

NASHVILLE

LIFESTYLES

BBQ

26 MOST SMOKIN' JOINTS IN TOWN

PLUS
A pitmaster dishes on whole hog



Women in Business 2015
MEET THE LEADERS MOVING
THIS CITY FORWARD
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Uncorked in Virginia

Step aside, Napa—there's a burgeoning wine region in the east. And with a recently renovated estate nestled among the vines, the Charlottesville experience just keeps getting better. STORY AND PHOTOS BY **KRISTIN LUNA**



Two hours from the U.S. Capitol, Thomas Jefferson's estate is rooted in the iconic history of the formation of the United States and numerous government institutions we often take for granted.

Writer of our nation's Declaration of Independence, secretary of state beneath George Washington, third sitting president, and a huge proponent of American expansion (see: the Louisiana Purchase), Jefferson and his nook of Virginia became the crucible from which our country was forged. All of that is to say, **Charlottesville** is worth a visit—if for nothing else, to take a stroll through Jefferson's "academical village" at the **University of Virginia**, the public institution that he founded in 1819.

But we can name a reason besides touring the stately brick buildings—and the fact that UVA is indeed a UNESCO World Heritage Site—that should have you planning a trip to the Old Dominion. Settled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, **Keswick Hall and Golf Club** rests like a sleek and polished time transporter, tinged with gentlemanly Old English-style and colonial old money amenities. With fresh ingredients grown on site in the estate's produce gardens, a rolling and well-manicured golf course, faux fox hunts with jovial hounds, and a fully equipped mansion at your disposal, the newly renovated property has never looked better. Plus, Keswick's easy access to the region's hundreds of wineries means there's no better time to go than now, just before the harvest.

DO

Golfers can while away the days teeing off at **Full Cry**, the 18-hole, Audubon-certified, Pete Dye-designed course that was completed just last year. The course feels ancient and mature, perhaps because folks have been slicing tee shots on the land since the early 1950s. Designed to give challenging options for the more seasoned player, Full Cry is simultaneously advanced yet approachable for the novice. Even if you don't feel like playing a round, hop in a cart and motor around the links, where you might spot white-tailed deer or a woodchuck or two.

The resort's Infinity-style horizon pool glistens above the fairways—two other, smaller pools are tucked away discreetly among the grounds—and the **Keswick Club Spa** serves up a lengthy menu of treatment options, including specialty packages like the Golfer's Delight (a gentlemen's facial, a 30-minute upper-body massage, and 30 minutes of reflexology). For the avid horticulturists, there are free daily



that explore the dozens of maintained gardens. Keswick Hall also lays claim to seven tennis courts, a mix of hard and clay—or you can take advantage of the complimentary activities on site, like archery, badminton, and croquet.

Though you'll likely feel no need to leave the estate at all, plan to steal away for an hour or two to visit **Monticello** (\$25 for a day pass), which requires just a 10-minute drive. The half-hour guided tour through the ground level of Jefferson's former home is a treat for history buffs, though the seasonal Gardens and Grounds Tour (included in the cost of the day pass) is a worthwhile endeavor to see the verdant groves, orchards, flowerbeds, and vegetable gardens. From April through October, the Slavery at Monticello Tour pays homage to the enslaved people who lived and labored on the plantation.

EAT

Following a round of golf, **Villa Crawford Bar** is the perfect respite with a full bar menu offering specialty drinks like jalapeño margaritas and strawberry basil mojitos, which go well with the lavish charcuterie spread. Order dinner at the bar or retreat next door

to **Fossett's** for a three-course journey through flavor profiles with favorites like Chesapeake oysters, scallops, and Prince Edward Island mussels plus sides sourced from the Chef's Garden. Breakfast each morning is served in the sun-drenched restaurant overlooking the golf course, with a bevy of brunch delights like eggs Benedict and artfully presented yogurt parfaits.

Friday nights in Charlottesville are worth driving 15 minutes into town for, especially for **Fridays After Five**, where you can listen to free music and sample a number of local bites and brews. The 44,000-person town prides itself in being a haven for locavores thanks to local establishments like **Mas Tapas**, **Parallel 38**, and **C&O**, a decades-old eatery in a railroad bunkhouse beside the former rail yard.

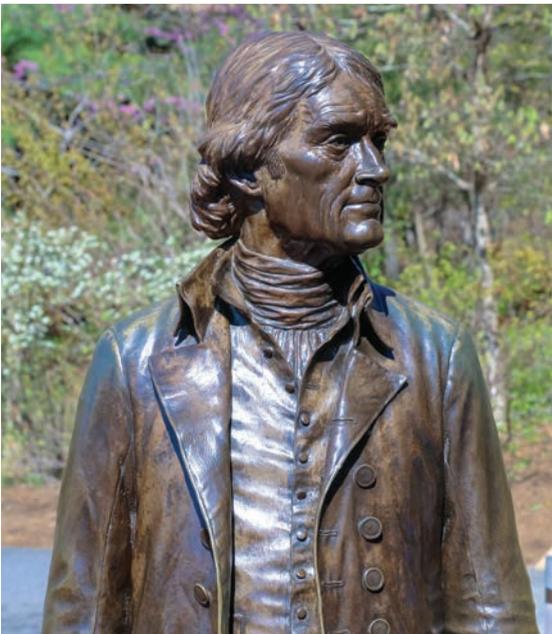
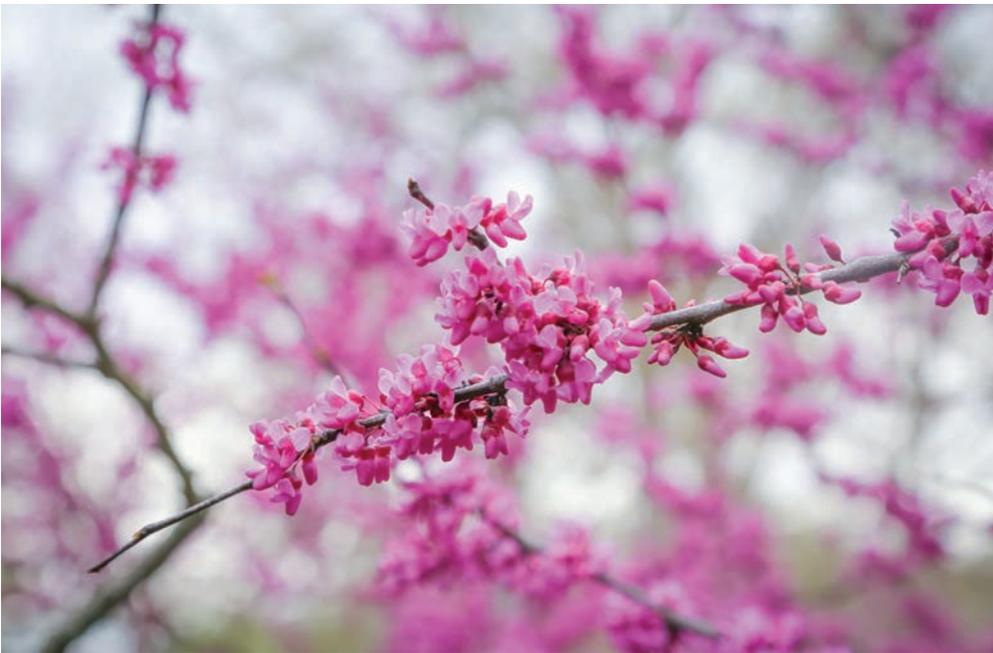
DRINK

No doubt, one of Charlottesville's biggest draws is its surrounding wine region, which would take months to explore in its entirety—with 230 wineries (and growing), it boasts a vineyard for every taste. To avoid drinking and driving, book a private shuttle or bus through **James River Transportation** to

chauffeur you around for the day. Each experience is customizable, but you'll want to start nearby at **Keswick Vineyards**, where Aussie winemaker Stephen Barnard doles out equal amounts of wit and wine. You can settle in at the bar for a flight or take a glass of chardonnay outside to the well-shaded holler, where there are picnic tables and lawn games.

Next up, head down the road for a chat and another glass of the good stuff with **Michael Shaps**, who runs a smaller tasting room but a major operation, as he does consulting and contract winemaking for myriad other wineries in the area. Forty-five minutes from there, **Stinson Vineyards** enjoys a stunning vista, and the tasting room has a farm store featuring local produce, cheese, and grass-fed meat. (While you're in the area, soak up all that vino with a spot of lunch on **Restoration's** patio.)

Feeling an overdose on wine? Stop by **Starr Hill Brewery's** headquarters in Crozet and try one of the 16 beers on tap. But don't forget the cideries either; the **Virginia Cider Trail** comprises nine, starting with **Urban Homestead Apple Farm** and **Foggy Ridge Cider** down near the Tennessee border and extending all the way to **Shenandoah Cider**



Company in Northern Virginia. In Charlottesville alone, you have your pick of **Albermarle CiderWorks**, **Bold Rock Cidery & Pub**, and **Castle Hill Cider**.

STAY

Keswick Hall's 48 accommodations (superior rooms from \$299 a night) recently got a major makeover. Previously owned by Sir Bernard Ashley, the widower of Laura Ashley, the historic 600-acre property was built in 1912 and had a very floral design scheme throughout, in keeping with the Laura Ashley brand; the upgrade to a neutral palette, subway tiles, and other modern furnishings morphed the rooms into serene retreats perfect for a long weekend of R&R.

GETTING THERE

Charlottesville is 550 miles—or an eight-hour drive—northeast of Nashville. Both United Airlines and US Airways offer daily flight service with quick stopovers in D.C. or Charlotte.



VISITOR'S TIP

You may hear hounds baying in the distance; that's not your imagination but rather the hunt club across the street from Keswick Hall and its 60 resident pooches. Join them on their morning stroll six days a week at 9 a.m. (they have Sundays off), and be sure to have your camera charged and ready.

LEARN MORE

keswick.com
monticello.org
virginiawine.org
jamesrivertrans.com
starrhill.com

Clockwise from top: flowers at Keswick Hall, wine-tasting at Stinson Vineyards, Starr Hill Brewery, and Monticello