

# Winery Toolkit: Selling Virginia Wine

## Introduction & Context

As the wine industry navigates potential new tariffs on European imports, there is an opportunity to highlight and promote high-quality, local alternatives. This toolkit is designed to help Virginia wineries confidently present Virginia wines as satisfying options for by-the-glass and wine list placements and retail shelves.

Our goal is not to diminish the value of European wines, but to celebrate the craftsmanship, diversity, and food-friendly appeal of Virginia wine. Let this be a moment to deepen your connection with restaurant and retail partners and offer customers something new to love.

## Sell Smarter: "If You Like This, Try That" (Virginia Edition)

Category	Popular Import	Virginia Swap	Notes
Crisp White	Sancerre	VA Sauvignon Blanc / Petit Manseng	Bright, high-acid, mineral-driven
Aromatic White	Pinot Grigio	Viognier	Floral, lush, fruit-forward
Light Red	Beaujolais	Chambourcin / Light Cab Franc	Chillable, juicy, easy-drinking
Bold Red	Rioja, Bordeaux	Meritage Blends / Petit Verdot	Spicy, structured, elegant
Rosé	Provence-style	VA Dry Rosé (Cab Franc, Merlot, Nebbiolo)	Crisp, pale, versatile
Sparkling	Crémant, Champagne	Traditional Method VA Sparkling	Elegant, local bubbles

## Talking Points

- With over 4,000 acres of grapes that span the state, Virginia is home to 10 regions and 8 distinct AVAs.
- Virginia is home to over 300 wineries, making it one of the top wine-producing states on the East Coast.

- 81% of producers in Virginia make fewer than 5,000 cases of wine annually, underscoring the deeply rooted presence of small, boutique, and often family-owned operations.
- More than 20 grape varieties are grown in Virginia, including internationally known classics and lesser-known gems. The most planted grape varieties are Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay.
- In 2023, Wine Enthusiast honored Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Monticello AVA as the Wine Region of the Year in its annual Wine Star Awards.

### Travel and Exploration

- Virginia wine lovers can explore the [Gold Medal Wine Trail](#), a complimentary mobile passport featuring gold medal winners. By checking in at participating venues, users unlock access to exclusive prizes and special offers.
- The Virginia Winery Guide is a double-sided brochure featuring a fold-out map showcasing Virginia's wineries, cideries, and meaderies. [Request](#) these guides to display and encourage patrons to discover the incredible producers in your area.

### By-the-Glass (BTG) Pricing Guidance

For wineries looking to build strong relationships with restaurants and bars, understanding by-the-glass (BTG) pricing is key to unlocking consistent on-premise placements. BTG programs are one of the most effective ways to increase visibility, boost volume, and introduce your wines to a broader audience.

### Understanding BTG Pricing Models

Restaurants typically determine BTG pricing using a standard industry formula:

*The cost of a single glass to the customer is equivalent to the wholesale cost of the entire bottle.*

For example, if a restaurant purchases a bottle at \$12 wholesale, they may price one glass at \$12, yielding four to five glasses per bottle. This pricing strategy allows them to:

- Cover the cost of the bottle
- Account for waste or spoilage
- Ensure a healthy profit margin

While every establishment has its own approach, most successful BTG programs operate within the **\$10–\$20 wholesale per bottle range**, with the **sweet spot landing under \$15**.

When considering wines for wholesale placement, it's important to lead with selections that reflect the strength and integrity of your portfolio. These placements are often a guest's first

introduction to your brand, and a strong impression can lead to increased interest in your broader offerings.

While it may be tempting to use wholesale as a solution for slower-moving wines, trade buyers are seeking dependable, well-crafted wines that deliver on value and quality. Quality BTG placements build trust with accounts but also sets the foundation for long-term, mutually beneficial relationships.

### Evaluating BTG Fit for Your Wine

To determine whether your wine is a good candidate for a restaurant's BTG program:

1. **Review Their Current Wine List:** Examine the BTG offerings and note the price points.
2. **Reverse-Engineer the Wholesale Pricing:** If a wine is listed at \$13/glass, it likely costs the restaurant around \$13 wholesale per bottle.
3. **Compare Your Pricing:** If your wine falls within that estimated wholesale range and offers compelling quality, it may be a strong fit.

This kind of pre-work shows buyers that you've done your homework and are offering wines aligned with their program goals.

### Tips for Presenting Your Wine to On-Premise Accounts

- **Be Transparent About Wholesale Pricing:** Clearly communicate the cost and any available incentives.
- **Position Your Wine as Practical and Profitable:** Highlight how your wine fits common BTG pricing structures.
- **Offer Suggested Retail Ranges:** Help the buyer see how your wine can be priced on their list.
- **Emphasize Unique Selling Points:** Whether it's a distinctive varietal, local sourcing, sustainable practices, or a compelling story, differentiate your wine from others on the list.

### Strategic Value of BTG Placement

While BTG pricing may be lower than your direct-to-consumer or cellar door pricing, it can be a valuable **marketing investment**. Benefits include:

- **Increased Visibility:** More consumers experience your wine when it's poured by the glass.
- **Faster Turnover:** BTG wines are reordered more frequently than bottles, ensuring consistent movement.
- **Cross-Sell Potential:** A popular BTG wine can drive interest in your other SKUs, creating opportunities for broader placements.

## Activation Ideas

To support your efforts in growing BTG placements through VWDC, consider these strategies:

- **Create BTG-Focused Sell Sheets:** Highlight wholesale price and pairing suggestions.
- **Offer On-Premise Incentives:**
  - Promotions like Buy X, Get Y Discounted “Buy 3 Cases, Get 1 50% off” can encourage initial trials and deeper commitments.
  - Tiered Pricing: Bigger discounts when you buy more. e.g., \$120/case for 1–4 cases, \$110/case for 5–9, \$100/case for 10+
  - Offer a small per-bottle discount (e.g., \$1–\$2) when wines are designated for BTG use
- **Provide Staff Education Tools:** Quick reference guides, tech sheets, or short videos about your wine can help servers confidently recommend it.
- **Share Social Media Assets:** Give restaurants photos, bottle shots, wine descriptions that they can post when featuring your wine BTG.

Learn More About VWDC: <http://bit.ly/3DlaTUd> Passcode: G\*hn^M9a

## Building Strong Relationships with Accounts

The best wine placements begin with trust. Whether you're nurturing an existing relationship or introducing your wines to a new buyer, consistency, collaboration, and communication are key. Here are a few practical ways to foster long-term partnerships with trade accounts:

- **Show Up and Support:** Visit local restaurants and bottle shops, order wine, and engage with staff. Be a familiar face and support their business to build trust organically.
- **Tap Into Your Network:** Use distributor reps, peers, and loyal customers to make warm introductions.
- **Make It Easy to Say Yes:** Schedule intentional sales calls, bring samples and materials, and tailor your pitch to their needs; highlight BTG fit, pairings, and offer marketing support like social assets or staff tools.

## POS + Marketing Assets

- [Virginia Wine and Food Pairing Guide](#)
- ["If You Like This, Try That" Chart](#)

Social Sharing Guidelines: **Tag:** @VirginiaWine on Instagram and use #VAWine to increase post visibility