



Taking Root: The Renaissance of Chardonnay in the Willamette Valley

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A Brief History
of Oregon
Wine Making
and Terroir



Willamette Valley
Chardonnay's
Early Years



Arrival of the
"Dijon" Clones



Willamette
Chardonnay
Today



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir

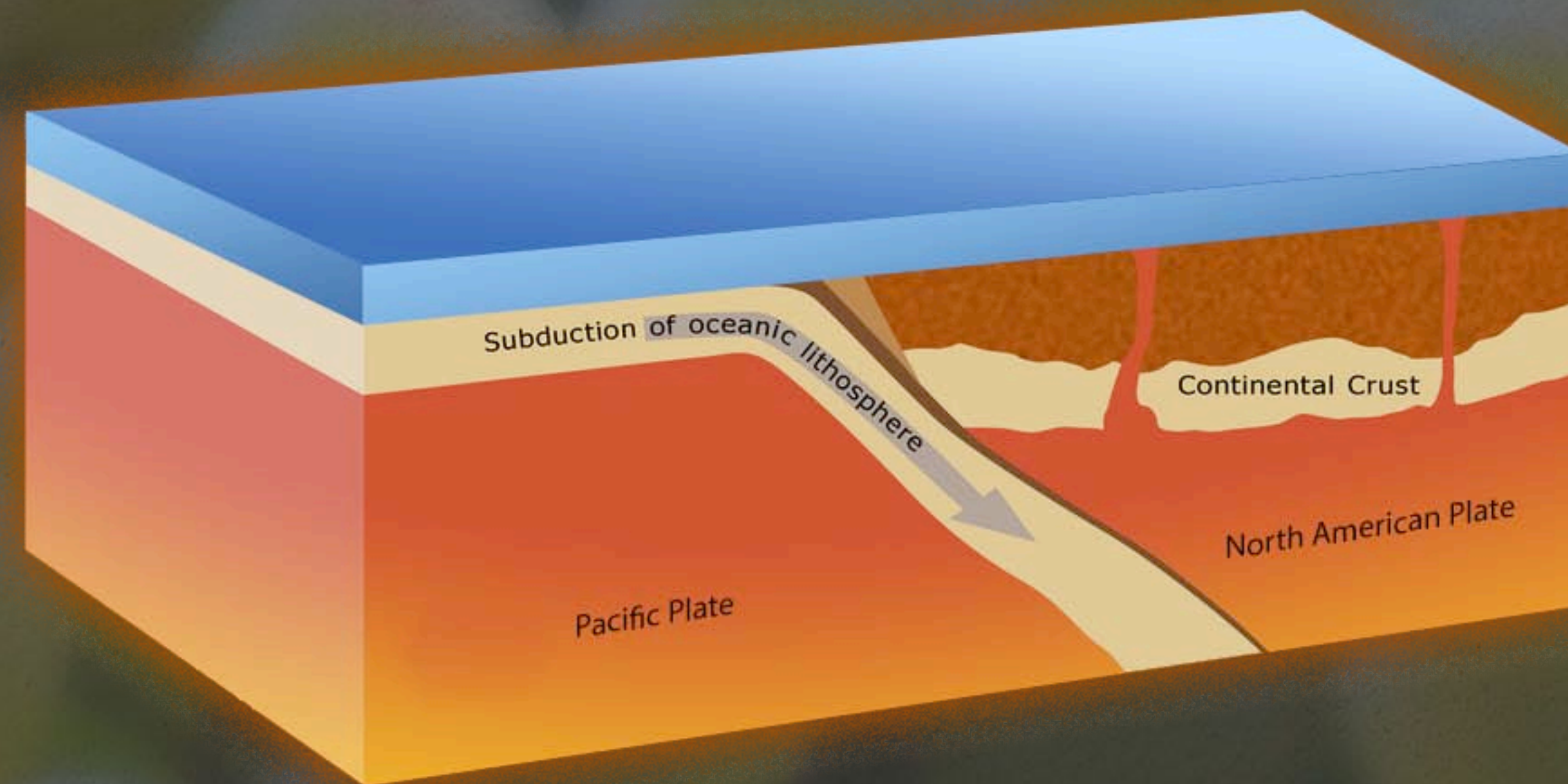


Pre-Historic
Geologic Events

Ice Age Events

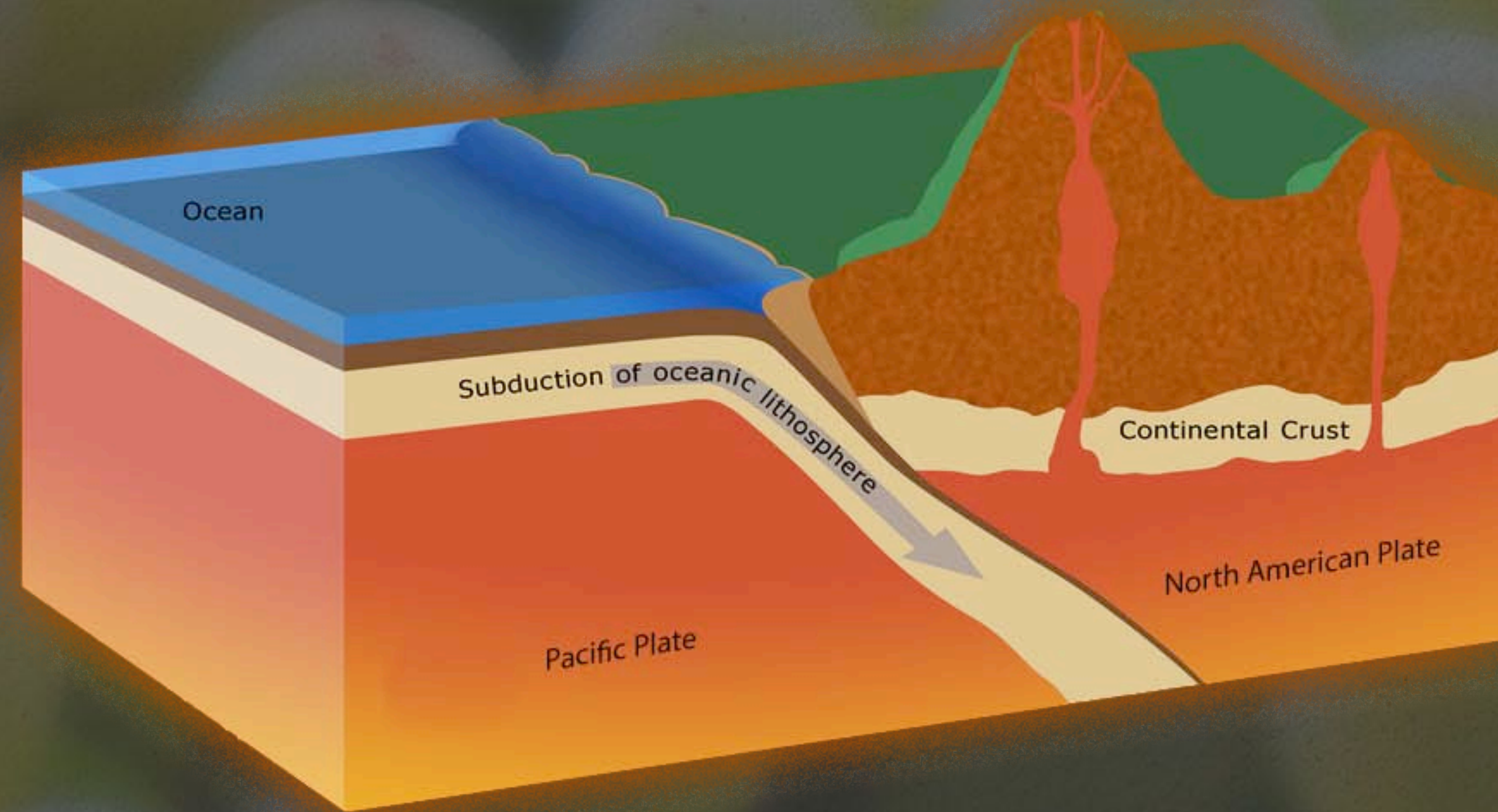


Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir





Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir





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Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



Marine Sediment:

- Developed from Ocean Floor Sandstone
- Shallow soil, high drainage, low in nutrients
- Forces deep roots to seek water & minerals



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



- Volcanic Basalt:**
- Result of weathering bedrock & lava flows
 - High in clay & iron minerals, good drainage
 - Fewer nutrients than marine sediment



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



- Missoula Alluvial :**
- High fertility, not ideal for grape growing
 - Relatively balanced sand, silt and clay
 - Common on the valley floor



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



- Windblown Loess:**
- From turbulent winds during the last ice age
 - High drainage inducing vine stress
 - Produces complex wine aromas and flavors



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



Marine
Sediment



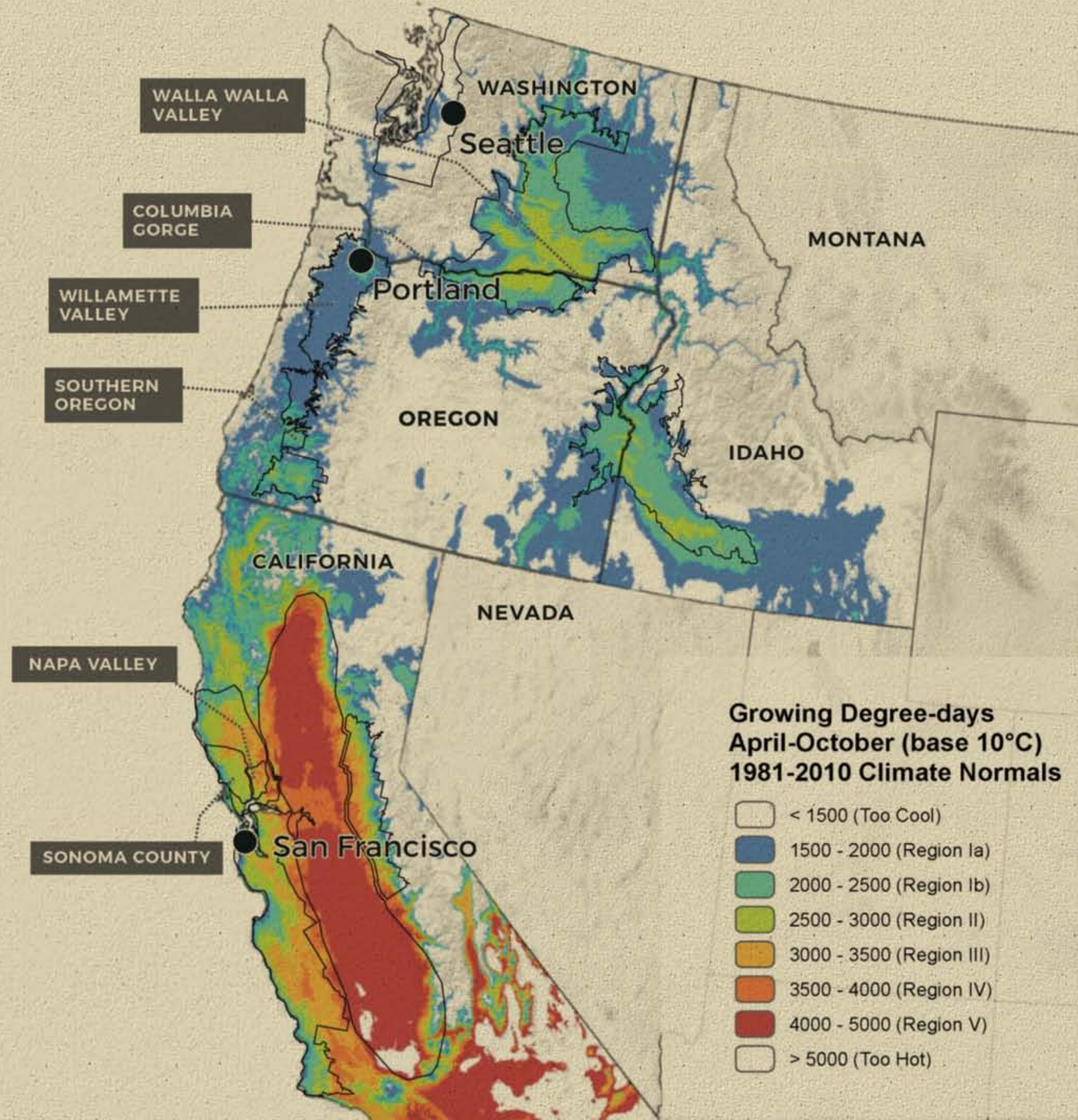
Volcanic
Basalt



Windblown
Loess

Favorable Wine Growing Soils

- The Willamette Valley falls just inside the lower temperature threshold for wine growing, averaging only 1,500 - 2,000 Growing Degree Days each year
- Warm Summer daytime temperatures are moderated by cool nighttime temperatures



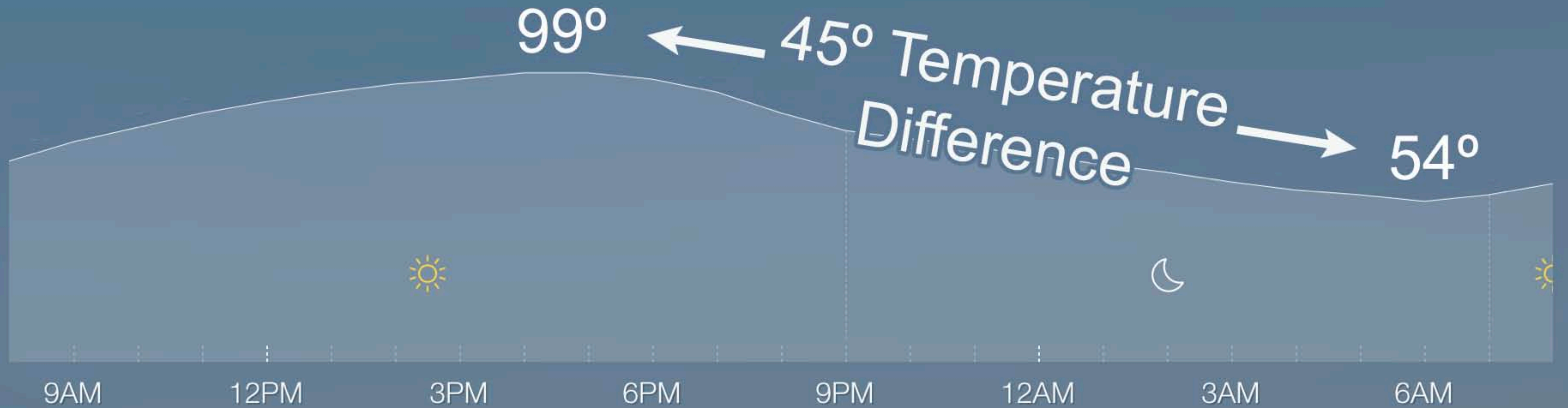
Newberg
7:03 AM PDT

Forecast



Newberg
7:03 AM PDT

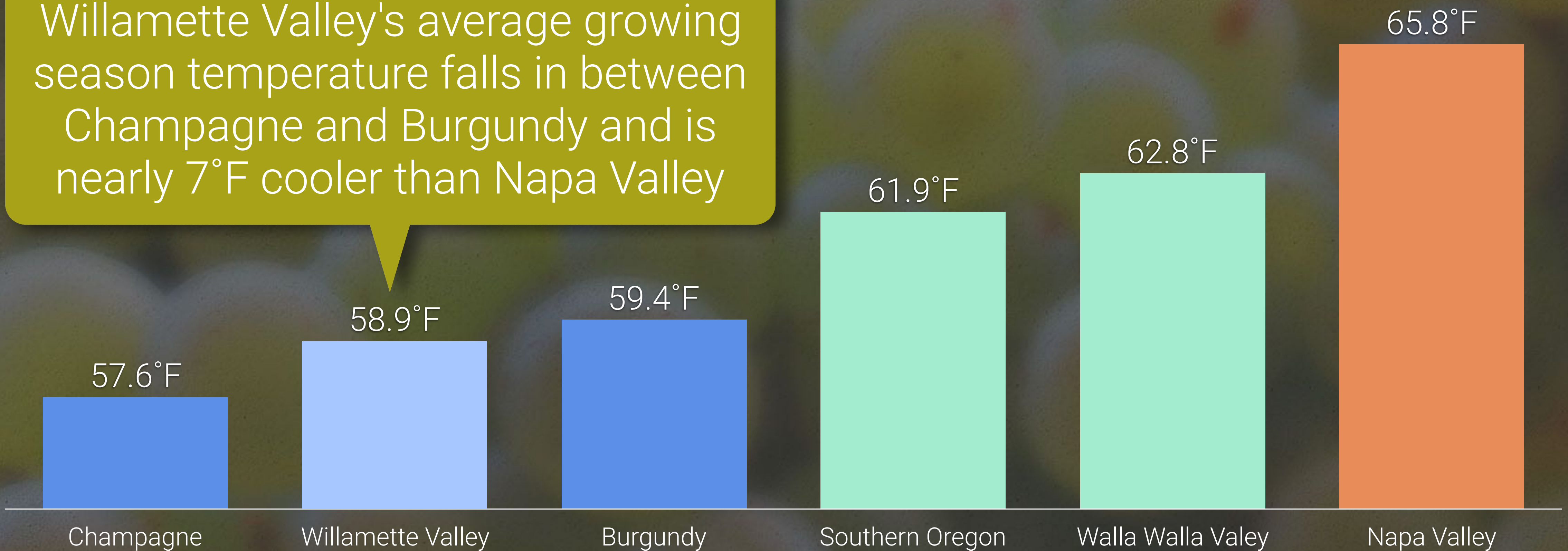
Forecast





Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir

Willamette Valley's average growing season temperature falls in between Champagne and Burgundy and is nearly 7°F cooler than Napa Valley



Oregon Wine Making History & Terroir



The Pioneers



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Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay

The narrative that early Willamette Chardonnay was a failure is a great over generalization and exaggeration...

- Chardonnay, like Pinot noir, had a long learning curve to establish the best growing and wine making practices
- Early attempts at Chardonnay varied considerably, influenced by growing/harvesting decisions, clone selections and wine making approaches
- Many excellent Chardonnays were made, as well as many unremarkable attempts...



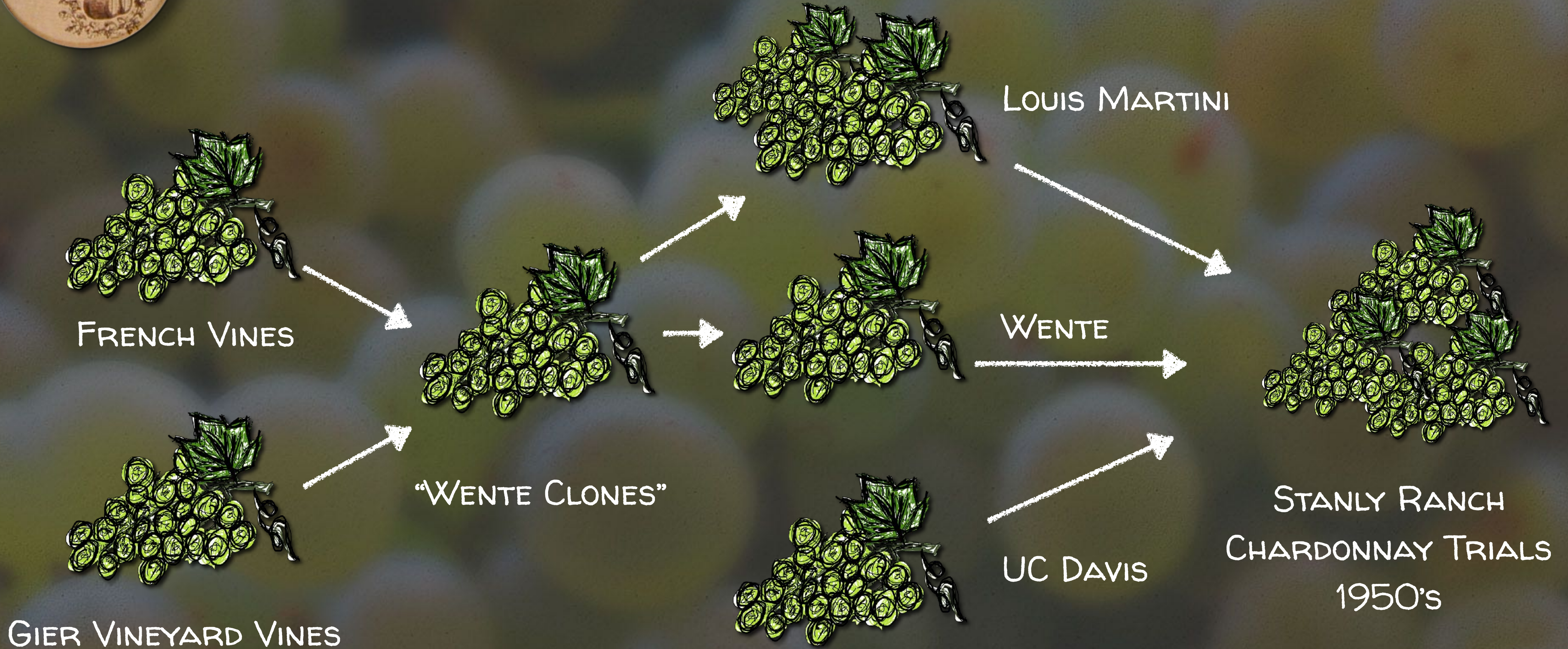
Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay

Common issues attributed to early WV Chardonnay:

- The fruit would not ripen...
- The grapes were susceptible to mold and fungus...
- The clones were completely unsuited to the region...
- The wines were uninteresting...

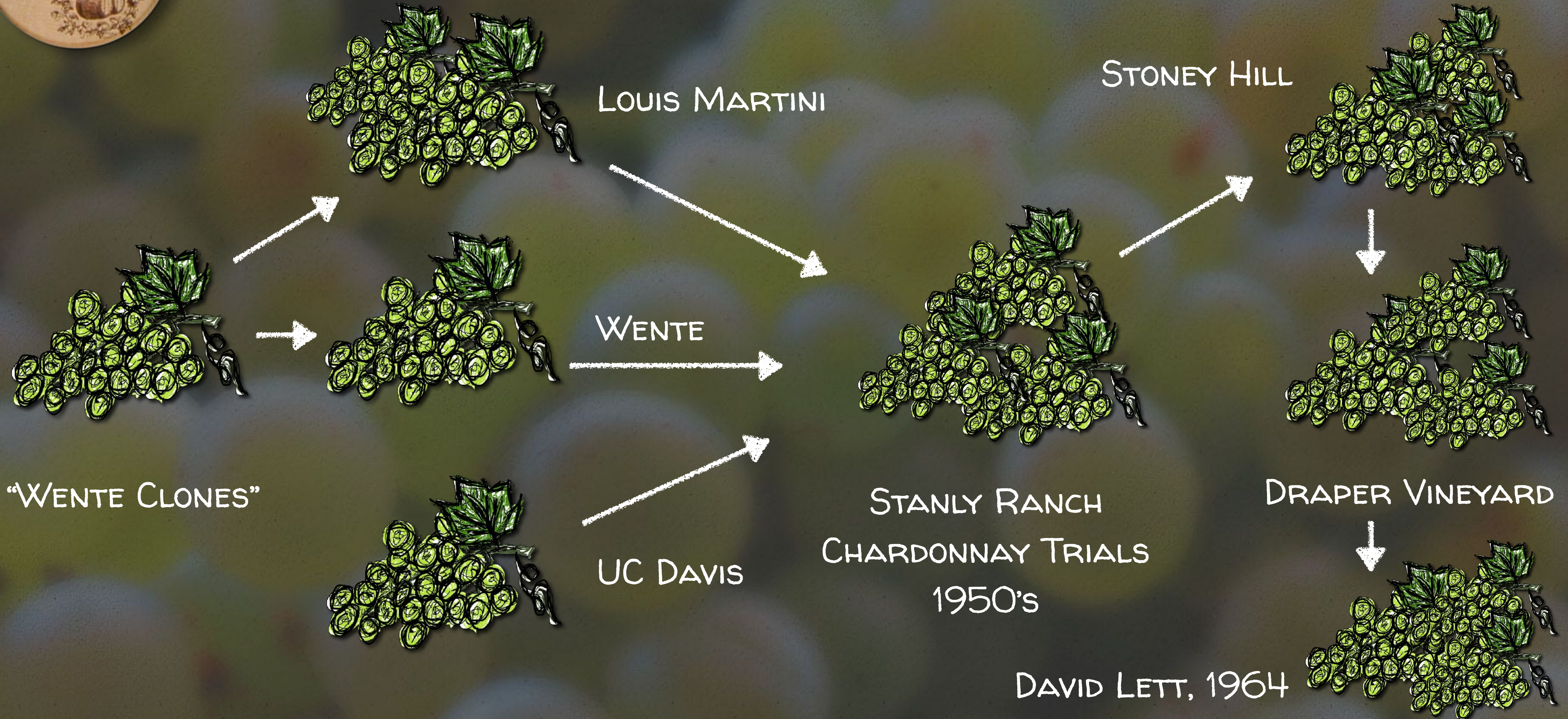


Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay





Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay





Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay



"DRAPER SELECTION"
DAVID LETT, 1964

UCD-4



UCD-5

SELECTION 108
UC DAVIS (1970's)



"WENTE CLONES"
BETHEL HEIGHTS, 1977



Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay



Eyrie Vineyards Estate Chardonnay:

- Oldest Chardonnay vines in the Willamette Valley
- “Draper Selection” Chardonnay from Napa Valley with history going back to the original 1912 vines in California
- Oak barrel fermentation and aging on the lees, no stirring
- Winemaker: Jason Lett



Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay



Bethel Heights The High Wire Chardonnay:

- 1977 Planting of “pre-prohibition” Wente Clones
- Whole cluster press, 72 hrs juice settling
- Wild ferment in barrel, 16 months French Oak barrel aging, 40% new (light toast)
- 100% ML, No Lees Stirring
- Winemaker: Ben Casteel



Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay

The “real” story on early Chardonnay:

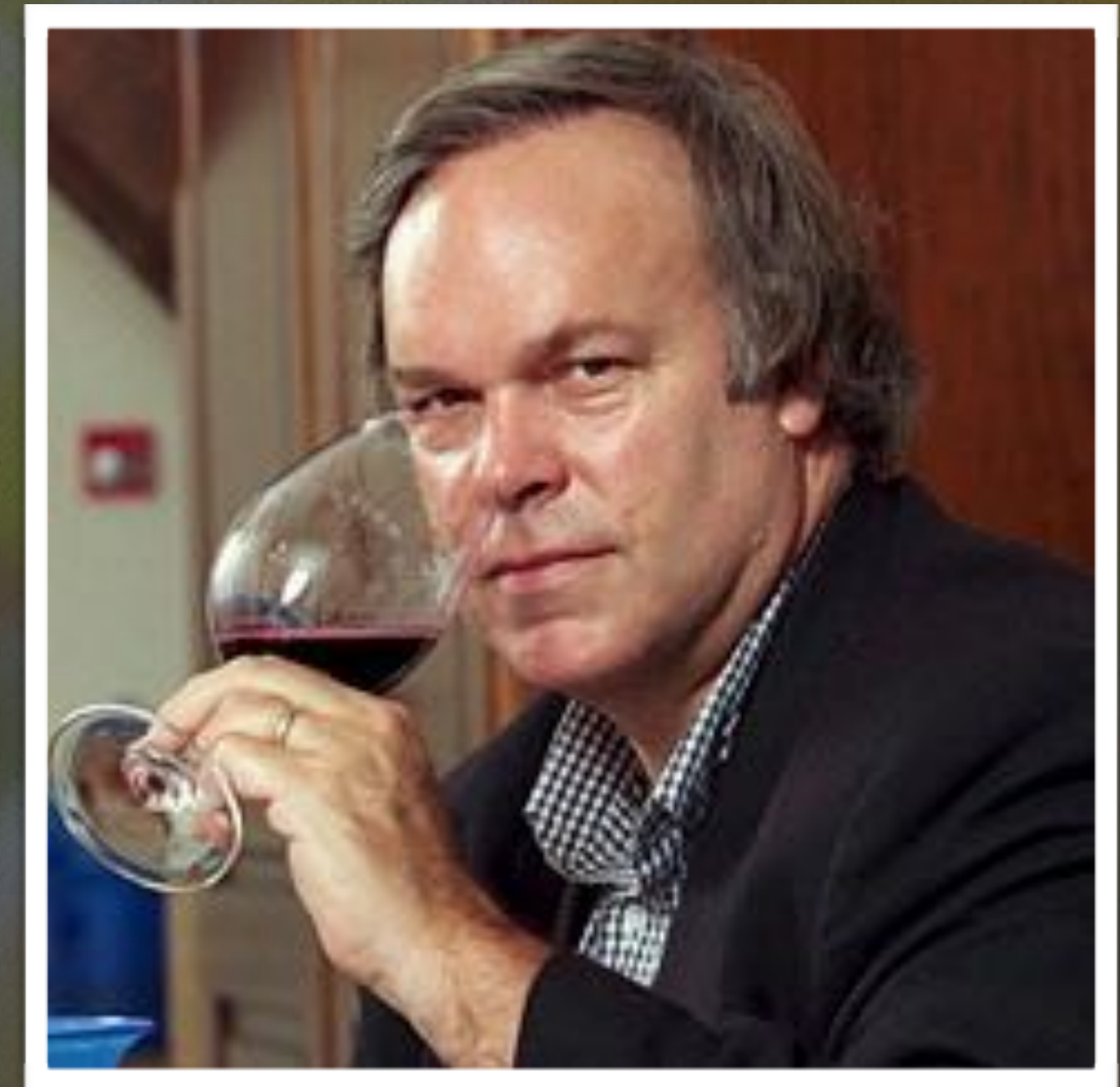
- Willamette growers couldn't emulate Napa-style Chardonnay because the climate is too cool
- The “popular” Selection 108 vines were not well suited to the Willamette Valley...
- The Draper Selection and Old Wente Clone vines can produce excellent wines, but are “unforgiving”
- Chardonnay production has a long learning curve to master



Early Years of Willamette Valley Chardonnay

“These guys don’t know what they have here...”

Overheard as Robert Parker tasted a 1983 vintage Chardonnay during his tour of Oregon in 1985. Parker and his brother-in-law subsequently purchased vineyard land in Willamette Valley and founded Beaux Freres. Their first vintage was in 1990.





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Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones



David Adelsheim interns at Lyceé Viticole in Beaune, France. He notices Chardonnay clones that ripen at the same time as Pinot noir. Ten years will pass before vines would be imported.



Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones

1984



OSU acquires a USDA Import and Quarantine permit. New OSU Enologist, David Heatherbell, arranges the import of 600 Pinot noir clones from Raymond Bernard at the Dijon Research Station. He sends four Chardonnay clones too.. 75, 76, 96 & 98



Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones

1984



David Adelsheim arranges for Clone 95 to be sent to the U.S. during a 1987 trip to Burgundy following a recommendation from Raymond Bernard. Both the 1984 and 1987 vine shipments go through proper Import and Quarantine procedures to allow legal mass plantings.



Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones

1984

1989/1990



In 1989 and 1990, Clones 75, 76, 96, 98 & 95 are released from quarantine. Multiple Willamette Valley wineries plant “test” vineyards for the new vines.



Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones

1989/1990



During the 1990's many prominent wineries are producing Chardonnays of exceptional quality and character. Clones 76 and 95 prove to be the most “interesting” examples.

Arrival of the “Dijon” Clones

1989/1990

Early 2000's



1987



1990's



In the early 2000's the Willamette Valley winegrowers establish ORCA – the Oregon Chardonnay Alliance – to share vineyard and wine making research to further enhance quality



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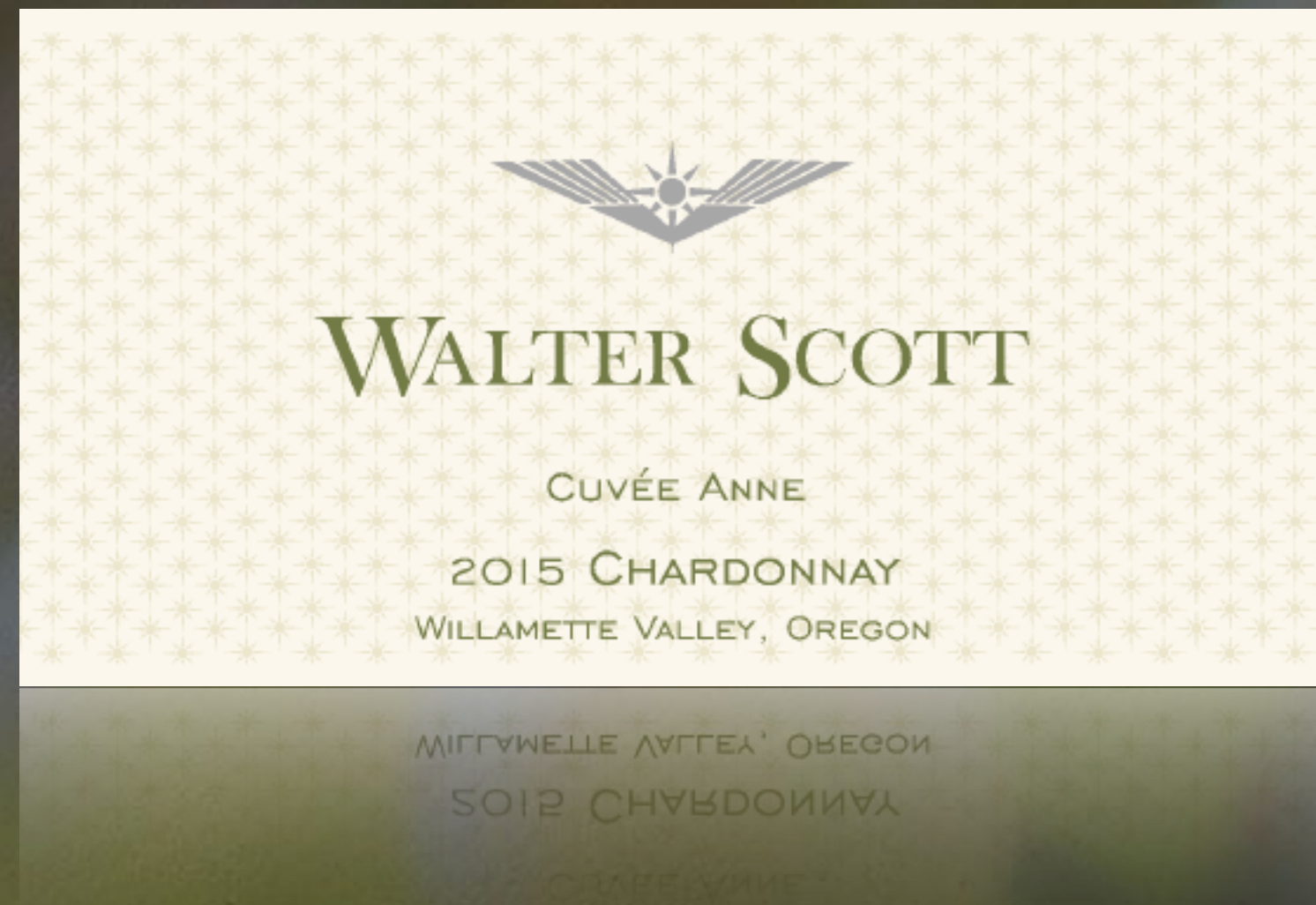
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Willamette Valley Chardonnay Today

Walter Scott Cuvee Anne Chardonnay

- Blended from several sites, including Freedom Hill, X Novo and Gibson Vineyards
- Mostly volcanic soils with some marine and alluvial sediment locations
- Fermented and aged in a new puncheon and four neutral barrels for 11 months with 100% native yeast fermentation and minimal bâtonnage then blended and finished in stainless steel for an additional 3 months
- Winemaker: Ken Pahlow





Willamette Valley Chardonnay Today



Adelsheim "Caitlin's Reserve" Chardonnay

- Three Vineyard Blend of Chardonnay
- 100% French Oak Barrel Fermented and Aged (20% new)
- Malolactic fermentation inhibited
- 10 months aging on the lees, no stirring, with one racking before bottling
- Aged 12 months in bottle before release
- Winemaker: Dave Paige



Willamette Valley Chardonnay Today



Ponzi Aurora Chardonnay

- 100% Oak Barrel Fermented and Aged (30% new)
- 100% malolactic fermentation with wild bacteria
- Lees stirred weekly for first six months, then racked to neutral oak barrels
- Barrel aged 18 mo and bottle aged 6 months before release
- Laurelwood Soil Vineyards
- Winemaker: Luisa Ponzi



Willamette Valley Chardonnay Today

Adelsheim 2007 Stoller Vineyard Chardonnay



- Single Vineyard Chardonnay from Stoller Vineyard grapes in the Dundee Hills
- 100% French Oak Barrel Fermented and Aged (20% new)
- No Malolactic Fermentation
- Aged 10 months on the lees, no stirring, with a single racking before bottling
- Estate cellar aged since bottling in 2008
- Winemaker: Dave Paige



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Questions



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Thank You