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Virginia Wineries: Top Three Day Trip Destinations

By **KW Rosenfeld**

Virginia's wine industry is considered to be among the finest in the country, making good on the vision of Founding Father Thomas Jefferson who persistently but unsuccessfully attempted wine-making more than 200 hundred years earlier. Now among the nation's most prolific wine-producing states, and rapidly building a reputation across the globe, Virginia receives acclaim for the quality of its wines and the character of its wineries.

Today, the rolling hills are overflowing with exceptional wineries, particularly in the regions surrounding Jefferson's Charlottesville and to the north outside of Leesburg. But travel a little out of the way and additional gems can be found. These wineries not only produce great wine, but offer the exceptional atmosphere and surrounding attractions that promise to turn a pleasant visit into a memorable day trip.

Contact each winery for the latest details on hours and events.

Paradise Springs Winery - Northern Virginia
13219 Yates Ford Road; Clifton, Virginia 20124
www.paradisesspringswinery.com

Notable as the only winery in populous Fairfax County outside of Washington, DC, Paradise Springs is nestled in a quiet, forested area near the quaint town of Clifton. A newcomer, having planted its first vineyard in 2008, the family-run winery opened in January 2010, after prevailing in a lengthy zoning dispute in which it had to prove that the winery was more "agricultural" than "industrial."

Wine award: The 2009 Chardonnay won the prestigious Governor's Cup as the best white wine in the Commonwealth.

Why visit: Already home to a red barn and an early-1800s log house, Paradise Springs opened a beautiful new tasting room and wine-making facility. Wood panels soar overhead, while interior glass windows allow a peek at the barrels. Live music can frequently be found on the covered back patio. Convenient to busy Northern Virginia, the location feels a world apart as you approach down the narrow, winding, tree-lined road.

What's nearby: The town of Clifton remains nearly unchanged from its founding, and the small downtown hosts several restaurants, an ice-cream stand, and dozens of charming, historic homes. The historic town of Occoquan is also nearby, as are the Civil War battlefields of Manassas and Bull Run, a number of parks, and paddling on the Occoquan River.

Ingleside Vineyards - Northern Neck
5872 Leedstown Road; Oak Grove, Virginia 22443
www.inglesidevineyards.com

Ingleside is located on the scenic Northern Neck peninsula in the Chesapeake Bay region. Production began in 1980, making this one of the older wineries in Virginia. Ingleside maintains that the local climate, topography, and soil create conditions reminiscent of France's Bordeaux region.

Wine award: The 2008 Sangiovese took Best of Category at the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association Competition.

Why visit: Ingleside offers an Old World atmosphere thanks to a picturesque courtyard complete with a fountain in the center. Despite the lure of the Chesapeake Bay outside, visitors can easily spend a relaxed afternoon with a bottle of wine and some cheese from the shop.

What's nearby: Recreational opportunities abound in the Chesapeake Bay. History buffs can choose among the birthplaces of George Washington, James Monroe, and Robert E. Lee.

Barboursville Vineyards - Central Virginia

17655 Winery Road; Barboursville, Virginia 22923

www.barboursvillewine.net/winery

Founded in 1976, the award-winning Barboursville Vineyards evokes the history of Virginia wine-making. This is the most spectacular of Virginia's vineyards, located on a historic estate featuring the ruins of a plantation home designed by Jefferson for his friend, Governor James Barbour.

Wine award: The signature Octagon blend is consistently considered the most renowned red wine of Virginia; the British Embassy in Washington selected Octagon for its evening reception honoring the marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

Why visit: In addition to the stunning ruins, an equally historic villa and cottages are on the grounds and now available as accommodations. The critically-acclaimed Palladio Restaurant is worth a visit on its own.

What's nearby: The quaint towns of Gordonsville and Orange offer a step back in time, as does James Madison's Montpelier estate. Charlottesville is less than 20 miles to the south.

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