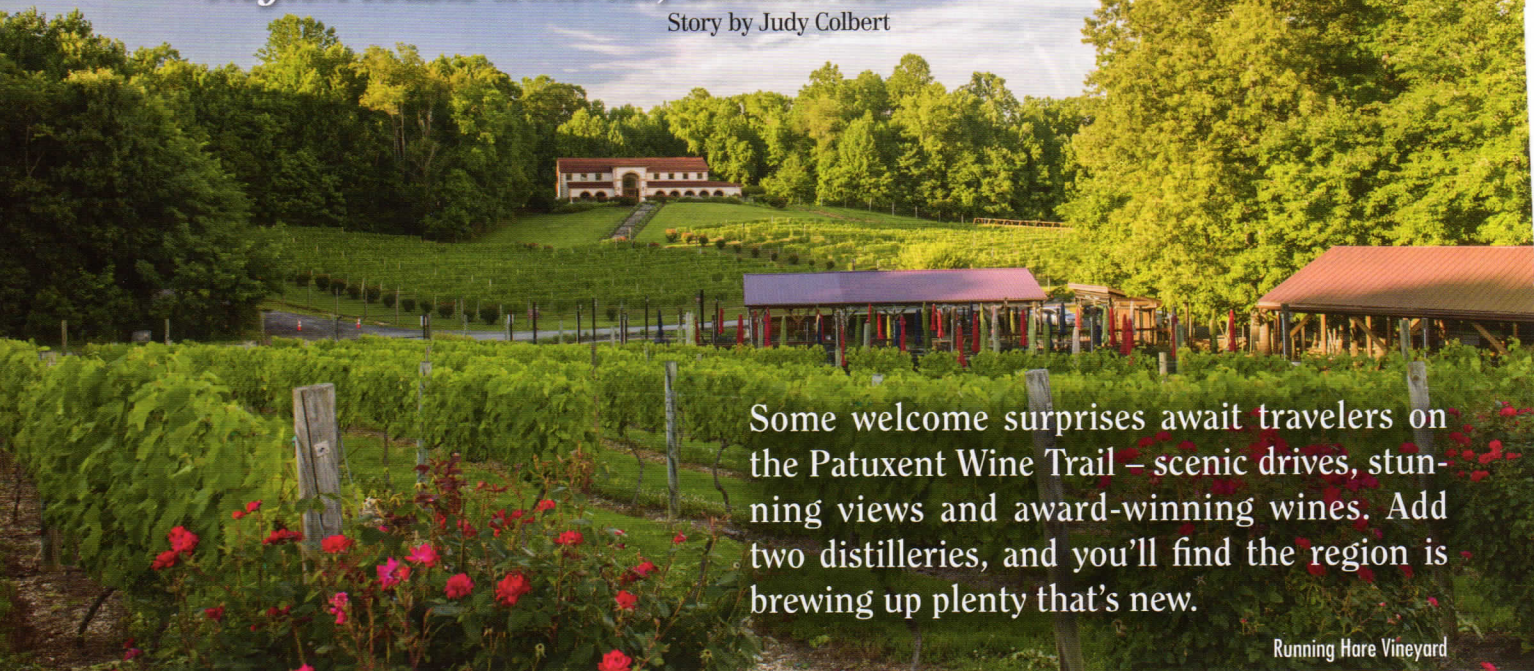


SIP, SIP, Hooray!

Region toasts wineries, distilleries

Story by Judy Colbert



Some welcome surprises await travelers on the Patuxent Wine Trail – scenic drives, stunning views and award-winning wines. Add two distilleries, and you'll find the region is brewing up plenty that's new.

Running Hare Vineyard

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE B PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVERT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Southern Marylanders are brewing up a lot of interesting things these days, particularly when it comes to wine. Almost any drive along one of our scenic roads will bring you to the picturesque doors of a vineyard, winery, coffee brewer, or a distillery. Some compare the area's climate to Italy's Tuscany region, minus the mountains and cascading terraces. Each year brings more experience and a better-tasting product. As the Maryland Wine Association says, as you travel the various wine trails throughout the state, you'll find, "Stunningly complex reds, vibrant whites, unique meads, ciders and fruit wines."

A Patuxent Wine Trail has been established so you can visit the region's wineries and experience the thrill of local wines and meet the winemakers. We also have two hard liquor distilleries that are open to visitors.

Calvert County

Cove Point Winery

Cove Point Winery is a boutique winery in Lusby, not far from the famed Cove Point Lighthouse. Started in 2004, they experiment with grapes and fruit, producing an enticing selection of about 7,000 gallons a year of potables you're likely to find only here. The grapes include a Cayuga white, chardonnay, cabernet franc, merlot, Niagara and Catawba, among others. They grow some,

Top: Solomons Island Winery
Bottom: Blue Dyer Distilling Co.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUEDYER DISTILLING CO.



Perigeaux Vineyards & Winery

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVERT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

obtain the rest from other vineyards, trying to stay with local grapes. The fruit wine offerings include blackberry, black cherry, mango, peach, blueberry, strawberry, a very berry port and sangria.

They were the first licensed and bonded Class 4 winery in Southern Maryland, which means they make their wine from fruit they grow themselves, unless there's an insufficient supply, and they can sell at farmers markets and other similar events and markets.

Fridays Creek Winery & Tasting Room

You can see a piece of tobacco-growing history because a remodeled 1920s tobacco barn is the setting for this winery. Instead of hands of tobacco hanging from the rafters, you'll see local art on the walls and wine aging in oak barrels. Please enjoy a walk through the grounds and sample the wines that include whites, rosés and reds (including a syrah and a cabernet sauvignon). Fridays Creek has a number of special events — at festivals around the state — and they are always looking for volunteers (pour wine, meet people, free admission to the event and discount on the wines). Frank Cleary, son of the owner and manager, says this year they're producing a

wonderful sauvignon blanc and a couple of reserve whites, all from their own grapes.

Perigeaux Vineyards & Winery

While some say our climate is similar to Tuscany, Italy, Mark Fleming, one of the owners, was reminded of the French village of Perigueux where he had lived while studying wine-making. The spelling was modified a touch, and from the first bottling of three cases in 2005, they're now producing almost 900 cases each year, all from grapes grown in their vineyards. They produce Bordeaux-style red and white wines. The tasting room can hold up to 250 guests and the view is almost better than the wines.

Tours are offered at 1 and 3 p.m. on weekends and by appointment. Check their schedule for live music events and then plan to assist in the harvest and crush. In exchange for your assistance, you receive a winery tour, wine tasting class and lunch.

Running Hare Vineyard

Running Hare Vineyard is an international award-winning winery located on a 300-acre property with a huge Tuscan-styled events villa and an outdoor wine

tasting pavilion. They have a desert wine (sort of a tawny port style), chardonnay, malbec, pinot grigio, riesling and others. In 2015, they became the first farm/winery to open a craft beer garden (Calvert Brewing Company). If you visit on a weekend, bring a picnic basket and spend the day.

Solomons Island Winery

Solomons Island Winery is a family-owned and -operated winery producing award-winning wines on its unique nine-acre property situated along Hungerford Creek. The winery's petite vineyard grows syrah, cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc and semillon vines, but their wines are made from their grapes and fruit grown by others. Look for green apple riesling, mango symphony, black raspberry merlot and exotic fruits white zinfandel. They've recently moved from Lusby, so be sure you have the Solomons Island address (next to the Pier Restaurant). They participate in a bunch of events and are always looking for volunteers.

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Fridays Creek Winery

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALVERT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Slack Winery & Vineyard

VKM

Sample & Savor

Calvert County

Cove Point Winery

755 Cove Point Road, Lusby, 410-326-0949
Open Wednesday-Sunday 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
www.covepointwinery.com
Free tasting for four wines; \$4 for 10 wine tasting and you keep the glass

Fridays Creek Winery & Tasting Room

3485 Chaneyville Road, Owings, 410-286-9463
Open Thursday - Monday: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
www.FridaysCreek.com
\$5 tasting fee (\$4.59 + 9% sales tax)

Perigeaux Vineyards & Winery

8650 Mackall Road, St. Leonard, 410-586-2710
Open Wednesday-Friday: 2-8 p.m.; Saturday noon-8 p.m.; Sunday noon-6 p.m.
www.perigeaux.com
\$6 tasting fee for six samples; \$12 for 11 tastes including Estate wines and Mackall Road wines

Running Hare Vineyard

150 Adelina Road, Prince Frederick, 410-414-8486
Open Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday: noon-6 p.m.; Friday-Saturday noon-8 p.m.
www.runningharevineyard.com
\$7 for wine tasting Wednesday-Friday; \$10 for wine and live music Saturday-Sunday

Solomons Island Winery

14575 Solomons Island Road, 410-394-1933
Open Monday-Sunday: 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
www.solomonsislandwinery.com
\$10 includes samples of seven wines and includes a souvenir glass

Charles County

Blue Dyer Distilling Co.

52 Industrial Park Drive #15, Waldorf
301-674-8832
Open Saturday-Sunday 2-10 p.m.; weekdays by appointment
www.bluedyerdistilling.com/
\$5 one taste; \$10 two tastes

St. Mary's County

Tobacco Barn Distillery

24460 Hollywood Road, Hollywood, 240-243-9151
www.tobaccobarnanddistillery.com
\$10 for tour, tasting and logo shot glass

Port of Leonardtown Winery

23190 Newtowne Neck Road, 301-690-2192
Open daily noon-6 p.m.; first Fridays until 9 p.m. (check website for extended Saturday music hours)
www.polwinery.com
\$10 for 8 wines (including souvenir glass); \$7 without the glass

Slack Winery & Vineyard

16040 Woodlawn Drive, Ridge, 301-872-5172
Open Sunday noon-6 p.m.
www.slackwine.com
\$10 for a flight of six wines

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Charles County

Blue Dyer Distilling Co.

Paying homage to five generations and 100 years (actually as early as 1720) of family distilling traditions, Blue Dyer's more recent history dates to the day of bootlegging -- the 20th century version -- and now to crafting fine gold rum, whiskey and gin. They've branched out to selling wearables, tumbler glasses, tote bags and flasks. Stop by on weekends for a tour and taste.

St. Mary's

Port of Leonardtown Winery

The Southern Maryland Wine Growers Cooperative has 12 vineyards from St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles and Kent counties. They're growing cayuga, chambourcin, vidal blanc, petit verdot, merlot, albarino, chardonnay, petit sirah and a dozen other varieties. Stop by the former State Highway Administration building, at the Port of Leonardtown Public Park, now the tasting room. They also sell cheeses, crackers and sausages so you can have a picnic, or bring your own basket of goodies.



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FEATURE

(Continued from page 47.)

key, veggies, eggs, bread and St. Inie's coffee. They expect to release new wines by the time you read this. Check the schedule for Sunday afternoon waterside music and plan to spend a few hours. Join their wine club which involves buying a case of wine per year and receiving a discount on future purchases and wine club events. Live music will be offered from noon to 6 p.m. Oct. 1.

Tobacco Barn Distillery

According to the guys at Tobacco Barn Distillery, whiskey and bourbon were produced in Maryland long before they were distilled in other parts of the country. Sounds sensible because we grow corn, wheat and rye and that's what's needed to produce alcoholic beverages. In the late 1700s, after a few political twists, the distillers moved to western Virginia, which would become Kentucky.

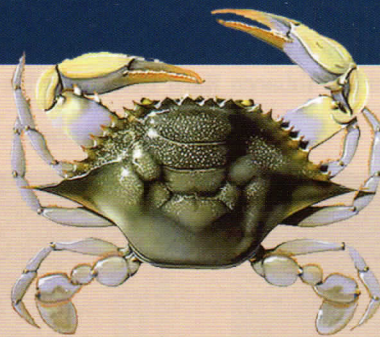
Fast forward and Scott and Jane Sanders, Sean and Tracy Coogan, and Dan and Susie Dawson decided to renew

the old business. "We source as much as we can from Maryland," says Scott Sanders, "the rye is from Wicomico Grains, and it's ground locally." Some of their rum is aged in the hold of the USS Constellation in Baltimore Harbor (the boat rocking adds something to the flavor). Once the grains are used they're almost 20 percent protein, and they're donated to local farmers for livestock feed (usually pigs).

Tobacco Barn will entertain groups of 10 or 12 for curated tastings. It includes a distillery tour, a bourbon and spirits of Maryland history lesson, a demonstration of how the product is made and then the tasting time. Buy a bottle, and there's no charge for the tasting. •

Judy Colbert is the author of *100 Things to Do in Baltimore Before You Die* and a regular contributor to *Southern Maryland-This is Living*.

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