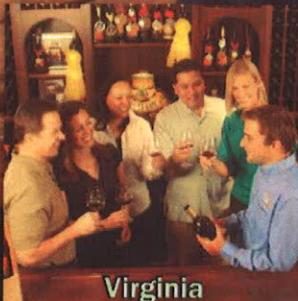


The Wine Buzz



Batch Cocktails



Thanksgiving Dinner
Knowing and Enjoying
Dessert Wines
News & Reviews

OHIO WINE:
Perfect Gift, Perfect Pairing
Holiday Beverage Buying Guide

BARNs TO BATTLEFIELDS: NORTHERN VIRGINIA'S WINE SCENE

By Mary Mihaly

It happens every time we cross the Potomac River into Virginia: as our surroundings switch from freeway-generic scenery to villages, horse farms and dips in the road, we mellow. Just like that, our moods soften from travel stress to, "Ah, we're here..."

Within a couple of miles we start spotting winery signs, and it strikes me that, with its slowed pace and milder climate, northern Virginia is a fine spot for handcrafting and sipping wine. We're not surprised to find a spirit of community and support between winemakers across the region.

Some would say that positivity comes through in the wine. I think it's partly because winery owners in northern Virginia are entrepreneurs. Their approach to winemaking is driven by the excitement of ownership; you won't find mega-corporate winemakers in this region. They are nurturing their babies here.

"We don't even sell in local wine shops," says Rob Cox, winemaker for Paradise Springs Winery in Clifton, Virginia, the closest winery to Washington, D.C. "as the crow flies." We're relaxing on Paradise Springs's terrace, surrounded by vineyard land owned by the same family for more than 300 years. Their vino is served only in high-end local restaurants and at the winery, a strategy that helps boost its image as a destination winery.

"We're more isolated out here," Cox says, "as opposed to [adjacent] Loudoun

County, where you find these large winery clusters – pun intended – five minutes apart. Once people are here, they stay here." With a light menu of charcuterie and soups, people are "more likely to stay a few hours."

Cox, a big promoter of cooperation between wineries, often hosts informal get-togethers of local winemakers. "We try each others' wine, talk about what are you shooting for in brix, fermenting temperature – we have fun with it. That's what California did in the '70s," he says. "They knew that if they shared information and helped each other create great wine, they would all benefit. A rising tide helps all ships. Now, they're wary of each other; their winemaking is like a guarded secret."

Virginia's signature wine grape is Viognier, but you'll also find most wineries selling a mix of Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Tannat, Petit Verdot, Chambourcin and specialty blends and bubbles – mostly dry. "We want our wines to be like eating the fruit, not candy that's supposed to taste like wine," says Doug Fabboli of Fabboli Cellars in Leesburg, who says he's comfortable being a "crafty, artisan, teacher kind of guy."

Relaxing on the patio outside his tasting room, Fabboli points to grapes hanging heavily on vine-covered hillsides layered around us: Chardonnay, Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc. The harvest has begun.

"We need more grapes," Fabboli says, echoing a need mentioned by every wine-maker with whom we spoke. "There's a real shortage of fruit here, and we don't buy grapes from outside Virginia – we just make less wine. Please, buy some land here, plant some vines."

Fabboli will even mentor you; he's been teaching consumers and new farmers alike, trying to help revitalize the region's agricultural base, for years. Even the tastings at Fabboli are educational – visitors experience pairings rather than simple sips, and the pairing list of seven bites and seven wines changes each month. Ours began with Fabboli's "Something White" blend of Viognier, Vidal Blanc and Chardonnay, paired with a pretzel crisp and honey mustard dip. The hour-long session also included a medium-bodied Cabernet Franc Reserve, aged 14 months in Hungarian oak, paired with woodsmoked cheddar; and a smoky, spicy "Royalty" traditional port, paired with a salted caramel truffle.

"We like to show what you can do with simple pairings," Fabboli says. "People don't realize how food can calm or change certain tastes."

In nearby Purcellville, Sunset Hills Vineyard's tasting room overlooks its 45 acres of rolling vineyards, but we were content to eye the indoor scenery – a 140-year-old barn, lovingly restored by six Amish brothers and furnished with period



Sunset Hills Vineyard

Photo courtesy Sunset Hills Vineyard



Photo courtesy Doukénie Winery

Tasting room at Doukénie Winery in Purcellville

antiques (along with radiant floor heating for cozy winter sipping) and a huge mahogany tasting bar. This restoration blends into the owners' vision of a sustainable operation, explains wine educator (and Cincinnati native) Beth Schnur, along with minimal use of pesticides and herbicides, cooling barrels underground instead of using refrigeration, and 154 solar panels that help the winemaker "turn sunshine into wine."

Had we more time, we could have collected dozens more stories of innovation and wine passion. More than 250 wineries, scattered across 16 regions and AVAs (American Viticultural Areas), await Virginia's thirsty visitors – 42 in Loudoun County alone. A few more favorites:

- **The Winery at Bull Run in Centreville.** That farmland filling your vision outside Bull Run's tasting room? It's Manassas National Battlefield Park. After you ponder the significance of sipping wine while gazing across a Civil War battleground, head into Old Manassas for lunch.

- **8 Chains North Winery in Waterford.** Relax in their newly remodeled tasting room as you try their latest Furnace Mountain Red Reserve – firm, bold and complex. "Imagine it with a heavy meal," says our pourer, "because you wouldn't just sip this on its own." (Um, yeah I would.)

- **Doukénie Winery in Purcellville.** Our timing here was perfect; we arrived just as the first bottles of Doukénie's Bordeaux-style 2012 Vintner's Reserve became available.

- **Tarara Winery, just outside Lucketts.** If you're only having one glass, go for a "Long Bomb" or "Nevaeh" ("heaven" spelled backwards) blend. (Note: Tarara is one of the few notable wineries that sources grapes from outside Virginia.) If you need wineglasses, pick up a pair of Riedel tasting stemware for \$6 a glass.

Expect to spend \$5-10 at most wineries for tasting fees, and check their hours before you start exploring; we set out on a Wednesday and found some wineries closed.

And for one last treat on your drive home, stop for lunch at the Jean Bonnet Tavern on Route 30, just west of Bedford, Pennsylvania. This 1760s landmark was a meetinghouse for farmers involved in the Whiskey Rebellion, and they serve up a mean bison burger.

If you go

www.VirginiaWine
www.VisitLoudoun.org



ZACK BRUELL EVENTS

Making all your
occasions a culinary event!

RISTORANTE
CHINATO
Z. BRUELL

Kafeteria
good food for good people

TABLE 45

Cowell & Hubbard
A ZACK BRUELL RESTAURANT

DYNAMITE

L'ALBATROS
BRASSERIE & BAR

PARALLAX
RESTAURANT LOUNGE

216.298.9131
contact@zackbruellevents.com
zackbruellevents.com



SUNDAY BRUNCH

10AM - 2PM
OVER 30 ITEMS!

BREAKFAST STATION

All of your favorite items

OMELETTE STATION

Fresh made-to-order omelettes

WAFFLE STATION

Cooked-to-order waffles with fresh toppings
including real Ohio maple syrup

COLD STATION

Featuring a variety of interesting salads
including shrimp and salmon

ENTREE STATION

Chef prepared entrees including chicken, beef,
fish, seafood and various vegetables

CARVING STATION

Featuring prime rib and other cuts

THE FRESH BAR

Fresh squeezed orange juice,
mimosas, and Bloody Marys

DESSERTS

A variety of wonderful dessert selections

Adults: \$18.95 • Seniors: \$14.95

Children 12 & under: \$7.95

Children 5 & under: FREE

Holiday Wine Festival

This is our annual showcase of the year's
most exciting wines from our best distributors.

Saturday, November 29 • 7pm

\$69 per person

Over 100 Wines, Many Higher End
Food Creations from Chef Jason Miller
Live Music • Cooking Demonstrations
Silent Auction to Benefit the Salvation Army

Reservations: Call 330-334-3663 or
visit www.galaxyrestaurant.com

201 Park Centre Dr. • Wadsworth, OH 44281



Great hotel room packages this evening. Ask for the Holiday Wine Festival rate of
\$69.99 for November 29th at the Holiday Inn Express (330-334-7666) and
Comfort Inn & Suites (330-336-7692), in Wadsworth, right next door to the Galaxy!