



TO BE . . . OR, TANNAT TO BE.

By Matthew Brown

After decades of experimentation, Virginia has developed a diverse wine industry with rich variation in grapes and wine styles. However, we can all recognize a few grape varieties as having become Virginia staples: Viognier, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot are just a few of these. It is easy for us to focus in on these successful few and to overlook some of the exciting stars rising up from the Commonwealth's vineyards.

Perhaps the most interesting variety to make a grand entrance on the viticultural stage is **Tannat**. In 2014, two Virginia Tannats earned gold medals in the annual Governor's Cup competition and two more made the gold medal cut for 2015, as well. This places these wines among the best in the state even though the variety itself is not commonly known to the casual wine drinker.

Like many grapes, Tannat is a French transplant which, in modern times, is mostly concentrated in the small French region of Madiran. There, it is appreciated as a dark, tannic, and full bodied wine of immense complexity. It yields many of these same traits from the soils of Virginia. For great Virginia Tannat, look for wines from **Fabbioli Cellars**, **Horton Vineyards** and **Virginia Wineworks**. It is best enjoyed with a few years of age and when served with grilled meats or other hearty dishes.



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