

Wine and Wagyu Adventures in Virginia Wine Country



On September 28th there were 17 UAA members who climbed aboard our rented mini-bus and headed out to Fauquier County. Our travelers included Georgia Sambunaris, Frank and Antoinette Almaguer (and Chico!), Margot Ellis, Margaret Neuse, Sharon Pauling, Karen Freeman, Dean and Joy Salpini, Carol Peasley, Denise Rollins, Laura Slobey, Greg Wittala, Cheryl Anderson, Dawn Liberi, Melissa Williams and Gail Spence.

The foliage was glorious and the company in high spirits as we made our way to Blue Valley Winery, one of Virginia's largest wineries. There on the patio, we looked over land owned in 1789 by the fourth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Marshall.



We were lucky to have Yanni, the Greek-American owner, and his wife, Helen, give us a tour of the wine making process and explain how their family had established this delightful establishment.

We sampled 6 different wines, munched on cheese and fruit, argued over our favorites and then purchased a few which we loaded into our bus and got back on the road. Winding down the country roads, where there are now several wineries, antique shops, B&Bs and historic sites, we headed to our next stop – 3 Fox Vineyard and Brewery. They had just completed their harvest and we were lucky to taste the newly released 2022 varieties along with a few of the older lines. We were led through a sampling of 6 wines including their fabulous sparkling rose and enjoyed a lunch of wood-fired pizza, BBQ wings and salads made fresh on site.



We enjoyed the camaraderie of our group and the lovely wines presented. Virginia has excellent, award-winning wines that we should enjoy in the area. Fauquier County really is up and coming and the spirit of entrepreneurship is palpable. Our final stop was Ovoka, a locally woman-owned/operated Historic Farm where they and their sons raise Ovoka Heritage F-1 and Full Blood Wagyu cattle to provide the most tender, delicious Wagyu beef at every price point. Ovoka is the only Wagyu farm in Virginia.

Wagyu beef is one of the most expensive meats in the world. It features rich marbling, meaning that streaks of fat exist within the red meat, making it tenderer and moister while adding flavor. Our group bought every type of Wagyu today, from hamburgers to NY strip steak to my favorite, Rib Eye and farm fresh eggs. Dawn Libiri “strip or sirloin” and Margot Ellis “hamburgers a must!”



Buoyed with our purchases we boarded our coach and headed back to northern Virginia laughing and comparing observations, ideas and addresses. This was the second of a self-pay option for adventure and it was a notable success. Many thanks to all of the work put into this by Sharon Pauling, Margot Ellis and Karen Freeman and even greater thanks to all who participated in this great adventure!



Stand by, we are working on the schedule for next year!

