



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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Inaugural Virginia Wine Summit Kicks Off
October Wine Month

Steve Spurrier, Legendary Wine Connoisseur, Offers Keynote Address



[PHOTO 1](#) [PHOTO 2](#) [PHOTO 3](#)

(Photo Courtesy of Michael White, Governor's Photographer)

RICHMOND - Governor Bob McDonnell and First Lady Maureen McDonnell hosted the first annual Virginia Wine Summit on October 2 at the Richmond Marriott. The sold-out event brought together domestic and international wine experts and industry leaders to taste Virginia wines and discuss key topics in moving the Virginia wine industry forward.

Internationally acclaimed British wine authority Steven Spurrier was the keynote speaker who addressed the summit at lunch. Spurrier, a consultant editor to *Decanter* and President of the Circle of Wine Writers, also led the first session of a blind tasting of wines from Virginia and other globally recognized wine producing regions.

The blind tasting was a comparative tasting of 8 Virginia wines against top wines from other globally recognized wine regions. The tasting of 16 wines included two each of Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Bordeaux blends, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Touriga Nacional, and hard cider. The discussion was led by Spurrier and a panel of top wine professionals including: Anthony Giglio of Food & Wine; noted wine importer and lecturer Bartholomew Broadbent; and Master of Wine Jay Youmans. After each set of the comparative tastings the audience was encouraged to show what wines they preferred prior to the lead panel's comments. The audience clearly responded to not only the preferences but also the differences of the panelists leading the discussion. Virginia wines showed extremely well, 'winning' five of the eight match-ups, including victories for: Barbourville Vineyards' 2009 Cabernet Franc Reserve over a 2010 Bernard Baudry Les Grezeaux Chinon from the Loire Valley; Potomac Point Vineyards' 2009 Heritage Richland Reserve, a Bordeaux-blend style wine, over a 2008 Chateau du Tertre Margaux; and Foggy Ridge Cider's Sweet Stayman Cider over Crispin's Original Hard Apple Cider. The Viognier tasting was between the Ducard Vineyards Viognier and 2010 Guigal Condrieu. In the Viognier tasting the panel was divided with 3 preferring the Guigal and Mr. Spurrier preferring the Ducard. The audience was divided but leaned toward the Ducard Vineyards. The tasting between DeFosse Vineyards Petit Verdot and the Italian 2009 Casale del Giglio Petite Verdot was considered a draw.

The two significant surprises from the tasting were the decisive wins by Keswick Vineyards' 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon edging out the 2009 Chateau Montelena Cabernet Sauvignon. The audience laughed since that vineyard's chardonnay was the winner of the original Judgment of Paris in 1976. Another strong showing was made by the 2008 Barbourville Nebbiolo which was widely preferred over the 2008 Vietti Barolo. Other tastings yielded varying preferences due to stylistic differences with only one comparative tasting clearly going to the Portuguese Quinta do Crasto Touriga Nacional.

During his presentation, Spurrier embraced Virginia's wine industry and said that Virginia is now solidly competing in the global wine industry. He concluded his overview of the Virginia wine industry with the following remarks: "To sum up, I will quote my friend Warren Winiarski of Stag Leap Cellars in Napa, who said that for him the wine was the '3 Gs' – the ground, the grape, and the guy or gal. For me, it is more the '3 Ps' – the place, the product and the people. Before coming out here, I knew already that Virginia could stand tall for the product. But in just three days I now know that the place and the people fit perfectly into the equation and that Virginia stands tall on all three and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future."

Other sessions had discussions about leading Virginia wine varieties, trends in wine tasting and pairing Virginia wines and foods. Food & Wine's Anthony Giglio led the panel on food and wine pairings. Dave McIntyre, wine writer for the Washington Post led a discussion on Virginia red wines varieties, and Master Sommelier Kathy Morgan led a discussion on wine tasting. These experts led panels, tastings, and general discussions for an audience filled with winemakers, restaurateurs, sommeliers, connoisseurs, media, wine-shop owners, and other industry professionals. The day-long event culminated with a Virginia wine reception.

The Virginia Wine Summit kicked off the Commonwealth's annual October Virginia Wine Month activities.

For more information about the Virginia wine industry, please visit the Virginia Wine Marketing Office's website at www.virginiawine.org/ or call 804-344-8200.

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