



***Commonwealth of Virginia***  
***Office of Governor Bob McDonnell***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 4, 2012

**Office of the Governor**

Contact: Jeff Caldwell

Phone: (804) 225-4260

Email: [Jeff.Caldwell@Governor.Virginia.Gov](mailto:Jeff.Caldwell@Governor.Virginia.Gov)

**Virginia Wine Marketing Office**

Contact: Annette Boyd

Phone: (804) 344-8200

Email: [annette.boyd@viriniawine.org](mailto:annette.boyd@viriniawine.org)

**Virginia Named One of the 10 Best Wine Travel  
Destinations of 2012 by Wine Enthusiast**

*~Commonwealth Joins World's Top Wine Regions in Prestigious  
Listing~*

**Magazine Cites State's Rich History, Natural Beauty, and Wine Makers in Selection**

**RICHMOND** – *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* has named Virginia as one of the 10 best wine travel destinations for 2012. The [article](#), listed online and in the February issue of *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*, highlights Virginia as one of only three domestic destinations to make the list of wine regions that are ideal for wine lovers to visit in 2012. Virginia was named along with regions in Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Hungary, Germany, France, Chile and two regions in California. The article cites Virginia's rich history, natural beauty and wine makers as some of the many reasons why Virginia is a hot wine travel destination. Virginia is home to more than 200 wineries statewide.

“Virginia is in excellent company in this list of *Wine Enthusiast's* 10 best wine travel destinations for 2012, and I applaud our wineries and wine makers on this achievement,” said Governor Bob McDonnell. “We are well on our way to being recognized as the premiere wine destination of the East Coast, which is one of my administration's top agricultural and tourism priorities. I have great confidence that this article will bring even more tourists to visit our wineries across the state and continue to build our reputation as the ideal travel destination for people who love to try new wines.”

Raising the profile of Virginia wines and wine tourism are key components of the governor's economic development and jobs creation initiatives. The governor has promoted Virginia wines at the Virginia Executive Mansion and throughout Virginia, on domestic business recruitment visits, and on international trade and marketing missions to Great Britain, China, South Korea, Israel and India. First Lady Maureen McDonnell has also incorporated wine and wine tourism promotions into her First Lady Initiative Team Effort or FLITE. More domestic and international promotions are planned for 2012.

"Virginia's vibrant wineries and talented wine makers are becoming less of an insider's secret. Indeed, the word is getting out that some amazing, well-balanced, old-world styled wines are being made right here in the Commonwealth. With our history, beautiful scenery, and ability to create world class wines, Virginia deserves to be recognized alongside the other amazing international wine regions listed in *Wine Enthusiast*," said Todd P. Haymore, Virginia Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry.

According to the article on WineMag.com, *Wine Enthusiast Magazine* states, "Historically significant sites, picturesque pastoral landscapes, elegant equestrians and affable winemakers set Virginia apart as an excellent wine destination on the East Coast. With six AVAs and nearly 200 wineries to explore in every part of the state, a comprehensive visit is nearly impossible."

"The fact that Virginia has wineries in every region of the Commonwealth sets us apart as a wine travel destination," said Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. "Where else in the world can you enjoy bluegrass music at a winery, kayak to a winery, taste local wines at a national park, sip local wines at a National Historic Landmark or bike from winery to winery? All those experiences are found in Virginia."

Tourism is an instant revenue generator for Virginia. In 2010 tourism generated \$19 billion in revenue, supported over 204,000 jobs and provided \$1.3 billion in state and local taxes. It is estimated that approximately one million people include a visit to a Virginia winery while visiting the state. Sales of Virginia wine reached a record high in fiscal year 2011 with more than 462,000 cases sold. This figure marked a sales increase of more than 11 percent over the previous fiscal year. Virginia is now the nation's fifth largest wine producer and seventh largest wine grape producer. According to the most recent economic impact study, the Virginia wine industry employs approximately 3,000 people and contributes almost \$350 million to the Virginia economy on an annual basis. The study reflected the impact of 120 wineries in 2005; today, there are more than 200 farm wineries in the state. A new economic impact study will be released in 2012.

Visit [www.Virginia.org/wine](http://www.Virginia.org/wine) to learn more about wine travel in Virginia or call 1-800-VISITVA to request a free, Virginia is for Lovers Travel guide. To learn more about Virginia's wineries including wine varietals and special events, or to request a 2012 Virginia Wine Guide, go to [www.VirginiaWine.org](http://www.VirginiaWine.org).

###

*Note to media: Find the complete Wine Enthusiast story on Virginia at the following link:*

<http://www.winemag.com/Wine-Enthusiast-Magazine/Web-2011/Virginia/>

*Visit [www.vatravelstories.com](http://www.vatravelstories.com), the official pressroom of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, for wine-related images available for publication.*