

# WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

EXCERPTS FROM CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

**STEVE HEIMOFF'S**

**WINE BLOG** | OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2009



## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A COUNTY LINE MAKES... OR DOESN'T

Back in the 1990s, a young couple, Casidy Ward and Lynn Hofacket, purchased a parcel of land high up on the slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains. They planted four clones of Cabernet Sauvignon at elevations ranging from 900 feet to 1,700 feet, on a steep slope whose soils consisted of sandy clay loam and degraded volcanic basalt, which is more or less **perfect for Cabernet**. Later, they hired the veteran winemaker, **Marco DiGuilio**, to make the wine, which is called **HIDDEN RIDGE**.

**[Hidden Ridge] is a very good Cabernet, as fine as just about anything from Napa Valley. I gave the 2005 "55% Slope" 95 POINTS.**

Their vineyard was technically in Sonoma County. *The only appellation it was entitled to was "Sonoma County" because it was on the wrong side of all the AVA lines in Napa Valley. Despite being on the same range as Spring Mountain and Diamond Mountain, they couldn't use those AVAs because the appellation boundaries end at the Napa-Sonoma county line.*

**Very fine Cabs and blends come from Sonoma County, from Paso Robles and other regions, not just from Napa Valley....**

When it comes to deciding what wine to buy, the winery's reputation is your best bet. After that come a range of variables: price, wine type, the food you're pairing it with, and perhaps even if you have a personal connection with the winery. **Appellation also counts, but not as much as some interests would have you believe.**



Hidden Ridge 55% Slope Estate Vineyard

Steve Heimoff,  
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