

MARRIAGE OF FOOD + WINE | HOSF 2062

The Role of Terrain in the Vineyard

ELEVATION – SLOPE – ASPECT



Photo credit: culinairemagazine.co

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

1. Introduction to Vineyard Terrain

- Elevation
- Slope
- Aspect

2. Analyze what this means for the grapes, and the resulting wines.

3. Learn how to pair wine to food with these elements in mind.

4. Virtual Tasting

Riesling from France

Riesling from Niagare

**What is terrain
and why do
winemakers
care about it so
passionately?**

MARRIAGE OF FOOD + WINE

Terrain Definition:

**A stretch of land,
especially with
regard to its physical
features.**

Oxford languages

**Latin word, *terra*
(the root of terrain)
means “earth”**

In physical geography it
basically means the lay
of the land.

It's usually expressed in
terms of elevation,
slope and aspect
(orientation of the land)

Higher Elevation

offers three things that lower elevation wineries do not:

- 1. Direct concentrated sunlight**
- 2. Dramatic daily temperature changes**
- 3. Excellent drainage**



1. Direct, Concentrated Sunlight

- Grapes adapt by growing thicker, tougher grape skins
- Pigmentation is more pronounced
- Produces more vivid colour, and stronger tannins in the wines



2. Dramatic Daily Temperature swings

- Blazing hot daytime temperatures plummet to cooler evening temperatures
- Forces grapes to ripen slowly reducing sugar production in the grape. At lower elevations and in valleys, ripening will continue in the warmer evenings

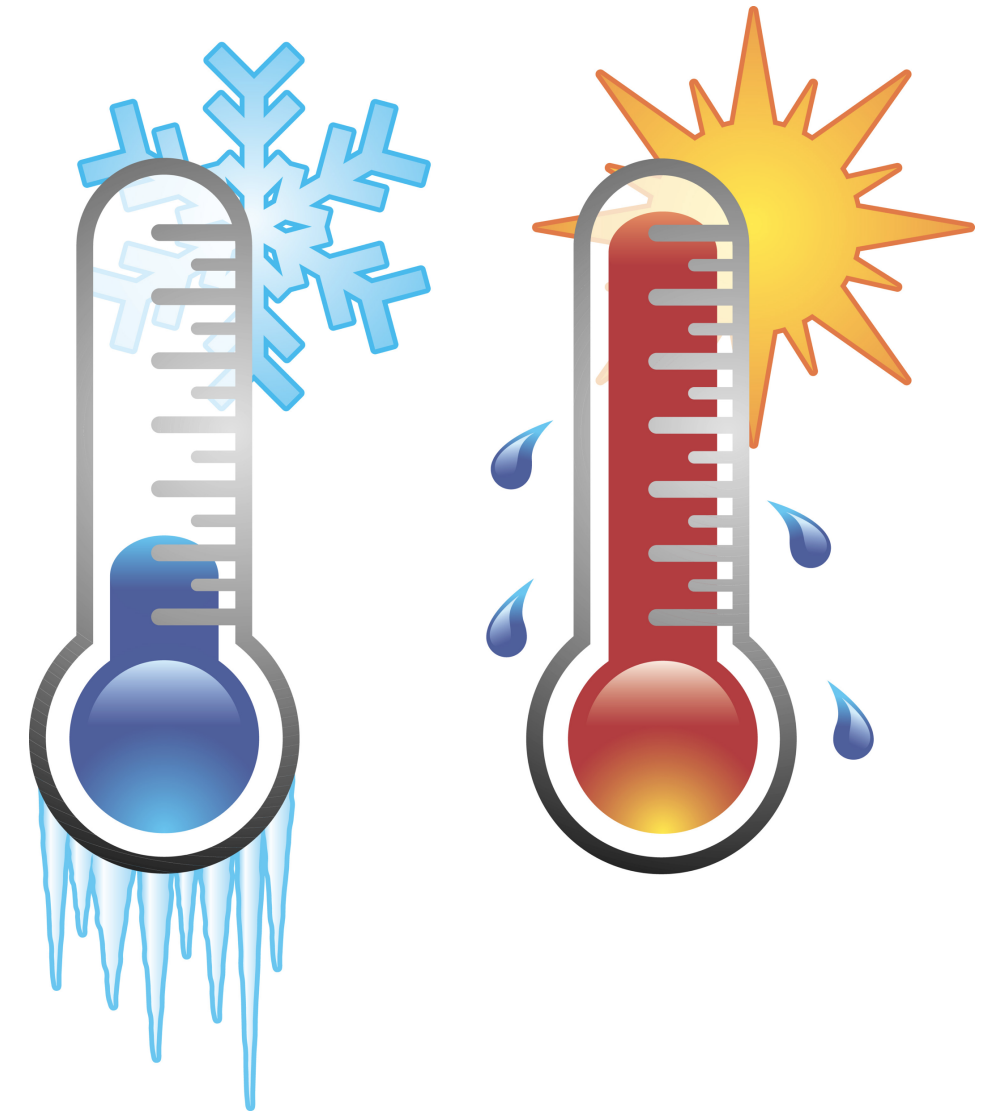


Image credit: 123rf.com

3. Excellent Drainage

- Higher elevation usually means steeper slopes and rainfall drains away readily. Why is this a good thing?
- Vine roots are inherently lazy, so they have to work harder to find water and nutrients thus producing fewer but more flavorful grapes
- Grapes will work smarter, not harder!



SUMMING UP ELEVATION

VINES STRUGGLE FOR WATER AND NUTRIENTS



PRODUCE FEWER, BUT MORE CONCENTRATED BERRIES



MAKE WINES THAT ARE FULL OF CHARACTER, NOT SHY!

ROLLING HILLS OF TUSCANY, ITALY



VS

STEEP SLOPES OF MOSEL, GERMANY



Is one better than the other? What does this mean for the vines and grapes?

Think what you have learned already about climate and elevation.

Slope

Why steeper slopes make better wines:

- **Natural irrigation** - easy drainage of excess rainfall down the hillside.
- **Air circulation** – cooler air from higher up will drain down, and out of the vineyard easier, and faster, than a gentler sloped vineyard.
Important in the Springtime when late Spring frosts are a concern for the flowering vines.
- **Hand Harvesting** – on steeper slopes no machinery.
- **Soil** - steeper hills usually means poorer soil, remember vines are lazy. They must work harder to find the nutrients to feed the vines and grapes. It's a real struggle!

Rolling hills, or steep slopes, all these wines are delicious!





Photo credit: foodandwine.com



Photo credit: wineanorak.com



Photo credit: nytimes.com

Aspect

The geographic compass direction of a particular slope or terrain.

What do the wine makers ultimately want?

How do you think the grapes adapt?

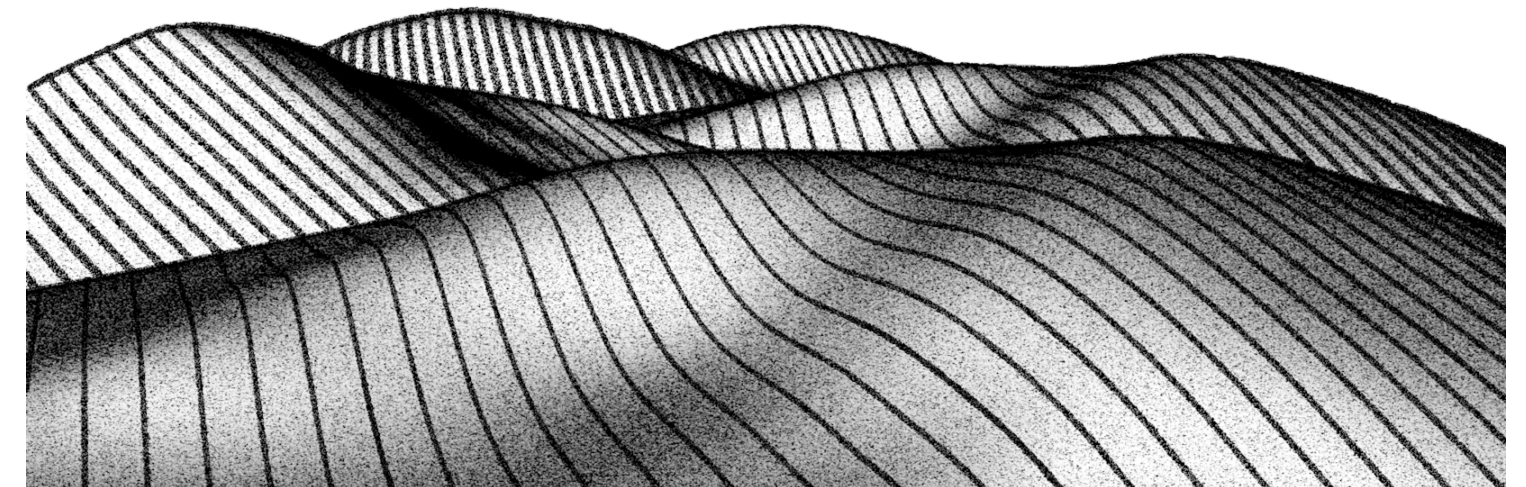


Photo: nytimes.com

In Burgundy, (France) it's all about aspect

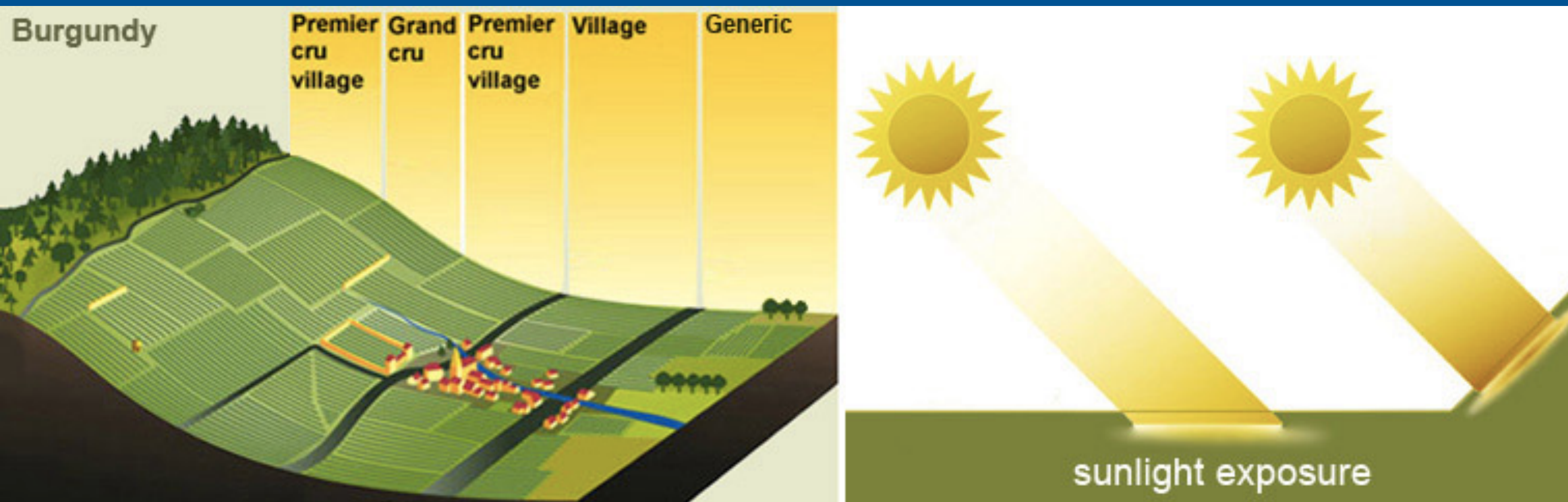


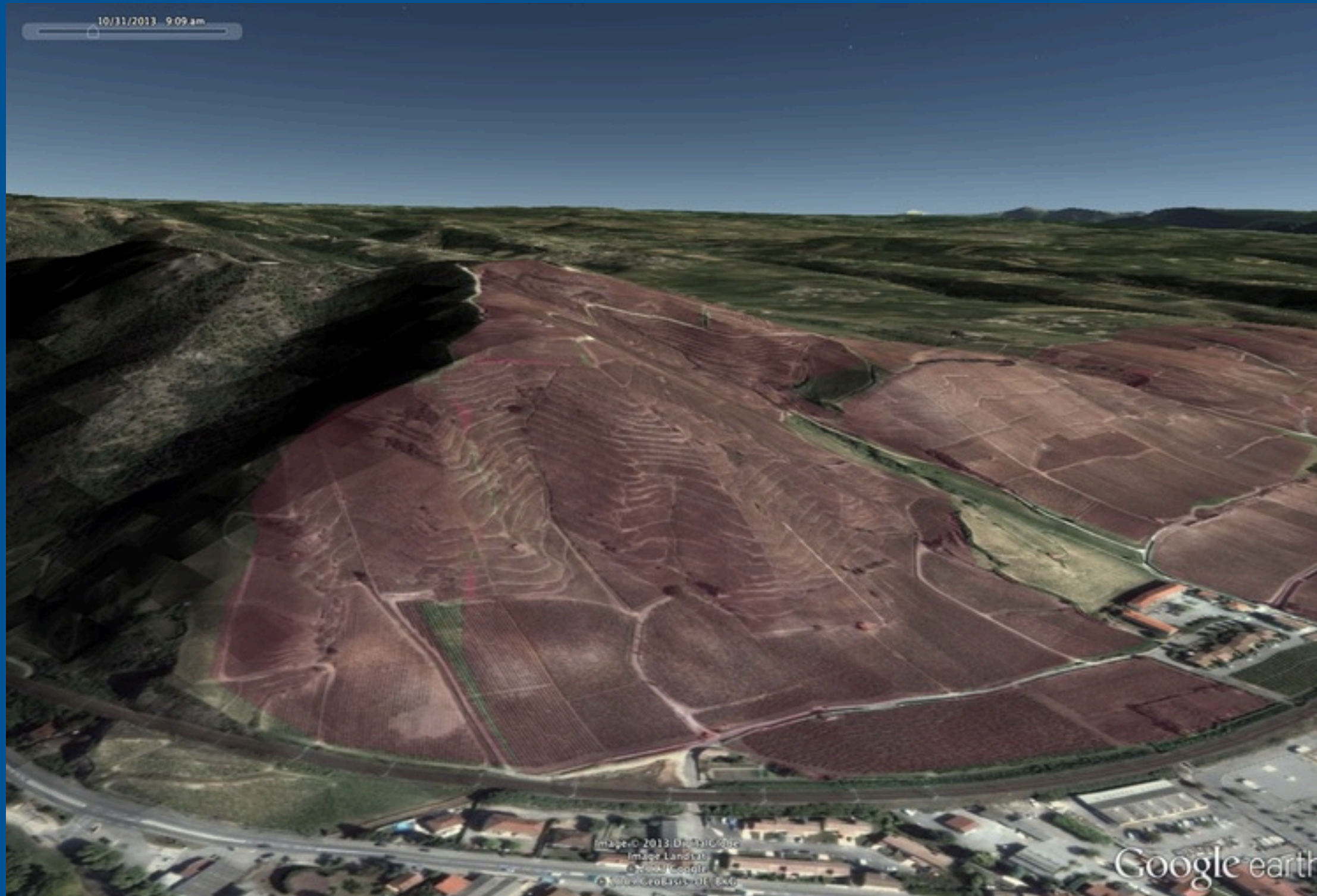
Photo credit: sipinsomm.com

The higher up the hill the more prized the wine.
In Burgundy this is part of their wine classification system.



Photo credit: thedrinksbusiness.com

ASPECT from Google earth



What can you tell from this photo?

Elevation?
Drainage?
Slope?
Aspect?

In this photo, where do you
think would be the best
location for the vines?



Photo credit: Liz-Palmer.com

Harvesting in Mosel, Germany



WILLM RESERVE RIESLING, ALSACE, FRANCE

Think Rieslings are always sweet? Think again. This one is bone dry.

Aromas of lime juice, peach and mineral. Ultimate wine for food pairing! Try with grilled shrimp and pesto pasta, or gourmet sausages.

12% ABV, 5g/L \$19.95 LCBO #11452



VINELAND ELEVATION, St. URBAN VINEYARD, RIESLING, NIAGARA, ONTARIO

Hermann Weis brought these vines, now nearly 40 years old, to Ontario from Weingut St. Urbans-Hof in Mosel. They have flourished in the ancient sea-born soils of the Niagara Escarpment. The wine is floral and juicy, with lime peach, apple and mineral notes.

8.4% ABV, 25g/L, \$19.95 LCBO #38117

LET'S REVIEW TODAY'S LEARNING

THE ROLE OF TERRAIN

Elevation – Slope - Aspect

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE GRAPE?

What are we tasting in the wine and pairing to food?

HOMEWORK & QUIZ #1

Discussion Board is due end of day today.

Quiz #1 will be available after class today.

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Next Week:

- ISN'T IT JUST DIRT?
- SOIL COMPOSITION
- How this all comes across in the wine.
- Virtual Tasting

