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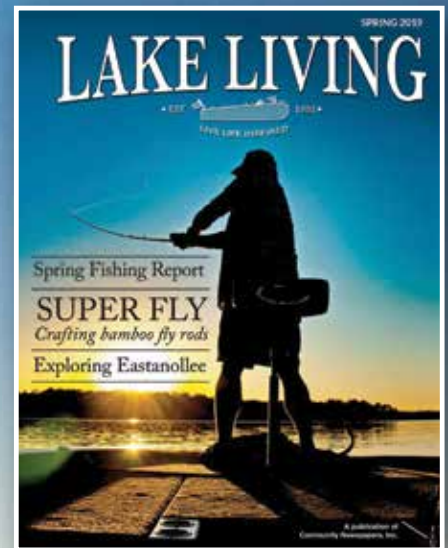
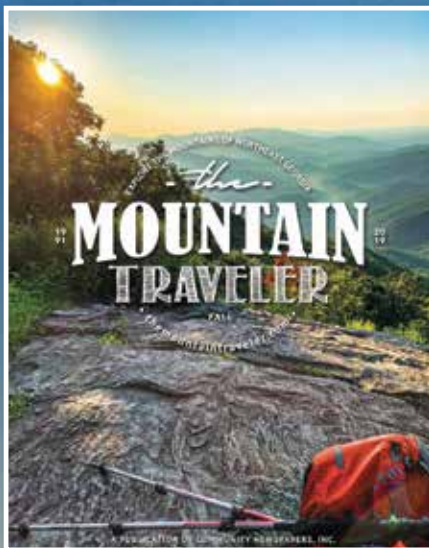
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## From the editor

We know a thing or two at Unwind.

For example, we know you can't swing on the hops vines at Tantrum Brewing Company. (Someone actually tried once.)

We know that if you're looking for hand-painted tabby cat art then Amy Sullivan in Dahlonega is probably the lady to see.

We know that Derek Chitwood decided to take a year long break in between college and grad school and wound up creating one of Georgia's hottest new name brands.

We know that if you want to include a Chihuahua in your wedding ceremony, the folks at Yonah Mountain Vineyards have no problem with it.

We know that whiskey isn't always whiskey at Moonrise Distillery. Sometimes it's ice cream.

And we know a whole lot more.

Not that we're trying to brag or anything. But these are the things you discover when writing about the wonderful world of weddings, wineries, breweries, farmer's markets and burgeoning businesses in North Georgia.

It's enough to fill a book.

Or in this case, it's enough to fill Unwind magazine.

Yes we know a thing or two at Unwind.

But most importantly we know the people who live here.

And that's the true focus of this publication.

Sure, the mountains of North Georgia are pretty, but this wouldn't be such a great place to be if it wasn't for the people who call this place home.

So it's time you get to know these people, and a few more too.

In other words, it's time to Unwind.

Though, um, make sure you stay off the hops vines while you're at it.

We hear that's off limits.

Cheers,

*Matt Aiken*

### **PUBLISHER**

Alan NeSmith

### **EDITOR**

Matt Aiken

### **MARKETING DIRECTOR**

Matt Lee

### **BUSINESS MANAGER**

Mark VanTassel

### **MAGAZINE DESIGN**

Kristen Morales

### **CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**

Matt Aiken, Candice Dyer, Wayne Hardy, Lisa W. Marlus, Anika Chatwivedi, Caitlin Jett, Daniela Citron, Wayne Knuckles

### **GRAPHIC DESIGNERS**

Vickie Baskins, April Compton, Jimmy Eden, Jake Frye, Rachel Grosse, Claudette Keeley, Cody Rogers, Barbara Slay

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**CNI**

A photograph of a man in a dark suit and a woman in a white wedding dress walking away from the camera on a dirt path through a vineyard. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden light. The vineyard rows are visible on either side of the path, and the background shows rolling hills under a cloudy sky.

*special  
events*

# WEDDING WINERY *Bliss*

Finding a happily ever  
after among the vines

Ashley and Chaz Parks walked into the sunset (and the grape vines) after exchanging vows at Yonah Mountain Vineyards.  
THE TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER





**By Candice Dyer**

Our local wineries go out of their way to prevent Bridezilla meltdowns.

They start with picture-perfect views of rolling hills cross-hatched with vines that lend a spirit of symmetrical harmony to the scene, along with a liberal pouring policy with their homegrown libations.

“I was worried there would be a lot of stress because we had a big wedding party,” says Amber Segers Lewallen, who got married at White County’s Cenita in May. “But everything was just so beautiful, the people were so helpful, that we were able to relax and enjoy ourselves. The wedding venue itself was already so pretty that we didn’t need to go overboard with decorations.”

Lumpkin and White counties now boast seven wineries each with different styles, from the Tuscan opulence of Montaluce to the “rustic chic” aesthetic at Kaya to the welcoming farmhouse air of Frogtown, to Wolf Mountain with its many wood elements and textures. So the wedding industry is booming; lovers are coming from as far away as New York, Chicago, and England to tie the knot in “Napalachia,” but most hail from Atlanta. “The

*“Brides don’t need to spend  
as much on flowers at wineries  
unless they choose to.”*

wineries are crushing it,” says florist Sarah Warner, and she does not mean just the grapes. June is the busy season, but many couples opt for autumn, when the weather is cooler and the leaves are changing and a fire is roaring in a fieldstone fireplace.

“It has taken off exponentially in the past couple of years,” says Jordan DePascale, event manager at Yonah Mountain Vineyards, which has an architectural style characterized as “mountain craftsman,” but looks uncannily like “Falcon Crest.” “We average 40 per year, and we’re hoping to push 50 by 2020.”

Kaley Stephens, the owner of Borrowed and Blue wedding planners, says, “Wineries can be a lot more flexible than churches and other venues, and they really make it a point to connect with their brides. The idea is to get the bride outside as much as possible to take advantage of the views.”

Warner says the greenery of

The winery at  
Kaya is the  
perfect back-  
drop for those  
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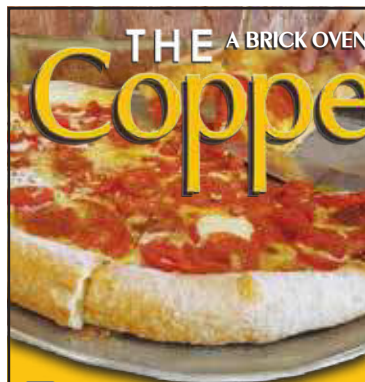
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the setting makes her job as a decorator easy.

“Brides don’t need to spend as much on flowers at wineries – unless they choose to,” she says. “The classic, traditional colors are green and gold, and those never go out of style, but this season color is back in a big way. We’re seeing a lot of peach and coral, and those colors really pop with the green of the vineyards in the background.”

Yonah Mountain Vineyards, a 200-acre spread with plenty of space to accommodate multiple events at the same time, holds only one wedding per day so that no one feels crowded or



Chaz Parks jumped into married life alongside his team of groomsmen at Yonah Mountain Vineyards.  
THE TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER

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rushed.

"We really prioritize each couple," DePascale says, "and we want to get to know them intimately and stay in touch with them. People return here on milestones such as birthdays and anniversaries."

And the bride is not the only center of attention. Yonah Mountain features a cigar lounge and a television room for the groom and his posse. "The girls get plenty of well-lit mirrors, and the boys get the flatscreen to keep them from getting bored," DePascale says with a laugh. "The guys get a Playstation, Netflix, and Apple TV. We bring them all plates of meat and cheese and drinks throughout the day."

Yonah Mountain Vineyards, which is geared for bigger, glam-

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Linda Monroe, Chef/Owner 25 years

our-focused budgets, also boasts Georgia's only "wine cave," which can seat 50 for a rehearsal dinner. Couples have the options of several ceremony spots including one that is smack in the middle of a vineyard; guests traverse through the grapes on golf carts. Looming closely in the background is the rock-faced, namesake landmark. A 10,000 square-foot ballroom can hold 400 people, and it features a winding staircase for a show-stopping entrance, as well as a state-of-the-art sound and lighting system, with a spotlight for that first dance.

"Our ballroom is like a blank canvas that can be easily customized," DePascale says. "And we have a 500-pound sub-woofer!"

Kaya in nearby Frogtown has recently transformed itself into a total "destination wedding venue" by acquiring the Dahlonega Resort, a lodge surrounded by eight cabins with a shuttle service. The winery grounds also include a neat row of four, two-story cottages for the bridal party. The cottages have capacious closets to keep the wrinkles from a tux or a train, and a washer and dryer in case, God forbid, some merlot splashes on the taffeta.

"We're trying to be a one-stop shop for the bride and groom, with an emphasis on convenience and stress reduction," says event manager Haylee Britt.

Kaya also offers its own catering out of a full restaurant – chef-driven, with locally sourced food – as well as a full spa to pamper the bridesmaids. "All of our ceremony spots are easily walkable and handicap-accessible," Britt adds.

A patio doubles as a dance-floor, and a reception tent has an Astroturf floor to protect revelers' shoes from mud. "We try to



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Ashley Parks walked down the aisle amidst the stunning scenery at Yonah Mountain Vineyards. **THE TALENTED PHOTOGRAPHER**

The cozy cottage at Kaya is ready and waiting for wedding parties. **HORNE PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN**

think of everything," she says.

Don't forget your emotional therapy animal. In one photo from Yonah Mountain Vineyards, you will spot a flower-bedecked Chihuahua mix basking in the festivities. "I wasn't sure they would allow it, but I really wanted our dog, Roo, to be part of the ceremony," says Ashley Parks. "They were fine with it."

Lastly, one potential pitfall to bear in mind, especially for clergy: "As a drinking officiant, I have to use caution not to get more wasted than the people at the wedding," says minister Michael Fisher. "At one wedding, which is still talked about at family functions, I may have gotten a little toasted and did a spot-on Rock Lobster on the dance floor. Some of the guests were rather bewildered."

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A large outdoor event, possibly a wedding or festival, is taking place at a farm. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is seated on the grass, looking towards the center. A woman is playing a harp on a small stage. To the left, there is a large wooden barn with a corrugated metal roof. In the background, there are rolling hills and a large tree. The sky is blue with scattered clouds. A green circular graphic with a dotted line is overlaid on the image, containing the text "special events".

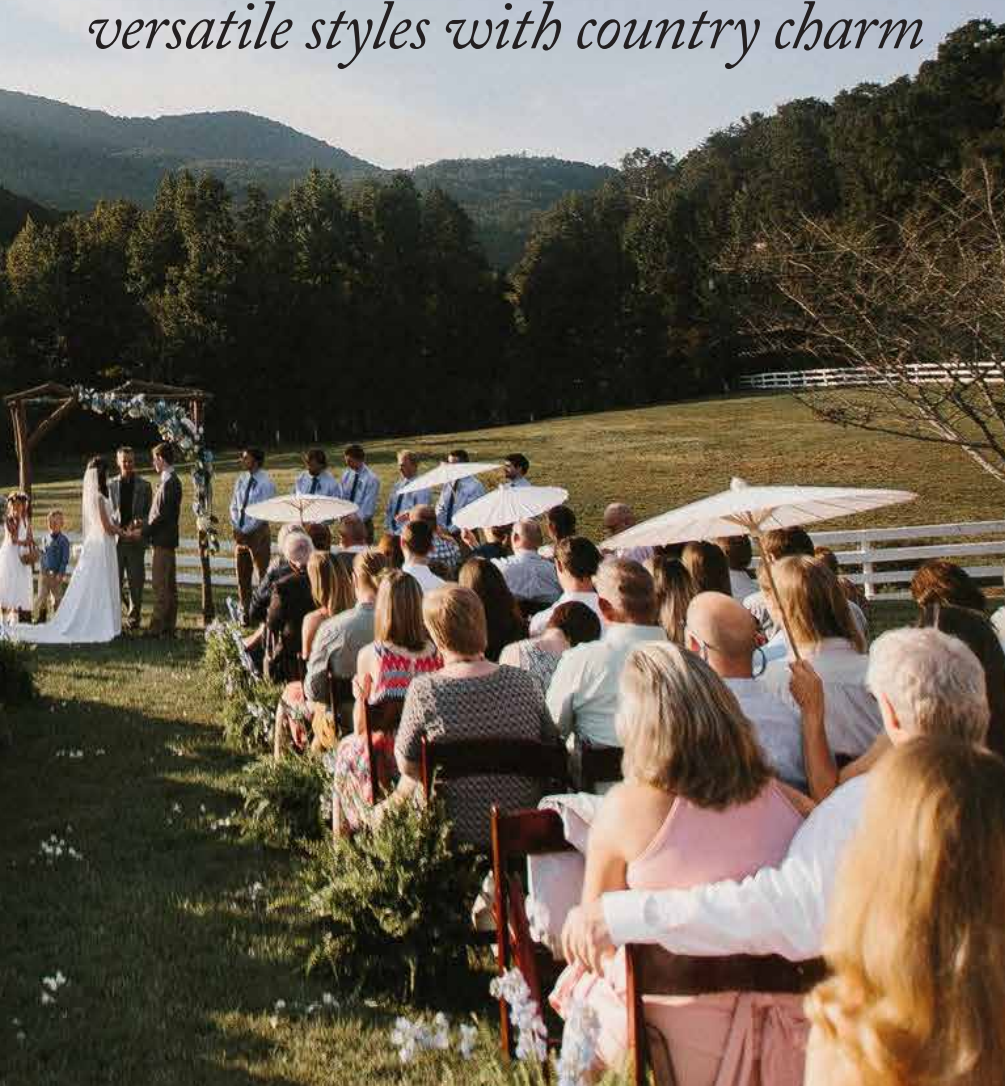
*special  
events*



# Burlap & boots

(and so much more)

*Farm-style wedding venues offer versatile styles with country charm*



By Wayne Hardy

As more couples look to exchange vows during destination weddings, some are heading down to the farm.

North Georgia is home to many historical farm venues, where lush green fields and grand farmhouses amid the mountains make for a memorable setting in the country.

“People don’t have to do much. It pretty much lends itself to the natural scenery – so there’s less spent on decorations and more on enjoying the actual authentic environment,” says Melody Lothridge, owner of Mountain Laurel Farm, a family-owned farm venue located just north of Cleveland in White County.

And while the bride is welcome to wear boots if she chooses, farm-style celebrations can run the spectrum from rustic to elegant.

Mountain Laurel Farm is in the business of picture-perfect weddings. **MONICA LEAVELL PHOTOGRAPHY**



Rural-friendly weddings just seem right at Mountain Laurel Farm. **MONICA LEVEL**

“The great thing about farm weddings is that you can do burlap, but you can also do gold sequin or French market-style,” Lothridge says.

Along with vast open spaces, Mountain Laurel Farm features a historic farmhouse and renovated barn built in the 1880s. The farm venue can be arranged for an elopement or to accommodate 200 guests, giving couples versatility for planning and budgeting. Lothridge recalls how a room inside the farmhouse was transformed into a dance floor with room for instructors and a seven-piece band.

“It just proves you don’t have to have a giant space to be able to have the look and feel you’re going for,” she says.

Whether for a small gathering or a larger party in the barn, farm venues can offer inclusive packages that provide couples a personal-

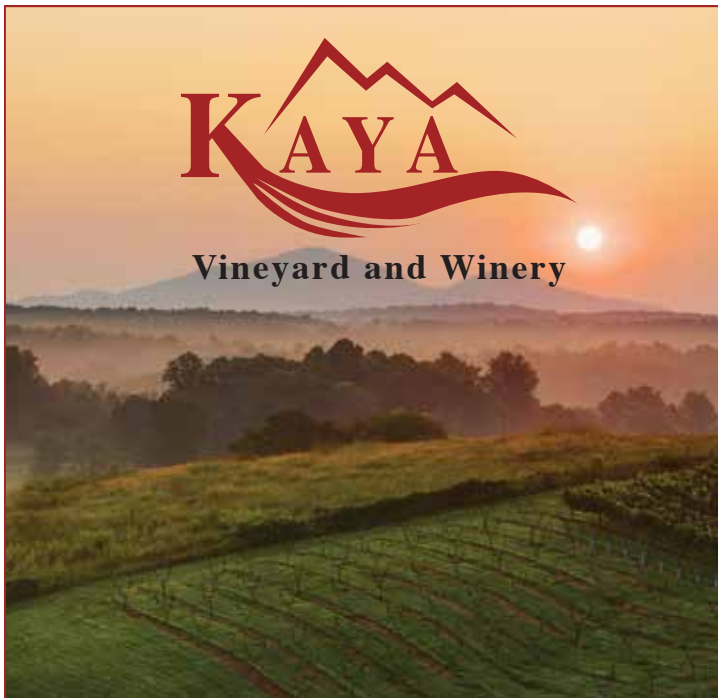
ized wedding experience without being overwhelmed by the stress of managing the event.

“Couples are looking for on-site lodging and a place to relax,” Lothridge says. “The carefree nature of the farm allows couples to connect with their family and friends and opting to spend the whole weekend in one place and sometimes turning their wedding into three-day events with welcome receptions, post-wedding events, day-after brunches,

“

*The great thing about farm weddings is that you can do burlap, but you can also do gold sequin or French market-style,*

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and incorporating local nearby tourism activities into their schedules.”

While some who select a farm setting for their ceremony have family roots in agriculture, its appeal extends to those without such a background.

“Others want it because it’s completely different from city life or being in an area that doesn’t have mountains or farming or green space,” Lothridge says.

With the place she grew up in now helping others create lasting memories, Lothridge says extending hospitality to visitors remains a hallmark of the farm.

“We treat them just like they’re family members.”

Fay Willis prepares to walk down the aisle at Mountain Laurel Farm. RIVER WEST



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There's plenty of room for after-ceremony socializing at Mountain Laurel Farm. **RIVER WEST**

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# BREW GURUS

Business is hopping at Tantrum



*drink*

The brew crew at Tantrum Brewing Company includes, from left, Jamie Parker, Ross Crumpton and Megan Norris. PHOTOS BY MATT AIKEN

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13 **Vide Noir**      4oz/16oz      15 **GameDay Pilsner**      4oz/20oz      16 **Late Bloomer**      4oz/16oz  
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By Matt Aiken

Ross Crumpton just couldn't bring himself to sign on the dotted line. It was 2016 and the White County native was about to start a life in Oklahoma with a longterm career in natural gas power generation.

There was only one problem.

"I absolutely hated it," he said.

Still, the Georgia Tech grad was making real plans to settle down and buy a new home a thousand miles from his hometown of Cleveland, Ga.

"One night I called my parents and said 'I can't do this,'" he said. "There's no way I'm about to buy a house in Oklahoma. I can't do this."

And so he didn't.

Instead he headed home, with an engineering degree and an idea.

That idea would eventually become Tantrum Brewing Company.

It was a concept that he briefly flirted with in 2013 but couldn't convince enough people to join the business venture.

Half a decade later, he was tired of waiting.

"I eventually said 'I'm just going to go for it,'" said the 29-year-old.

"Though it seemed like putting a production brewery in Cleveland, Georgia was a very far fetched idea."

Now the idea is anything but far fetched.

In fact, it's not even far from the Cleveland city limits.



Crumpton's brewing career began unassumingly. And in the dark.

"We actually started out, me and my roommate, doing muscadine wine fermentation in his closet. It was not very good," said Crumpton with a grin. "But we tweaked it."

After he graduated from college, Crumpton made the jump to hops.

"I just decided to buy some



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home brew equipment and basically just bought enough to get by with literally a kettle on a stove," he said.

Now the kettles are much bigger. And they're housed in the gleaming brew room on Helen Highway just north of Cleveland, which opened for business earlier this year.

Located on a spread of green acreage and with Mt. Yonah looming in the distance, the modern wood and metal building stands out against the scenic backdrop.

It also seems to attract plenty of patrons.

On the weekends there's beer, bands, food-trucks, corn-hole, axe-throwing and plenty of crowds to go along with it.

More than Crumpton initially expected.

"Everything just happened so quickly," he said. "Looking back over the past six months it's hard to imagine that we've come this far. The community support has been awesome."

It's also been lively.

"We have tons of families that come and kids playing and things like that," said Crumpton. "At one point there were literally kids Tarzan-ing from the hop vines."

Crumpton wants to make it clear that Tarzan-ing from the hop vines is frowned upon at Tantrum. (It even led to a series of 'Don't Climb the Vines' signs.) But that doesn't mean he wants the fun to end.

"I don't want to be a bar," he said. "It's not about coming and drinking until you're too drunk to drive home. People come up here to relax, to chill out and get away from the city."



So what's the secret to stand-



*Looking back over the past six months it's hard to imagine that we've come this far. The community support has been awesome.*



ing out amongst the crowded market of burgeoning breweries?

It's simple, says Crumpton.

"You've got to make better beer," he said. "That's the whole thing."

That's even their slogan.

It can be found on T-shirts and pint glasses throughout the brewery. Make Better Beer.

And that's where the expertise of brew gurus Jamie Parker and Megan Norris comes in handy.

"Every beer I brew I definitely look at it as my baby," said the bearded Parker while standing next to a wall of barrels in the brew room.

Parker honed his skill at Atlanta area breweries like Wild Heaven, Slice & Pint and Five Seasons.

He said there's real work to the job, but there's also a real pay-off too.

"It's very tangible," he said. "When you sit down in the tap room and there's like 20 people and they're all drinking beer that you made."

Norris agrees.

"My favorite part is just going and standing in there and watching people enjoy the beer and hearing how much they love it," she said. "That's what makes it all worth it for me."

And more and more people are enjoying the work of Crumpton, Parker and Norris these days.

Tantrum produces IPAs like *Porch Swing Pale*, *Folklore* and *Round Trip*; lagers like *90s Baby* and *Gypsy Queen*; sours like *Poems @ Midnight* and *Boom Gose the Dynamite*; German/Belgian beers like *Michelina* and *Thrice*; and barrel aged beers like *Life in the Shadows* and the awesomely named *Pirate Punk Politician*.

Tantrum brews can be found throughout North Georgia and as far away as Augusta.

The plan is to take it even further as Crumpton hopes to bring an in-house canning operation to the Helen Highway property.

He feels he has the right team to make it happen. And he's quick to give the credit to his staff, and friends and family, who helped to back his brewing enterprise.

"This is absolutely a team effort," he said. "None of this would have been possible without everyone involved."



It's a Friday afternoon and the staff of Tantrum is getting ready to open the doors at the taproom.

Several customers are patiently waiting in the parking lot for 2 p.m. to arrive.

One is waiting not-so-patiently.

Hoping for early entry, a balding biker jostles the front door and peers through the window.

Crumpton walks over and explains that the tap room will be ready in about five minutes.

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"Can you bring out a free sample while I wait?" asks the man with a laugh.

Crumpton smiles.

That's just what he wants to hear.

"I want us constantly striving to make better beer," he said. "And make beer that people truly enjoy. I just want people to come here and try our beer and think 'Damn, that is really good.'"

Though not a direct quote, a few minutes later the eager biker seems to be thinking just that as he's settled into the bar with a pint and a smile.

He's not alone, as a crowd begins to fill up the taproom.

It's still early in the day. The food trucks don't show up for a few more hours. And the band won't be there until dark.

But business is already bustling at the brewery.

The founder of Tantrum Brewing Company notices and hurries over to the tap to help out with the pouring.

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# Man and the **MOONRISE**

## Crafting the perfect whiskey in Clayton

By Wayne Knuckles

A small, family-operated craft distillery in Rabun County is poised to make a big splash in the world of artisanal whiskey.

Moonrise Distillery is not just another company seeking to cash in on the growing craft distillery business in Georgia.

It's a family affair that takes whiskey making back to its roots, using locally grown ingredients and techniques that would make the moonshiners that used to ply their trade in the nearby hills and hollows proud.

"Our motivation is to make the best upper one percent bourbon and rye we can possibly make, and use local ingredients whenever possible," said Doug Nassaur, who operates Moonrise with his wife Jennifer and son CJ. "One hundred percent of the corn—which is 80 percent of the product—is grown locally. We use an heirloom white Silver Queen corn that's one of the best corns you can get. It probably costs three times as much, but it produces a much, much better product."

Whiskey judges agree.



Moonrise Distillery owner Doug Nassaur shows some of the many bourbon-related products offered for sale at the Clayton distillery.



*drink*

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Moonrise rye whiskey has been recognized as one of the top 25 rye whiskies in the country. They recently earned a 96 and a 94 rating from Tasting Panel magazine for their bourbon and rye, respectively.

"That's almost unheard of for a craft distillery," Nassaur said.

Local ingredients are one of the keys to success, Nassaur explained.

"That's one of the beauties of being up here," he said. "The access to natural products. The water that you have here is the same as you can get in Kentucky—limestone filtered. Limestone is important because it takes the iron out. Iron is Public Enemy No. 1 to a good bourbon."

But the attention to detail and the family touch are just as important, he added.

"When we say we are hand crafted, we mean it," he said. "Every day we try to be true to the spirit of the people who came before us. We are unapologetically old-fashioned and admittedly inefficient."

Doug and CJ handle the distilling of the spirits. Doug conducts the tours and Jennifer handles the gift shop and everything else.

"Nothing is more interesting than doing this as a family," Nassaur said. "Nobody takes better care of the product and the business than the family."

Moonrise was founded in 2012, but it's been under the current ownership for just a little over a year.

"We took (the original) three products, and now we have 13 products," Nassaur said.

In addition to bourbon and rye, the product line includes vodka and gin, with plans for a fortified wine offering made using local wines in the near future.

There are also food products,



ranging from a barbecue sauce made special with the help of the same charred oak barrels used to age the whiskey to beef jerky and ... believe it or not, ice cream.

But there's more to Moonrise than just the food and beverages.

The new owners have spent the past year making improvements to the property designed to enhance the experience for visitors. A performance stage has been added along with an artificial grass surface in front for spreading out during the weekly musical performances.

Moonrise also offers tours that are attracting thousands of visitors every month.

"When I wrote the business plan, I titled it 'Gilligan's Island,' because I wanted to create a place where people would want to come for a three-hour tour," Nassaur said. "A distillery is a living, breathing organism. There's always something going on, there are sights, smells and tastes to share."

The community support has been overwhelmingly positive,





What began with three products has now grown into a line of pickles, jellies, barbecue sauce and more.

Nassau said.

"The amount of effort that people have put into welcoming us into this community has moved us," he added. "We are surrounded by people who care. We get to share the things we are passionate about with people who care. What more could you ask for?"

While future expansion, including a second barrel house, are on the horizon, Moonrise will always be a manageable size by design.

"We have made a conscious decision that we are not going to grow beyond a point where we can't touch each one of our customers," Nassau said. "When we have visitors here, we try to demonstrate to them that a craft distillery can make products as well as the big guys, and in some places better. We just can't make as much at the same time."

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# OUT OF THE ORCHARD

The Chitwoods take pride in the Peach State



The Georgia peach logo developed by Derek Chitwood was inspired by his family's orchard.

(Inset photo) Derek and Kari Chitwood have worked together to make Peach State Pride a household (or state-wide) name. **PEACH STATE PRIDE.**



By Lisa W. Manus

For the past decade, Derek Chitwood has built the business and brand, Peach State Pride.

The logo has become synonymous with all things southern, especially that which is uniquely Georgia.

Chitwood may have started his business 10 years ago, but his journey to regional and national recognition began in his childhood, working alongside his grandfather Virlyn Chitwood in the family peach orchard in Canon.

It was there, in his grandfather's shadow, that Chitwood says he learned the importance of "passion, hard work and respect for others" as well as gaining an appreciation of Georgia's history and culture.

After graduating from Georgia College, Chitwood planned to teach history and coach. He intended to take a year off, before attending graduate school at Clemson University.

It was during this gap year that Derek went to work for a company that built playgrounds. Although the company was based in Oconee County, many of the jobs were in South Carolina.

Everywhere he turned, Chitwood noticed the well-known South Carolina logo—a palmetto tree and crescent moon.

"It was so neat, it didn't matter what part of South Carolina you were in...you could be in the low country, or the upstate, it was like everybody was united together under that one logo," Chitwood said.

Realizing that Georgia lacked such a unifying logo, Chitwood decided to draw upon his childhood experiences in the family peach orchard to create one himself.

"I thought Georgia is such a unique state in so many ways. You go from Lookout Mountain to Atlanta to Savannah to the

*style*

Okefenokee Swamp. The geographic and cultural differences; it's so diverse. We didn't really have anything that brought us all together," said Chitwood. "Growing up picking peaches, I was always really proud of being from the Peach State, because I was so involved in that. So, I went home and I drew the logo. It was a peach, of course. I started dreaming about it being the logo for the state of Georgia. That was the mission, the goal."

At the time, clothing and other apparel were not on Chitwood's radar. But a roommate urged him to make a few items of clothing sporting the logo. Chitwood created a few hats and T-shirts with the design.

Ace Hardware in Royston was the first store to carry the items.

Word of mouth quickly created a buzz about the apparel. Willow Bend in Lavonia – now known as



A native of Franklin County, Derek Chitwood opened V.F. Chitwood's in Lavonia in 2014.

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the Vintage Owl – was next to carry the line.

For the next few years, Chitwood gradually recruited more stores to sell his merchandise.

By 2012, Chitwood had decided he wanted to turn his full attention and efforts to the Peach State Pride endeavor. A website was created with online shopping.

The company developed partnerships with nearly 70 stores to display and sell their merchandise. Chitwood paid attention to which stores were the most successful and why. He began to ponder the idea of opening his own store and pushing the product the way he wanted to.

“You don’t have full control over your product line when you sell it to another store,” said Chitwood. “They might carry only 10 percent of your line. We thought, with our own store, we could present it the way we wanted to, but also adjust to the markets,

as well as bringing in other brands we wanted our brand next to.”

In 2013, the first storefront was opened in Watkinsville, under the name of Peach State Pride. It would later become Empire South.

Today, the Peach State Pride clothing line is just one aspect of the business.

Empire South serves as their retail front for their signature line, along with other brands. The company now has close to 100 employees on its payroll.

Wholesale still makes up a large part of their business model. Chitwood describes the wholesale market as the engine that has allowed the company to grow. Currently, Peach State Pride apparel is sold to more than 100 stores throughout the state of Georgia.

The original trucker hat remains the bread and butter of the enterprise, along with the original T-shirts.

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The line has expanded to include a wide variety of merchandise from decals to performance polo shirts.

The company has also created an internship program with the University of Georgia to provide real-world experiences for business and marketing majors.

Chitwood says the most important part of Peach State Pride is his wife, Kari, who majored in business management and marketing. He describes her as the perfect partner for him, her analytical, organized mind complementing his more creative one.

"We really play off each other well," said Chitwood. "She makes sure we have things in place to grow. It's a joy to work

*The original  
trucker hat  
remains the bread  
and butter of the  
enterprise.*

with her every day."

The partnership has led to five storefronts in Watkinsville, Lavonia, Hartwell, Athens and Atlanta, in addition to an online store, and a wholesale business.

The Lavonia store, V.F. Chitwood's, is named after his grandfather.

"The pride that I see with Peach State Pride...what I want to communicate is 'How can you be proud of where you are from and make it better?'...because as great as it is, we can always make it better," Chitwood said.

The journey from a mere idea to full-fledged company has come full circle for Chitwood.

A love for Georgia, cultivated in childhood in a peach orchard alongside his grandfather, has been the driving force for the business.

"Growing up in the orchard, working side-by-side with him was the greatest inspiration for everything I do. All the values, everything we do circles back to the values that were instilled by my Grandpa," said Chitwood. "The way he lived his life was important. I want people to know that. I want that to resonate with people."



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# The *Farm-Frien* Life

The Mashburns make their living through the Georgia soil

By Daniela Cintron

On a sunny Saturday morning, you can make your way to the Clayton Farmers Market at the Northeast Georgia Food Bank, and find an array of local farmers offering the best of their harvest. It's a bustling market teeming with freshly-cut flowers, honey, meats, and, of course, a variety of vegetables.

And amongst the colorful tents and umbrellas you'll also find a couple.

Amy and Chuck Mashburn.

With her dark hair and beautiful smile, Amy will most likely be behind

Amy Mashburn peels some of her organic locally grown vegetables while attending her table at the Clayton Farmers Market and chatting with the locals who enjoy her produce and cooking tips. PHOTO BY DANIELA CINTRON





Farmers Amy and Chuck Mashburn stand on the land they have worked tirelessly every single day for 20 years, with the sole purpose to provide for their family and the community, and live out a legacy in their family land.  
PHOTO BY DANIELA CINTRON



*daily*



*farms*

the table offering you an impressive looking squash or a crunchy seasoned peanut. If you're up for a conversation, she will give you great tips on cooking the vegetables she is offering.

Do not be intimidated by the massive Asian squash, she says.

Amy has a trick to cooking it quickly and deliciously.

"We grow vegetables that take less than 20 minutes to cook," she proudly tells her clients. "To conserve the taste and texture, you want to make sure you are not overcooking it."

If you have any further questions about the farm, Amy will quickly refer you to her husband Chuck.

The couple run Mill Gap Farm in Tiger, Georgia.

A Northeast Georgia native,

Chuck grew up working the field as a hobby while pursuing a carpentry career. And it wasn't until his sister bought the land in the late 1990s that he decided to go full-time into farming.

"It was very small and very slow, as I was still trying to learn," says Chuck about his early years farming at Mill Gap. "I started by growing a few vegetables that I would eat, and then sell a few."



Chuck's passion from the beginning was to harvest organic food, eliminating the use of synthetic chemicals. At the time, not many local farmers were applying such techniques, so he had to rely on books and research to learn how to successfully grow the wholesome foods in the most natural way possible.

"I grew up around conventional farming, so it took me trial and error to learn how to grow without all the chemicals," he said.

At the time, Chuck relied on books only, but some of them seemed to be lacking on some of the information and making him fall into the substitution game.

"You start substituting for organic fertilizer, insect spray and all, and think that essentially you are going to get an organic product, but that doesn't work. It took me a while to figure that out." Chuck enrolled in classes focusing on composting and spent years studying different techniques. Despite the many generations that have gone through the land since the American Indians, the 12 acres have been a chemical-free farming land before the 1940's and since 1999.

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Sometimes people seem to drift away from organic products due to the price difference. When it comes to vegetables, organic can be more expensive depending on the product and season.

This might turn away people from supporting local farms like Mill Gap, so it is important to understand that organic requires a lot more laboring, time and patience.

In this case, Chuck and his wife do all of the labor by themselves, devoting their every day to their job and their farm. They don't have big machinery to make the job easier, or chemicals to make vegetables grow faster.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, organic vegetables can cost 10 to 30 percent more than those

mass-produced, but one must understand that local organic farmers depend on the weather more than they would like to, and work tirelessly growing and selling their harvest.



Farming is a very consuming and labor-intensive job that starts as soon as the first rays of sun start to shine through until the

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darkness of the night takes over.

### A DAY ON THE FARM

At 5:30 a.m. Chuck and Amy wake up and get ready for the day. As soon as the sun shows some light, Chuck lines up his tools and hits the field while his wife goes to feed and check on their animals. Dependent on many factors, including the day of the week, the weather and the season, Chuck could be planting more Asian winter squash, pulling some okra, cleaning up the corn, or preparing the soil for a dry week.

At 1 p.m., after six hours of intensive labor, the heat of the sun starts to feel stronger on the farmer's shoulders, so Amy and Chuck take a break to prepare and eat whatever Amy cooks from their veg-

etables.

The break doesn't last too long. As soon as the day starts to feel a little cooler at around 5 p.m., Chuck and his wife pick back up where they left off until the sun is completely down.

This routine takes place at least four times a week. The other days they focus on the sale of their product through the main source of their income, online sales.

Using NortheastGeorgia.LocallyGrown.net Mill Gap Farm and many other local farmers have been able to sell their products to people in Northeast Georgia. Anyone is welcome to place an order for locally grown organic products.

The online market closes Monday nights, and the farmers are notified of their orders.

Chuck and his wife gather up the vegetables needed to meet the orders on Tuesdays, and by Wednesday they can deliver it,



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April 2004, five years after embarking into the adventure of full-time farming, Amy and Chuck prepare for a day of digging at Mill Gap Farms. Most of the labor is done just by them. PHOTO BY CHUCK MASHBURN



After a few dry days in Rabun County, Farmer Chuck Mashburn relies on city water to keep his field moist and be able to grow his produce. Dry days can compromise his ability to harvest vegetables on schedule. PHOTO BY DANIELA CINTRON

not only to the Rabun County area but also to Habersham and Hall County.

“Timing is everything,” says Chuck. “It is a very structured process that allows us and other local farmers to sell our products.”



Chuck is not interested in producing large amounts. They are happily growing a little, but with one main goal in mind.

“My biggest focus is to figure out a cheap affordable way to do organic farming and be able to teach it to other people,” he says with a hint of pride in his voice. “That is my way of promoting organic farming.”

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# Living in the LAVENDER

By Anika Chaturvedi

“It’s about giving back to the community.” For Tina and David Duffey, operating the Red Oak Lavender Farm is a way to interact with the community and to stay active post-retirement.

Originally from Atlanta, Tina has always preferred the outdoors and living in the country. Ten years ago, she moved to her current home in Dahlonega with her son and late husband.

Red Oak Lavender Farm began in 2014 when Tina first planted lavender. After seeing photos of French lavender plants in a magazine, she was inspired to expand her few lavender plants into rows and rows behind her home.

Tina’s late husband was ill due to exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. When Tina first started growing lavender, she hoped it would have a positive effect.

“He was ill at the time, and so growing the lavender was also, I think, therapeutic for him,” she said.

This therapeutic effect has extended to other visitors of the farm. According to Tina, a variety of people visit the farm to see the lavender, and she enjoys hearing their stories.

“That’s what makes us keep doing this,

This story, and all accompanying photos, are brought to you by Grady College of Journalism student Anika Chaturvedi as part of the University of Georgia’s Woodall Weekend Workshop.



because it's a lot of work," Tina said.

Despite the fact that lavender is suited to a Mediterranean climate, she was determined to make adjustments to Georgia's red clay including aerating and lining the soil.

"I had this dream of these purple flowers and these perfect rows of lavender growing," Tina said. "So I didn't give up, I kept going."

Following the establishment of the farm, Tina met David and the two became engaged. The couple now run the business together.

Tina is a retired teacher and







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Tina Duffey's son William Misko, 34, cleans bee frames at Red Oak Lavender Farm. PHOTOS BY ANIKA CHATURVEDI

David is a retired materials engineer, and both of their previous occupations factor into the lavender farm. Tina learned how to grow lavender and teaches others how to do so, with David adjusting the current methods they use to grow lavender.

"We're always constantly learning, that's the thing with being a farmer," Tina said.

Today, the farm is home to 2,000 lavender plants of 20 different varieties. One reason Tina appreciates lavender is because it's natural and she has allergies to several synthetic materials.

"We make our products so they

don't last that long and it's fresh, and we try to use as simple ingredients as possible," she said.

Along with growing lavender, Tina and David tend to bees and have several beehives on their property.

The farm has also collaborated with other businesses that use their lavender. Most recently, the farm and Etowah Meadery have collaborated on a lavender mead.

Once the lavender is harvested in June, Tina and David will host the Red Oak Lavender Festival. The annual event consists of food, music and art including making crafts taught by Tina.



*I had this dream of these purple flowers  
and these perfect rows of lavender growing.*

*So I didn't give up, I kept going.*



Tina and David are the smiling faces behind the Red Oak Lavender Farm.

According to David, most of the money they earn from products goes back into the farm and maintaining the lavender.

"We're retired and we do this because we love it, not because we make money off it," David said.



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*art*

Amy Sullivan uses sandpaper to reveal the dots on a rooster that she just painted inside her studio at Dahlonega's The Pig and The Poppy. PHOTO BY CAITLIN JETT



*Finding a way in*  
**FOLK ART**

**By Caitlin Jett**

Amy Sullivan graduated with a degree in law, and was at the top of her class. She then obtained a high-end job in Atlanta as a corporate real estate lawyer after graduation and got “swept away into corporate America.”

But something was off.

As years went by, she felt like she was moving further and further away from what she wanted to do in life. She felt like she was not herself anymore; she didn’t feel like the “goofy, artistic” person she was.



Amy Sullivan paints on the front porch of Canvas and Cork, a wine tasting room and art gallery located on the corner of Dahlonega's downtown Hancock Park. PHOTO BY CAITLIN JETT

It was during the recession, when real estate began slowing down, that Sullivan began to reflect on herself and the life she was living. She attended therapy sessions to find help in deciding on what she should do. At the time, she knew she wanted to do something outside of a big law firm, whether that be a non-law job or a law job in a small town.

Sullivan eventually quit her job as a real estate lawyer, after giving a month's notice, because she knew the people around her weren't her people.

"I needed to go figure out who my people were," Sullivan said.

In April 2016, Sullivan opened her art shop, The Pig and The Poppy, on the square in Dahlonega. Her mother, Liz Sullivan, was the inspiration for her decision to dive into the world of folk art. An established





Amy Sullivan often uses wood as a canvas for her art, which she gathers from a shed near her house.

folk artist in Asheville, North Carolina, her pieces of art can be seen at The Pig and The Poppy.

Sullivan finds inspiration for her artwork within the community around her. She typically draws two-dimensional animals, such as pigs and roosters. An animal that makes frequent reappearances in her artwork is Earl, her 16-year-old tabby cat. Earl is inspiration for many of Sullivan's folk art pieces.

In September 2018, Sullivan's shop, The Pig and The Poppy, moved into Canvas and Cork, a wine tasting room and art gallery, located on North Meaders Street in Dahlonega. She now spends most of her time in her studio, painting, and enjoying wine in her pink pig-themed wine glass.

And it appears she's found her people.

This story and photos are brought to you by Grady College of Journalism student Caitlin Jett as part of the University of Georgia's Woodall Weekend Workshop.

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# UNWIND

## Wineries, vineyards, tasting rooms and breweries **DIRECTORY**

### Wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms

#### **12 Spies Vineyards & Farm**

12spiesvineyards.com  
Rabun Gap, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Boutier Winery and Events**

boutierwinery.com  
Danielsville, GA

✓ Tasting Room (weekends only)

#### **Canvas and Cork**

canvasandcorkdahlonega.com  
Dahlonega, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Cartecay Vineyards**

cartecayvineyards.com  
Ellijay, GA

✓ Tasting Room (Ellijay and  
Wild Berry College, Clarkesville)

#### **Cavendar Creek Vineyards & Winery**

cavendarcreekvineyards.com  
Dahlonega, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **CeNita Vineyards**

cenitavineyards.com  
Cleveland, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Chateau Elan Winery & Resort**

chateauelan.com  
Braselton, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Chateau Meichtry Family Vineyard & Winery**

chateameichtry.com  
Talking Rock, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **The Cottage Vineyard & Winery**

cottagevineyardwinery.com  
Cleveland, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Courson's Winery**

Sparta, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Crane Creek Vineyards**

cranecreekvineyards.com  
Young Harris, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Currahee Vineyard & Winery**

curraheevineyards.com  
Toccoa, GA

✓ Tasting Room  
(Thursdays and weekends)

#### **Ellijay River Vineyards**

ellijayrivervineyards.com  
Ellijay, GA

✓ Tasting Room (weekends only in tent)

#### **Engelheim Vineyards**

engelheim.com, Ellijay, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Etowah Meadery**

Dahlonega, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Fainting Goat Vineyards & Winery**

faintinggoatvineyardsandwinery.com  
Jasper, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Feather's Edge Vineyards**

feathersedgevineyards.com  
Ball Ground, GA

✓ Tasting Room (weekends only)

#### **Fox Vineyards & Winery**

foxvinwinery.com  
Helen, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Frogtown Cellars**

frogtown.com  
Dahlonega, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Habersham Vineyards & Winery**

habershamwinery.com, Helen, GA

✓ Tasting Room  
(Dahlonega and Juliette, GA)

#### **Hightower Creek Vineyards**

hightowercreekvineyards.com  
Hiawassee, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Kaya Vineyards**

kayavineyards.com  
Dahlonega, GA

✓ Tasting Room

#### **Lake Russell Vineyards**

lakerussellwines.com  
Elberton, Georgia

Tasting Room opens soon



### **Montaluce Winery**

**& Restaurant**  
montaluce.com  
Dahlonega, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Noble Wine Cellar**  
noblewinegeorgia.com  
Clayton, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Odom Springs Vineyards**  
odomspringsvineyards.com  
Blairsville, GA  
☑ Tasting Room  
(Thursdays and weekends)

**Paradise Hills**  
paradisehillsga.com  
Blairsville, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Serenberry Vineyards**  
serenberryvineyards.com  
Morganton, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Serenity Cellars**  
serenitycellars.com  
Cleveland, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Sharp Mountain Vineyards**  
sharpmountainvineyards.com  
Jasper, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Stonewall Creek Vineyards**  
stonewallcreek.com  
Tiger, GA  
☑ Tasting Room (Dahlonega and Sautee)

**The Southern  
Alpaca Connection**  
southernalpacaconnection.com  
Lavonia, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Sweet Acre Farms Winery**  
sweetacrefarmswinery.com  
Alto, GA  
☑ Tasting Room (weekends only)

**Three Sisters Vineyards**  
threesistersvineyards.com  
Dahlonega, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Tiger Mountain Vineyards**  
tigerwine.com  
Tiger, GA  
☑ Tasting Room  
(at Naturally Georgia in Dahlonega)

**Wolf Mountain Vineyards**  
wolfmountainvineyards.com  
Dahlonega, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

**Yonah Mountain Vineyards**  
yonahmountainvineyards.com  
Cleveland, GA  
☑ Tasting Room

## **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

**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

**NoFo Brew Co.**  
nofobrew.co  
Cumming, GA

**Reformation Brewery**  
reformationbrewery.com  
Woodstock, GA

**Southern Brewing Company**  
sobrewco.com  
Athens, GA

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

**Strawn Brewing Company**  
strawnbrewing.com  
Fairburn, GA

**Tantrum Brewing Company**  
tantrumbeer.com  
Cleveland, GA

**Terrapin Beer**  
terrapinbeer.com  
Athens, GA

**Whistle Top Brew Company**  
whistletopbrew.com  
Cornelia, GA

## **Distilleries**

**Bill Elliott Dawsonville  
Distillery**  
dawsonvillemoonshine  
distillery.com  
Dawsonville, Ga

**Chattooga Belle Farm**  
chattoogabellefarm.com  
Long Creek, SC

**Granddaddy Mimms  
Moonshine Distillery**  
mimmsmoonshine.com  
Blairsville, Ga

**Moonrise Distillery**  
moonrisedistillery.com  
Clayton, Ga

**R.M. Rose and Company  
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rmroseco.com  
Dillard, Ga

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