

# TANNAT

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## BACKGROUND

Tannat (tann-UTT) has been known in the Hautes-Pyrénées in south-west France since the 18th century. It is likely that it originated there given that it is genetically related to other varieties from that region such as Courbu Blanc, Crouchen, Manseng Noir and Petit Courbu. It is best known in the red wines of Madiran (40 to 80%) and Saint-Mont (minimum 60%), mainly blended with Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Synonyms include Moustron or Moustrou (France), Madiran (France), Harriague (Uruguay) and Bordelez Beltza (Spain). Globally there were 5940ha in 2010: 2914ha in France, 1815ha in Uruguay (24% of national share), 705ha in Argentina and 295ha in Brazil. There are also small areas in Italy, USA (California, Virginia), Canada and South Africa. There are currently at least 31 wine producers in Australia, in 19 regions from cool to hot climates. McLaren Vale, New England and the Granite Belt have the most producers. There are 9ha planted in SA, mostly in McLaren Vale.

## VITICULTURE

Budburst is late and maturity is mid to late. Vigour is high with erect growth habit. Bunches are large and normally compact with medium tough-skinned berries; however, moderate susceptibility to poor set may result in loose bunches in some seasons. Yield is usually moderate but may be low in some seasons as a result of poor set. Cane pruning is used in France but both spur and cane have been successfully used in Uruguay, USA and Australia. In Virginia, Tannat is said to have moderate susceptibility to downy and powdery mildews, and slight susceptibility to Botrytis. In Australia, it is tolerant of heatwaves.

## WINE

Tannat is one of the most phenolic of all grape varieties and, as a consequence, wines are deeply coloured and high in tannins. Micro-oxygenation is often used in both France and Uruguay to 'soften' the tannins of young wines. Acid is high. Wine descriptors include sweet cherry, raspberry, plum, currant and spice. Wines are concentrated with medium body and good ageing potential. In some countries it is considered to be most useful as a blender.

*For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling ([marcel.essling@awri.com.au](mailto:marcel.essling@awri.com.au) or 08 8313 6600) at The Australian Wine Research Institute to arrange the presentation of the Alternative Varieties Research to Practice program in your region.*