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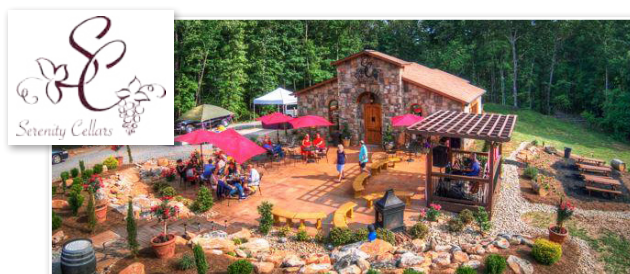


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Welcome to Unwind Magazine...

We know the title of this magazine may seem out of place in 2017.

Because one thing's for certain, there's not much unwinding going on these days.

From our constant cable news to the frequent beeps of the email inbox to the ever-present glow of our smart phones, we're usually so busy trying to catch up that we forget something much more important: How to relax.

We'll we aim to change that.

And we aim to start now.

The good thing is the North Georgia mountains are a pretty great place to start. And the following 60 pages are exactly about slowing down and savoring the enjoyable things in life.

From the cool breeze coming

off Wolf Mountain's vineyard to the heady foam of a freshly poured craft brew at Whistle Top to the soothing cluck of free-range hens at LoganBerry Heritage Farms, this magazine is a how-to guide for unwinding.

It's also about a movement.

People are getting fed up with fakeness.

They're longing for authenticity. So the folks featured in this magazine took matters into their own hands.

There's Jabe Hilson, who left his job as a graphic designer to pursue the art of wine making. There's chef Chris Bolton and his wife Laura Farrelly, who brazenly bypass the frozen food section and craft culinary creations that come straight from the farm.

There's craft beer barons John Cochran and Spike Buckowski who created the Terrapin enterprise out of one special brew. There's Dietrich Hoecht who made the unlikely jump from engineer to metalwork artist.

And that's just the start.

Each of the stories in this magazine is about a person who took the time to hone a craft and create something real and tangible.

And they've invited you to be a part of it.

Some come join them.

And while you're at it, feel free to sign off, log out, power down and then...Unwind.

It's easier than you think.

Cheers,

Matt

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What would you like done today?

LADIES STARTING AT...

Blowout	20
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GENTLEMEN

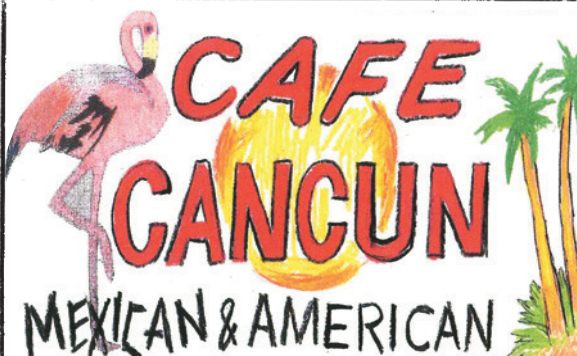
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Year-round



Chris Bolton adds a pinch of microgreens while creating a culinary creation at Harvest Habersham. (photo by Anneliese Zemp)

'Harvest'

By Candice Dyer



A farm-to-table operation thrives



Chris Bolton reverently breaks off a tendril of some greens and pops it in his mouth. As he chews, he smiles, and says, "Tastes just like a fresh pea. This is exciting."

Bolton is the chef and co-owner of Harvest Habersham, a farm-to-table restaurant in Clarkesville. Its mission consists of a strict adherence to only locally grown, chemical-free ingredients, and it has acquired the kind of discerning cult following – among both locals and the Lake Burton crowd – that requires reservations in advance to get a table.

Bolton is methodically surveying the produce at "Locally Grown," a mobile, pop-up farm-

ers market that distributes vegetables and meats at stops in Clayton, Clarkesville and Gainesville. Bolton, 39, is tall and taciturn – he does not like to talk about himself. However, he sees appetizing potential in every item at the market and can gush at length about its quality and how he would prepare it.

"Look at how beautiful the beets are," he marvels as he holds them up for inspection. "I would poach them in water with some cinnamon and black pepper and a little vinegar, then sear them on the grill and then use the leaves in a salad."

He moves from bin to bin. "And these chicken feet! I would

make a bone broth out of them or maybe pickle them," he says. "And those radishes. You won't find them this nutrient-rich in the grocery store."

He could go on, and on.

For Harvest Habersham, today's haul includes some Austrian winter peas ("A nitrogen-fixing cover crop that will be tilled back into the soil," he notes approvingly); honeycomb; some hickory nut syrup ("We use this in lieu of maple because maples don't thrive here. I might smoke it to pair with blue cheese," he says.); sage; butternut squash; and new potatoes ("The longer a potato ages, the starchier it gets. These young ones will be great



mashed," he says.)

The restaurant sticks to its objective so energetically that its menu changes weekly and sometimes, daily. Even the butter and olive oil come from Georgia producers, and foragers bring them mushrooms, ramps and more exotic fare, such as kousa fruit

from nearby Asian dogwoods and kudzu blossoms.

"The farmers give us a heads-up about what's coming, but we don't make the menu until it arrives," Bolton says.

The only dish that has remained a constant since the

establishment opened is its cornbread, made from cornmeal milled just down the road.

Bolton is as locavore as his cuisine. He grew up in Clarkesville, washing dishes and paying his dues at local restaurants such as The Trolley and The Orchard. Then he spent time working



Chris Bolton and his wife Laura Farrelly are on a mission to bring locally grown, taste bud pleasing meals to their customers at Harvest Habersham in Clarkesville. (photo by Anneliese Zemp)



with James Beard notables, Mark Kiffin, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and John Flerer, in Asheville, North Carolina. He and his wife, Laura Farrelly, owned Merritt's Table, a farm-to-table restaurant in Merritt Island, Florida, before coming home. It was at Glen-Ella Springs where Bolton first started for-

ing alliances with local growers and experimenting with seasonal, artisanal agriculture.

Bolton and Farrelly opened Harvest Habersham in 2014, operating with a dynamic tradition among restaurateur couples – he presides over the kitchen, while she handles the front of the house, which seats

70, and they collaborate on the menu.

“A big part of our job is educating the consumer about the practices and philosophies of local farms,” Farrelly says. “When we first opened, people would ask if we would be closed during the winter, as if nothing is harvested then.”

Bolton interjects, “What they didn’t realize is that farming is a year-round endeavor, and we get kale, broccoli, beets, turnips and all kinds of other greens then.”

Farrelly also points out that organic produce often “doesn’t look perfect. These farmers don’t use chemicals, so





there might be a bug-hole in something, but that doesn't mean it's not usable."

The farm-to-table movement emphasizes ingredients over technique.

"I try to keep everything as natural as possible to reveal the true taste of the food," Bolton says. "I try not to mess with it too much."

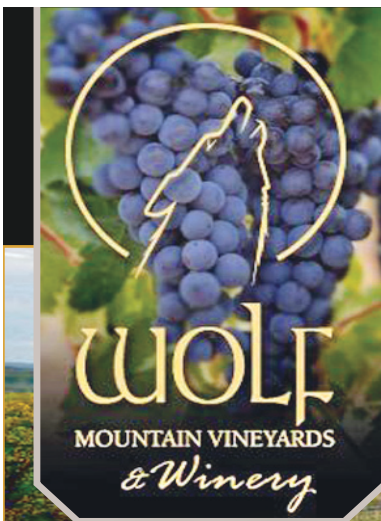
Chuck Mashburn of Mill Gap Farm, which supplied the "exciting" peas, praised Bolton's inspired but unfussy approach.

"He usually doesn't use more than, say, seven ingredients," Mashburn says. "He keeps it very simple, but every bite, every forkful, is bursting with flavor. He'll take some vegetable you thought you were familiar with and present it in a whole new way. It's really incredible the way he works."

Bolton also takes a holistic tack, finding a purpose for every part of whatever happens to be near his knives. "I'll use the leaves of a carrot to make a pesto sauce," he says, "and I like to buy a whole hog and then break it down myself, maybe make my own smoked, cured bacon."

Ronnie Mathis, of Mountain Earth Farm, sells Harvest Habersham produce by the bushel. He says, "Chris just has all the right instincts. He knows what to do and how to do it, and he knows what people like, which is intense flavor and fresh-from-the-earth quality."

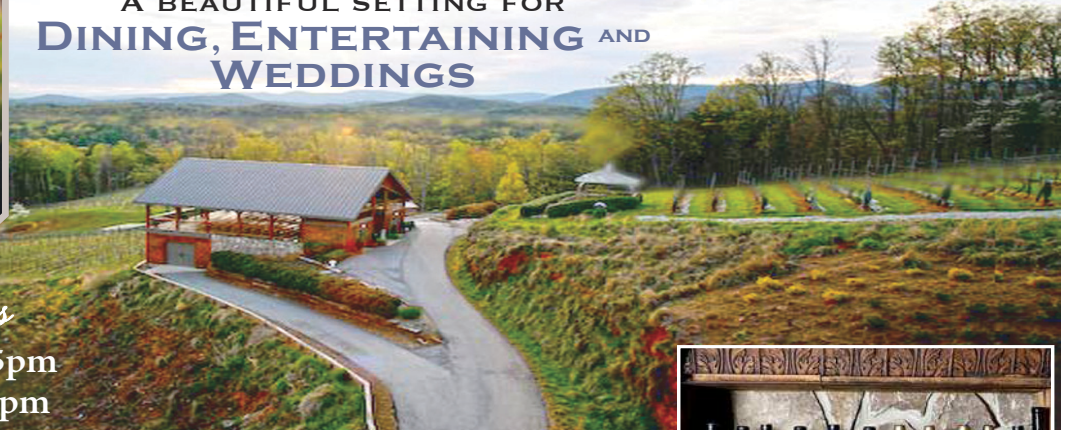
Bolton, gesturing toward his kitchen table overflowing with vegetables in their rawest splendor, says, "I just wish I could buy more and offer more support to local farmers. They deserve it."



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Slow food

No drive-thru in sight

By Candice Dyer

Like so many foodie trends, the farm-to-table movement, also known as “slow food” originating from “artisanal agriculture,” started in California in the early 1970s with celebrity chef Alice Waters and her restaurant Chez Panisse.

Despite Georgia’s rural landscape dotted with farms, local restaurateurs and chefs did not really adopt the practices and philosophies of the movement, which entails sourcing food that is seasonal and sustainably grown, until around five years ago. The United States Department of Agriculture has decreed that a vendor can label its food “locally grown” if the vegetables, fruits, and meats are cultivated within 400 miles of the establishment.

In Northeast Georgia, the nexus of this scene is “Locally Grown,” a consortium of 40 farms around Rabun, Habersham, and Hall counties, founded in 2010 by the Georgia Mountain Farmers Network. Depending on their different certifications, some of these farms are organic and others are designated “naturally grown,” but all are chemical-free – no pesticides or synthetic fertilizers are used. One of the hallmarks of artisanal agriculture are the whimsical names farmers give their operations: Whit’s End; DancesWithBees honey; Taterville in Turnerville.

For only \$20 per year, consumers can place orders online and then pick up the items at the pop-up markets along the network’s weekly delivery route. One old-timer was heard quipping, “Farm to table? Back in my day, we just called that ‘supper.’”

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MOUNTAIN MUSES

North Georgia Arts Guild inspires and intrigues

by John Bynum

Rich and unique art experiences – this is the goal of the North Georgia Arts Guild.

As a nonprofit organization founded in 1994, the Guild now features over 100 members.

The group includes artists of many skills, said basket weaver Randy Sells.

“We run the whole gamut – novice to very experienced,” she said.

The Guild holds monthly programs, as well as two major shows throughout the year, said Sells.

In July, the Painted Fern Festival of Art will showcase the Guild’s members at the civic center in Clayton, and includes complimentary wine as well.

Sells believes that the breadth and depth of talent and diversity

of the artwork is what makes the North Georgia Arts Guild artists unique.

AN APPRECIATION FOR POTTERY

Frank Lustig has built a following among art enthusiasts with his raku pottery technique.

After working as an engineer, Lustig retired in 2000 and wanted to do something artistic.

Beginning with a watercolor class at John C. Campbell Folk School, he soon noticed the two-stage wood kiln that fascinated him.

After subsequently becoming involved in a course about how to use the kiln, Lustig realized that class members were expected to have their own pottery to fire in the kiln.

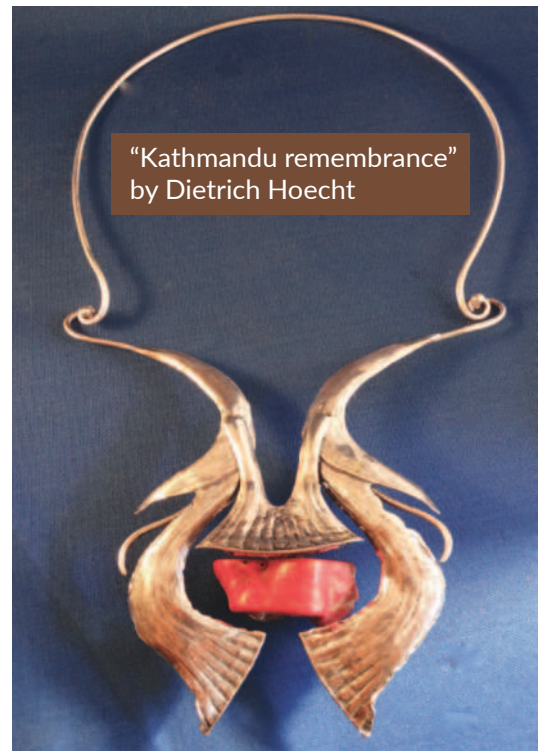
With some practice with clay and more courses at the Folk



Dietrich Hoecht said he has always been designing, building, exploring and inventing (and has his name on six U.S. patents). For him, art adds to happiness and keeps the mind wide open.



Bathroom dresser by Dietrich Hoecht



"Kathmandu remembrance" by Dietrich Hoecht

School, Lustig gained momentum.

"I really like the feel of the clay and what you can do," Lustig said. "I found the raku glazes are sort of like watercolor."

Lustig said he realized he didn't want to spend five years mastering the pottery wheel.

Therefore, he specializes in hand-built pottery featuring architectural designs, artistic faces, animal shapes and Japanese influences.

He said he has collected his own recipe for his raku firing

technique, which gives each piece strength to go ahead and glaze it.

Lustig said when he fires his pottery outside, he goes up to about 1,900 degrees. When the piece comes out it's red and white hot, requiring the use of protective tongs.

The pottery is then put in a bed of combustible material – newspaper in this case – and it immediately flames up, Lustig said.

The next step is to cover the pottery with a can or put it in a

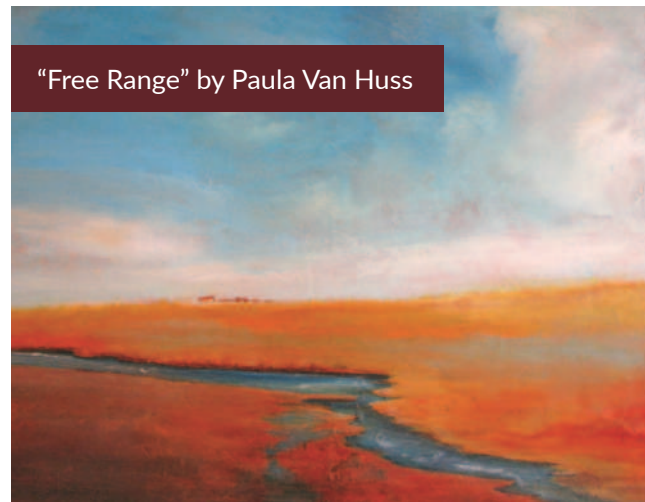
metal container with a lid, which allows the flame to burn all the oxygen around it, bringing out the metallic look of the piece.

"People think I made it out of metal, not clay," Lustig observed. "When I use a particular glaze, I have an idea of the color it should be, but sometimes it comes out different shades."

Lustig said some customers commission pieces of pottery and expect them to end up looking a certain way. However, often raku pottery comes out looking slightly different than expected, he said.



Paula Van Huss lets her imagination take over while in the studio.



"Free Range" by Paula Van Huss

In addition to meeting new good friends, becoming involved in art has had another effect on him.

"One unexpected benefit is that it has taught me that you can pick up something at any stage of life and become good at it and enjoy it," Lustig said.

Among the locations that display Lustig's art are High Country Art & Antique Art Gallery in Blue Ridge, Smitten art gallery in Highlands, North Carolina and others in South Carolina.

PERSONAL MEANING IN HER PAINTING

Paula Van Huss said she has a different approach to acrylics than most artists who use them to paint realistic-looking subjects.

"I use acrylics the same way as watercolors – loosely," she said.

Van Huss said she uses texture such as gels and other media, and has even used Venetian plaster. Sometimes she has sanded them down to give the ap-

pearance of being textured.

"I do all sorts of things [just not flowers]. My imagination takes over," Van Huss said.

Unlike many artists, Van Huss didn't paint as a child, not even in high school.

She recalls a time in her early 20s when she visited an art show in southwest Atlanta, where many of the works – mostly realism – made her want to try art.

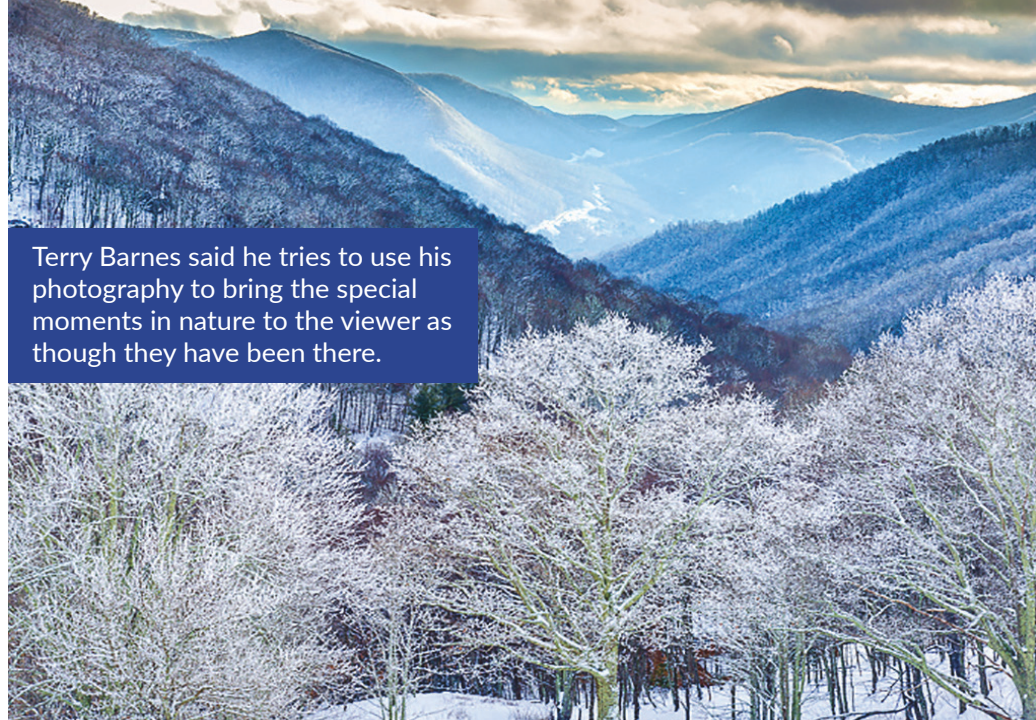
As an adult, she found time to paint while she worked as an agent at Hartsfield - Jackson Atlanta International Airport - sometimes painting from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. and going to art shows on the weekends.

She began in oils, painting landscapes, but now has a very different approach.

Van Huss said she now gets her inspiration from looking at contemporary artists that lean toward abstract.



"I Like the Night Life" by Paula Van Huss



Terry Barnes said he tries to use his photography to bring the special moments in nature to the viewer as though they have been there.

"It takes a lot more ability in the foundation to do contemporary or abstract," she said. "You can't just throw paint on the canvas and have it look like anything – you have to work at it."

One major factor that makes her art unique, Van Huss said, is

that she paints for herself – not the public.

This fact, along with the earth-toned colors she often uses, gives people a general feel that draws them in.

The artwork of Van Huss can be seen at Gartrell Gallery in Blue

Ridge.

In addition, she will be an artist in residence July through September at the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association.

Plus, as a member of the Quinlan Visual Arts Center in Gainesville, Van Huss will be a part of

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the member show in October.

FROM FOREST WALKS TO METALWORK

Dietrich Hoecht doesn't want to find his signature style – on purpose.

"I just like to explore and make one-of-a-kind," he said

He describes his work as "eclectic" art or "seeking art."

As a metalwork artist, Hoecht creates knives, furniture, lighting, jewelry, kitchen utensils, wall art, sculptures and more, along with embellishments of metal plating, patina and enamel, and leather and wood, he said.

In his earlier life as a mechanical engineer, Hoecht had constant exposure to art. He said his wife and their old friends from the Buford arts colony stuck his nose into art.

"We also were founding members of the Gwinnett Council for the Arts," he added. "Of course, retirement life has become a great art-prodding motivation."

Hoecht gets his inspiration from natural forms – looking for motifs photographing on daily

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walks in the forest.

He also finds intriguing shapes in art, like architecture, online using Pinterest.

This, along with his many influences from sculpting, blacksmithing, jewelry making and pottery, have shaped him artistically.

Hoecht's ironwork can be seen at Aurum Studios in Athens and online through his Etsy shop, "Big-bangforge."

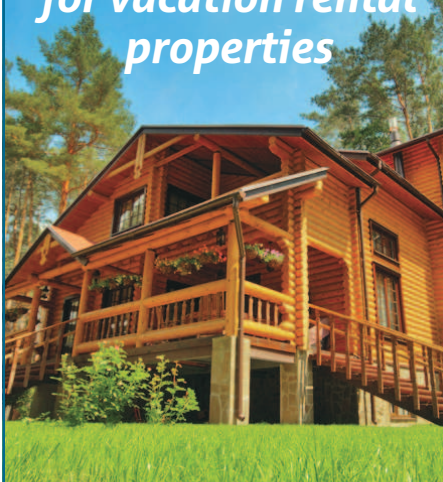
DISCOVERING PEACE THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

About 30 years ago, Terry Barnes decided to get serious about cameras and photography.

"I'd always found great images fascinating and wanted to produce them myself," he said. "I was drawn to the images that were taken in some of the most scenic places on Earth."

Barnes said his inspiration comes from nature. "The beautiful

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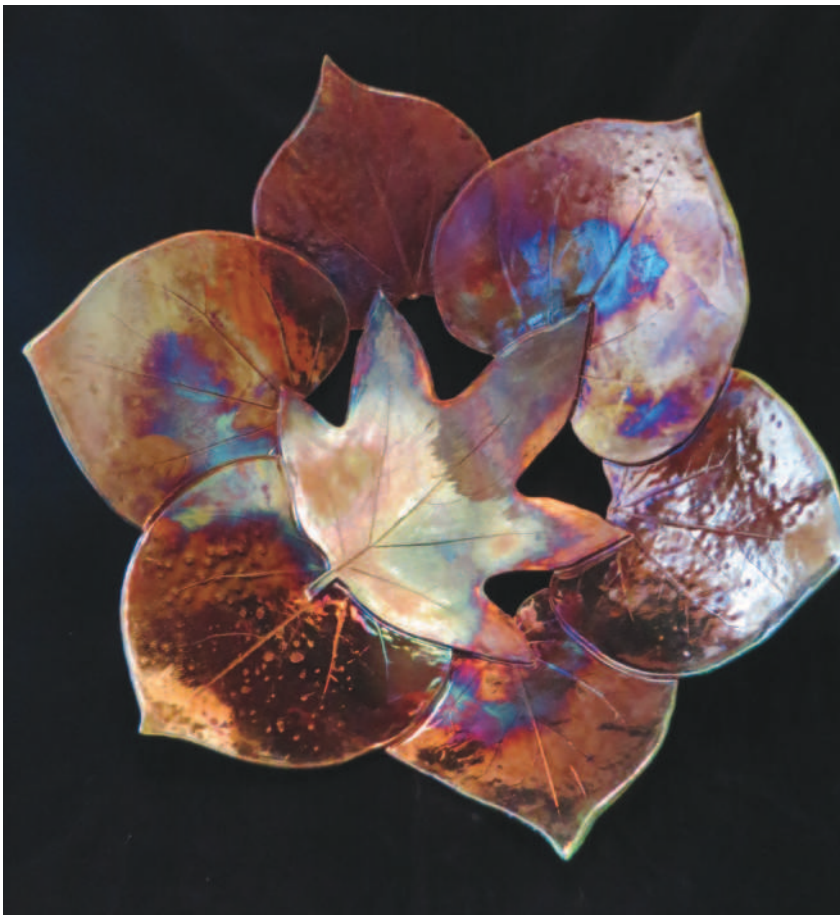
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weather and scenic changes captured in a moment keep me in awe.”

“I like to produce results in my images that show the entire range of light and shadow, just as viewed by the human eye,” Barnes said.

He believes his photography brings the special moments in nature to the viewer as though they have been there.

Barnes said photographing nature has brought a sense of peace to his life.

“I’m more spiritual and let nature show me its magic rather than forcing a specific goal in mind each time I venture out with the camera,” he added.

Barnes displays his work at Blue Ridge Art Center in Blue Ridge, others in North Carolina, and on his website: tbarnesphotography.photoshelter.com.

More information about upcoming North Georgia Arts Guild events can be found online at northgeorgiaartsguild.com.

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– *Southern Living*, March 2017

A glass of beer with a thick head of foam sits on top of a wooden barrel. The background is a blurred brewery setting with more barrels.

HOP to it

A look at
Georgia's
GROWING
craft beer
culture

By Greg Finan Jr.



The ancient Sumerians must have known they were onto a good thing when they brewed up their first batch of beer in 1800 BC. More than 3800 years later, so did the folks at Terrapin Beer Company.

It was then, in Athens, Georgia (2002 A.D.), that founders John Cochran and Spike Buckowski released their first craft beer, Terrapin Rye Pale Ale, after the two came up with the idea while working at a microbrewery in Atlanta.

The beer quickly won the Gold Medal in the American Pale Ale category at the Great American Beer Festival just six months after its release.

Since then, Terrapin's collection and varieties of craft beer has grown by leaps and bounds.

It's variety, said Leah Kuck of Terrapin, that keeps things going. Along with a willingness to stick to the company's pledge to refrain from floating "the mainstream."



Fain Anderson mans the taps at Terrapin head-quarters.



Waitress AnnaMaria Little has served up plenty of local brews at Shenanigans Irish Pub in Dahlonga. (Photo by Matt Aiken)




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"We use feedback from our customers all the time," she said. "We'll ask them things like, 'What do you think about a peanut butter and chocolate-flavored beer?,' and they respond whether it sounds good or not. That's how Liquid Bliss was born."

For Terrapin, the craft beer culture serves as a driving force for the company's bold choices in its products.

It's a culture that prides itself on individuality. In other words, this isn't your father's light beer. Though dad is welcome to grab a bottle as well.

"Our employees and our customers are like family," Kuck said. "We have a group called the Terrapin Tribe that consists of both employees and customers which has grown over the years."

With the success of Terrapin,



cans of Creature Comforts Brewing in Athens to big city brews in Three Taverns Craft Brewery in Decatur, there is no shortage of craft breweries to fill your weekends with your favorite libation.

The craft beer boom has cre-

ated a niche inside a niche, so the days of having to go to a brewery to enjoy your favorite craft beer have gone by the wayside. Now, there are a plethora of brewpubs that specialize in offering Georgia's craft beer drinkers craft brews from local breweries

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and craft breweries across the nation.

That's where people like Chad Wimpy come in.

In the small, mountain community of Dahlonega, his Gold City Growlers offers its customers 20 different, rotating styles of craft beer. Customers can purchase 32-ounce or 64-ounce refillable, sealable containers to fulfill their craft beer needs.

"We try to reserve half of our craft beer list to local breweries, as tourists are always asking for local craft beers," Wimpy said.

Wimpy, who had never been a craft beer drinker before opening the growler shop, has grown

to love IPAs and is continuously amazed by the eclectic palettes of his customers.

"It is interesting how true craft beer drinkers can go from one taste to an entirely different taste and enjoy them all," Wimpy said. "I have about 30 regulars who come in every week to try something new or get refills on their favorite flavor."

The Whistle Top Brew Co. in Cornelia, has also tapped into the craft beer boom, offering North Georgia one of the best selections of craft beer, wine and sodas available. Like Gold City Growlers, Whistle Top offers 20 taps of rotating brands of craft beer.



"Whistle Top always has great brews on tap, and the owners are extremely knowledgeable about beer," said Sam White, a regular patron of the establishment. "If you're in or near Cornelia and want a good brew, this is the place to go."

With the craft beer explosion that has consumed Georgia over the past 15 years, the craft beer culture has established itself within the state's borders.

The only concern the craft brewery industry has about the craft beer boom is that the sheer number of breweries that have popped up over the years may be too large in number.



If you need a good beer, then Chad Wimpy is your man at Gold City Growlers in Dahlonega. (Photo by Matt Aiken)

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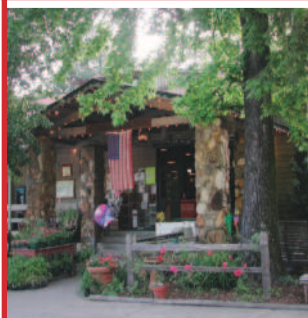
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"The biggest concern is over-saturation in the market," Kuck said. "But it is great to see what small craft breweries can offer. The craft beer culture is strong here, and as long as these breweries don't try to get too big, too quick, the growth we've seen over the years bodes well for the craft beer industry."

If you're in the North Georgia area, check out: Blue Ridge Brewery in Blue Ridge, Copper Creek Brewing, Terrapin and Creature Comforts in Athens; Left Nut Brewing Company in Gainesville; Bacchus Beer & Growlers in Hiawassee; or Whistle Top Brew Co. in Cornelia to quench your thirst for craft beer.

So pull up a stool and take part in a tradition that's as old as time. And while you're at it, you might want to raise a glass to the Sumerians.



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Jabe Hilson

A man among the vines

By Steven Grubbs



Jabe Hilson left behind his regular day job as a graphic designer to pursue his passion in the vineyards. (Photo by Jim Loring)

I first heard from Jabe Hilson about a year and a half ago via email. He dropped by one of the restaurants – a cold call – to see if the beverage director might like to taste his wines. I wasn't around, but he left with my card.

The message he sent – in which he told me a bit about his Clayton winery, Noble Wine Cellar – was noteworthy for a couple of reasons. Although my inbox is constantly peppered with email salvos from national brand managers, importer reps and distributor salespeople, I almost never see contact from winemakers in my home state.

But simple rarity wasn't the only thing about Jabe's email that caught my attention. A couple of phrases suggested he might really be thinking through what he was doing in Clayton, and that he had a sharper-than-average sense of his role in a budding culture. He hoped his wines were "maintaining a sense of connectedness," and that he believed "in North Georgia's potential to be a grape growing region of renown, as it once was." He added, "I am proud to be making wine in Georgia."

I scheduled a tasting with Jabe in Atlanta, and within seconds of



Eight-year-old Fenton Hilson learns the new family trade while working in the vineyards alongside his father Jabe Hilson. (Photo by Jim Loring)



shaking his hand it was clear my suspicions were correct. In many ways, Jabe cuts the ideal figure of farmer-philosopher. He is tall, and wiry, with a brown country beard and thin circular spectacles, and he emits the feeling of another time, like he might have been born a century earlier.

As he was working the corkscrew into a bright bottle of Traminette, he said something that seemed very important, and it framed everything I've thought about Jabe and his wines ever since. He said, "I'm not trying to make wine from California. I'm trying to figure out what Georgia wine can be."

That sentiment may not sound like much, but a whole

life's work of implications will flow from that decision. After all, the South is a tricky place to grow grapes. There isn't any reason to assume that its wines could – or should – ever taste like wines from anywhere else. That sense of variety and specificity of place is something that causes people like me to fall in love with the subject in the first place.

Jabe's perspective is surprisingly uncommon. Most of the East Coast winemakers I've met seem to want to iron those differences out. It's the reason so many are skeptical of hybrid grapes (i.e. varieties with both European and American DNA), and one of the reasons why a glut of trucked-in California juice makes its way



Steven Grubbs is an award-winning sommelier and Wine Director for Empire State South (Atlanta) and Five & Ten (Athens).

Photo/Andrew Thomas Lee

“Georgia has such a rich agricultural history. I spent my life around it, and yet I never really knew how drawn I was until I got that first real job in agriculture,” said Jabe Hilson, founder of Noble Wine Cellar. (Photo by Jim Loring)

into bottles that claim Southern origin.

But Jabe doesn't seem afraid of making unusual wine. In addition to a few European grapes, he also works with hybrids, like Traminette and Chambourcin – all of which he farms himself on vineyard land just across

the state line into North Carolina (but still within the AVA of Upper Hiawasse Highlands) – then borrows space at Montaluce Winery in Dahlonega to vinify the wines. Lately, he also has experimented with brewing mead. The enterprise for him seems to be an exercise in grow-

ing as a craftsman first.

“You take what you feel like you do well, and keep developing those skills,” he said, when we spoke recently. “At this point, I've never really had formal education in wine, and I don't know what I would even do with it.”

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It's not just a job for Jabe Hilson, it's the foundation for a family business. (Photo by Jim Loring)



The craftsman motif makes sense with Jabe's background. He studied art at LaGrange College, and worked as a graphic designer before taking a job at Tiger Mountain Vineyards in Rabun County. That work resonated firmly with him, and hearkened to Jabe's deep roots in Thompson. His earliest ancestor fought in the Revolutionary War, was paid in land and taught himself to be a Georgia

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cane farmer.

"Georgia has such a rich agricultural history. I spent my life around it, and yet I never really knew how drawn I was until I got that first real job in agriculture," he said. "It really sucked me in."

Unlike many winemakers, Jabe is not an egoist. Instead, he sees himself as a small part of a longer process of cultural development, one that may extend well beyond his own experience.

"You can work a lifetime and not feel like you learned anything," he said. "How many vintages are you going to have in your life? I wish I had someone with 20 years of experience working next to me, that I could always have over my shoulder. "But one of the cool things for me right now is that my 8-year-old son, Fenton, is really interested in what I do. You start a legacy."

Jabe remains soberly optimistic about what's possible with Noble Wine Cellar and Southern wine at large. "We can be exactly what we want to be, and we don't have to cheat to get there," he said. "It just will take time, and devotion, and the right kind of vision to get it done."

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FAMILY tradition

By Steve Alexander



White Lightning and white knuckles were synonymous for many early moonshine runners as the illegal elixir would eventually fuel the billion dollar racing industry known as NASCAR. Pictured here, Gober Sosebee and his hotrod are ready for a race in 1947. Upper right, Gober Sosebee and his wife Vaudell celebrate one of many racing wins.



Don't disrespect the 'shine.

For years the high-octane elixir powered an underground Appalachian industry while providing the fuel for what would become modern day NASCAR.

Not too bad for an illegal enterprise.

Today, things are different.

Moonshine and distilled spirits are going through a renaissance of sorts, with craft distilleries popping up all over the country, and North Georgia has its fair share of them. Whether you want to enjoy some craft whiskey in Dahlonega, some craft moonshine in Dawsonville, or some craft bourbon in Clayton, there are plenty of options available in our neck of the woods. And all of them are true "craft distilleries," using only local, natural products to produce handmade spirits. And the owners are generally very hands on, love talking to customers and have a lot to share, whether it be a love of family, a lesson in history

or talking the science of their craft.

Dawsonville is known as the racing capital of the world, but it's also thought of as the moonshine capital. The two go hand in hand, as the sport of NASCAR can be directly traced to bootleggers building elite racing machines to outrun the law in order to deliver moonshine during Prohibition. In fact, Gordon Pirkle, chairman of the board of the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame, said that Dawsonville has produced five drivers and three owners who are responsible for 28 various NASCAR titles related to Daytona and NASCAR championships. "Even the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, can't claim that," Pirkle said.

Today, the Dawsonville Distillery, which is affiliated with local racing legend Bill Elliott, is housed in the same building as the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame and Dawsonville's City Hall. The distillery opened in 2012 and offers aged and

From the backwoods to the big time

unaged brandy and whiskey, among other things.

Owner Cheryl "Happy" Wood comes from nine generations of whiskey makers and moonshiners, and came up with the idea to open a legal distillery in 2006. Her grandfather is legendary moonshiner Simmie Free, and her great grandfather is moonshiner Fate Free, who lived to be 109. She made a promise to her mother to open a legal distillery and honor the history and heritage of her ancestors, and loves sharing stories about her family.

"My mama died in 2010, so she never got to see any legal moonshine, but we were on our way to opening the business by then," Wood said. "She wanted me to carry on so I made her a promise that I would. When Mama was in the hospital, she told me she framed a picture of her daddy (Simmie Free) and wanted me to hang it in the distillery when it opened."

That painting is displayed in the distillery today – Simmie Free proudly looking over a family tradition.

"I fulfilled a promise and

that's my goal. This is my family, my tradition, my promise to Mama," Wood said. "We're trying to carry on the tradition, do it legally and let other people experience it."

Just up the road in Dahlonega, the Stillhouse Creek Craft Distillery is also handcrafting bourbon, brandy and gin, using only local, natural ingredients. Director and Whiskey Alchemist Jeff Odem loves talking about the historical relationship between whiskey and America.

"The negative connotation of distillation and the making of



The crew at Stillhouse Creek Craft Distillery enjoys a private tasting from the first barrel they ever produced.



Whiskey Alchemist Jeff Odem admires the fruits of his labor at Stillhouse Creek Craft Distillery in Dahlonega.

spirits is really specific to the 20th century," Odem said. "The history of whiskey making goes all the way back to Revolutionary times. It was the part and parcel of the economy of farming for all people, including George Washington, and there was no negative connotation associated with it."

Prohibition forced many distillers to go underground in 1920,

and Odem is making his product, in part, to honor the farmers who did it as a way of life during Revolutionary times. Odem served during the Vietnam War and his grandfather, father and son are all war veterans.

"I'm a believer in the Constitution, but historically, there's a part of me that enjoys this because of a certain rebellious part of my character," he said with a

grin. "But I'm doing it legally."

As for why the craft distillery movement is happening, Odem points to the handmade and personal qualities of his product.

"People want something handmade, something that has some value in it as opposed to something that was put together by a robot," he said. "We use local farms for our corn and ingredi-

ents, hire local labor and I make the best bourbon you'll ever put in your mouth. It's a very personal experience."

Odem is also looking forward to the future. "My first barrel was filled in November 2016. If I'm lucky, I'll be 83 years old and will take a sample of a 20-year-old bourbon that came out of my first barrel."

Another couple hours up the road, you can find the Moonrise Distillery in Rabun County. Owner Jim Harris also uses only local, natural ingredients in his top-shelf bourbon, rye whiskey and full-grain moonshine. Harris got into the business more for his love and knowledge of science than history.



Cheryl "Happy" Wood proudly displays a small sampling of the many spirits available at the Dawsonville Distillery. Wood is the great granddaughter of moonshining legend Simmie Free.



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"It started as a hobby," he said. "I'm retired out of the chemical industry. We do it all at our distillery and we're totally self-sufficient. We've actually had several master distillers from big companies come through our distillery and they've been dumbfounded by the type of product we're putting out and the equipment we've designed."

Harris built a setup that paid tribute to stills used in Appalachia in days gone by. "We use Appalachian-style pot stills and we run a thumper, because that's what they used and the pot stills is where you get your flavor," he said. "I designed the stills and all the equipment, and it's all housed in three buildings. It's an impressive operation. We have 400 barrels of bourbon and rye that are aging now."

The craft distillery movement is here and North Georgia offers several great places to choose from. Go for the whiskey, stay for the stories and remember—always respect the 'shine.



Samples of moonshine flow every day of the week at the Dawsonville Distillery, which is uniquely housed in City Hall, along with the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame. Visitors can pay their water bill, enjoy some spirits and take a guided tour through automobile history, all under the same roof.



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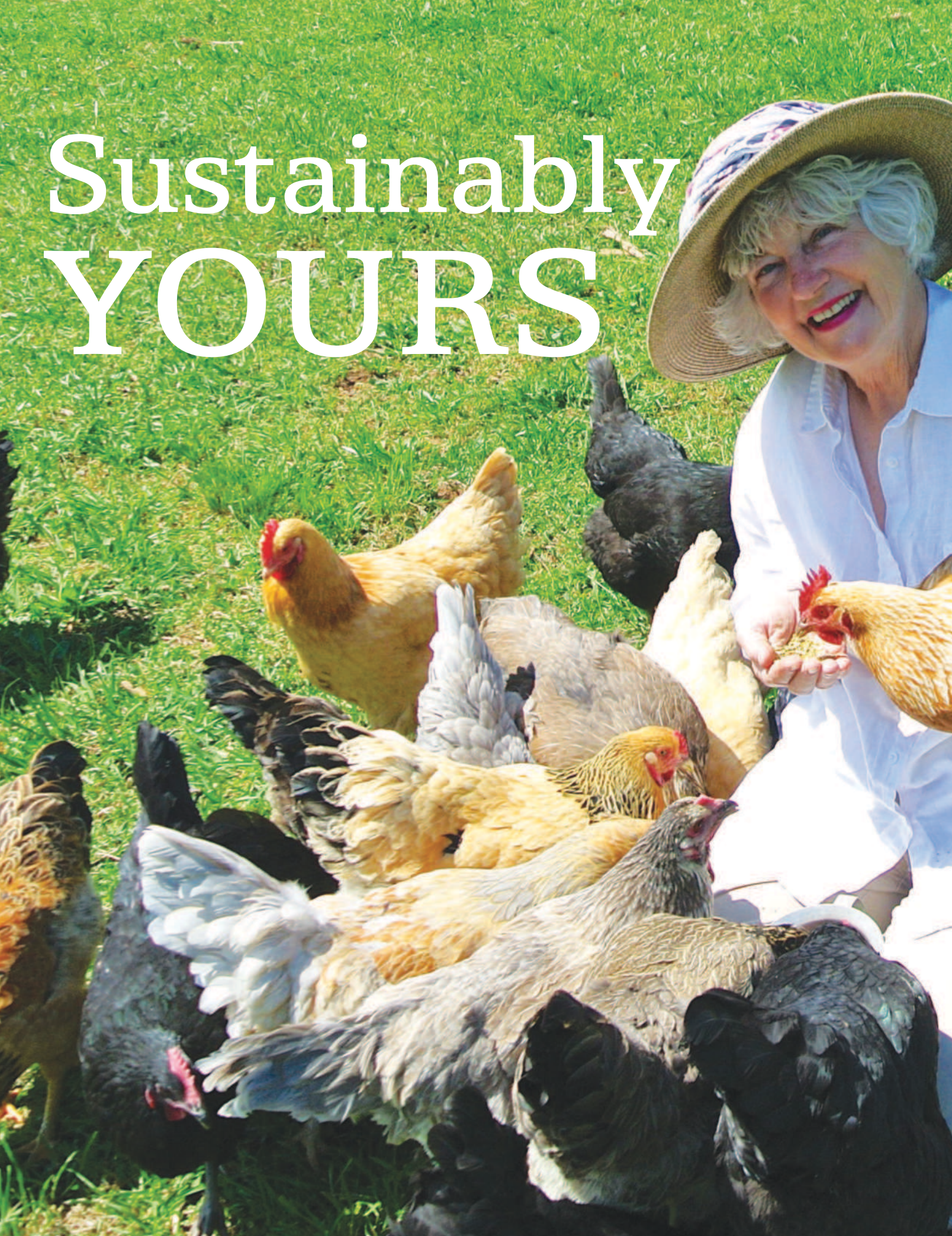
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A person wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants is holding a large, fluffy brown chicken. They are standing in a lush green field. In the background, several other chickens of various breeds, including black, white, and brown, are pecking at the grass. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a rural farm setting.

Farming with

Organic ROSE

By Candice Dyer

Sharon Mauncey is one with the residents of LoganBerry Heritage Farm (feathers and all) as she practices the age-old art of biodynamic farming.

A photograph of an elderly woman with short white hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a wide-brimmed straw hat with a colorful floral scarf. She is smiling and looking down at several chickens. She is holding a large brown chicken in her left hand and feeding a smaller black chicken with her right hand. Other chickens, including a yellow one and a black one, are gathered around her. The background shows a green field with a wire fence and a wooden post, under a bright sky.

"I wanted to take this old, worn-out farm and do something special with it," says Sharon Mauncey of her well-loved LoganBerry Heritage Farm.

With great precision, Sharon Mauney takes a small, pointy stick and pokes a hole into the fragile bottom of an empty eggshell that has been neatly cracked in half.

Then she packs a wad of nutrient-rich soil into it, and plants two tomato seeds – an extra seed in case one plant does not survive – to germinate in her greenhouse. “The eggshells give the soil much-needed calcium,” she explains. “When these are transplanted to my garden, I’ll sprinkle chips from cracked eggs all around them.”

The owner and steward of LoganBerry Heritage Farm, on the boundary of White and Lumpkin counties, she rhapsodizes about each heirloom tomato plant while she works. “I’m a fool when it comes to tomatoes,” she says. “We have 150 varieties to choose from, in all colors – yellow, green, red,

white, black. Slice them all up, and you have a rainbow-colored caprese salad.”

Mauney grew up on this land, which was settled by her ancestor, Berry Turner, in 1828. Her family “farmed the hard way – with a hoe,” she says, noting that now she does only minimal tilling.

In 2007, after decades of working as an entrepreneur, she moved back.

“I wanted to take this old, worn-out farm and do something special with it,” she says.

So she commenced to researching practices that fit her rarefied sensibility. Mauney is an ethereal woman who dreams big and dresses like a downhome Stevie Nicks – she often wears a broad straw hat, no matter what she is doing. She signs her correspondence “Sustainably Yours,” and goes by the nickname “Organic Rose,” but that does not tell the entire story.

“I start with organic and then work up from there!” she says.

LoganBerry is “holistic” in the sense that Mauney views it as one sprawling organism with a variety of moving, living, blessed parts. So she practices “biodynamic farming,” which is based on the teachings of Rudolf

Steiner, who lived around the turn of the last century. His approach to gardening is considered an early forerunner of modern organic farming, though the two practices differ in some key ways. Biodynamic agriculture treats soil fertility and livestock as ecologically related partners, but it also incorporates some mysticism and astrology.

“My farming is a spiritual enterprise as much, or more, than it is a physical labor,” Mauney says. “I try to work in a way that is sensitive to all of the subtle energies of the earth. Synthetic chemicals override those energies.”

For example, she stuffs manure from a lactating cow into hollow cattle horns and then buries them in the autumn. “They stay until after the spring equinox to absorb the energies of the universe and seasons,” she says. “Filled with life-force energies, the horns are dug up in the spring, emptied in a wooden barrel and mixed with creek water.”

Then she sprays her soil with this concoction.

“My Baptist husband calls this part the ‘bula-bula stuff,’” she says with a laugh, referring to Rush Mauney, who sells art and antiques.

In addition to tomatoes, LoganBerry is renowned for



LoganBerry Heritage Farm is known for honey, grass-fed beef, garlic, and 'of course, plenty of eggs.



eggs, honey, grass-fed beef and garlic. Every year, the Mauneys host the popular Garlic Festival, a rite of summer that features a tasting that renders everyone un-kissable for days.

"That farm is a charmed, magical place," says Kim Kiker, a local animal-welfare advocate and long-time LoganBerry customer. "Not only do they supply me with fresh eggs, but Sharon also has guided me in how to cook grass-fed beef. At first, I grilled some steaks and they turned out like shoe leather, but Sharon showed me the proper way to prepare it."

Sending animals to slaughter has proved challenging for Mauney.

"When the date comes for the abattoir, I have a special blessing service for them," she says. "I give them arnica and lavender sprays to keep them calm. I'm there spraying their noses and standing in front of them on the killing floor

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when the bolt gun goes into their head. That was my contract and commitment for them. Some customers tell me they can detect the differences those things make in their meat."

LoganBerry belongs to Locally Grown, a network of chemical-free farms, and it supplies chefs such as Jamie Allred, of Fortify, the Clayton hotspot that Open Table named one of the top 100 restaurants in the country. He uses Mauney's asparagus, tomatoes and garlic.

"Visiting Sharon, I experienced firsthand what true farming is about," he says. "We walked through

her asparagus, tomatoes and garlic fields, and the whole time she was discussing with me ecosystems, sustainability and growing produce the way it has always been intended, working with nature. Once I tasted some of her items, you can truly enjoy what properly grown food is all about."

As Mauney walks by her glossy-looking chickens, they follow her. "They're pets," she says, pausing to survey her little Eden. "With LoganBerry, I just wanted to try a few different things to see if they would work. My purpose is to restore our health."



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TAKING ROOT

Vineyards now thrive
in North Georgia soil

By Steven Grubbs

It wasn't easy, but North Georgia vineyards are now flourishing across the region and at award winning wineries such as, right top, Frogtown Cellars and below right, Wolf Mountain Vineyards.

If you think Georgia's wine industry grew naturally from the fertile soil of the Appalachians foothills, then you might want to think again.

The story of this region's wine is one marked mostly with slow starts. A cynic might read its struggles – whether natural or cultural – as amounting to some handicap, evidence that truly fine wine wasn't meant to be grown and made in the state. Or, worse yet, a sign it isn't possible.

But advances over the last decade in eastern wine-making and viticulture – especially in Virginia and New York State – serve as a reminder that those sciences happen to be complex enough to consistently upend predictions about what is and isn't possible. Suddenly, California, Oregon and Washington no longer seem to hold a monopoly on authentic American wine. Instead, the culture of America's wines (and probably our tastes) might require expanding. If new tastes are ever going to take hold, however, a little context seems necessary. Some history will certainly help.

Georgia's early history with wine moved along the same tack as the rest of America's East. European settlers arrived to find forests teeming with wild grape vines, an image that sparked visions of land primed for a viticultural boom. Even Leif Erikson – the Norse explorer who briefly explored the conti-





Randi Jarrard, left, and Maggee Wilson unwind at Kaya Vineyard & Winery.



cent five centuries before Columbus – noticed that potential, calling the place Vinland.

But when settlers made wine from wild grape species, they found it strange, and unappealing, a fact that – since native American grape varieties tend to be much higher in acidity than natural sugar (the element that translates to alcohol when fermented) and typically bear a characteristic “foxy” flavor – comes as no surprise. The wines would have been tart, low alcohol, and savagely wild.

The obvious solution was to carry vine cuttings from the Old World and make wines European palates understood, but, with every attempt, those vines withered and died. In 1734, James Oglethorpe established a 10-acre garden in Savannah for the Georgia colony, a portion of which was devoted to propagating European varieties. Like all other attempts of its kind, the experiment failed.

Wayne Crawford a Georgia wine historian, reports that blame fell on poor site selection, too much sun, wind and wrong soil. A nearly invisible louse native to eastern America was likely another major culprit. Its natural absence on the West Coast is one reason viticulture on that side of the continent developed along a different path.

Georgia had to rely on native grapes like Scuppernong – a sub-variety of the Muscadine grape

– and winemaking remained mostly a backyard effort among farmers. There were, however, occasional bursts of growth in the culture, most notably the work of Connecticut investor Ralph L. Spencer, who with the help of 400 Hungarian immigrants and a priest sparked massive-scale grape cultivation in Haralson County toward the end of the 19th century.

“By 1896, there were 12,726 vineyard acres of land in Haralson County,” Crawford reported, “665,885 grapevines with production of 1,593,536 pounds of grapes.”

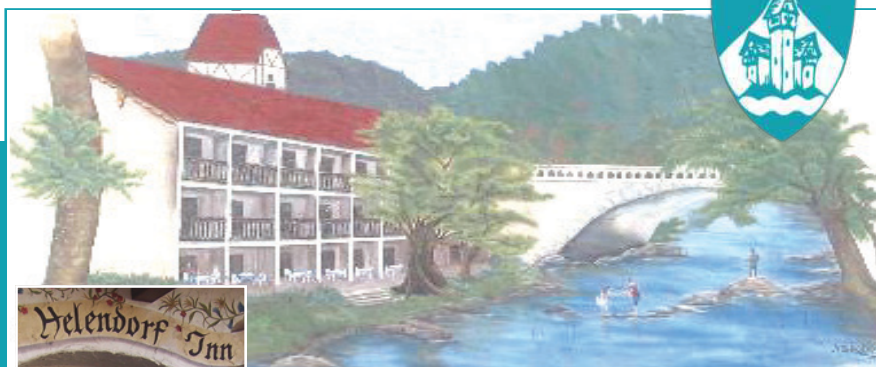
Only a few years later, the onset of Prohibition would erase any traces of progress. One cannot overemphasize the crippling effect Prohibition had on American wine culture, but since Georgia went dry early in 1907 and waited until 1935 to make its

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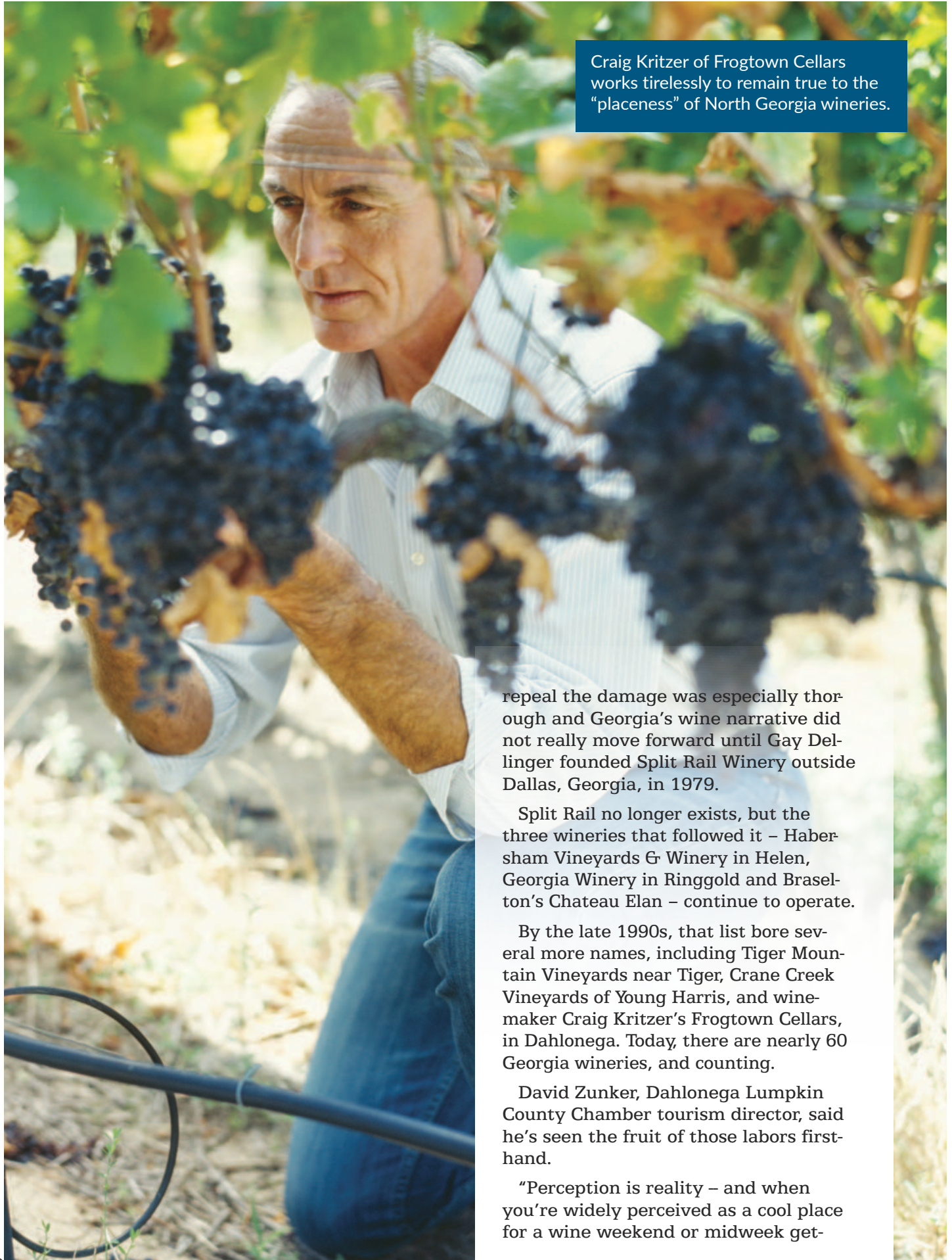
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Craig Kritzer of Frogtown Cellars works tirelessly to remain true to the “placeness” of North Georgia wineries.

repeal the damage was especially thorough and Georgia’s wine narrative did not really move forward until Gay Delinger founded Split Rail Winery outside Dallas, Georgia, in 1979.

Split Rail no longer exists, but the three wineries that followed it – Habersham Vineyards & Winery in Helen, Georgia Winery in Ringgold and Braselton’s Chateau Elan – continue to operate.

By the late 1990s, that list bore several more names, including Tiger Mountain Vineyards near Tiger, Crane Creek Vineyards of Young Harris, and winemaker Craig Kritzer’s Frogtown Cellars, in Dahlonega. Today, there are nearly 60 Georgia wineries, and counting.

David Zunker, Dahlonega Lumpkin County Chamber tourism director, said he’s seen the fruit of those labors firsthand.

“Perception is reality – and when you’re widely perceived as a cool place for a wine weekend or midweek get-

away, suddenly that's exactly what you are," he said. "Dahlonega and North Georgia wineries have done an amazing job of building a diverse destination for wine lovers of all kinds."

Frogtown is a destination that has embraced the uniqueness of the region.

It's a credit due partly to the quality of Kritzer's wines, but also his dedication to the challenge of learning what works best in his vineyard (he farms both European varieties and

American-European hybrids – 23 different varieties in all) and expressing the true character of that place (he cites the untranslatable French word *terroir*, or "placeness").

Kritzer is an outspoken proponent of labeling that is transparent about sourcing, since wineries may legally include up to 25 percent of fruit from another state – often California – yet still bear a Georgia origin on its label.

"Even five percent of California fruit in a Frogtown wine ruins

the *terroir*," Kritzer said.

At this point in history, Georgia's wineries remain at a crossroads, with one path being the status quo, and the other being the hard work of growing culture. Kritzer agrees.

"How many people in Georgia do you think are trying to grow a culture?" Kritzer asked. "You're looking at the leader in that," he said, proudly.

Which winemakers will follow his lead remains to be seen.



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Wineries, vineyards, tasting rooms and breweries

Directory

Wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms

12 Spies Vineyards & Farm
12spiesvineyards.com
Rabun Gap, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Boutier Winery and Events
boutierwinery.com
Danielsville, GA
Tasting Room? Yes
(weekends only)

Canvas and Cork
canvasandcorkdahlonega.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting room only

Cartecay Vineyards
cartecayvineyards.com
Ellijay, GA
Tasting Room? Yes —
in Ellijay & Clarkesville
(at Wild Berry Cottage)

Cavendar Creek Vineyards & Winery
cavendarcreekvineyards.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

CeNita Vineyards
cenitavineyards.com
Cleveland, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Chateau Elan Winery & Resort
chateauelan.com
Braselton, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Chateau Meichtry Family Vineyard & Winery
chateumeichtry.com
Talking Rock, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

The Cottage Vineyard & Winery
cottagevinyardwinery.com
Cleveland, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Courson's Winery
Sparta, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Crane Creek Vineyards
cranecreekvineyards.com
Young Harris, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Currahee Vineyard & Winery
curraheevineyards.com
Toccoa, GA
Tasting Room? Yes (weekends
only + Thurs.)

Ellijay River Vineyards
ellijayrivervineyards.com
Ellijay, GA
Tasting Room? Yes (weekends
only for tasting tent)

Engelheim Vineyards
engelheim.com
Ellijay, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Fainting Goat Vineyards & Winery
faintinggoatvineyardsandwinery.com
Jasper, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Feather's Edge Vineyards
Ball Ground
feathersedgevineyards.com
Tasting Room?
Yes (weekends only)

Fox Vineyards & Winery

foxvinwinery.com
Helen, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Frogtown Cellars

frogtown.us
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

**Habersham Vineyards
& Winery**

habershamwinery.com
Helen, GA
Tasting Room? Yes, in
Dahlonega & Juliette, GA

Hightower Creek Vineyards

hightowercreekvineyards.
com
Hiawassee, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Kaya Vineyards

kayavineyards.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

**Montaluce Winery
& Restaurant**

montaluce.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Noble Wine Cellar

noblewinegeorgia.com
Clayton, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Odom Springs Vineyards

odomspringsvineyards.com
Blairsville, GA
Tasting Room? Yes (week-
ends only + Thurs.)

Serenberry Vineyards

serenberryvineyards.com
Morganton, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Serenity Cellars

serenitycellars.com
Cleveland, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

**Sharp Mountain
Vineyards**

sharpmountainvineyards.com
Jasper, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

**Stonewall Creek
Vineyards**

stonewallcreek.com
Tiger, GA
Tasting Room? Yes, in
Dahlonega & Sautee

Sweet Acre Farms Winery

sweetacrefarmswinery.com
Alto, GA
Tasting Room? Yes (week-
ends only)

Three Sisters Vineyards

threesistersvineyards.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Tiger Mountain Vineyards

tigerwine.com
Tiger, GA
Tasting Room? Yes, in
Dahlonega at "Naturally
Georgia"

Wolf Mountain Vineyards

wolfmountainvineyards.com
Dahlonega, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

**Yonah Mountain
Vineyards**

yonahmountainvineyards.
com
Cleveland, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

Breweries

**Alpine Brew
& Bottle Haus
Helen, GA**

Bacchus Beer & Growlers
bacchusbeerandgrowlers.com
Hiawassee, GA

Blue Ridge Brewery
blueridgebrewery.com
Blue Ridge, GA

Blue Ridge Cellars
blueridgetastingroom.com
Blue Ridge, GA

**Cherry Street Brewing
Cooperative**
cherrystreetbrewing.com
Cumming, GA

Copper Creek Brewing

coppercreekathens.com
Athens, GA

Creature Comforts

creaturecomfortsbeer.com
Athens, GA

Fannin Brewing Company

fanninbrewingcompany.com
Blue Ridge, GA

Grumpy Old Men Brewing

grumpyoldmenbrewing.com
Blue Ridge, GA

Hop Alley Brew Pub

hopalleybrew.com
Alpharetta, GA

**Left Nut Brewing
Company**

leftnutbrewing.com
Gainesville, GA

Reformation Brewery

reformationbrewery.com
Woodstock, GA

**Southern Brewing
Company**

sobrewco.com
Athens, GA

Strawn Brewing Company

strawnbrewing.com
Fairburn, GA

Terrapin Beer

terrapinbeer.com
Athens, GA

Whistle Top

whistletopbrew.com
Cornelia, GA

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The Taste of North Georgia

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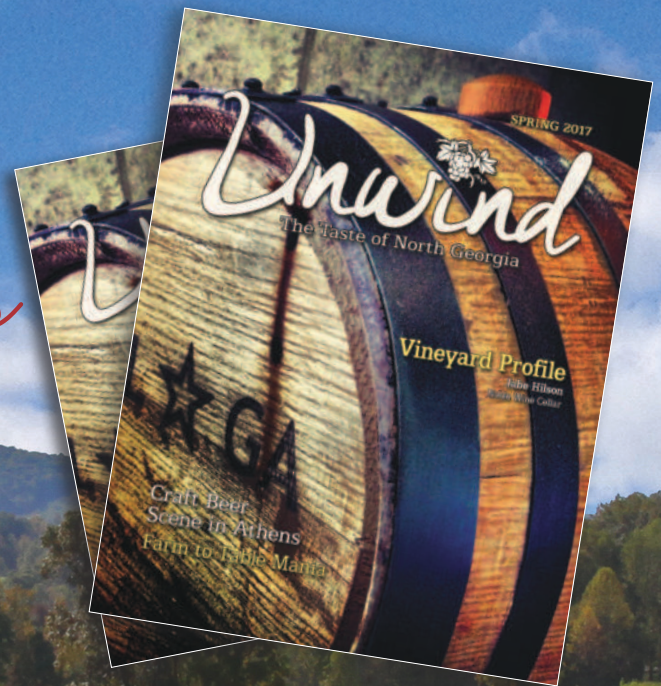


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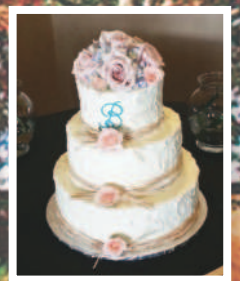
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