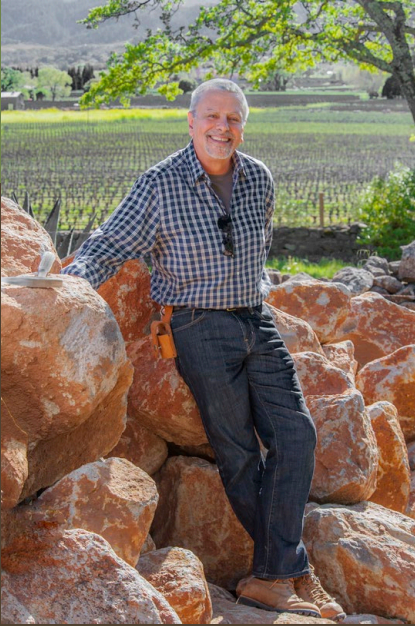


## BIOGRAPHY

# Ed Bortugno, Geologist



Mapping the geology of large portions of the state, including the Napa, Sonoma and Salinas Valleys, has given Ed deep insight into the forces that created California's acclaimed viticultural zones.

As a geologist working for the State of California, Ed has spent most of his professional life investigating the world underneath the soil. "The geologic history of the earth has always fascinated me," says Ed, who for the first half of his career, worked for the California Division of Mines and Geology (now the California Geological Survey). Mapping the geology of large portions of the state, including the Napa, Sonoma and Salinas Valleys, has given Ed deep insight into the forces that created California's acclaimed viticultural zones.

"It's no accident that Napa Valley is a great winegrowing area," says the geologist. "From one side of the valley to the other, you can see completely different rocks. On the west side you run into older oceanic sediments, and on the east side you see younger, shallower water sediments that tend to be more continental. When these two mix—when the river grabs soil from one side and then the other—you get variety. You can go just a few feet in an alluvial fan and see different kinds of rocks and soil types."

The grandson of Italian immigrants from the Campania region—from Avellino, a village renowned for its white wines—Ed has wine appreciation in his DNA. But his curiosity about vineyards and their geologic underpinnings emerged more gradually, over decades of nightly tastings with his wife, Angela Bortugno.

"I listen to vintners talk about how soils play a huge role in grape quality, but it's rock that produces soil," says Ed. "How do rocks affect soil, and what effect do they have on the wine? That's where my interest is and the part that I enjoy sharing."

Ed has collaborated on a video series exploring Burgundy's geology, meeting with wine producers and a French geologist to try to decode the secrets of those subsoils. "I have never seen limestone anywhere in California like the limestone I saw there," recalls Ed.

Later in his career, as senior geologist for the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Ed focused on analyzing natural hazards, like earthquake faults and landslides. Even today, driving around Napa Valley, he observes the landscape differently than a layperson. "I think I look in more detail anyway," he says. "Recently, on the east side of Napa, I had to stop to look at this road cut that had a beautiful layering of sedimentary rock capped by a thick pile of basalt that erupted two or three million years ago. Vintners look at soil profiles, but rock is where soil begins." ●

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