

NEW PERSPECTIVES

BY JASON HUNTER

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As a photographer with more than 10 years' experience, I have tried all styles, from street to portrait. However, over the last three years, I have started to find my true style and gain some recognition for my work in the process. I like to think my style is a mix between New Topography and Minimalism; what does that mean? Sharp lines, thoughtful compositions, and rich colors are elements incorporated in my photographs.

To me, the most enriching part of photography is finding the beauty in even the most mundane things. That's what inspires me about my hometown of Chesapeake, Virginia. What may seem like an ordinary town is quite the opposite. Sometimes, just taking a step back and observing the world around us can lead to new ideas and perspectives. For example, driving around town and looking for colors, lines, and patterns might spark a creative idea for a photograph. These day-to-day details that normally go unnoticed spark ideas for the photographs you see here. By embracing the ordinary and our surroundings, we can unlock a world of creativity and meaning.



JASON
HUNTER





HOOK @ HARVEY
Cape Charles



LILY'S CHOCOLATE & COFFEE
Alexandria



HEIFETZ MUSIC SHOP &
INSTRUMENT RENTALS
Staunton



OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA
Alexandria



DOWNTOWN STAUNTON
Staunton

While I love capturing scenes around town, my wife and I spent the summer exploring new and unfamiliar places in Virginia. This kind of exploration has been an integral part of my photography journey. The landscapes, architecture, and people we've encountered have provided unexpected inspiration and growth. Whether it's capturing the vibrant colors of a bustling town like Alexandria or the serene beauty of the natural landscapes of Cape Charles and Staunton, travel opened a world of possibilities and allowed me to tell captivating stories through my images. It has also taught me to be patient, adaptable, and open-minded as I navigate unfamiliar environments to capture the perfect shot.

We experienced quite a few pleasant surprises during our trips, but one town that exceeded expectations was Staunton. The city was previ-

ously unknown to us, but it turned out to be a charming and vibrant destination with a rich history and plenty of one-of-a-kind attractions. I'm embarrassed to say that someplace so pretty is only three hours away from our home, yet we've never thought to visit.

After taking in a preview of the city, I could hardly wait to check into Hotel 24 and start exploring and taking photos. My wife was equally excited to start shopping on Beverley Street. The beauty of the downtown area came through in the finished products of my photos, while my wife returned from her shopping excursion with armfuls of purchased goodies. In fact, we loved Staunton so much that we are already planning our next trip in the fall for the Queen City Mischief and Magic Festival, where Staunton transforms into the magical world of "Harry Potter."

Another favorite memory from our travels is from the city of Alexandria. We celebrated our 13th wedding anniversary while in this Northern Virginia city, and to help celebrate, my cousins drove down from Annapolis. We all enjoyed a lovely dinner at the Chart House on the water, witnessing one of the most gorgeous sunsets we've ever seen. The following morning, I woke up before sunrise to explore Alexandria. It was so peaceful, and there was so much to take in and photograph — the streets were bustling with runners, cyclists, and people walking their dogs, and the morning light on King Street was particularly stunning, allowing me to capture some of my favorite photos from the trip. Everywhere I looked was picturesque and colorful, and I felt incredibly inspired to create. Trust me when I say that photographers live for these moments.

Of the three places we visited, nowhere makes you feel more welcome than Cape Charles. Located on the southern end of Virginia's Eastern Shore, Cape Charles is a charming little town right on the water that emanates small-town vibes. We visited during the annual Fourth of



July celebrations, so the entire town was decked out in flags and red, white, and blue décor. The beautiful summer sun and sand provided the perfect backdrop for excellent photo opportunities, and we enjoyed hanging out on the pier and taking it all in. I couldn't think of a better way to spend a summer day in Virginia.

While this Virginia journey has ended, my wife and I will keep traveling around our beautiful state to explore new ar-

reas. This initial trip was the experience of a lifetime and something we should have done sooner. Virginia is a wonderful place that is full of friendly people and sights, and I'm so proud to call this state my home. I can't wait to explore more of what this state has to offer, from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the beaches of Virginia Beach. There's just so much to see and do, and I hope you decide to check it out too.



A GILDED LOVE STORY

By Tricia Anderson

The Gilded Age was a period of excess and wealth for a select few families in America, and a prime example of that luxurious living were James & Sallie May Dooley, original owners of Richmond's Maymont estate and their Afton summer home, the magnificent Swannanoa, built as a monument to James's love for Sallie Mae.

But unlike many wealthy Americans, the Dooleys were generous with their massive fortunes and believed in charitable giving. After they passed, the Dooleys left their Maymont estate to the city, ensuring future generations of Richmonders, no matter their financial standing, would be able to enjoy the pristine property in the heart of the capital city.

While Swannanoa was bequeathed to James Dooley's sister, the property has belonged to only two other owners in the century since. Today, Sandi Dulaney continues her husband's beloved work of restoring Swannanoa to its original glory while educating and sharing Swannanoa with visitors through scheduled tours. Experience the Gilded Age firsthand when you visit Maymont and Swannanoa, two of Virginia's most beautiful historic estates.

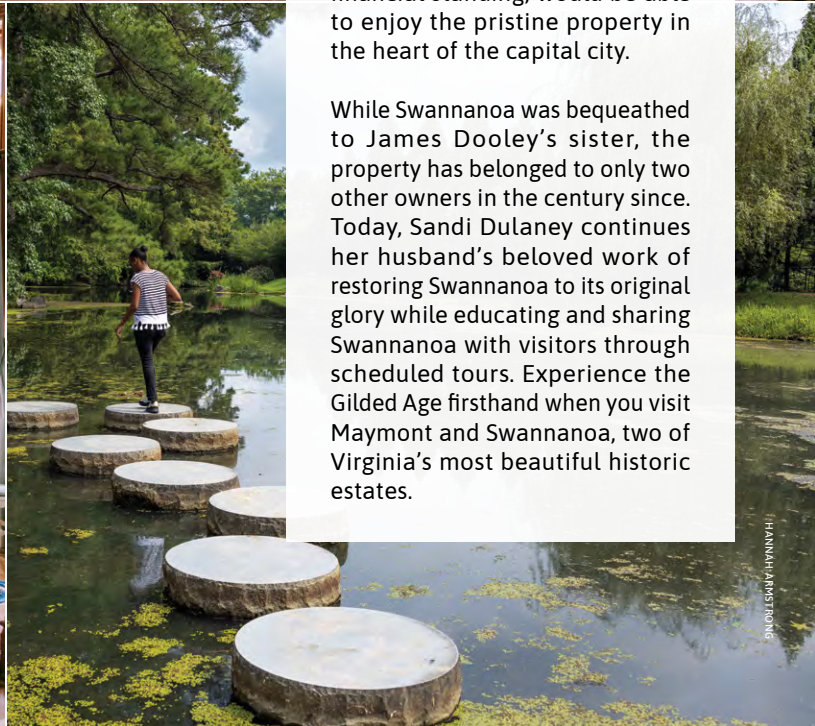
SWANNANOA
Afton



Check out the
full story on
[Virginia.org](https://www.virginia.org)



MAYMONT
Richmond



HANNAH MONTGOMERY



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

My Home Virginia

BY BRIAN NOYES

@redtruckbakery

On a sweltering July morning, my old red truck is kicking up dust as it bounces across the bumps and ditches of a gravel road in Fauquier County, Virginia. I coast into the driveway at the dead end of Tackett Lane and park near rows of fully-loaded blueberry bushes, some five or six feet tall. Farmer Rick Crofford ambles out of the mud room as the door slams shut. Floyd, his Australian Shepherd, jumps up with dirty paws and sniffs my shirt. "Welcome to Berry Simple Farm," Rick laughs.

HANNAH ARMSTRONG



Farmer Rick
Brings the goods



Me + Dwight

RED TRUCK BAKERY
Marshall



Our Marshall location

Rick's blueberry farm, Virginia's bucolic dirt roads, and my second career are a long way from the nation's capital, where I left a 30-year run as the art director for The Washington Post, and Smithsonian and Preservation magazines, to launch a rural Virginia bakery. I baked on Friday nights at the weekend farmhouse that Dwight McNeill and I bought in the village of Orlean, an hour west of our home in Arlington. A country store was selling my pies, breads, granola, and cakes on Saturday mornings, a manageable amount of baking for me until a national food writer got a taste.

Marian Burros wrote about my fledgling Red Truck Bakery on the front page of The New York Times food section, and my website hits went from two dozen to 57,000 in one day. Now hundreds of orders were in my inbox and I had to take a week off from work to make, wrap, box, and ship baked goods all over America to people who hadn't even known about them a day earlier. The mailman backed down my driveway and saw piles of packages on the front porch. "That's quite a load," he said, scratching his head. I was too



HANNAH ARMSTRONG

exhausted to laugh and told him that's just what didn't fit inside the house. I left my publishing career and signed a lease on a former 1921 Esso filling station in Warrenton, the county seat.

I wasn't a baking novice. I had trained at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, and at L'Academie de Cuisine, a cooking school outside of D.C. where my two instructors were former White House pastry chefs. I didn't want to make fancy desserts or decorated cakes, but simple rustic country pies, cakes, and breads. I insisted on using local, seasonal ingredients for our pies, and I'm still explaining to customers why they can't get a blueberry or cherry pie in the middle of December. Dwight, a residential architect, drew up plans to renovate the old gas station. I courted two prospective investors who thought I was making a naïve move, and they bailed. I emptied out my savings account.

I bought used commercial ovens, kitchen equipment, and tools, hired three staffers, and flipped the open sign in July 2009, just as the roar of the Great Recession was headed our way. It was rough going for a while but we survived. In 2015 we opened a second location and main



Check out Brian's
"My Home Virginia"
episode on YouTube.



headquarters in Marshall, 20 minutes north, with now fifty employees shipping thousands of items nationwide from a Virginia farm town.

When I signed a lease on that second store, most recently a diner and bar but originally a pharmacy and Masonic lodge, most of the buildings on the block-long Main Street were vacant. Window signs begged for occupants. The bank building next door was boarded up. A family-run grocery store two doors down locked up their 50th anniversary then locked up for good. Down at the red light on the corner, the oldest Ford dealer in America celebrated their 102nd birthday and then emptied their lot.

We opened to a line out the door after installing a "food this exit" sign on I-66 a mile away. Customers told us they needed a place to go after dropping off the kids at school, and we were it. Soon The Whole Ox, a butcher shop, arrived down Main Street. A farm-to-table restaurant, Field & Main, opened up across from us. Buildings up and down the street were renovated and painted, and they're now coffee shops, antique stores, salons, and art galleries. An inn

moved into an old house and brought along an interior design studio.

Three new residential neighborhoods were soon under construction, each set behind the bustling mercantile buildings of Main Street. VDOT and Fauquier County joined forces and have completed our Main Street renewal program with brick sidewalks, benches, and tree plantings. The eyesore power lines were relocated underground, and old-timey street lights now provide a nice warm glow, thanks to a charming little bakery that took a chance.

It's blueberry season and almost Independence Day, and we've run out of Rick Crofford's berries. Customers are eager for blueberry pies and muffins, blueberry coffee cakes, and our cobbler-like blueberry buckle. The only way to get more fruit quickly is to visit the source, and Rick and Floyd are waiting for me. And tomorrow our customers will be, also, pinning for pie for the Fourth of July. It doesn't get much more local than this.

HANNAH ARMSTRONG



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

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RIVERS CASINO



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SOUNDS *of* YESTERYEAR

Experience Country Music Along the Crooked Road

BY ANDREW COTHERN

I'm a huge fan of music and have been listening to many different artists throughout my life, but as I keep up with the latest musical trends and artists, I tend to shy away from the sounds of yesteryear. But upon taking a trip to The Crooked Road Music Heritage Trail with fellow colleagues, we found a community that pays homage to the pioneers of country music and strives to keep one of music's most enduring genres alive.

Weaving its way through the vivid landscapes of Southwest Virginia, The Crooked Road highlights the cultural significance of the area's music venues, museums, festivals, and historic sites. The trail has become a cherished route for music enthusiasts, history buffs, and curious travelers, offering a unique journey through the roots of American musical traditions — one that we were eager to explore.

*Their whole life story
was right in front of us.*



The roads leading to Hiltons took us to the Carter Family Fold, where the enduring influence of the "First Family of Country Music" has been showcased for 50 years. Mother Maybelle, A.P., and Sara Carter's life and legacy are on display every week for their Saturday night concerts, where we flatfoot danced to the classic country and bluegrass music of yesterday performed by today's artists. Rita Forrester, granddaughter of A.P. and Sara Carter and executive director of the Fold, gave us a tour of the venue that features large collections of Carter Family memorabilia, including various stage outfits, awards, and dozens of handwritten letters, each with its own unique story. We couldn't believe the things we were seeing. Their whole life story was right in front of us. Rita told us she was just thankful it was all there for us to see.

We then made our way to Bristol, the city considered to be the birthplace of country music. In 1927, musicians traveled here to create the first country recordings known as the Bristol Sessions. The Smithsonian-affiliated Birthplace of Country Music Museum delves into the region's musical heritage with interactive exhibits, artifacts, and immersive experiences. Putting on headphones at one of the listening stations, I heard the original scratchy, unproduced 1927 recordings. There was something raw and personal about these songs that took me back to those early days where this music came from and its far-reaching impact on American culture.

HANNAH ARMSTRONG



THE BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY
MUSIC MUSEUM
Bristol

HANNAH ARMSTRONG



*the crowd began spilling
out into the streets*



Check out the
full story on
[Virginia.org](https://virginia.org)

We couldn't leave the Crooked Road without visiting Floyd and heading to the Floyd Country Store. For 40 years, this weekly Friday Night Jamboree turns the quaint general store into a rowdy night of entertainment. We saw people of all ages partake in traditional dances to authentic old-time and bluegrass music performances — and we joined in ourselves before the crowd began spilling out into the streets, which locals told us was a common occurrence.

There are several other music heritage spots along to explore and experience along the trail including the Ralph Stanley

Museum in Clintwood, the Lincoln Theatre in Marion that presents the monthly award-winning “Song of the Mountains” concert series, the yearly Old Fiddler’s Convention in Galax, and the Southwest Virginia Cultural Center and Marketplace in Abingdon. We needed more time to visit them all, but every stop along the trail offers a new and unique experience that any music lover will enjoy.

Exploring the unique sounds of The Crooked Road reminded us that even as the world changes, there are places here at home where music history continues to resonate and how much influence it has today.



*Me and the team
on the road!*



LET THE SOUNDTRACK LEAD

For generations, bluegrass and mountain music have connected friends and neighbors while preserving the lore and mystique of Virginia's dramatic Appalachian region. The sound and story along the 330 miles of The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, have created a one-of-a-kind cultural experience. With nearly 100 venues, festivals, and wayside exhibits, you too can experience one of the richest music traditions in the world.

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cultural access and music history
along The Crooked Road music trail.



**VIRGINIA IS FOR
MUSIC LOVERS**



Finding *Magic* in Family Travel

BY MEGAN ARIAIL, WEST END MOM

@thewestendmom

The joy of feeling the ocean. The magic of seeing a wild pony. The thrill of sledding in the summer. All of these extraordinary experiences are right here in Virginia, less than four hours away from our home in Richmond. I grew up learning about and seeing these places with my parents and sister, and now I have the privilege of sharing these magical spaces with my own children.

As a mother, my children inspire every aspect of my life, but most significantly our family travel. My most vivid and magical childhood memories are from my family vacations, and I want to create the same magical memories for my children. Can we hike by a river? Can we see new animals? Can we watch

the sunset? For us, our travel and experiences help us deepen our family relationships and teach our children about our beautiful state.

In our busy world, we're rarely able to fully disconnect from the outside noise and focus on each other. But when we travel, it's different. We turn off notifications. We turn off distractions. This new habit has not only been refreshing for the grownups, but it's also been refreshing for our children. On our recent trip to Cape Charles, we took 7 a.m. beach walks, flew kites in the ocean, and watched the sunset every day. There were no text messages dinging to interrupt our walks. No quick email responses breaking up our kite flying. No calls to take away from our present conversation.

Virginia Bucket List for Families:

- 1. Best Beach for Children:**
Cape Charles Town Beach
- 2. Best Hidden Thrill:**
Liberty Mountain SnowFlex
- 3. Best Luxury Resort:**
The Homestead Resort
- 4. Best Festival:** *River Rock*
- 5. Best Wildlife:**
Chincoteague Island

This simple life gave us time to talk with our children – What did they see? What did they love? We got to know our four-year-old and five-year-old in a new way. As we drove home over the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, my husband and I were filled with joy recollecting the new memories we created as a family.

I'm also noticing my children see everything and remember experiences from each trip. Children are naturally curious, and when they get to experience something new, they soak it in like a sponge.

Hiking helps them learn about geography and nature, climbing a tree top adventure course helps them see their own physical strength, and

fishing by the river helps them learn about the food chain and ecosystem.

As we revisit these places each year, I'm able to see their growth. We've visited Tuckahoe Creek Park so many times that my children understand this creek flows into the James River. My children, who are not yet six years old, understand how tributaries, like creeks and rivers, flow into the Chesapeake Bay to the Atlantic Ocean!

And the more we travel, the more our travel decisions become collaborative. When they were very little, I looked for places I knew they would love. Now, my children are recalling those memories and asking: Can we find more hermit crabs? Can we see wild ponies? Can we go sledding before school starts? These curiosities inspire them to learn more about each location we experience together.

...we took 7 a.m.
beach walks,
flew kites in
the ocean, and
watched the
sunset every day.

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Chincoteague

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