

SKUNK

THE EMERALD THEN CUP AND NOW

**BREEDING
TIPS** • FINDING
THE RIGHT STUD

POT LIARS
A BRIEF HISTORY

**WILLY G'S
LEBANESE**



USA 7.99

CAN 9.99

DISPLAY UNTIL MAR 31, 2019



www.skunkmagazine.com

JANUARY 2019
VOLUME 12, ISSUE 6

TERROR

the taste of a place

WORDS FRENCHY CANNOLI



THE WORD ‘TERROIR’ for a native French person is the source of uniqueness and quality in what we cherish above all, food and wine. Terroir expresses the ecological uniqueness of every region of France, and the products made there. Terroir is the delicate symbiosis between the land, the climate, the plant kingdom, and the humans who nurture and enhance the characteristics of the land.

The land and climate are the dominant elements of a terroir, the soil, in all its complexity from its composition and structure to the microorganisms it nurtures, is the life-giving source of all living organisms thriving above ground. The climate is the shaping force defining the life-cycle constraints of plant's evolution, adaptation and productivity as much as the farming practices.

The most abundant terroirs on the planet have been at the origin of sedentary life and civilization. If indeed “agriculture grew from human behaviors and from responses or changes in plants and animals, leading without conscious plan toward domestication of plants and animals,”¹ then the land's abundance and fertility has been a defining factor of human evolution.

The terroir is the embodiment of the life-giving essence of a geographical region, incarnated in the bounty harvested, it is “the taste of a place.”²

The qualities and characteristics inherent to a specific region of production cannot be duplicated even in apparently similar geographical conditions. The land and the climate are the essential links between a growing region and an agricultural product.

Geographical and climatic conditions have determined the evolution of plants, promoted sedentary life, given birth to agriculture and have had an enormous influence on the evolution of farming. Terroir is the essence of biodiversity, a living heritage in constant evolution, the very opposite of globalization and monoculture.

It is the notion of terroir that is the basis of the concept of Appellations d'Origine.³

Agricultural regions are the lifeblood of uniqueness and diversity, the source of any agricultural product's excellence and such geographical intrinsic values makes the demarcation of any specific terroir a complicated matter of vital importance. Scientific studies in soil science, agronomy, history, geography, sociology, and ethnography done by the National Institute of Origin and Quality are mandatory in France to prove the importance of any given region.⁴

The soil is a vital element of “the taste of a place” however all soils will not be equal in any given region, and as such a product planted in an inadequate soil cannot benefit from the “appellation d'origine” of a renowned regional terroir.

The genetic quality of the agricultural product grown and the farming methodology practiced over generations are the other half of the terroir equation.

The quality of a product and the “savoir-faire” behind such quality were the primary forces behind the recognition awarded to the most famous terroirs of the world.

However rich a soil is, there

cannot be an expression of the full potential of “the taste of a place” without great genetics and the dedication and knowledge of generations of farmers to bring out the full potential of the land and climate.

“It is not enough to validate the authenticity of the origins of a product, it is vital to ensure the quality of the product grown as well.”⁵

The concept of Cannabis terroir seemed far-fetched when introduced a few years ago, but it has now taken roots far beyond the Cannabis farmer's community of the Emerald Triangle where it started. A concept has, however, to be proven to become a recognized fact. The French government's regulations guidelines would have to be followed to demonstrate the importance of our Cannabis growing region and the uniqueness of the genetics, not a simple matter when half a dozen scientific disciplines are mandatory to ensure recognition and acceptance.

Northern California can be considered as the epitome example of quality born from generations of farming selective genetics, and the force behind the worldwide recognition the region has earned. As such, Cannabis terroir must be more than a concept because terroirs are recognized by the quality of the product produced there before being acknowledged as a terroir.

I experienced the depth of Cannabis terroir diversity for the first time in India, at the feet of the Himalayas, making charas from wild cannabis plants. The seemingly unlimited ability to express the characteristics of

1 *The Third Chimpanzee, the Evolution and Future of Human Animals*, by Jared Diamond, 2006

2 *The Taste of Place, “A cultural journey into terroir”* by Amy B. Trubek, University of California Press; First edition (August 17, 2009)

3 www.inalco.gouv.fr/eng/Official-signs-identifying-quality-and-origin/PDO-AOC0

4 www.inalco.gouv.fr/eng/The-National-Institute-of-origin-and-quality-Institut-national-de-l-origine-et-de-la-qualite-INALCO/Missions/Demarcation-of-production-areas-and-protection-of-soils

5 www.inalco.gouv.fr/Institut-national-de-l-origine-et-de-la-qualite-INALCO/Ouvrages-sur-les-signes-de-qualite-ou-d-origine

TERROIR : THE TASTE OF A PLACE

its surrounding ecosystem the wild Cannabis plants possess was an unforgettable experience. Caressing the flower of a live Cannabis plant to collect resin on the palm of your hands creates an intimate and unique relationship with the plant but more importantly with its birthplace.

Cannabis can under certain natural conditions express the exact terpene profile of the dominant plant of its growing habitat. The most unforgettable example I have of such a happenstance was of a patch of wild Cannabis growing in a field of wild strawberries that produced a Charas with a powerful and unique berry terpene profile and another batch growing under cover of some type of wild nut bushes which made a Charas with the most interesting nutty terpene profile.

I have also experienced the taste of many places in Northern California, the same genetics grown in different regions of Northern California will express different and unique terpenes undertones that will alter the overall aroma of the genetic to an amazing level. The farmer's dedication, knowledge, and approach to farming also create recognizable, unique terpenes undertones.

However, the taste of many of these places can too often be sourced to the difference in soil recipes and not on the uniqueness of a specific parcel of land.

The nature of the earth is so complex and intricate that it requires the study of the soil in its natural environment known as pedology and the study of the influence of soil on living organisms known as pedaphology to fathom this powerful life-giver and shaper. The intrinsic life-giving and shaping essence of any soil is hard

to tame and nurture in nature and impossible to recreate artificially.

It is a power that cannot be duplicated in a pot; the human factor controlling the soil composition and the living organism within will forfeit the uniqueness of the local nurturing ecosystem and its evolutionary potential for diversity, the trademark of a terroir.

We need to define the specificity of the many terroirs of California accurately and not merely settle for the approximation of agricultural regions. Studying the soil and the life it supports is mandatory to fully understand the nourishing force behind the "taste of a place." The knowledge of the soil is mandatory to truly become a nurturing and enhancing element of a specific ecosystem and harness the life-giving power, the very essence of a place.

Is there anyone within the Cannabis industry in California who can apply soil science to define the characteristics of the land and parcel it accordingly?

Soil science is "the study of soil as a natural resource on the surface of the Earth including soil formation, classification and mapping; physical, chemical, biological, and fertility properties of soils; and these properties in relation to the use and management of soils." (Wikipedia)

Soil science by itself is not enough to capture all the vital elements of a terroir. A survey of soil management and crop production (agronomy), of the historical background of the region and of all its geographical characteristics must complement the knowledge of the specificity of the soil. Sociology, the scientific study of society, patterns of social

relationships, social interaction, and culture of everyday life may seem way beyond the point but think for a minute of the impact three generations of Hippies had on Northern California society, the culture and the evolution of cannabis as an agricultural plant.

The recognition of a terroir is of the utmost importance for any agricultural region.

"The demarcation of a geographic territory is the expression of the history of a community osmosis with the land, the bridge between the physical and biological worlds. The specific farming and production methodologies born from such a complementary relation are as such the source of uniqueness and recognition of an agricultural product inherent to the specific geographical region. It is the fundamental principle of any appellation."⁶

We may need serious professional and scientific support to define precisely the many terroirs of California to the level necessary for global acceptance, however since our small farmers are already recognized worldwide as among the finest producers of high quality cannabis on the planet, the many unique Cannabis cultivars of Northern California are all the evidence we should need to prove the soundness and value of our quest for recognition and protection. 🌿

Frenchy Cannoli /

is a consultant, educator, and writer in the Cannabis industry with special focus on hash making using traditional methods. Frenchy can be reached through his website at: www.frenchycannoli.com or seen on Instagram @frenchycannoli.