



# A Marvelous Coastal Corral

A Century of Wild Pony Preservation

BY PATRICIA KEPPEL ANDERSON

**S**itting with my toes buried in the cool sand and admiring a sky streaked in brilliant hues of orange and pink, I listen to the waves break rhythmically on the shoreline. As the sun rises over the horizon, excitement begins to build amongst the few hundred people that woke well before dawn to witness a spectacular sight. This is no ordinary beach vacation, but the kickoff to one of Virginia's most unique experiences — the Chincoteague Pony Swim.

This annual event funds the care and protection for wild ponies that roam the marshes and maritime forests of the Eastern Shore. The animals gained fame following the 1947 children's novel "Misty of Chincoteague" (and the 1961 movie of the same title), but

the wild ponies have inhabited the area for centuries; historians theorize that the ponies are descendants of Spanish mustangs washed ashore after a catastrophic shipwreck.

Established in 1925, the Pony Swim was organized by the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company to solve several emerging problems; a small-town budget spread too thinly, an exponentially-increasing pony population, and the protection of local habitats for rare and endangered species.

This weeklong event includes the sunrise beach walk, a nightly carnival, and a raffle to win your own Chincoteague pony, but the signature event — the Pony Swim — is the biggest draw for spectators.

Read the full story



KYLE MATTHEW



Hours before the swim is scheduled to begin (the Coast Guard makes the ultimate call for when to start based off the tides), I join the media crews on the dock located at the end of the appropriately-named Pony Swim Lane. Despite high water levels from a week of rainy conditions, thousands of people stand along the marshy shores, some knee-deep in mud and missing shoes from their trek through the challenging terrain. The anticipation is palpable, and I witness a comradery of sorts among the crowd; instead of grumbling about the less-than-ideal weather, attendees give each other a hand to cross the swamplike areas of the shore, laughing together about missing footwear and reminiscing on pony swims past.

Finally, red smoke begins to rise over the water — the signal for the start of the swim — and 20 minutes later, I spot the first ponies as they come into view. Only their heads break the surface of the water, and the moving herd is surrounded by Saltwater Cowboys atop their own horses. These local men and women spend years learning the skill of corraling swimming ponies, often following in the footsteps of their parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents.

The crowd waits for hours for the swim to begin, but the actual crossing only takes about five minutes. As the herd reaches the shore, the announcer notes the first foal to swim to safety and crowns him or her (her in the case of the 2024 swim) King or Queen Neptune. This foal is raffled off to one lucky winner at the end of the carnival.

HANNAH ARMSTRONG / AXLE LAFERRIERE / HANNAH ARMSTRONG



HANNAH ARMSTRONG



The ponies rest for about an hour, then the journey continues toward the fairgrounds in a parade through downtown Chincoteague. Residents and visitors line the streets to get a closer look at the beautiful wild creatures (at one point, a pony escapes the guard of the Saltwater Cowboys to trot casually into a backyard). Eventually, the ponies are all safely transported to the fenced fields of the fairgrounds, where they are examined, given veterinary care when necessary, and vaccinated against illnesses.

The cowboys mark 150 of the ponies to return to the wild, which is the maximum number allowed through the national wildlife refuge's permit, and choose foals that will be sold during the auction the following day. The ponies are coveted by equestrian enthusiasts from around the country, and prize ponies, such as descendants of Misty, sell for tens of thousands of dollars. Not only do these sales maintain the legally-allowed wild pony population, but the auction also helps fund the herd's veterinary care throughout the rest of the year.

The entire week is a blur of pony mania; I love every minute of the action, and am eagerly anticipating the magic of next year. While this swim was an incredible experience, 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the Chincoteague Pony Swim, and undoubtedly this centennial celebration will be one for the books.

by Patricia  
Keppel Anderson



# Loves, Legends, & Lore

A Century of Coastal Opulence



HANNAH ARMSTRONG / COURTESY OF CAVALIER HOTEL

THE HISTORIC CAVALIER HOTEL  
& BEACH CLUB  
Virginia Beach

**T**he Roaring Twenties were an era of wide economic disparities and wild social changes in response to Prohibition, and nowhere exemplified these trends better than Virginia Beach's Historic Cavalier Hotel. Officially opened in 1927, the original resort spanned 350 acres along the waterfront and included a 290-acre golf course, a luxurious indoor swimming pool filled with filtered sea water, a private train depot with direct routes from America's biggest cities, and the opulent Beach Club.

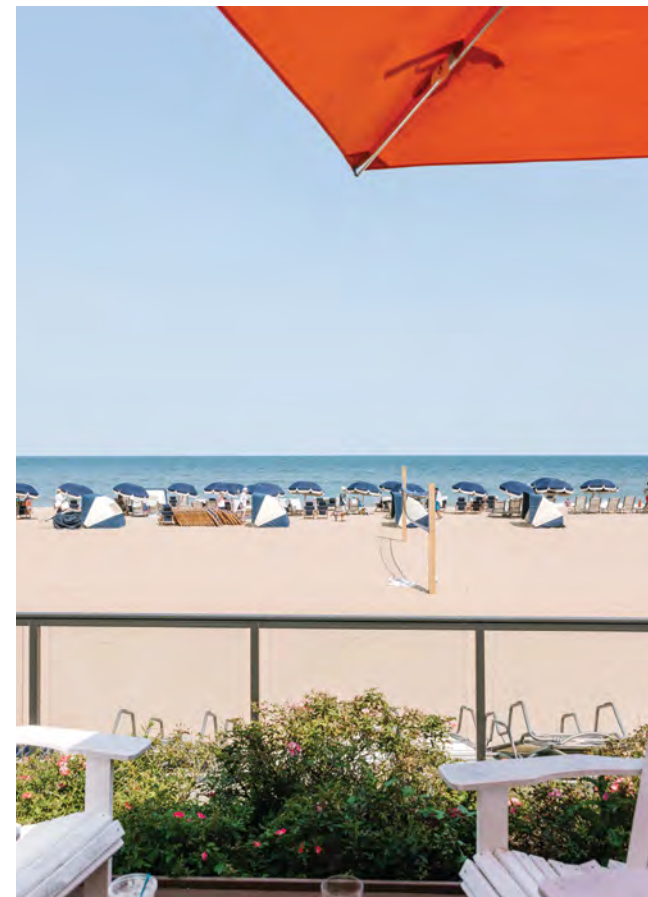
During the peak of Big Band music, this oceanfront club brought the biggest performers, from Frank Sinatra to Ella Fitzgerald. Over the decades, the historic hotel also attracted the rich and famous; F. Scott Fitzgerald was allegedly inspired to write "The Great Gatsby" after his visit, and 10 U.S. presidents stayed here over the 20th century.

Today, the renovated Cavalier is back to drawing huge celebrity guests. Although it has only been open since 2018, the hotel has already hosted stars such as Pharrell, Jimmy Buffett, Pusha T, and Gwen Stefani. With celebrities returning to the historic luxury hotel, it's safe to say that this decade is yet another booming "Roaring Twenties" for the Historic Cavalier Hotel & Beach Club.



Read the  
full story

HANNAH ARMSTRONG / SAM DEAN / SARAH ANN ATKINS



# Kid-Approved Adventures

by *Yatzuri Thomas*

@kidsquarantineandme

THE PRESIDENTS HEADS  
Williamsburg



**A**s we set off on our road trip to Williamsburg, my family and I were bursting with excitement. The two-hour drive from our home in Northern Virginia flew by as we chatted about our plans and what each of us was most looking forward to. My kids, Mia and Myles, were practically bouncing with anticipation.

We're the Thomas family, a local-loving clan who discovered the joy of exploring

our own backyard during the pandemic. Our Instagram handle, @kidsquarantineandme, was born out of a desire to showcase the beauty of Virginia and help families navigate the outdoors safely. With almost every town in Virginia under our belt, we've become experts in uncovering the state's hidden gems — from secret hiking spots to unique attractions and activities. Our kids have grown up on these adventures, learning valuable lessons about resilience, curiosity, and

**"If eerie and beautiful sights captivate you, don't miss this! It's a surreal blend of art and history."**

—YATZURI THOMAS

**"I had to try on the soldier outfits — they were surprisingly heavy, but I still felt like a cool Colonial soldier!"**

—MIA THOMAS

community. Through our experiences, they've developed a deeper appreciation for nature, history, and the importance of spending quality time together. Travel has taught them to be open-minded, adaptable, and empathetic.

When it came time to plan our latest adventure, we offered our kids a choice of destinations — and they unanimously chose Williamsburg! They couldn't wait to dive into the city's rich history, thrilling attractions, and quirky charm.

This adventure was all about sharing experiences and making memories together. The kids wanted to explore history, have fun, and maybe even stumble upon something unusual. And boy, did we find it!

From the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown to the quirky Presidents Heads, our journey was filled with laughter, curiosity, and wonder. Here's a glimpse into our travels, told through my kids' eyes, whose enthusiasm and curiosity made every stop unforgettable.



JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT  
Jamestown



JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT  
Jamestown

**"Whoa, I got to go on a REAL ship! It was so much fun, I felt like a pirate!"**

—MYLES THOMAS

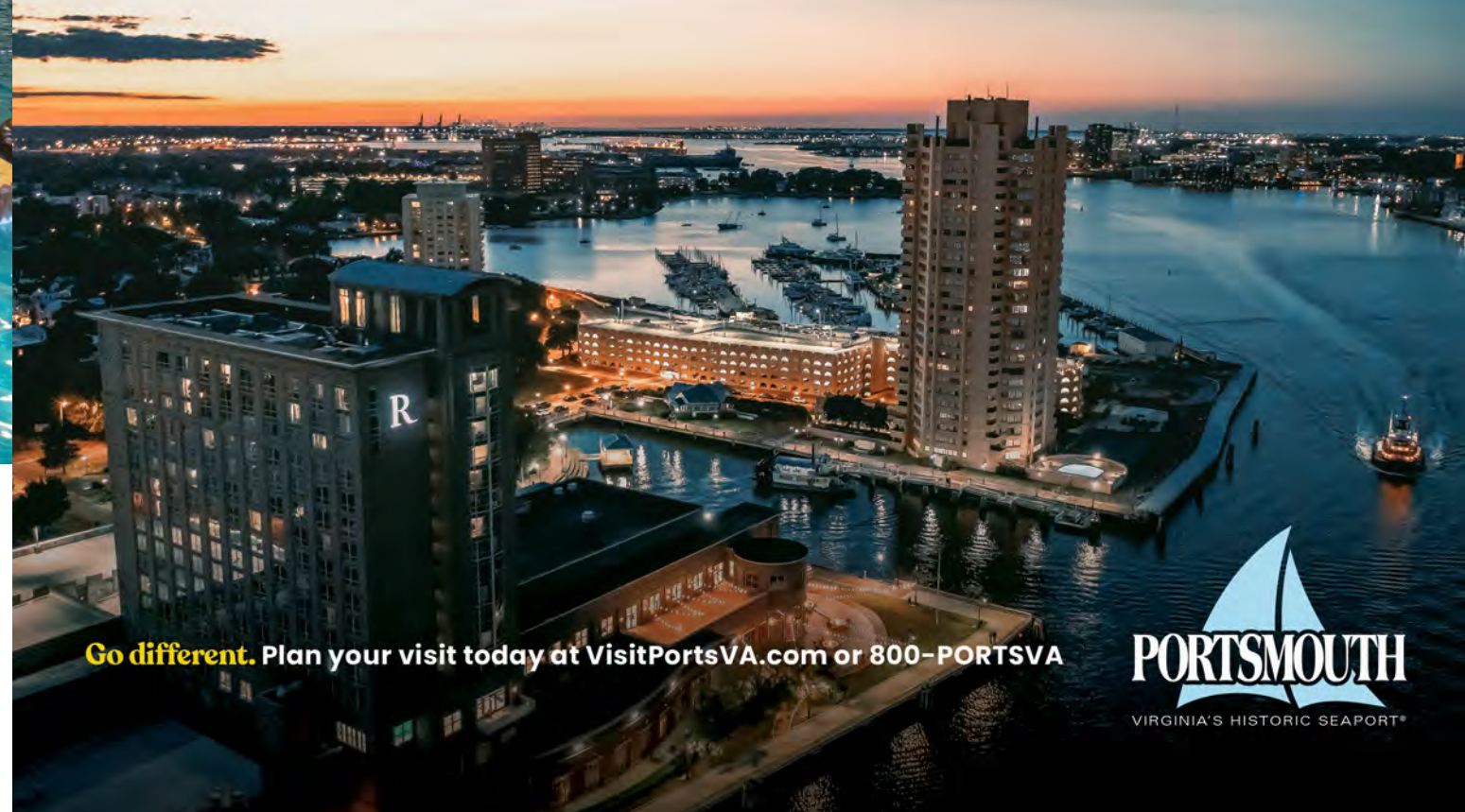


**"Great Wolf Lodge never misses! The water rides are my absolute favorite!"**

—MIA THOMAS

**A Vegas-style casino, kayaking, concerts and coffee shops. Golfing and go karting, nature parks and nightlife. Ferry rides, farmers markets, festivals, fishing, and tons of museums – even one just for kids. Wining and dining with water views. History tours and hiking trails. Shopping, ship watching and much more.**

THERE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT. FOR EVERYONE.



**Go different.** Plan your visit today at [VisitPortsVA.com](http://VisitPortsVA.com) or 800-PORTSVA



# Virginia's Wine Journey

BY MATT HARMON

**I**n the world of wine, Virginia has been making a name for itself as one of the best in the world. The Monticello Wine Trail was heralded as "Wine Region of the Year" by Wine Enthusiast in 2023, beating out some of the more well-known regions of wine in France and New Zealand, among others.

But this acclaim can often seem overwhelming to the average wine drinker. Learning about wine feels like a learning experience rather than just pure

enjoyment for some people.

"Which wine do I pair with this?"

"Am I getting the right notes?"

"What are tannins?"

Questions like these led me to start my own wine business, Harmony Wine, after being laid off during the pandemic. I jumped into the industry to introduce wine in a new light, working hand in hand with many successful wineries in this region and expanding my own knowledge of wine in the process. My goal was to make wine more approachable and

exciting for consumers through special events, introducing a line of canned wines, and sharing the magic of the settings in which wine is enjoyed.

In addition to tastings and tours, many Virginia wineries are now offering unique experiences to bring in new audiences, allowing visitors to sample some of the best Virginia wines in a fresh and interesting way!

King Family Vineyards hosts its Roseland Polo event every Sunday from Memorial Day weekend until October. Reserve a spot and bring a tent, the family, and snacks as a wine cart makes its rounds. This approach brings in people of every age to enjoy everything good wine should be about — family, friends, and good times! Their Crose wine is a particular favorite, as the rosé embodies the spirit of wine, horses, friends, and family on a warm summer afternoon.

Veritas Vineyards & Winery offers vineyard tours on horseback, providing a leisurely ride through the grapes with an awe-inspiring backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the summer, the winery's Starry Nights series features live performances, local food truck fare, and delicious Veritas wines throughout the day and into the evening. Veritas also hosts a supper series featuring chefs from across the country.



MATT HARMON AT PIPPIN HILL FARM & VINEYARDS  
North Garden



HANNAH ARMSTRONG

HANNAH ARMSTRONG



HANNAH ARMSTRONG

I recently attended one such open-fire dinner led by Chef Sarah Rennie, a private chef who collaborated with Veritas. The experience was incredible, to say the least — each course was paired with an amazing wine selection that brought out the flavors of the dish. As the fireflies and hanging lights blended together, the strawberry full moon peeked over the Blue Ridge Mountains, creating an unforgettable ambiance.

If you love cooking, Pippin Hill Farm's cooking class experience is a must. Greeted with a glass of wine, you'll take in the beautiful backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains and roll up your sleeves under the guidance of Pippin Hill Head Chef Tori Cosner. She will take you on a tour of the garden, where you'll gather fresh ingredients, and then it's off to the kitchen to prep and cook the food (and, of course, drink some marvelous wine). Once we did our part, it was time to let the professionals do their magic and cook the rest of the meal. With a family-style dinner and wine being poured, the evening was filled with laughs, memories, good food, and great wine.

Boxwood Winery offers the very interesting experience of sitting in a wine cave built into a hillside, seemingly underground, surrounded by aging wine barrels. This tasting experience includes a small cheese board and wines to pair. Make sure to bring a jacket as the temperature in the wine cave is a cool 55 degrees.

This new approach of pairing Virginia wines with one-of-a-kind experiences is drawing travelers from all over the world, and the special events scene has also been bringing in new demographics to Virginia wineries. Events like Daze of Rosé, Two Up Wine Down, and The Neptune Wine Festival have broadened the idea of what wine drinkers look like and how they drink, making it clear that wine is for everyone! Both events take place in Charlottesville, a mountain city along the Monticello Wine Trail. Daze of Rosé kicks off the spring season and includes the best rosé Virginia has to offer, with attendees deciding on the

CHAD WILLIAMS / HANNAH ARMSTRONG



BOXWOOD WINERY  
Middleburg



PIPPIN HILL FARM & VINEYARDS  
North Garden

favorite. Two Up Wine Down takes place in October during Virginia Wine Month, and highlights Black and brown wine lovers and those in the industry doing great things for the wine community. The Neptune Wine Festival in Virginia Beach takes place every year at the end of May with all the food and wine that you can eat and drink (not to mention, it's at the beach!).

The Virginia wine scene has a lot to offer, and there are so many great things about this blooming and booming industry that can't be ignored. From wine shops like Penny's in Richmond to brunch at CrossKeys on a late Sunday morning, there is no shortage of ways to experience Virginia wine. Special events? We've

got them. Weekend wine tours? Yup! Date night activities? Practically every night of the year at a winery near you.

I love the industry of wine for many reasons, but the biggest one is that there is something for everyone; beginners and experienced wine lovers alike have widespread opportunities to enjoy local Virginia wine.

When it comes to a good wine experience, the most important factors are good company and memorable experiences. Virginia's wine events are inclusive and welcoming, reflecting a booming local wine scene. It's safe to say that it's only getting better, and will open up the door for even more wine lovers.





# TASTE VIRGINIA



With 300+ wineries and ten distinct regions spanning the state, Virginia has something for everyone. Embark on your next Virginia Wine adventure today.

[virginiawine.org](http://virginiawine.org)



Find one near you!

CLARKSVILLE  
Clarksville



## VIRGINIA'S LOVEWORKS

Did you know that there are more than **370 LOVEworks** found in every corner in the Commonwealth? These themed LOVE signs come in all shapes and sizes, each one unique to the communities and towns they are found in.

### LOVEwork Murals

Sage Bird Ciderworks  
Under the Stars Farm  
Kyra Aulani  
Garrett's Bistro and Spirits

### Waterfront LOVEworks

Clarksville  
Chincoteague chairs  
Colonial Beach

### Farm LOVEworks

Messick's Farm Market  
Wegmeyer Farm  
Montfair Resort Farm  
Liberty Mills

DREW MORRIS / CHRIS MILITZER / PATRICIA HAYS



COLONIAL BEACH  
Colonial Beach



SOUTHERN GAP  
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES  
Grundy

# Travel by Trail



**V**irginia is one of the most diverse states in the country when it comes to travel opportunities. You'll discover

mountains and beaches, urban centers and rural farmland, musical performances of every imaginable genre, and a bevy of outdoor experiences such as hiking, kayaking, and mountain biking.

Whatever you're looking for, the best way to experience Virginia's bountiful offerings is to set out on a carefully curated themed trail.

For history lovers, Virginia's Heritage Trails provide an immersive exploration that spans more than 400 years. Wander through historic sites and landmarks that tell tales of Virginia's pivotal role in American history, from the victories of the American Revolution to the struggles of equality during Civil Rights.

For travelers eager to taste the finer things in life, Virginia's Wine Trails promise a world-class journey through the vines.

And for nature enthusiasts, hiking trails wind through lush forests and end with scenic vistas affording breathtaking views that have inspired poets and musicians throughout the centuries.

So find your trail and map out your next journey through Virginia, where you'll explore, indulge, and create lasting memories along the way.

RACHEL STEVENS

JOEL MULBAH / SAM DEAN

## FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL

Agriculture tourism trail through the Shenandoah Valley that includes pick-your-own farms, farm-to-table restaurants, wineries and breweries, and farm tours.

**Don't Miss:** Hike with your own alpaca at Point of View Alpaca Farm.

## VIEWS & BREWS

An 11-mile e-bike tour of Roanoke with stops at local breweries. The trail goes along the Roanoke River Greenway and up Mill Mountain for incredible views overlooking the downtown area.

**Don't Miss:** Grab a bite to-go at Crystal Spring Grocery, an adorable gourmet grocery along the route.

BIG LICK BREWING COMPANY  
Roanoke



### CIVIL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION HERITAGE TRAIL

Take this self-guided driving tour through Southern Virginia to trace the historic steps of teachers, students, and politicians that fought for equality in education.

**Don't Miss:** Tour the Robert Russa Moton Museum, the site where the pivotal case of *Brown v. Board of Education* began.

### VIRGINIA OYSTER TRAIL

A trail centered along the Chesapeake Bay that showcases eight distinct oyster regions and the culinary delicacy harvested from Virginia's waters.

**Don't Miss:** Visit an oyster farm, pull up oyster cages, and learn how to grill your catch during the Chesapeake Gold oyster tour at the Tides Inn.

### RICHMOND MIMOSA TRAIL

Comprised of Richmond restaurants that feature traditional mimosas, mimosa flights, and fun flavors like pineapple and pomegranate.

**Don't Miss:** Play a round of miniature golf while you sip mimosas at Hotel Greene, an eccentrically-decorated hotel putt-putt course.



VIRGINIA CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL  
AT CAPITOL SQUARE  
Richmond



HAZY MOUNTAIN  
VINEYARDS & BREWERY  
Affton

### MONTICELLO WINE TRAIL

Named "Wine Region of the Year" in 2023 by Wine Enthusiast, the Monticello Wine Trail is made up of more than 40 award-winning wineries around the Charlottesville region.

**Don't Miss:** Sample authentic Northern Italian cuisine with world-class wines at Barboursville Vineyards' Palladio Restaurant.

### APPALACHIAN TRAIL

With more miles than any other state, Virginia's section of the Appalachian Trail winds through 544 miles of mostly mountainous terrain. This hiker's paradise attracts thru-hikers, section hikers, and single trail travelers to see some of the most stunning landscapes in the world.

**Don't Miss:** Take in awe-inspiring view from McAfee Knob, one of the most photographed locations on the Appalachian Trail.

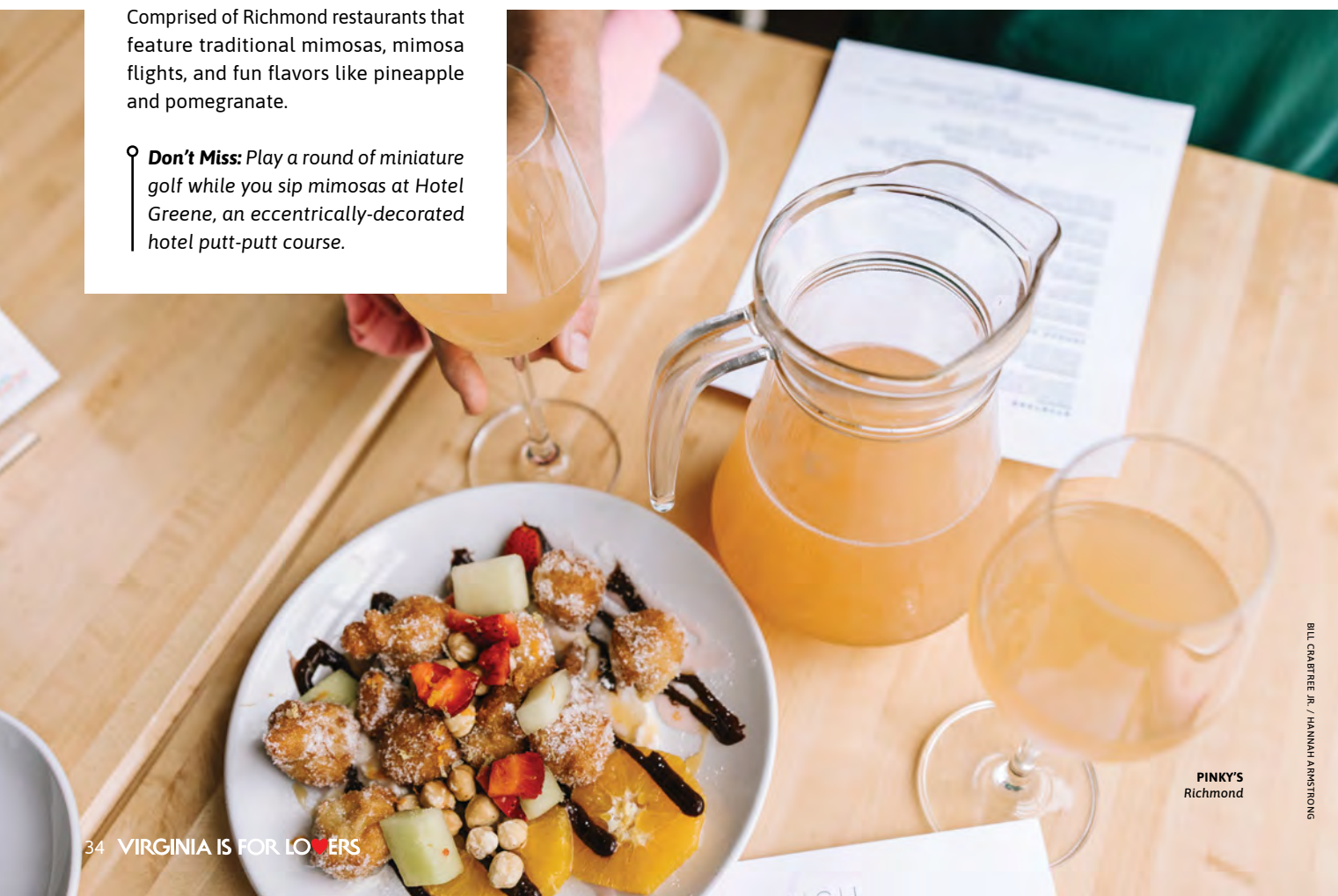


Check out this  
bonus trail!

CHAD WILLIAMS / ALI ZAMAN



TIMBER HOLLOW OVERLOOK  
Page County



PINKY'S  
Richmond

BILL CHABRETE JR. / HANNAH ARMSTRONG

VIRGINIA SCENIC RAILWAY  
Staunton



# Love Renewed

All Aboard for Gorgeous Views From Virginia's Historic Railway

BY PATRICIA KEPPEL ANDERSON

**S**taunton is one of the oldest cities west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, with the first settlers arriving in the 1720s. But it wasn't until the late 1800s and the establishment of the Virginia Central Railroad that Staunton became a thriving hub for commerce. From the 1870s to the 1920s, the town saw a drastic boom in population, investment, and construction — and the railroad was at the forefront of it all.

While train travel became less popular with the advent of airlines, the joy of traveling by rail can still be felt in Staunton. The Virginia Scenic Railway offers two regular routes—one heading west through the Shenandoah Valley, traversing George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, and the other winding east and passing through the Blue Ridge Tunnel. Each experience takes place on historic trains originally built in the mid-1900s and renovated with modern amenities. Your ticket includes a delicious meal with dessert and unlimited non-alcoholic drinks in a souvenir glass.

Take a ride on one of these scenic train adventures to travel back in time to the golden age of railroads in Staunton, Virginia.



See it in action!

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