

## 2024 Visit Loudoun *Media Sheet*



### Loudoun's Award-Winning Craft Beverage Scene

With more than 50 wineries on rolling hills and vine-covered slopes, Loudoun is known as DC's Wine Country®, the views as sumptuous as the vintages. It is a vibrant craft beer destination too, with the popular LoCo Ale Trail connecting some 30-plus breweries, from trendy urban tap rooms in the east, to mountain top beer gardens in the Blue Ridge

out west. And if spirits are your thing, Loudoun is home to two artisanal distilleries producing award-winning bourbon, rye, gin and even absinthe. Becky Harris of Catoctin Creek Distilling Company is arguably the leading female whiskey maker in America today. It's not only grapes and grain that Loudoun ferments: cideries are popping up and several meaderies ferment local honey for mead.



**Jennifer Sigal**

Director of Communications  
Sigal@VisitLoudoun.org  
703-669-2002

#LoCoAleTrail | #LoveLoudoun  
#DCsWineCountry

@VisitLoudoun | VisitLoudoun.org



### The Great Outdoors

While eastern Loudoun is dynamically urban, the west is an outdoor paradise – a lush expanse of working farms, soaring mountains and tumbling river valleys – dirt roads, hiking trails and biking paths connecting them all. From high-flying adventures over forest canopies on zip lines to cycling the 45-mile Washington & Old Dominion Railroad or hiking the “Rollercoaster” of the Appalachian Trail, there is something for every outdoor enthusiast. And if you need to cool down from it all, enjoy kayaking or stand-up paddleboarding the Potomac River.



### Small Town Appeal

Experience authentic, small-town America and journey into the nation's past in Loudoun's 12 small towns and historic villages. Downtown Leesburg is lined with handsome 18th and 19th century Colonial and Federal red brick buildings, while picturesque Middleburg in horse and hunt country has dozens of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Off-the-beaten path villages such as Waterford, founded by Quakers in 1733, have barely changed in centuries. Take self-guided tours, public art walks, visit historic attractions, shop in rustic farm stores and chic boutiques, and enjoy fine food, wine and beer in cafes, bars, restaurants and tasting rooms that will make you feel at home.

# Story Ideas

## Dirt Roads & Digital Highways

While western Loudoun has more miles of unpaved roads than any other Virginia county, Sterling and Ashburn in Loudoun's urban east are home to scores of sleek hi-tech data centers that power 70% of the world's Internet traffic. The area is known as Data Center Alley or the Silicon Valley of the East.

## Lights, Camera, Loudoun!

The Middleburg Film Festival, taking place each October, has become a major stop on the Oscar trail. Established in 2013 by billionaire black female entrepreneur Sheila Johnson, owner of Salamander Middleburg, the likes of Emma Stone and Kenneth Branagh have made appearances while films like "Marriage Story" in 2019 wowed crowds before getting Six Academy Award nominations.

## Literary Loudoun

Loudoun is DC's Wine Country® but it's literary country too. A single street in tiny Waterford, (est. 1733; pop 2,467), has been home to three Pulitzer Prize-winning writers – Larry McMurtry (Lonesome Dove), Geraldine Brooks (March) and journalist Tony Horowitz, author of Confederates in the Attic – as well as award-winning playwright John Guare, author of Six Degrees of Separation. Pulitzer-winning humorist Russell Baker (Growing Up), grew up in the even smaller Morrisonville a few miles away.

## Agri-Innovators

Agritourism is big business in Loudoun, and with that has come outside-the-box innovators. At Wheatland Spring Farm + Brewery, beer is made using yeast captured from grain grown on property; at Endless Summer Harvest gourmet lettuce and salad greens are grown hydroponically in hi-tech greenhouses; at Sunset Hills Vineyard the sun that nourishes the grapes also powers the solar panels that help make award-winning wines and at Great Country Farms the fruit they grow feeds the farm's livestock, is sold as produce in the farm's store and is used to make the craft beverages produced in the spin-off winery, brewery and cidery.

## The Resorts

Fancy a luxe resort? Sheila Johnson's Salamander property in Middleburg's rolling countryside is a swanky equine-themed resort with state-of-the-art spa, exquisite dining and multiple sporting activities including horse riding, archery and ziplining. Equally upscale, The Goodstone on 265-acres nearby features 18 guestrooms across six historic cottages and a superb tasting menu in its Conservatory restaurant. Lansdowne Resort in Leesburg is a sprawling hotel, golf and lifestyle destination set on 500 scenic acres along the Potomac River.

## What's New for 2024?



Home to more than 50 wineries and tasting rooms, 2024 will mark the 40th Anniversary of the Loudoun wine industry. Incredibly, the man who started it all – Lew Parker of Willowcroft Farm Vineyards – is still growing grapes and still making wine on the land where he planted his first vines. Parker has turned the cellar of his 1790s farmhouse into a wine library where he archives every bottle he has ever made including that first bottle in 1984: an award-winning Riesling.



Sweet Run State Park in Hillsboro is Virginia's newest state park, an 844-acre greenspace nestled between the Blue Ridge and Short Hill mountains in far western Loudoun County. The park features 11 miles of hiking trails, nine miles of equestrian trails, two streams, dense forest and a rugged stretch of the world-famous Appalachian Trail. There is also a picnic pavilion, a "nature play area" for children and a fishing pond stocked with sunfish and largemouth bass.



Sultry Loudoun soul, jazz and R&B singer Tracy Hamlin's Sweet Jazz Festival will take place at the National Conference Center in Leesburg on April 19-20. A two-day celebration of music, art and wine, the festival will feature stirring performances from Hamlin as well as appearances by jazz artists Marcus Anderson, Karen Briggs and others. Proceeds go to supporting aspiring musicians.



The Tarara Summer Concert Series, a five-month series of Saturday evening concerts from May to September, celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2024. Takinh place at Tarara Winery on the banks of the Potomac River, the festival features a rotating series of cover bands and original acts on a raised stage in a natural amphitheater. There are beer and food tents and Tarara wine to keep you refreshed.