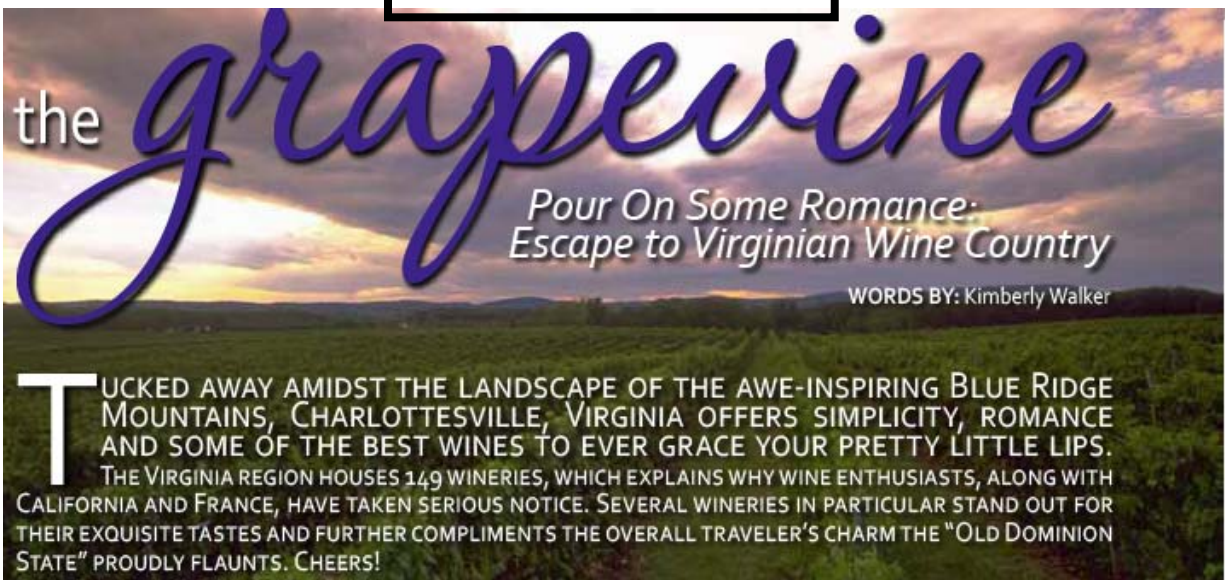


J'ADORE

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TUCKED AWAY AMIDST THE LANDSCAPE OF THE AWE-INSPIRING BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA OFFERS SIMPLICITY, ROMANCE AND SOME OF THE BEST WINES TO EVER GRACE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE LIPS. THE VIRGINIA REGION HOUSES 149 WINERIES, WHICH EXPLAINS WHY WINE ENTHUSIASTS, ALONG WITH CALIFORNIA AND FRANCE, HAVE TAKEN SERIOUS NOTICE. SEVERAL WINERIES IN PARTICULAR STAND OUT FOR THEIR EXQUISITE TASTES AND FURTHER COMPLIMENTS THE OVERALL TRAVELER'S CHARM THE "OLD DOMINION STATE" PROUDLY FLAUNTS. CHEERS!



BLENHAIM VINEYARDS

"Wine doesn't have to be so pretentious," remarks Blenheim Vineyards winemaker, Kirsty Harmon, about the spirited industry. Based in Charlottesville and owned by the family of music superstar Dave Matthews, Blenheim Vineyards combines the sacred traditions of winemaking with contemporary appeal. Upon entering the facility, Harmon's description is confirmed as you immediately take in the soothing tasting room with a special glass-encased view of the cellar below.

Like any other legendary winemaker, Harmon studied in France, but admits, "My ideas challenge their conceptions." She boldly uses screw caps instead of corks on Blenheim wines to allow them to maintain their original taste—and Harmon knows a thing or two about taste. Blenheim's selection of white wines, especially the Chardonnay 2008, is synonymous to a breath of a fresh air. "They're very crisp and clean, not buttery," Harmon explains.

Along with her distinct blends, Harmon stands out as well. She says it's taking a few folks some time to get used to the tomboy wine-making marvel. "It's an old boy's network, but they're getting used to me," she says with a smile.

www.blenheimvineyards.com

KLUGE ESTATE & WINERY

Treat yourself to an arsenal of gourmet cheeses in the beautiful country store of the Kluge Estate Winery, also based in Charlottesville. Sitting on 2,000 acres with swan-filled lakes, this quaint atmosphere offers some wonderful blends including several sparkling wines that are perfect for cocktail parties and holidays. Festive hosts will love the bubbly 2004 Rosé which has a beautiful salmon hue with delicious notes of black cherry, raspberry and rose petal.

When asked how Virginia vineyards like Kluge are able to harvest such sweet grapes in a fickle Eastern shore climate, it actually only enhances the flavors of the wines according to CEO William Moses. "The weather is actually good for the grapes and contributes to some of the unique tastes," he reveals. Moses adds that during tastings, each signature wine is paired with a specific cheese that showcases the flavor, and although this is a practice popularized by our friends across the pond, Moses assures, "We're not trying to copy France, we're trying to find the best expressions of our grapes to make good wine."

www.klugeestateonline.com

KING FAMILY VINEYARDS

When a big city lawyer visited a quaint, country town on his honeymoon, he and his wife ditched their urban comforts to create a beloved, family-oriented treasure in Virginia. "People want the rural experience. We're trying to offer people what we came to Virginia for in 1995, which is a country life," says owner, David King.

Known for their rich, lively blends, Crose (the combination of their Crozet city and Rosé style of wine) the is a popular dry Rosé Merlot with hints of grapefruit, pomegranate and a tart cherry candy finish. It's perfect for grilling which you can find many families doing on the King Family's brick patio.

From the end of May until the beginning of September, the locals come and play polo. Kids wander through the barn which houses about 50 horses, and the tasting room employs a stone fireplace for cooler days. King, a distinguished family man, might just be responsible for building big families with the magic of Seven, a port wine fortified with Brandy and aged in Kentucky bourbon barrels for two years. When asked how to pair the zesty drink he simply remarks, "Pair it with a cigar, fire place and a significant other."

www.kingfamilyvineyards.com ♦