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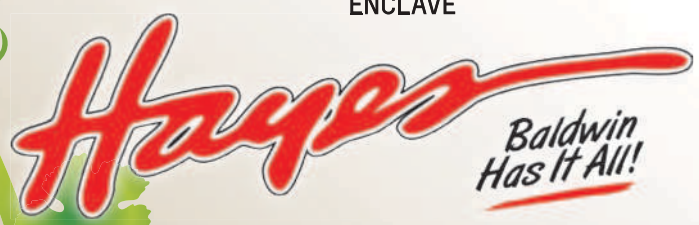
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The Taste of North Georgia

A close-up photograph of a dark wine bottle being poured into a snifter glass. The glass is partially filled with red wine and sits on a rustic wooden surface. The background is softly blurred, showing a person's arm and a blue patterned cloth.

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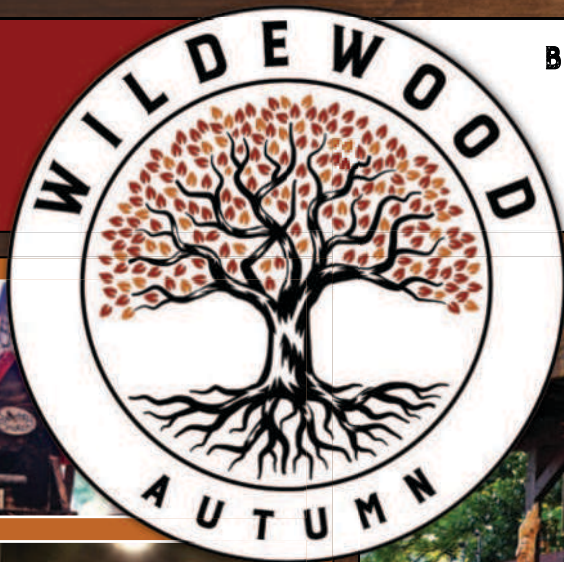
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Greetings reader and welcome to Unwind!



This is your North Georgia guide to wineries, breweries and distilleries; as well as all things home grown, homemade and all-around farm-friendly. And you may have noticed...it's made of paper.

That might seem like an obvious statement. But these days it feels noteworthy, doesn't it? Sure there's an e-edition of Unwind.

There's also a website. (Check us out at www.unwindnorthgeorgia.com.)

But for this publication, good old-fashioned paper and ink just feels right.

Because this is a magazine that's about slowing down. It's about stepping away from the screen and into something real.

And, yes, it's about unwinding.

In our overly wired world there's not enough of that going around. But there should be.

That's the spirit behind each of the stories in this publication.

There's the feature on Carl Fackler, a former surgeon who's retired to life among the grapes and vines at Stonewall Creek in Tiger.

Or there's Darby Weaver, who's getting ready to quietly work her Union County land throughout the fall season alongside her dog Garlic.

There's the industrious Brian Roth and Rick Goddard craftily churning out new-fangled brews at Southern Brewing Co.

There's also Virginia and Carl Webb, who are happily employing a workforce of "12 million" at MtnHoney in Clarkesville.

And that's just the start.

So sit back, relax, put the smart phone on vibrate and Unwind.

And if the cell signal is weak, don't worry.

Unwind works better without wifi.

Cheers,

Matt Aiken

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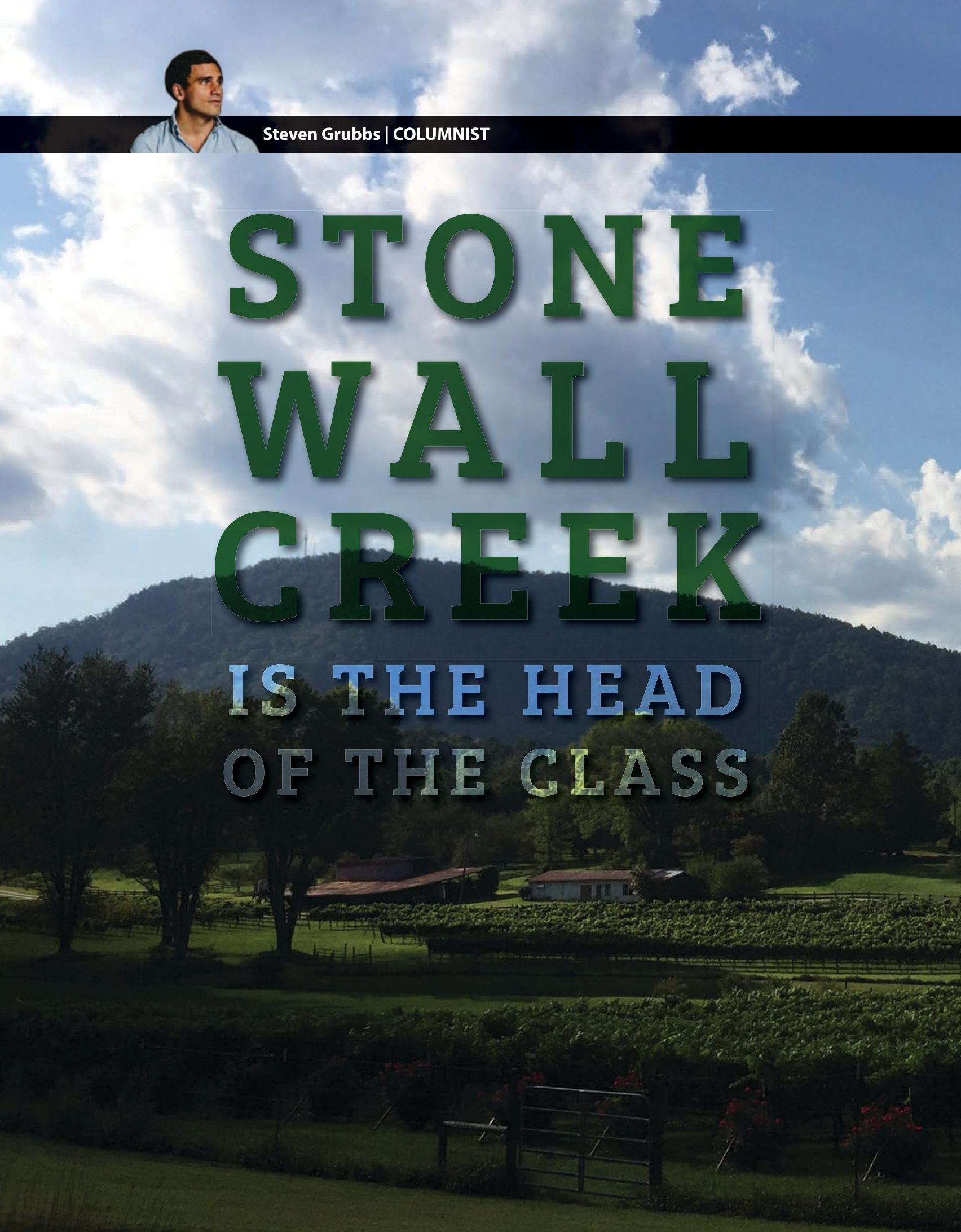
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Steven Grubbs | COLUMNIST

STONE WALL CREEK

IS THE HEAD
OF THE CLASS





I started in 2005 with just one-third of an acre of Malbec,” Carl Fackler says. He is giving me the backstory of his winery, Stonewall Creek, in Tiger, Georgia. A retired orthopedic surgeon, he’s very good at keeping things simple for purposes of explanation. If he was describing the way he was about to repair my shattered leg, I imagine his bedside manner would be the same.

“I visited just about every winery in North Georgia, seeing which grapes they were growing and tasting the wines to see if I liked what they did,” he says. “Tiger Mountain grows Malbec, and every year they were selling it out. So they told me if I grew it, they’d buy all of whatever I grew. So, the next year I put a full acre in, then the next year another.”

Carl goes on to tell how—little by little—he and his wife, Carla, added adjoining land to their original five acre lot, so that Stonewall Creek began to take form. Nestled into a bucolic Rabun County valley surrounded by high pines, it is one of the most picturesque wine-producing properties in the state.

“We probably overpaid,” he says, with a half-grin. “I think the locals saw us coming. But I knew I wouldn’t have another chance at it. And I think it’s a really pretty little valley.”

Carl soon realized the cost of growing his grapes was higher than he could make by selling them, and the only way to keep the operation sustainable was to make wine from them himself. So, in 2012, he and Carla built the winery. He’d taken courses at University of California, Davis—the premier winemaking school in the US—in both viticulture and oenology, giving him technical foundation. But growing grapes in Georgia is a unique chore. He would need wisdom from those around him.

“I certainly tried to take advantage of people who’d been growing here before, but the oldest vineyard in this county was planted in ‘95—not that old. You know, I jokingly tell customers the French only had a 2,000-year head start on us,” he notes, as an aside.



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“But I relied a lot on other growers who were very open and transparent. In general, they’re a very friendly and supportive group, so I took from them and added some of my own thing.”

His own thing seems to be the combo of both a well-appointed little winery—setup of which he conducted under the counsel of one Virginia’s brightest winemakers, Michael Shaps—and a good nose for which grapes to farm, and how best to use them. Carl makes mostly single-variety wines, and in addition to Malbec, he also focuses on Cabernet Franc and fairly obscure white grape Petit Manseng, all three of which have roots in southwest France.

“Our Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot don’t really get ripe enough here, so I use them in the rosé, and I think they really help it. I don’t think we can compete with California for Cabernet Sauvignon anyway,” he says. Like a number of other producers, he’s putting faith in Cabernet Franc.



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Southern Living



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Carl Fackler and his wife, Carla, started Stonewall Creek Winery, located in Tiger, Georgia, in 2005 with just one-third acre of land.

“We held a tasting the other day where we blind tasted several east-coast Cabernet Francs against a bunch of different Pinot Noirs, mostly from Oregon. We found that most people couldn’t tell the difference between the Pinots and the Cabernet Franc. It was almost unbelievable. I mean, these are people with educated palates. And a lot of them picked the Cabernet Francs as their favorite,” he says, with more surprise than overt pride.

The tasting room is very active for a winery away from the highway, particularly one that is somewhat purist in nature. There isn’t a big gift shop or restaurant attached, only a couple of modest signs and patio tables. It reminds me of Carl’s demeanor: humble,

“**WE FOUND
THAT MOST PEOPLE
COULDN’T TELL
THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE
PINOTS AND THE
CABERNET FRANC.**”

— Carl Fackler, owner Stonewall Creek Winery



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but also clearly serious about its work. I remember that doctors are also scientists and craftsmen, and it makes perfect sense that a good doctor would create a wine estate like this. Georgia's very first State Viticulturist, Cain Hickey, conducts a range of experiments here with a few University of Georgia graduate students. In the air at Stonewall Creek, there is the distinct feeling of Georgia wine maturing, growing up, little by little.

We move to the barrel room, where Carl wedges himself between two racks of barrels, pipette in hand, and begins passing me samples of the wines from 2016. His Three Eagles wine—a blend of Malbec, Petit Verdot, and Tannat—is maybe the best Georgia red I've ever tried. And the Norton—a hybrid grown up the road by Bill Stack, winemaker at Tiger Mountain—is maybe the best iteration of that grape I've tasted. I suspect Carl knows the 2016s are something special. I think he knows Stonewall Creek is special, too, although he doesn't really let on.

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



Photo / Andrew Thomas Lee

THE WINES OF STONEWALL CREEK

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AT THE HELM OF HABERSHAM

A new generation grows among the vines

BY STEVEN GRUBBS

For Georgia wineries, growing what might be called a legacy hasn't been easy, or common.

After all, Prohibition effectively killed wine-making in Georgia until 1979, when the now-defunct Split Rail Winery became the first winery to function in the state's modern era. One year later, a Texas-born, Atlanta-raised entrepreneur named Tom Slick purchased a farm called Stonepile in Clarkesville and planted it with grape vines. By 1983, Tom had gained legal approval for his winery, and the vines were mature enough to yield wine. He gave the winery a simple name, after his new vineyard's county, Habersham.

Tom's legacy at Habersham Winery is now maintained by General Manager Emily DeFoor. Emily represents something remarkable in the Georgia wine world: a second generation.

Although Tom Slick continues to be master architect of Habersham and Nacoochee Village—the collection of shops he established as a small community on the outskirts of downtown Helen—Emily handles many of the daily details and decisions that keep the winery moving toward its fifth decade of operation. It is not your

Photo / April Swing

average management role. The job has a much longer view. Emily took the reins from Steve Gibson, who had held the position for the previous 26 years before retiring in 2014. Winemaker Andrew Beaty is also a veteran with 21 years at Habersham under his belt. He plans to retire in November of this year.

"I do feel like we're building the next generation for Habersham," Emily said. "Tom is still very active in the business and plans to be for many years to come. We are hiring for longevity. We want to carry on the great traditions built by the first generation of Habersham while bringing fresh perspectives and new ideas to the table."

And those ideas range from the very small—like tweaking staff dress code or merchandising in the shop—to much larger-scale monitoring of changes in the visiting demographic and surrounding dining culture, a series of trends that could bend the area's wines toward a

very food-friendly style.

"There are quite a few restaurants now that feature local wineries," she said. "And I think that's really evolved in the last few years with the farm-to-table movement, the drink local movement, and the fact that we're getting a little more fine dining in the area. That has really helped shift things. There's more cooperation between the wineries and restaurants. People will go wine-tasting, then they'll go eat dinner and ask for the wines they had that day."

There's more cooperation between the wineries and restaurants. People will go wine-tasting, then they'll go eat dinner and ask for the wines they had that day.

— Emily DeFoor, General Manager Habersham Winery





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STAY FOCUSED
ON FARM
WINERIES
AND OTHER
THINGS MADE
HERE BY HAND.

— Emily DeFoor, General Manager Habersham Winery



Photo / DayBlind Creative
Tom Slick established Habersham Winery in 1983 and now owns 600 acres on which to grow his business.

The trend works in a few dimensions. As restaurant culture grows and supports the wineries, the wineries create a greater draw to supply the restaurants with a dining public. The combined effect is to change the composition of the visiting audience.

“It’s drawing people here because of the wine, not because they happen to come out here and the wine was an afterthought. It’s a much more intentional wine travel, so we are seeing a shift,” she said. “And that is exciting.”

Another change Emily is seeing is the relationship between the wineries and those same state and local governments that once made it very hard—either because of skepticism, political wariness, or outright fear—to grow the business of beverage. But now, the advantages—through both the boost

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in tourism and the addition of new tax-paying producers—to the local economy are becoming very clear.

“Before they were ready to dismiss you, but it’s now such a strong impact that it’s undeniable. And that shift has meant the counties and municipalities are not just afraid of this, like, ‘Oh, this is an unknown thing...we’re not sure, but if you make us do it, we’ll do it,’ to now the counties are actively seeking us out. I recently had representatives from a county across the state come and meet with me. They see what’s happening here, and they wanted to know how to write an ordinance to encourage the same thing in their own county. It’s a huge shift.”

And, with Tom Slick’s larger vision, Habersham itself continues to grow. Tom now owns 600 acres at Nachoochee village and the wide, forested hills that surround it. He has already set aside a 7-acre plot

across from the winery for a new vineyard site—an especially useful location since the main original vineyard, Stonepile, is a fifteen-minute drive from the winery. And the winery facility will soon undergo some updates, too, with the current barrel room converting into an additional tasting room and event space.

But none of that means Emily wants Habersham to move away from its rustic roots, or for Nachoochee Village to lose its small-time charm. In fifty more years—as the winery begins to look toward a century mark—she says, “I hope it’s not incredibly different. I hope we continue to see the shift toward more wine and food culture here, and I hope the things around it shift, as well, like the shopping experiences changing to fit that wine and food culture. I hope we stay focused on farm wineries and other things made here by hand. But I do hope it keeps its rural nature.”

WINE TASTINGS



Photos / DayBlind Creative



Wine Tasting is \$7.50 per person and includes 5 wines and a souvenir wine glass.

Reservations are not required for Wine Tasting, but recommended for groups of 10 or more.





STRANGE BREWS

'Mad scientists' brew up creative craft beers
from North Georgia's local fields and farms

BY BOB TOWNSEND

Photos / Jeremy Olson



In its most time-honored recipe, beer is the product of four simple ingredients: water, grain, hops and yeast.

But as Kennesaw State University geography professors, Nancy Hoalst-Pullen and Mark W. Patterson, demonstrate in their new book, *Atlas of Beer*, brewers the world over have always added their own indigenous flavors.

The result is an infinite variety of styles, with ingredients that range from the wild yeast in Belgian lambic and the lactic acid in German Berliner Weisse to beers with fruit, vegetables, herbs and wild honey.

In north Georgia, Athens' Southern Brewing Co. has quickly become known as a place to find all kinds of new and unusual beers, which regularly use produce and products from nearby farms.

Wild yeast strains, many captured from around Southern's semi-rural, 15-acre tract of land just off Highway 29, also play a big part in the flavor profiles of many of the styles produced here.

Co-founders Brian Roth and Rick Goddard opened the brewery to the public in May 2015. Since then, it's become a popular destination for tours, tastings, music and community events.



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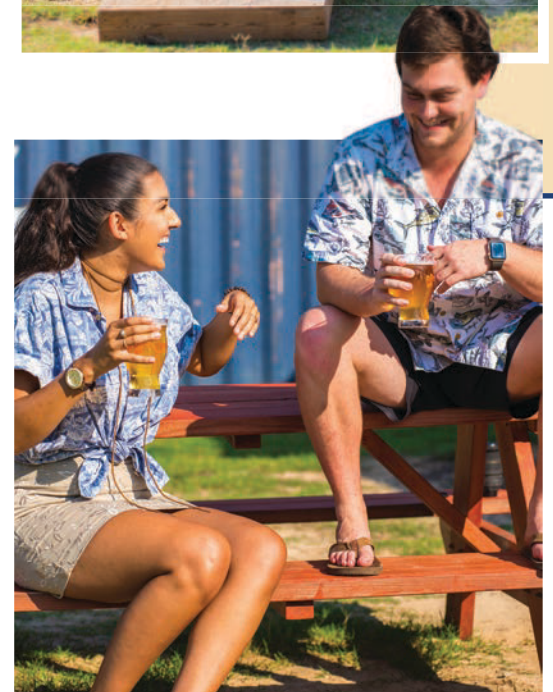
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The brewers at Southern Brewing Company have created 87 different wild yeast strains in the brewing lab, all made with ingredients from local farms. Their beers are popular choices at local festivals. Visit www.sobrewco.com for a calendar of upcoming events.

Roth, a former beer wholesaler and homebrewer, who enjoys conducting beer nerds through the operation, is a loquacious guide, offering details about the origins of the wooden foeders and spirits barrels used to age some of the brewery's rare and limited edition beers.

The bubbling yeast experiments in the lab are a favorite tour stop for Roth, who often launches into mad scientist explanations of his adventures hunting and gathering microorganisms from nearby trees and shrubs.

"I fell in love with Belgian styles traveling around the world," Roth says. "And I became a fan of 'The Mad Fermentationist' blog. I started making lambics at the house, and messing with wild yeasts. I have a ton of biologist friends, who helped me out doing wild yeast catches and open fermentation.

"But I've always been kind of a nerd and a science geek, so that helped me go into the lab and start really playing around. From just right around Athens, we wound up with 87 different funky, crazy wild yeast strains."

Among the wild beers that developed from those early experiments, the Wild Azalea series features yeast harvested from an Azalea bush near the brewery, and remains a mainstay of Southern's sour beer program.

I've always been kind of a nerd and a science geek, so that helped me go into the lab and start really playing around. From just right around Athens, we wound up with 87 different funky, crazy wild yeast strains.

— Brian Roth, Co-Founder
Southern Brewing Co.



Wild Azalea Saison is described as “crisp, dry, fruity, and just a bit funky, with pronounced clove and orange notes,” and pairs with “everything from bacon to blue cheese.”

Cherokee Rose is fermented with yeast harvested from the flowers of the native plant, which is on display at the nearby State Botanical Garden, and is the state flower of Georgia.

The beer is described as having “beautiful hints of banana pudding and vanilla,” making it “the perfect porch beer” and pairs “beautifully with boiled p-nuts and bar-b-que.”

“My goal with the brewery was to offer fresh beer here, so that people could travel the world tasting different styles, while hanging out in the tasting room,” Roth says. “It used to be that every little valley had its own yeast. So every beer

was somehow representative of what that local yeast was doing.

“We wanted to know, what does Athens taste like? So we started using local farms to get the local terroir. That’s really the overarching goal, right now, along with collaborating with other local breweries, and bars and restaurants.”

What’s dubbed the Southern Woodpile series includes beers flavored with local fruits and vegetables, including muscadine grapes, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon and cucumbers.

Southern Brewing Company's “Southern Woodpile” series includes beers with local fruits and vegetables, including muscadine grapes, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon and cucumbers.



An advertisement for Goose Island IPA. On the left is a condensation-covered bottle of Goose IPA with a label that reads "GOOSE IPA" and "Bright citrus aromas * BOLD HOP FINISH". In the center, a hand is pouring beer from a bottle into a glass. The background is dark with the text "TASTE IS THE TRUE TEST." in large, white, distressed font. Below this, smaller text reads "BRIGHT CITRUS AROMAS AND A BOLD HOP FINISH MAKE GOOSE IPA THE CHOICE FOR BEER JUDGES AND BEER LOVERS ALIKE. BECAUSE TASTE IS THE TRUE TEST." The bottom right features the Goose Island Beer Co. logo, a circular emblem with a white goose head and the text "GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO.". At the bottom center, the text "TO WHAT'S NEXT. GOOSEISLAND.COM" is visible. On the far left edge, there is a vertical copyright notice: "©2016 Goose Island Beer Co., Goose IPA®. Inflat, Falls Ave, Chicago, IL. Enjoy responsibly".



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— Brian Roth, Co-Founder Southern Brewing Co.



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I thought, what if everything happens in the pumpkins? What if we brew it, and ferment it and serve it in the pumpkins? Now that would be a pumpkin beer.

— Brian Roth, Co-Founder
Southern Brewing Co.



Southern Brewing Company's "Bumpkin" is made with giant pumpkins from Burt's Farm in Dawson County, Ga, and flavored with a blend of ginger, allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, clove, and vanilla. [ABV: 6.5% • IBU: 20]

For those not so enamored of the flavors of wild yeast and sour beers, Southern offers plenty of other styles, including British and American-style pale ale, IPA and stout.

Roth isn't the only mad scientist experimenting with strange brews. Just down the road at Creature Comforts you can find the fruity Tritonia with Smoked Pineapple. Or there's the grapefruit tinged Squeeze Box IPA at Sweetwater Brewing.

Right now, though, Bumpkin is the most highly anticipated fall seasonal for Southern Brewing. It's made with giant pumpkins from Burt's Farm in Dawson County, Ga, and flavored with a blend of ginger, allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, clove, and vanilla.

"I thought, what if everything happens in the pumpkins?" Roth says. "What if we we brew it, and ferment it and serve it in the pumpkins? Now that would be a pumpkin beer.

"This year, we got six 200-pound pumpkins from Burt's. We do a wild fermentation using the Azalea yeast and the microbes on the pumpkins, and then we finish it in the tanks.

"But what's always exciting is that each new fruit or vegetable brings us a whole new microcosm of flavor. That just always blows my mind."

■ Bob Townsend writes about beer and food for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, edits *Southern Brew News*, and is the beer columnist for *The Bitter Southerner*.



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How Sweet



It Is

Bee business is big business for North Georgia apiarists

By CANDICE DYER

The folks at MtnHoney like to boast that they rank as one of north Georgia's largest employers, with a staff of 12 million industrious workers.

"Most of them – the most important ones – are female," says the company's owner Virginia Webb, who is decked out in honeybee jewelry. "And they all get along. The process of making honey revolves around the queen, so you could think of beekeeping as a feminist enterprise."

Webb and her husband, Carl, oversee 300 strategically placed hives from their head-

The process of making honey revolves around the queen, so you could think of beekeeping as a feminist enterprise.

– Virginia Webb, Owner MtnHoney

quarters in Clarkesville. Each hive yields around 200 pounds of honey a year, and every pound requires the participation of two million flowers. "Honey is the product of sex among plants," Webb says happily.

Evidently her bees are grateful overachievers. MtnHoney's sourwood line has been voted "Best Honey in the World" four times in the World Honey Show. It won gold medals in Ireland, France, Ukraine, and South Korea. The Webbs are gearing up for the next competition in Istanbul, Turkey, which will swarm with hundreds of beekeepers from around the globe.



The queen bee is marked with a dab of bright yellow paint on her thorax.



"The competition is fierce," Virginia Webb says, but she enjoys a home-field advantage: the Appalachian mountains are renowned for sourwood honey, which is a light, ambrosial syrup perfect for hot toddies, biscuits, and foodie experiments because it does not readily granulate.

"We're in the heart of the sourwood belt that stretches from Lumpkin to White to Union County," says Lloyd Allison, of Allison's Honey, one of the five commercial beekeeping operations in northeast Georgia. "Sourwood is our most popular honey, though we also make it from blackberry, wildflower, and tulip popular." His family business, based in the Town Creek community near Cleveland, comprises 1,000 colonies in 30 locations, including 250 hives down south in Unadilla, where mimosas inflect the taste.

MTNHONEY'S
 SOURWOOD LINE
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 FOUR TIMES IN THE
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For the discerning consumer, honey, like wine, comes in "varietals" and has a "terroir" of sorts by way of the blossoms it pollinates. Webb got her first hive – or "gum" as old-timers call it – "the year John F. Kennedy was assassinated." She takes pride in her bees and does not mind showing them off to a curious customer, as long as that visitor dons a protective beekeeper suit. She uses a bellows to send up clouds of smoke around the insects to calm them, removes a frame teeming with her winged friends, and points out the queen, a large, lumbering matriarch marked with a dab of bright yellow paint on her thorax. "Look at her moving!" Webb says. "She's looking for a place to lay eggs."

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Every serious beekeeper has what is called a “honey house,” where the comb is run through an extracting device that separates the viscous liquid from the wax. Webb’s is fastidiously clean and decorated with a movie poster of “Ulee’s Gold.” She offers an impromptu “tasting.”

“This tulip poplar is a red color, and it’s great for baking, for sauces, and for pungent cheese,”

she says, extending a plastic spoon. “And the tupelo honey has a woody taste with a finish to it.”

To reach this kitchen-table stage, the honey must fend off certain challenges.

“A small hive has all kind of enemies, from mites to viruses,” Allison says. “Their immune system is vulnerable, and Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is one of those hassles that just

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Carl Webb works the
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6

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TO STEP IN MANURE
ONCE IN A WHILE,
AND IF YOU'RE A
BEEKEEPER, YOU'LL
GET STUNG
OCCASIONALLY.

— Virginia Webb, Owner MtnHoney

HOW MANY HIVES?



MtnHoney has 300 placed hives in Clarkesville. Each hive yields around 200 pounds of honey a year, and every pound requires the participation of two million flowers.

about all beekeepers deal with." That phenomenon occurs when the majority of worker bees in a colony disappear and leave behind a queen and just a few nurse bees to care for the remaining immature young. Maybe those worker bees have intuited their fate if they stay. Another make-or-break factor in honey production is moisture content. The worker bees use their wings to fan the honey, and they ultimately die while striving to keep the cells dry. "We also use fans to keep the wetness down," Allison adds.

When the moisture in the honey reaches 18.5 percent, it can ferment to become mead, which creates a buzz in every sense of that word. Allison's family-run operation recently has been expanding its honey house with plans to make and sell the alcoholic beverage.

What about that other occupational hazard – getting stung?

"That doesn't happen to me much anymore," says Webb. "I know the temperament of the bees when the harvesting disrupts them. If you're a dairy farmer, you're going to step in manure once in a while, and if you're a beekeeper, you'll get stung occasionally."

An itchy welt is a small price to pay for a jar of sunlight that tastes of flowers, she says.

"If you think about a hive, it really is the perfect, most efficient factory," she says. "Not only do the bees not hurt the flowers and fruits they come in contact with, but they also help them to reproduce. Honeybees are desirable, beneficial pollinators – vital, important players in their ecosystem. What else does that? It's a sweet industry with sweet rewards."

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COOL GARDENING

When the temperature drops
the greenery can still grow

By CANDICE DYER



Timpson Creek Farm in Clayton



During the cold months, a garden may appear desolate and depressing, but dig a little deeper and you encounter enough action to fill up a cornucopia. “Even with the frost of winter, the soil is still working hard if it’s nourished properly,” says Clem Adams, manager of Indian Ridge Organic Farm. “You just have to go farther down in a bed of vegetables to see all of these microbes at work.”

Think of a garden as you regard your body, urges Darby Weaver, of Timpson Creek Farm in Clayton. “Just as you have different systems at work inside you, a garden does, too,” she says. Her farm operates on biodynamic principles that emphasize a holistic, spiritual approach. “Fall marks a time when the earth goes into a digestive nature. It’s a time to ‘amend’ the soil with chemical-free fertilizer that stimulates biology and fights stagnation. We use a lot of composts and manure from our cows and horses.”

Many crops thrive in winter, says Andrew Linker, executive director of Georgia Mountains Farmers Network. Visualize an abundant horn of plenty.

“Relatively easily grown and harvested without synthetic chemicals: arugula, carrots, radish, broccoli, kale, lettuce, apples cabbage, peas, Swiss chard, sweet potatoes, beets, onions, collards, winter squashes, raspberries, blackberries, and watermelons,” Linker says.

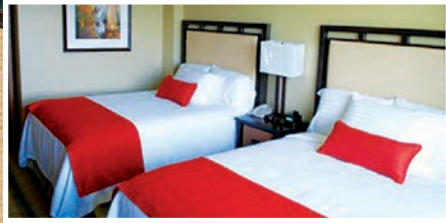
Weaver plants her beets and radishes in the autumn, along with greens such as collards and kale. Carrots and arugula grow year-round, and heirloom green beans come in during November. Farmers sow their frost-hardy garlic in the months between September and November, and it grows so quickly that it soon peeks out of the soil, maturing in early summer.

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Winter farming surprisingly offers a few advantages.

"It may sound counter-intuitive, but the work is easier this time of year," Adams says. "The cooler weather keeps the weeds down, and weeds are always a problem if you're organic."

The United States Department of Agriculture has developed a map called the "Plant Hardiness Zone," the standard by which growers can determine which plants are most likely

The cooler weather keeps the weeds down, and weeds are always a problem if you're organic.

— Clem Adams, manager of Indian Ridge Organic Farm

to flourish in their locations. Northeast Georgia fortunately falls into the fertile Zone 7B.

"What that means is that the winters are mild and it doesn't get crazy-cold here," Adams says. "There are a lot of plants that are frost-resistant."

However, farmers still face many challenges, including slugs and snails that are active during the winter, and the ever-annoying vole, which eats more



A good fertilizer helps yield colorful vegetables in the wintertime.

than you would think given its small size.

"A vole will snag a baby beet and whip right down its hole," says Steve Whiteman, of Trillium Farms in Mount Airy. (He is known to local restaurateurs as "Microgreen Steve.")

So farmers have devised several tricks to protect their crops. "Hoop houses" are essentially unheated greenhouses, simple shelters constructed with plastic sheets and PVC pipe. Whiteman's hoop houses typically are 40 feet long and nine feet high.

"They keep the ground from freezing, and they keep the soil friable," he says. "They contain some heat, but they also shield the clay from the sun. Seeds won't germinate in a brick."

In the cooler seasons, growers also use cover crops such as buckwheat, millet, sunflower, and nitrogen-

fixing clover. If hoop houses function as a sort of poncho, think of cover crops as a warm sweater.

"I use buckwheat as a cover crop, and I use a lot of mulch for weed control," says Whiteman, who cultivates 40 different crops, including three varieties of kale.

Another bonus of mulch: earthworms love it. "Their casings make the most well-balanced fertilizer you can use," Whiteman says.

Adds Adams, "Vermiculture refers to

the process of using worms to decompose food waste. It turns the stuff into a nutrient-rich material that sustains plant growth," he says. "And it kills pathogens. Worms are our friends."

Kasey Sanders, the manager of Burt's Farm, won't say what kind of fertilizer her 52-acre spread uses, but colorful – and hefty – veggies in the calabash family are the specialty.



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Darby Weaver, of Timpson Creek Farm, and her dog Garlic are ready for the harvest.



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"I won't give away our trade secret," she says, of the Dawsonville business that offers autumn hay rides to view an estimated 10,000 pumpkins and gourds. "We use a fertilizer that's specially formulated for our soil," she says. "Some pumpkins are so small you can hold them in one hand, but we also have some that grow to be 200 pounds. I don't know of any other farm that does this."

Both Timpson Creek and Trillium Farms provide for a year-round CSA, which stands for "community supported agriculture." You can sign up for Whiteman's fall and winter CSA in mid-October. Timpson Creek welcomes school groups and adult learners to experience hands-on agriculture. "Our farm makes a beautiful classroom," Weaver says.

6 IN ORGANIC FARMING, THE SOIL IS EVERYTHING. HAPPY SOIL PRODUCES HAPPY PLANTS, NO MATTER WHAT TIME OF YEAR IT IS.

— Clem Adams, manager of Indian Ridge Organic Farm

Indian Ridge is owned by Ed Taylor, and his wife, best-selling author Barbara Brown Taylor. In addition to their organic vegetables and honey, they sell eggs from pasture-raised hens. Manure from their llamas and horses gets repurposed as fertilizer.

"In organic farming, the soil is everything," Adams says. "Happy soil produces happy plants, no matter what time of year it is."



CSA

Community Supported Agriculture



Both Timpson Creek and Trillium Farms provide for a year-round CSA, which stands for "community supported agriculture." You can sign up for Whiteman's fall and winter CSA in mid-October. Timpson Creek welcomes school groups and adult learners to experience hands-on agriculture.





STILL AT IT

Mountain moonshiner moves to the mainstream

By STEVE ALEXANDER

Dwight Bearden has seen all sides of 'shining. The Dhlonega resident grew up in a house stocked full of illegal moonshine, became a fourth-generation moonshiner at

a very young age and now sells his product legally as the head distiller out of Thunder Mountain Distillery in Kodak, Tennessee, a town near Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg.



Photo / Scott Harris



"When I was a teenager I had a copper pot still that held 35 gallons of mash and now I have a still at Thunder Road that holds 400 gallons of mash. I've also run a still that held 2,400 gallons of mash out in the environment," he said while sitting at a picnic table in Dahlonega's Hancock Park. "People ask me all the time which I'd rather do – legal or illegal. I tell them I can make a lot more money doing it illegally, but I'm getting too old to be tromping up the hills and hollers, plus I'm too pretty to go to jail."

I can make a lot more money doing it illegally, but I'm getting too old to be tromping up the hills and hollers, plus I'm too pretty to go to jail.

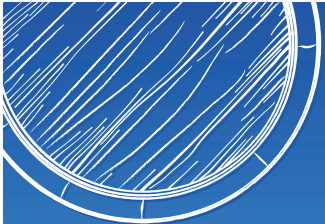
— Dwight Bearden, fourth-generation moonshiner

Bearden learned his time-honored craft from his father. And that included his own brand of mountain man business sense.


"My daddy told me at a young age, if you want to get caught making liquor, sell it to someone who don't know how to drink it," he said. "If a guy gets drunk on it the first thing he's going to do is slap his wife around and if the wife knows where he got it, you're caught."

As a result his father was a selective salesman.

"People would knock on daddy's door and ask him for liquor and he'd tell them he didn't have any. Meanwhile, I'm climbing over liquor in my bedroom to get into my bed. I'd



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say 'daddy, you've got plenty of liquor' and he'd say 'they don't know how to drink it, so I'm not going to sell it to them.'"

So what's the right way to drink moonshine? Bearden said you need to drink to "enjoy it."

"It took me a long time," he said with a grin. "I used to drink it to get drunk, but now I just drink it because I like it. I drink it to get a little buzz and that's as far as it goes. And I drink it all day long when I'm runnin', for quality purposes, but I'll also take shots of corn whiskey with the customers. You know what they say about women who drink corn whiskey? If women drink a lot of corn whiskey, all their babies will be born naked. That's guaranteed."

It recently became easier to buy a bottle of liquor in North Georgia and there are several distilleries now serving up legal moonshine. Whether you want cinnamon whiskey from the Dalton Distillery, White Lightning from the Dawsonville Moonshine Distillery, apple brandy from Granddaddy Mimm's in Blairsville, Georgia Rye from Moonrise Distillery in Clayton, or some of Zac Brown's White Gold from the Z. Brown Distillery in Dahlonega, SB 85 made it legal for customers to purchase up to three 750 ML bottles directly from Georgia distilleries as of September 1, 2017.

Previously, local breweries and distilleries could only charge customers for a tour of their facility and give away a bottle of their product free of charge, so for customers to be able to skip the tour and quickly walk

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out with three bottles of whiskey should really help the industry in the state of Georgia.

The fact that Georgia moonshine is now sold legally is a fascinating development for Bearden.

And it's meant big changes for his workday.

No need to sweat and strain your back in the backwoods when you have access to AC and a forklift. Though he's not a computer user and has never been on an airplane, he admits that there are advantages to having access to the technology offered in today's industry.

When asked if he ever thought he'd be selling moonshine legally, Bearden said he had a feeling it might happen one day.

"I knew it was such a big industry and that the government would eventually regulate it so they would get the money," he said. "It all boils down to money so I'm not really surprised that we're doing this legally now."

So the next time you're touring North Georgia, stop by one of the distilleries and grab a couple bottles of shine. But remember the words of Mr. Bearden, drink to enjoy. And do your best to avoid jail time.



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— Dwight Bearden, fourth-generation moonshiner



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A BACKYARD for the birds

Sure, Old MacDonald had a farm. But when it came to raising chicks, he probably could have made due with a nice ranch house and a fenced-in yard. That's the idea behind the current trend of backyard birds. Here's a handy guide to keeping your own coop happy:

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- **Leave plenty of space:** The minimum space required per bird is 1 square foot for smaller birds, to upwards of 4 square feet per turkey. For egg production, leave 3.5 square feet per bird
- **Regulate temperature:** A poultry house should be around 70 degrees. Have windows or openings in your coop that can be opened to ventilate the space.
- **Keep the predators at bay:** Although free-range chickens evoke an ideal rural image, this isn't safe for the birds. A fenced-in enclosure will help protect from predators. Make sure to cover the top of the enclosure to protect from predatory birds, like hawks and owls.
- **Select the correct breed:** For eggs, leg-horns are a good choice. For meat production, Rock-Cornish have rapid meat production, but tend to get overweight. Breeds that serve well for both egg and meat production are Orpington, Rhode Island Red, Plymouth Rock, and New Hampshire.
- **Provide fresh water:** Laying hens can consume 1 gallon per water each on a cool day. This increases at higher temperatures. Make sure to provide fresh water daily.

>>DON'T:

- **Let birds drink in the open:** This can lead to your poultry contracting viruses like avian influenza, which can be deadly
- **Allow birds to stray:** Especially if you live near commercial chicken houses. Diseases can be spread by infected backyard poultry walking near other birds.
- **Use the same feed for all stages:** Use starter rations for young birds until they are 6 weeks old. Switch to a commercial ration until 18 weeks old, then move to a layer ration to prepare for egg production.
- **Expect eggs too soon:** Egg production is based on bird age and day length. Don't expect eggs before the birds are 18-20 weeks old. Adding a lightbulb to the coop can extend egg laying as days shorten.
- **Keep roosters:** Roosters are not needed for egg production. They tend to be noisy, which will annoy your neighbors. Only keep a rooster if you want to fertilize eggs and produce more chicks.

(This list was compiled by
Dawson County Extension
Coordinator Clark MacAllister.)



Photo / Jill Freeman



Unwind

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**
chateameichtry.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, in both locations

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
(weekends only + Thurs)

Paradise Hills
paradisehillsga.com
Blairsville, GA
Tasting Room? Yes

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
(weekends 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

Southern Origin Meadery
(also home to Blue
Haven Bee Company)
bluehavenbee.com
706-245-6586
Canon, GA

Strawn Brewing Company
strawnbrewing.com
Fairburn, GA

Terrapin Beer
terrapinbeer.com
Athens, GA

Whistle Top Brew Company
whistletopbrew.com
Cornelia, GA

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The Taste of North Georgia

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