

*Soil Characteristics of Champagne
Vineyards*



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
UNDERGRADUATE DIVISION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
IN
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**

Summer 2003

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Preface

Vine and wine are one of the most cultural features of France. When we think about France, we usually imagine fresh bread, good gastronomy and wine. French wines are well known for their quality and are famous throughout the world. France produces one of the largest volumes of quality wine in the world; no other country produces it in such diversity. There are a million hectares of vineyards in France, creating a volume of 70 million hectoliters of wine per year. Forty-seven per cent of this surface is for wine of “*appellation contrôlée*”, which corresponds to good quality wines. French wines are classified by their names of origin and their geographical origin. This classification emphasizes the importance of the original environment including the climate, the geology, the soil, the landscape, the type of vine, and the cultural heritage... The word *terroir* in French means the sum of all the natural, environmental, and human factors. It means that a wine has the characteristics of its *terroir*, and each *terroir* is different, which makes each wine unique.