the most captivating writing, but a very well made book.

The author never illustrates the mechanism by which landscape, culture, terroir, and weather supposedly influence the taste of a wine. The entire book is based on the ASSUMPTION that these things influence the taste of wine, but it provides no evidence as to how these things influence the taste of the wine. Working on such large assumptions without any/much proof of them reminds me very much of Ellsworth Huntington’s climatic determinism in Yale’s geography department in the early 1900s.

Terroir is the all-purpose French term for the land, the weather, the climate, the environment in which the wine grapes grow. It’s what makes Bordeaux (the region) produce Bordeaux (the wine), Burgundy, Champagne, and Alsace likewise. American wines are labeled by the variety of grape in

argument that that is the most important aspect, though Napa, Sonoma, and Russian River Valley also appear on the labels. But Pinot Noir does well in Oregon (as well as in Burgundy), as does Riesling (which does well in Germany too), but not so well other places. This book looks at how the land, the weather, and the choices of the people doing the wine making affect the wines. It's a decent book which covers a lot of territory (literal and figurative) in a readable, non-technical manner. I've deducted a star only because this book could have been better, many times I was left with questions leading directly from the text, and the author had moved on. The coverage is thin in spots, and seems to have variations in what level of wine knowledge the reader is expected to have (in most places there's little or no assumed knowledge, but then suddenly one is expected to know quite a bit more).

As a wine writer myself (for wine beginners) I appreciated the wealth of knowledge Sommers has collected and shared with his readers. The term "terroir" has never before been so well explained, in every nuance that could be thought of and examined. And for those that discounted, or haven't learned, the importance of geography - read this book. It is not a difficult read and provides lots of thoughtful contemplation. Cheers to Sommers!

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