

TERROIR

In some way Ekkeland Götze has achieved the thing we hard cadre of terroiristes vainly dream of. He has managed to delicately trap and keep alive in some dimension that delicate, furtive - and even to many that speculative - spirit of terroir, and do so with a permanence that will long hold true on the paper, decades after our liquid attempts have faded and sickened within their glass cocoons.

Searching for terroir through the vine is now a fashionable winegrowing marketing mantra. Colette wrote over seventy years ago that 'Alone in the vegetable kingdom, the vine makes the true taste of the earth intelligible.' (1) Yet most of the modern winegrowing and winemaking techniques obscure and even obliterate the chance of meeting the vines spiritual and sensual revelation of the 'somewhere-ness' or 'here-ness' winegrowers especially drone on about attempting to let speak through our bottles. (2)

Ekkeland's prospecting and art allows the 'here-ness around' the planet another voice. Through colour and texture one might say he has made terroir even more recognizable in our impatient age. Like snowflakes, no two of the terragraphics are the same. Together in quiet rank and file they sparkle like jewels, alive and powerful enough to force a rethinking of the bland Anglo-saxon term 'Earth Tones.'

Our own patch of the planet in Prince Edward County has soils that are mere babies, maybe 4,000 to 10,000 years old, formed by the last glaciers to pass over. Yet they also have been ground and conjured from some of the oldest limestones, laid down about 460 million years ago. It is our good fortune in abiding on these shallow, stony limestone soils that has set us novice winegrowers to work; our belief in them is what obliged us to summon Ekkeland.

There is something so brilliant and just in this artists own name EkkeLAND; the passion and rigour he brings to the terragraphics is immediately recognizable to winegrowers attempting to commune with terroir in a less direct manner. Californian Randall Grahm, never short of Raisin detres, once wrote a few years back that 'To sincerely pursue terroir, one must, as a winemaker, learn to subordinate ones ego, to put ones stylistic signature at the corner of the wine-painting rather than squarely in the middle...'

He could well have been writing of Ekkeland Götze's art...right down to the impressed seal at the lower right of each piece.

Geoff Heinrichs, September 2005

1 < Seule, dans le règne végétal, la vigne nous rend intelligible ce quest le véritable saveur de la terre.>

Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, Prisons et Paradis, 1932

2 For a great philosophical rant on this, read Randall Grahms speech < The Reign of Terroir >, given on May 21st at the Terroir International 2000 conference.