



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2011

Office of the Governor

Contact: Jeff Caldwell

Phone: (804) 225-4260

Email: Jeff.Caldwell@Governor.Virginia.Gov

Virginia Wine Marketing Office

Contact: Annette Boyd

Phone: (804) 340-8200

Email: annette.boyd@virginiawine.org

**Governor and First Lady McDonnell Promote
Virginia Wine in India**

*~Virginia Wine Impresses One of India's Top Wine Importers, Retailers
and Connoisseurs Sanjay Menon~*

Photos: [Governor McDonnell](#), [Mrs. McDonnell](#)

BANGALORE, INDIA – Governor Bob McDonnell and First Lady Maureen McDonnell hosted a reception in Mumbai earlier this week to promote business, tourism to Virginia and Virginia wines. In attendance was Sanjay Menon, one of India's top wine importers, retailers and connoisseurs, who gave a glowing review of Virginia wine, adding to the international acclaim for Virginia's growing wine industry. Sanjay Menon has made the *Decanter* power list top 100 personalities in the world wine. Mumbai was the first stop in a three city tour of India which included Delhi and Bangalore.

At the reception, Menon guided the guests through red and white wines from Virginia, including wine from Barboursville Vineyards, Narmada Winery, Trump Vineyard Estates, Breaux Vineyards and Horton Vineyards, highlighting the properties of each of the wines. More

than 150 Indian wine importers, dealers, sommeliers and journalists, along with representatives from India's tourism and travel agencies attended the event.

“The choice of Virginia winemakers in working with Cabernet Franc and Viognier as the signature or reference varietals for the region is both very interesting and intelligent,” said Menon. “The wines we tasted were true expressions of the varietal and I'm looking forward to either varietal doing for Virginia what Sauvignon Blanc did to New Zealand over 20 years ago. From the state that is the cradle of American viticulture and the one that gave the wine world the American who did the most to improve wines image in the world, Thomas Jefferson, nothing less is expected.”

The Governor raised a symbolic toast in a special ‘Jefferson’ cup to strong ties and friendship between India and the state of Virginia. Thomas Jefferson served as Governor of Virginia and President of the United States of America and is widely credited with being America’s first wine connoisseur. Grapes brought from Europe were planted at his estate of Monticello. In her address, First Lady, Mrs. Maureen McDonnell touted Virginia wine and tourism destinations.

Also present at the gathering were Diane, Bechamps, Vice President of Marketing, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Hon. James S Cheng, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Hon. Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry and Hon. James D Duffey, Secretary of Technology and other members of the Virginia delegation.

On August 2, 2011 Governor McDonnell announced a wine export agreement between Barboursville Vineyards and Tianjin Tewoo Group. The deal, a result of the Governor's trade and marketing mission to Asia in May where seven Virginia wineries were highlighted, is believed to be the first commercial transaction between a Virginia winery and a Chinese importer.

Sales of Virginia wine reached an all-time high in fiscal year 2011 with more than 462,000 cases sold during the fiscal year. This figure marked a sales increase of more than 11% 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.

###