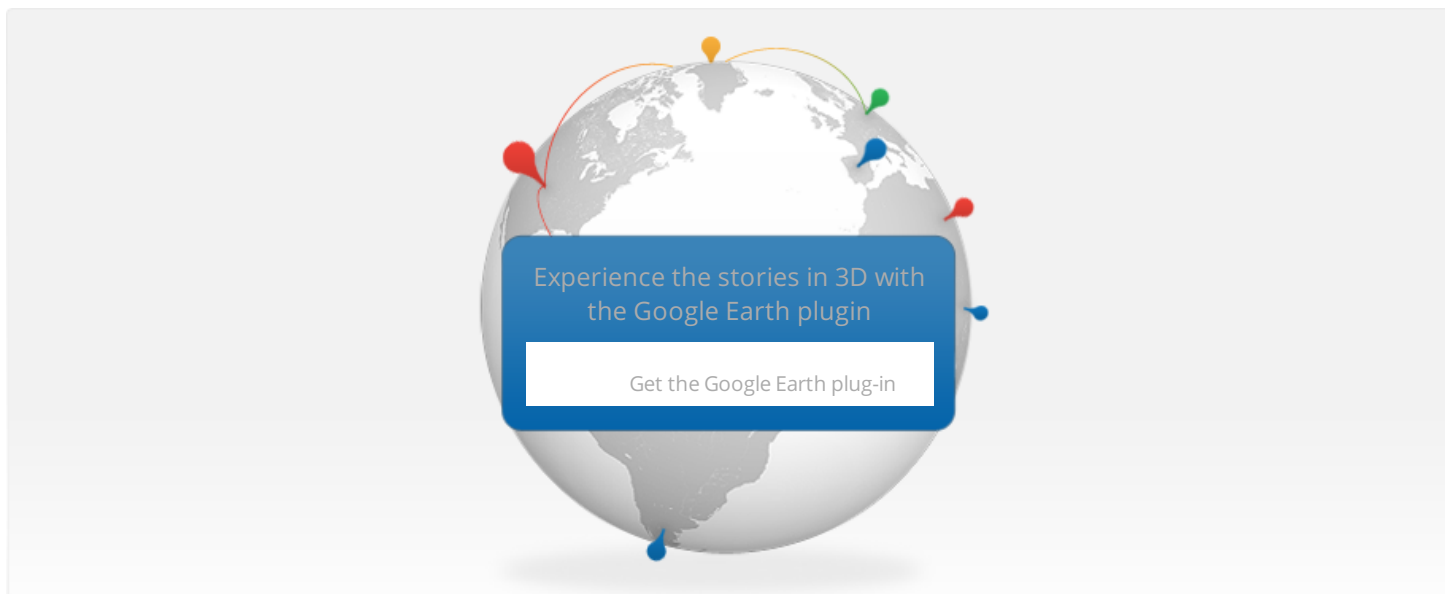


## Virtual Travel

Seeing the world from the comfort of home



All themes

2005



2006



2007



# 2005

**Date:**

October 2005

**Geo Coordinates:**

45° 35' 37" N / 121° 2' 26" W

**Behind the Project:**

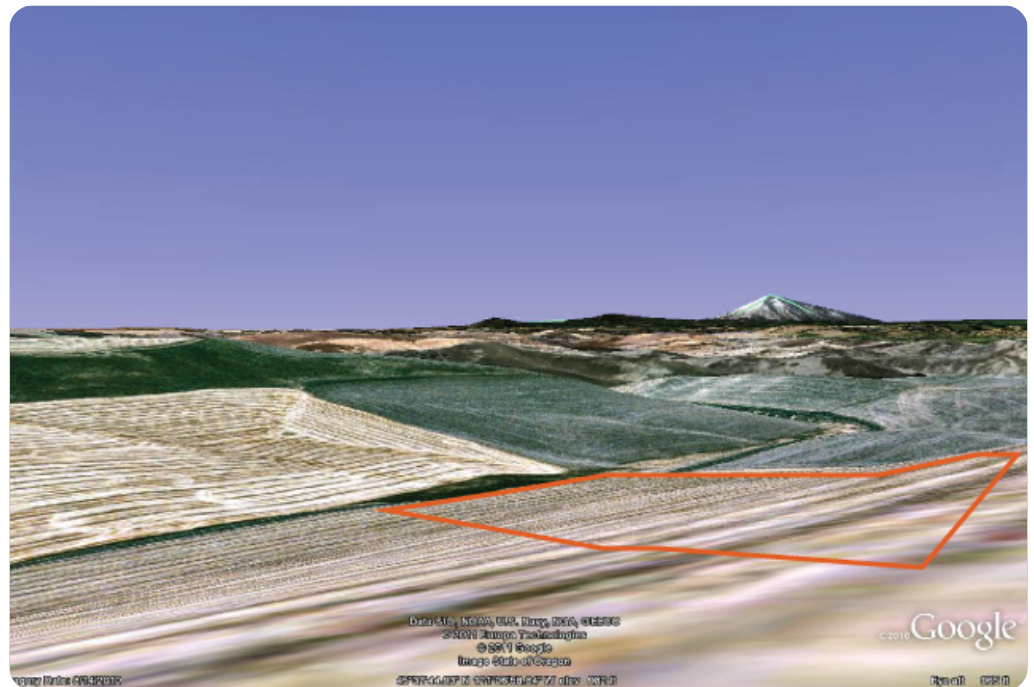
› <http://www.thegradedall...>

## Zooming in on a dream of sunshine, grapes and wine

You're thousands of miles and two years from home when your decades-long dream of a creating a vineyard suddenly beckons. You can: 1. Wait; 2. Call a realtor and wait; or 3. Try out a beta-version of a new program called Google Earth and get that dream going yourself. Living in Ireland in 2005, Oregon residents Scott Elder and Stephanie LaMonica went for it. Relying on Google Earth, they found their perfect family farmland -- without ever setting foot on it. In 2006, they planted their vineyard just outside The Dalles, Oregon, a place they never even knew existed.

With the dream of sunshine, grapes and wine pushing him on throughout a dark, blustery Irish winter, Scott, a scientist by education but Kansas farm kid at heart, got to work, poring over the Oregon landscape from thousands of miles away. Like a modern-day explorer, he was looking for the undiscovered gem, a hillside that would grow the distinct wines he had envisioned from his time spent in France years earlier, under the tutelage of noted French wine merchant, Jean-Yves Belin.

Once he identified The Dalles environ as "it," his task grew tenfold, for he'd never personally been there. Scott spent dozens upon dozens of hours with Google Earth, uncovering every detail he could to find the most suitable land and make a well-informed decision. He scrutinized the earth's contours, studying the steepness, aspect and elevation -- any variation relevant to a vineyard -- and panned 360 degrees to inspect the vistas around him. Then he transposed the data he'd collected, including growing degree days, temperature highs and lows, etc., across his zoomed-in maps from Google Earth.



The Grand Dalles vineyard viewed in Google Earth.

“We could not have done this without Google Earth, period. Scott was able to put himself in a place he had never seen before, learn all about it, and make a life-changing decision based on what he discovered. Most people use Google Earth simply to find restaurants, or peek in on their childhood home miles away, but not us. We used it to find a dream.” – Scott Elder and Stephanie LaMonica, [TheGrandeDalles.com](http://TheGrandeDalles.com)

Soon Scott had assembled a long list of properties, none of the land even for sale, and while still living in Ireland enlisted a realtor to go knocking on landowners' doors. On the day after the couple returned to the U.S. in late 2005, they met the one landowner willing to sell some property and struck a tentative deal.

From that humble start, wind-blown vines now grow. What was once an e-folder of maps and data sourced

through Google Earth is today a family's proud endeavor; since planting in the "undiscovered" wilds of Wasco County's wheat country, The Grande Dalles wines have been celebrated at a dinner at The James Beard House in New York and praised by one of America's most noted wine experts, Joel Butler MW. And others are following in these trailblazers' footsteps; at least two individuals have begun vineyard development in the vicinity, all thanks to Scott's persistence and, of course, to Google Earth.



The Grand Dalles vineyard six years after discovery.

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