



Situated along the rolling hills of Orange County just west of Gordonsville, Horton Vineyards is one of the most innovative wineries in the country. Utilizing the latest viticultural techniques, owner Dennis Horton is charting a new generation of wines made from Viognier, the premier grape of France's Rhone Valley, and other premium varieties from southern France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Russia/Georgia. He continues to explore new varietals to discover the best that Virginia viticulture can produce.

Horton Vineyards started in 1983 as a small winemaking venture with a small home vineyard in Madison County. It did not take Horton long to realize that, although the Virginia summers were warm enough to ripen almost any grape variety, the humid conditions favored growing grapes with thicker skins and loose clusters. Thus began his search for varieties that would flourish in Virginia's climate and had the capacity to produce some of the finest wines of the world.

Initially, the search was concentrated on the warm growing regions of southern France, and before planting any additional grapes, Dennis Horton traveled to the Rhone Valley in France. In his research, one grape in particular seemed to keep coming up as perfect-Viognier. It had a thick skin and loose clusters, perfect for the Virginia climate. The decision was made to plant Viognier, along with lesser amounts of Marsanne, Mourvedre, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, and several other grape varieties like the native grape Norton. Dennis was intrigued by the idea of reviving this historic grape which had almost died out during prohibition.



In 1988, Dennis and partner Joan Bieda acquired 55 acres of land to launch Horton Vineyards. The first small crop was harvested in 1991 and made into wine at Montdomaine Cellars. Dennis took over management of Montdomaine, and produced Chardonnay and Cabernet under that label, in addition to his own line of Rhone Varieties.

Construction was started on a magnificent new stone winery in 1992, with stunning underground cellars, a wonderful vaulted ceiling tasting room and spectacular views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The following year saw the first crush at the new Horton Cellars and in 1994 additional acreage came into production with plantings of Bordeaux, Portuguese and Spanish varietals as well as additional varietals of the Rhone Valley. The national success of these wines has demonstrated that if the right grapes are planted for the climate of Virginia, the results can be stunning.

Horton consistently wins medals in national and international competitions. Their 2014 Petit Manseng was recently awarded a Gold in the 2016 Virginia Governor's Cup. The winery produces over 30 different wines including Viognier, Eclipse, Mourvedre, Ivy Creek Chardonnay, Dionysus, Cabernet Franc plus fruit wines including Peach, Pear, Blackberry, Blueberry and more, as well as the only Vintage Port made in Virginia.

The Tasting Room at Horton Vineyards is the place to explore these distinctive wines. It is open seven days a week from 10 am to 5 pm. You'll be welcomed by a friendly staff extremely knowledgeable about the wine. A hugely popular event at the winery is the Annual Pig Roast coming up on July 16. Tickets are always at a premium, so reserve early.



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