



## TANNAT: HOME AWAY FROM HOME

From Tannat's contested South American debut, back to its origins in southwest France, and forward to its latest outposts in New Zealand, **Julia Harding MW** charts the rise of this climate-sensitive and terroir-transparent grape variety, now producing a thrilling range of wines

**F**orget the tango and *dulce de leche*, the competitive debate now simmering concerns Tannat's first home in South America. Those waving the Argentine flag claim that the variety was brought to their country toward the end of the 19th century by the Basque farmer Juan Jáuregui (born in Irouleguy in 1812), who traveled from Bordeaux to Montevideo in 1835, moving north to Salto before crossing the River Uruguay and settling in Concordia in the province of Entre Ríos in southern Argentina, immediately opposite the Uruguayan town of Salto.

According to Alberto Moroy, a specialist in Argentinian and Uruguayan history, writing in Uruguay's national newspaper *El País* in March 2016, Jáuregui planted the first Tannat cuttings in Concepción in 1861, brought over from France by his nephew Pedro Jáuregui. They apparently came via his paternal grandfather from the estate of Louis XVI. (Moroy's account is based on a book by Frenchman Alexis Pierre Louis Edouard Peiret, *A visit to the Colonies of the Argentine Republic*, published in Buenos Aires in 1889.) Jáuregui was also the first to make wine in Concordia.

The story continues with another Basque, Don Pascual Harriague (1819–94), who emigrated from Lapurdi (Labour) to Uruguay in 1838 and settled in Montevideo. In 1840 he moved north to Salto, which is where he became interested in farming and eventually in grape-growing. He is said to have bought cuttings of Tannat from Juan Jáuregui and planted his first Tannat vineyard on the outskirts of Salto in 1871, producing his first commercial Tannat wine in 1875.

The Uruguayan banner, however, is being waved by GRIMVITIS, a multidisciplinary team created in 2000 with joint funding from INAVI (Instituto Nacional de Vitivinicultura) and the Universidad de la República to carry out research into Uruguayan viticulture (see the GRIMVITIS website for more details). Now part of the Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinarios Latinoamericanos de la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias

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de la Educación de la Universidad de la República, they are working on an eight-volume history of the vines and wines of Uruguay, including a new project looking into Harriague's pioneering role in relation to Tannat.

According to Professor Alcides Beretta Curi, "It is not accurate to assert that Tannat was introduced by Basques in Argentina [...] Although the work is not done yet, our investigation reveals a greater complexity: I dare say that the vast majority of the varieties entered through the port of Montevideo, the main entrance of immigrants to the country, among others the Basques. Then they were spread through the country, a process that has been verified since the establishment of the Uruguayan State in 1830 (although vines were already cultivated during colonial times). The research we are doing is strongly oriented to this explanation; this hypothesis would reveal the presence of Tannat a few decades before Uruguay began the production of vines for industrial purposes, and before Harriague himself made contact with this variety when he was not yet a winemaker. The contact of Jáuregui with Harriague should be placed in this context; and since this is not a well-known story, people have fueled a 'mythology' with weak evidence."

While we cannot confidently confirm where the truth lies, we can be sure that wherever the cuttings landed and were first planted, their first home was southwest France.

### Tannat in France

According to Rézeau (1997), Tannat, spelled Tanat, was first mentioned in 1783–4 in Madiran in the Hautes-Pyrénées in southwest France, where it is still the dominant variety, though it is also planted in Béarn, Irouleguy, Tursan, St-Mont, and Cahors. The first occurrence of today's spelling dates to 1827. Lavignac (2001) indicates that the name Tannat derives from a word in the Béarn dialect meaning "tanned," referring to its deep color, but it might also be to do with the variety's high tannin content.

Lavignac suggests that Tannat could be the progeny of an undetermined variety from the Pyrénées, and that it is also morphologically close to Baroque from the Landes and to Lauzet from the Béarn in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, "two varieties that belong, like Tannat, to the Courbu ampelographic group" (Robinson et al 2012). This grouping is consistent with recent parentage analysis carried out by José Vouillamoz based on 22 DNA markers suggesting a possible parent-offspring relationship between Tannat and Manseng Noir, subsequently confirmed by Lacombe et al. (2013), who also posit a parent-offspring relationship with a variety called Plant de Cauzette.

Lavignac also notes that it was little cultivated in southwest France until the beginning of the 19th century, when it became increasingly popular owing to its productivity and robustness. Because of its vigor, it tends to be pruned long. It is slightly prone to rot because although the bunches are big, they are compact, with small to medium-sized berries. As I learned on my most recent visit to Uruguay in 2017, Juanicó's agronomist Gustavo Blumetto recommends cutting off the tips and the wings of the large Tannat bunches in some case to allow better ventilation and full ripening.

According to FranceAgrimer statistics, in 2016 there were a total of 2,974 ha (7,350 acres), around half in the Gers, down from 4,192 ha (10,359 acres) in 2006. The official catalogue of varieties permitted in France lists 12 registered clones.

Madiran wines have a reputation for their deep color and firm tannins, though in recent years some wines have been made in such a way as to make them accessible without long years in bottle.

Two of Tannat's offspring are also in the French official catalogue: Arinarnoa, a 1956 Tannat x Cabernet Sauvignon cross created at INRA Bordeaux by Marcel Durquéty. There were 179 ha (442 acres) planted in France in 2016, mainly in Languedoc and Roussillon. There are a few also a producers

in South America—Giménez Méndez in Uruguay, Familia Zuccardi in Mendoza—and in 2007 there were 7 ha (17 acres) in Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul.

The second is Ekigaiña, another Tannat x Cabernet Sauvignon cross obtained at INRA Bordeaux, probably also by Pierre Marcel Durquéty. There were just 2 ha (5 acres) in France in 2011, and equally minuscule plantings in Argentina thanks to Zuccardi.

### Tannat in Uruguay

While southwest France is Tannat's original home, it has found a second one in South America, especially in Atlantic-cooled Uruguay. Carrau et al (2011) continue the story of Pasual Harriague's vineyard on the outskirts of Salto: "Later in the 1880s, this vineyard together with a small winery were bought by the British brothers G and C Dickinson & Co., who transformed the winery into one of the best of that time, including a laboratory for microbiology [...] Although the technology improved between 1930 and 1970, the wine producers thought in terms of increasing quantity rather than increasing quality."

This focus on quantity was encouraged by "a closed market for imported wines, very little demand for quality by the consumer and an increase in the local consumption of wine from about 15 to 28 liters [4 to 7.5 US gallons] per capita." A further consequence of this, after hybrids were introduced in the 1950s, was the common blending of Tannat with Muscat varieties or with these red hybrids. As a result, Tannat "did not have very good reputation."

A drive for quality began in the 1970s, with greater focus on the best sites for viticulture. This was essential if producers were going to be able to export their wines. At the same time, the first virus-free clones of Tannat were imported from France and California, and these have largely replaced the old vines that were derived from the original plant material brought to Uruguay in the 19th century. While some old vineyards remain, in theory any new plantings must be of the virus-free clones.

Writing in 1997, Professor Francisco Carrau of the Uruguayan National University anticipated a promising future for his country's wine industry. "With the program of training for winemakers and the recently started R&D projects in the University of the Republic, it is hoped that the Uruguayan wine industry, based on quality wines at a good price, will continue opening markets and reach its target of 300,000 cases by the year 2000." Martín López of INAVI confirmed that they exceeded that target, exporting just over 350,000 cases of bottled wine by that date, and reaching roughly 464,000 cases by 2017. Yet even now, exports are generally less than 5 percent of total production.

These numbers are not differentiated by variety, so it is impossible to know what proportion of exports is represented by Tannat wines. It is, however, known that in 2017 there were 1,708 ha (4,220 acres) of Tannat planted, representing 26 percent of the total vineyards in the country and nearly 34 percent of dark-skinned grapes—very similar to the 1,731 ha in 2016 (INAVI). This area produces a little bit more than 25 million kg, just over 26 percent of the total crush.

Opposite: Bodega Juanicó, an hour's drive from Montevideo, whose single-vineyard Tannats are among the growing proof that terroir trumps clonal variety in Uruguay.

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The Uruguayan wine industry is dominated by small- to medium-sized family businesses, often passed down through several generations, with many more smallholder growers than wineries. Even if the damp climate makes it difficult to farm organically, Uruguayans are proud to cite the Environmental Sustainability Index, which placed Uruguay third after Finland and Norway (Esty et al. 2005). Now some 90 percent of the country's energy is from renewable sources, primarily wind turbines.

While the climate may not be conducive to organic farming—both rainfall and average annual temperatures are higher than in Bordeaux—it does suit Tannat. Santiago Deicas of Juanicó emphasizes that this variety needs humidity during the ripening season. "If Tannat vines feel severe water stress they block the nutrient interchange with the berries and it is irreversible, whereas other varieties can go back to normal interchange once the stress is diminished. This fact is extremely important to understand why Tannat only develops its full potential in a few terroirs."

While there are many different styles of Tannat in Uruguay—from light, fragrant, and unoaked, to rich, tannic, and oaky—they are almost always marked by their deep color, freshness, and tannic structure, although some wines are made in such a way as to be accessible without long bottle aging. Even when the tannins are firm or powerful, they are rarely astringent. Tannat has one further advantage: its reported health benefits thanks to the very high level of polyphenols. (See, for example, Corder et al, 2006.)

### Viticulture and clones

While the vineyard "reconversion process" led to "a progressive loss of old plants," the aim of the research conducted by González Techera et al. (2004) was "to determine whether several old Uruguayan Tannat clones were genetically different from the French commercial Tannat clones recently introduced."

Their research found that there was very little clonal variation and a high level of homozygosity, suggesting that the parents of Tannat are genetically closely related. Only one microsatellite could clearly distinguish the two groups and both "old Uruguayan clones and French commercial clones were found in each group, suggesting that the original sources were probably the same." Measuring the concentrations of aroma compounds in their microvinifications resulted in the same two groups.

Eduardo Boido, winemaker at Bodegas Bouza, explains the source of the virus-free clonal material: "Nowadays, 12 clones are selected and registered in France through its registered trademark ENTAV-INRA: 398, 399, 472, 473, 474, 475, 717, 794, 944, 1048, 1154, and 1175 (Établissement National Technique



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pour l'amélioration de la Viticulture, 2017). There is also a registry and preservation of clones carried out by Foundation Plant Service (California), with the collaboration of the University of California, where the updated version has clones 03, 011, 04, 041 (FPS UC Davis, 2017)."

French clone 398 is the most widely planted in Uruguay. According to studies in France and in Uruguay, clones 717 and 474 give wines with more color and total polyphenols. Clone 398, however, gives wines with less alcohol. Sensory panels also preferred the wines from these three clones.

At Bouza they have 11.5 ha (28 acres) of Tannat, including 0.5 ha (1.2 acres) that is 45 years old and was planted using mass selection. All their new plantings are nursery clones from Uruguay or France. Boido's preferred clones are 398 and 717, although 474 was chosen for their most recently established vineyards in Pan de Azúcar and Las Espinas.

Pisano Family Wines in Progreso (Canelones) have 15 ha (37 acres) of Tannat of different ages ranging from 10 to 35 years old with a very small plot of "ageless" Tannat (70-plus years old) where they maintain non-virus-free old strains descended from the original vineyards. Any new plants needed to renovate existing blocks are bought French clones that are now widely available, with a range of rootstocks bought from nurseries in Uruguay, "but we would reproduce and plant old genetic material if it was allowed ... obviously not in big amounts but to get more nuances." Pisano also believes that small plantings from the old vine material should be used to study the potential differences and to maintain the diversity that could be very important if certain clones start to show pesticide resistance.

This preference is informed by their experience with Syrah: "In the past when regulations were not so stiff, we managed to get a *sélection massale* of Syrah from Château de Beaucastel, and I am convinced that our Syrah is what it is because of that genetic material. Leaves turn reddish much before the virus-free clones and the berries are not so sturdy but I love the taste and diversity of the grapes."

Pisano agrees with Boido that "for high-quality wines under the conditions of Uruguayan terroir, clones 474 and 717 have the best grape and wine quality [...]. The wines of these clones, together with 398, have a great structure, combined with the best and most typical fruit flavors and aromas, and less harsh tannins." He adds that 474 gives lower yields than 398, 399, or 475. He also finds differences in the wines from these clones, although he believes the differences would be greater and the wines more nuanced if they could use mass selection.

Juanicó (Familia Deicas) is one of the largest producers in Uruguay. It owns 73 ha (180 acres) of Tannat, in eight different regions of Uruguay, and buys fruit from growers whose vineyards it manages in four further regions. Its most recent plantings were four years ago. As well as buying off-the-peg clones, it takes cuttings from its best vines and sends them to a nursery, which ensures they are virus-free and propagates them. "Clonal selection is important so that every plant ripens at the same time."

It has seven different clones but prefers 717 and 398 for their high quality and because they enable its vineyard workers to cut the wings and tips off bunches to get full and even ripeness. Santiago Deicas confirms what research has shown—that, unlike varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc, clonal variation is minor and the biggest difference is terroir. Juanicó's single-

vineyard Tannats are proof of this, as are the wines being made in the most recently developed region of Garzon, where granite dominates, which tend to be lighter and fresher than those from longer-established regions such as Colonia, Progreso, and Carmelo. (The majority of Uruguayan vineyards are on the more common calcareous clay soils.)

Bracco Bosca in Atlantida (Canelones) has around 4 ha (10 acres) of Tannat, with an average age of 25 years. Fabiana Bracco explains that they are hoping to plant more Tannat because they are very happy with the results of their unoaked version (Bouza and Garzón also do very good unoaked Tannats). They generally buy clones for new plantings and prefer 717 as they find it gives the best expression of fruit, but they do find different clones are better suited to specific parcels.

Wherever it is grown, Tannat has many points in its favor in terms of its appeal to consumers: deep color (arguably less important than in the past); a high level of antioxidants, said to confer cardiovascular health benefits; and the ability to age well in bottle, even if current winemaking is also able to produce wines that are more fruity and accessible in youth. A "manifesto" that a group of producers in Canelones and San José presented to me spoke proudly of following the traditions of their Basque and Italian ancestors in focusing on Tannat, making wine in what they called a non-international style, and it is this distinctly Uruguayan flavor profile and structure that gives the producers in this small, green country the edge.

Recommended producers and wines include Narbona, Campotinto, Irurtia, and Buena Visto from Carmelo (Colonia); Juanicó's single-vineyard wines from various different regions; Bracco Bosca and Viñedos de los Vientos from Atlantida (Canelones); Bouza's wines from Maldonado and Canelones; Pisano, Viña Progreso, Marichal, Pizzorno, Carrau, De Lucca, Antigua Bodega Stagnari, and Artesana from Canelones; Alto de la Ballena and Garzón from Maldonado; El Capricho from Durazno; Cerro Chapeu from Ravera.

### Gaining ground: Argentina

While Tannat is the dominant red variety in Uruguay, this is definitely not the case in Argentina, where Malbec takes that crown. Total plantings in Argentina (INV 2017) are 835 ha (2,060 acres), which is just 0.74% of the total vineyard area, and 1% of the vineyard area planted with red grapes (cf Malbec with 36%). Although Salta in the north of the country has just 130 ha (320 acres, 5.57% of the region's vineyards)—less than San Juan (330 ha [815 acres]) and Mendoza (317 ha [783 acres])—it represents a higher proportion of the overall vineyard area in Salta and has earned a reputation in the Calchaquí Valleys for quality wines and a distinctive style. The variety's potentially astringent tannins are still powerful here but smoother thanks to full ripening, making the wines more accessible in youth. They also tend to be deeply colored and more aromatic than in Madiran, with flavors of dark ripe fruits, sometimes carrying notes of menthol or pencils.

In 1928, Miguel Hurtado, the first winemaker from Salta in charge of the experimental viticultural station in Cafayate, described Tannat in this way: "Recommended for body and blends. Making Lorda (Tannat) using more than 50 percent with any other variety (Cabernet or Malbec), produces table wines that have nothing to envy from the best of the country in its class."

When trained on overhead parral trellises, as the old vines in Salta tend to be, great care is needed, especially in the run up to the harvest, to ventilate the canopy to avoid botrytis bunch rot. Wines of Argentina describes it as "a wild and rebellious variety," productive and vigorous, with a long growing and ripening cycle.

It is well suited to barrel aging, though it can pick up too much oak flavor if there is too much new oak, and I prefer wines matured in older wood. As in Madiran and Uruguay, it is renowned for its high levels of the antioxidant resveratrol.

Victor Barroso, CEO of Vivero San Nicolás vine nursery, which produces about 4 million plants per year, reports that Tannat ranks sixth in their production at around 100,000 plants per year and is propagated mostly from mass selection. He attributes growing demand to "the high-quality Tannat (mainly color and structure) obtained in warm Argentine areas such as northern Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Salta ... wineries can obtain better qualities in mid-priced wines."

At Colomé/Amalaya, French winemaker Thibault Delamotte suggests it brings red fruit and freshness as well as contributing to the tannin structure to blends with Malbec and Petit Verdot or Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Good producers of varietal Tannat or Tannat-dominant blends include Seclantás Adentro in Molinos and, in Calchaquí Valleys around Cafayate, Vallista, El Porvenir, Domingo Molina, Yocochuya, and El Esteco. At Piatelli, Alejandro Nesman says he would love to make a varietal Tannat but it is hard to buy enough fruit; and anyway, the company's American owner told him that such a wine would be a hard sell.

Alejandro Pepa of Bodega El Esteco in Salta notes that most of the 138 ha (341 acres) of Tannat in the Calchaquí Valleys—about 3.5 percent of the valleys' total vineyards—were planted many years ago, some are now more than 80 years old. The oldest vineyards are pergola-trained while the new ones are typically VSP-trained.

Even the older vines yield well, says Pepa, and even though the bunches are slightly compact, the vines are very healthy. They ripen slowly and reach maturity from mid-March and as late as mid-April. "A positive aspect is that this level of ripeness goes hand in hand with very good acidity and naturally low pH levels (3.45–3.55 at the time of harvesting)."

Grape skins offer great concentration of both tannins and color, partly because the berries often contain four seeds rather than the more regular two. As a result, during winemaking "great attention must be given to the style of maceration." Marco Etchart of Yocochuya agrees, noting that extraction must be very gentle.

I agree with Pepa that the Calchaquí Valleys "offer excellent Tannats: deeply intense and concentrated purplish black wines that are powerful on the nose, inky, with notes of dark fruit and a great palate with white chocolate and mineral touches." Pepa believes that "this is definitely one of the best locations in Argentina and Latin America where this exquisite varietal is grown, which also happens to be one of my favorite wines."

Sebastian Zuccardi, based in Mendoza, suggests that the greater recognition for Tannat in Salta than elsewhere in Argentina is because "the wines produced with Tannat have more character there." Although Mendoza has more hectares planted to Tannat, the proportion of vineyard area planted to it is higher in Salta, and it is difficult to find 100% Tannat from

Mendoza. Zuccardi has 6.5 ha of Tannat in its Santa Rosa vineyards and uses it in Santa Julia blends such as Magna. "It is a grape that has a very good tannin structure and not as 'hard' as it can be in wetter climates. It ripens very well but in wet years, because of the compaction of the bunches, it can have rot problems."

Dominio del Plata in Mendoza buys Tannat grapes from the Uco Valley and its CEO Edgardo Pópolo believes that although the variety tends to be used in blends, it performs better in Argentina than in Uruguay thanks to the high elevation, sun, temperature, and high UV, which change the variety's "tannin expression." Harvested early, "it is never rustic or green in Mendoza; when harvested late, tannins are bold, soft, and rounded."

And so the rivalry between the two countries continues.

### Elsewhere in South America

Statistics from Brazil's Cadastro Vitícola 2015 recorded 323 ha (800 acres) in Rio Grande do Sul, the country's most important state for wine production, compared with 136 ha (336 acres) in 1995, with a peak of 421 ha (1,040 acres) in 2007. The area is pretty much evenly divided between Serra Gaúcha and Campanha Gaúcha.

Tannat was brought from Argentina to Serra Gaúcha by the Experimental Station of Caxias do Sul in 1947. Since then, new plant material has been imported from California (1971) and France (1977). Tannat stood out in experiments and in trials carried out by producers in the early 1980s and commercial distribution began in the Serra Gaúcha in 1987. Over the past 30 years, according to Wines of Brazil's Rudolfo Lucchese, Tannat has demonstrated tremendous potential in the country, mainly in the Serra Gaúcha and Campanha Gaúcha regions.

Rizzon and Miele's research into Tannat (2004) concluded that "the must has high titratable acidity and, when the climatic conditions are favorable, it reaches a high sugar content [...] Sensorially, it is characterized by intense red-violet color, reduced aroma, and notes of ripe red fruit. In the mouth, it presents good structure due to the phenolic compounds, but with little fineness, softness, and balance. It is a wine recommended for blending with other fine red wines, to improve color and body, but can also be marketed as varietal."

From the Brazilian varietal Tannats I have tasted, the fruit quality is exceptional, with both red- and black-fruit flavors and great balance between fruit intensity and structure, the tannins broad-shouldered but smooth. In some instances, I think it could be picked a little earlier for greater freshness and slightly lower alcohol, and a more restrained use of oak would allow the fruit to shine. The best examples come from Pizzato and Miolo. I liked Lidio Carraro's bold non-use of oak but felt the fruit was a little too ripe.

Flavio Pizzato says he has had very good results with Tannat over the past ten years and, surprisingly, it is his biggest single-varietal export, selling as well as his Cabernet Sauvignon—though not quite up with Merlot—on the domestic market.

Lucchese concludes that the tannins of varietal Tannat "generally demand aging in the bottle," but that once its tannins "have been tamed [...] the wine presents a complex, compelling scent." He also points to a more recent attempt by producers who have come to understand the grape to make "friendlier labels for younger people to consume."

Moving southwest to Chile, there are just 7 ha (17 acres) of Tannat, with about half of that in Colchagua (Marchigüe, Peralillo, San Fernando, and Santa Cruz) and small areas in Maule, Curicó, and Cachapoal.

Eugenio Lira, president of the Chilean national enologists' association, explains that most of the Tannat planted in Chile is used in blends, and only Odjfell is making a varietal wine in Cauquenes. In 2015, however, Montes planted 5ha (12 acres) of an ENTAV clone on steep slopes (to reduce vigor) in the Apalta Valley, where "the temperatures match perfectly well with the variety," according to Aurelio Montes. The company expects to produce its first Tannat in 2019. Lira surmises that the variety was brought to Chile with other French varieties at the end of the 19th century, but that some of the plant material would have been brought in more recently, from Uruguay or Argentina or from plant nurseries in France. Lira concluded that the area planted to Tannat is not growing, and he does not see it as a new trend in Chile.

According to Cees van Casteren MW, Tannat is extremely well suited to Bolivia; it works well in a relatively short window and deals very well with the ultra-high UV in Bolivia. Grapes tend to have thicker skins in such conditions as a form of self-protection, and presumably Tannat has a head start with its high tannin content. Van Casteren describes Bolivian Tannats as having "silky and sweet" tannins, deep color and fruit, and good balance between fruit, acidity, and alcohol. He singles out Campos de Solana and Aranjuez as top producers, and goes as far as to say he thinks Bolivian Tannat is even better than Uruguayan.

Van Casteren estimates that in Peru there are around 50 ha (125 acres) of Tannat. Tacama is the main producer but he suggests that "in quality it will not get close to Campos or Aranjuez."

### Beyond France and South America

*New Zealand Winegrowers Vineyard Register Report 2017–2020* lists just 2 ha (5 acres) of Tannat. Trinity Hill in Hawke's Bay was one of the first to plant the variety about 15 years ago but uses it only in blends. De La Terre, also in Hawke's Bay, has been making a varietal Tannat since 2009 using fruit bought from grower David Cranwell, who planted Tannat after finding that a daily glass of Madiran reduced his cholesterol level. It is a French clone (TKO5226) that was apparently imported into New Zealand by ex-All Black Andy Haden, who fell in love with the variety when he was playing rugby in France. Stoneyridge on Waiheke Island also produces a 100% Tannat.

Kim Chalmers of Chalmers vine nursery in Australia reports that the main Tannat clone in Australia is H9V3—"a Davis clone judging by the clone number, and it was introduced in 1969." Chalmers used to have it in its old nursery vineyard in Euston NSW, but no longer. Of the few producers of Tannat in Australia, she recommends Symphony Hill.

It is also found in Portugal, where there are about 50 ha (124 acres), half of that in the Alentejo; on Sicily, in Hungary, and in California, where it was pioneered by Tablas Creek in Paso Robles; in Switzerland, South Africa, and Japan.

### Conclusion: Vivat Tannat

Tannat clones may be relatively homogeneous, and the variety's fruit character less distinctive and dominant than that of

Cabernet Sauvignon or Syrah, for example, but it produces fresh, well-structured wines that seem to express climatic differences particularly well, whether in its French homeland, in cool, green Uruguay, in the high-elevation vineyards of Argentina, or in its many adoptive homes. Tannat's famous tannins are shaped not only by climate but also by winemaking choices, resulting in a range of styles, from lively and refreshing, to dense and age-worthy. In Uruguay, Juanicó's single-vineyard bottlings are starting to show just how nuanced the variety can be, while Garzón's wines from the country's youngest region suggest that there are many new horizons throughout South America. Vivat Tannat.

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