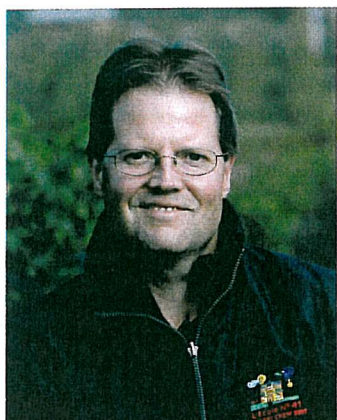


L'Ecole N°41



REGIONAL

Founded: 1983**Winemakers:**

Martin Clubb and Mike Sharon

Viticulturists: Martin Clubb and
Chris Banek**Acres owned:** 175**Annual production:** 35,000 cases**Estate grown:** 75%**Owners:** Martin and Megan Clubb**Known for:** Classic Washington
wines, by way of Walla Walla**Location:** Lowden, WA**Website:** lecole.com

Martin Clubb

The Wall is a 20-foot man-made basalt cliff in the Walla Walla Valley's new Sevein Vineyard development. It marks the western edge of L'Ecole No 41's new 20-acre parcel planted in 2007, which owners Marty and Megan Clubb are calling Ferguson Ridge, after Megan's father and L'Ecole founder Baker Ferguson. Contractors had been extracting material for the roads through the new vineyard land and had chipped away until they'd exposed a more or less solid chunk of basalt, through which rainwater has been percolating for millions of years. It had decomposed into colorful rock and was glazed like a raku ceramic surface. Now that it's exposed, the Wall gleams weirdly in the moments before sunset.

The soils above the rock are minimal. Clubb, along with others attempting to develop vineyards at Sevein, are ripping into the rock and pulling it into the soil, creating a loess and chipped rock mélange to serve as home to mostly Bordeaux varieties. No one knows yet the sort of flavors that will result at Ferguson Ridge, but there's no doubt they'll be distinctive.

Clubb is clearly excited at the prospect of a new Walla Walla terroir to grace those already on L'Ecole's roster. As the winery celebrates its 25th year, L'Ecole No 41 wines have come to embody the vast frontier of Washington State, from its iconic Columbia Valley bottlings of merlot, semillon and chardonnay to its more homebound vineyard selections from Walla Walla.



Of these, L'Ecole's standard bearers are Perigee from Seven Hills and Apogee from Pepper Bridge. In 2005, the pair shared top billing. Perigee is typically the more loosely structured wine, with a brighter fruit template and a lightly floral tone, like cherry or plum blossoms. Apogee's Pepper Bridge fruit brings out a tighter weave in its structure, greater concentration and a little more depth. Not long from now, from Ferguson Ridge, there will be a third point of comparison. —P.J.C.

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 93** '05 Walla Walla Valley Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard \$50 (6/08)
93 '05 Walla Walla Valley Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard \$50 (6/08)
91 '05 Walla Walla Valley Seven Hills Vineyard Syrah \$37 (2/08)