

# WASHINGTON

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# SOUND RIVERS OYSTER ROAST

PHOTOS BY VAIL STEWART RUMLEY

On Nov. 16, Sound Rivers celebrated its annual Oyster Roast on the grounds of, and inside, the Washington Civic Center. The event has been a major fundraiser for the environmental nonprofit for the past 37 years. Guests are treated to live music, craft beer, a silent auction and all-you-can-eat steamed oysters served under the stars — all to raise funds to monitor and protect the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers, from the Piedmont to the Pamlico Sound. For more information about Sound Rivers, visit [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org).



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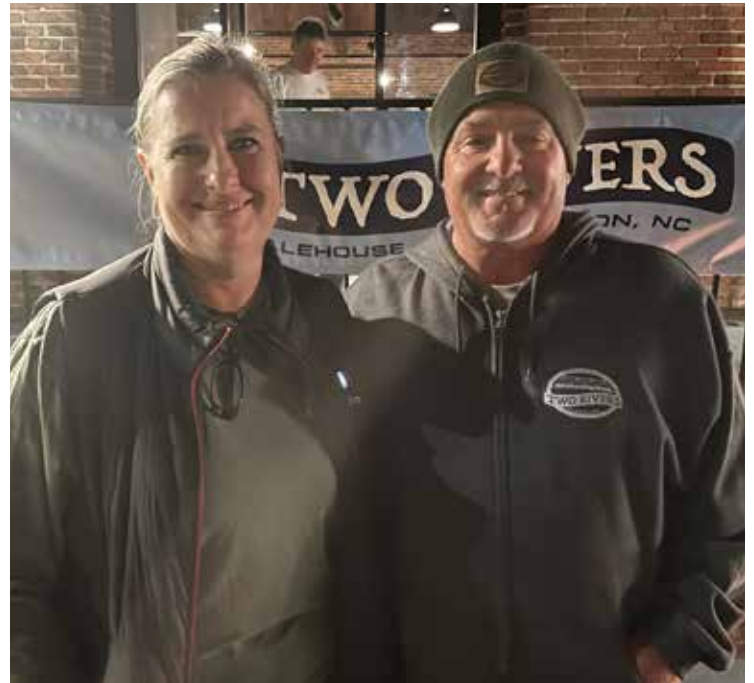


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# Farming Pungo Waters

**Belhaven Oyster Company: A hobby turned thriving business on the Pungo**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY **HOLLY JACKSON**

**O**n a frigid, early Saturday morning in December, not long after the sun reached its summit in the sky, Nathan Van Nortwick hops out of his boat and into the Pungo River. Trudging through water and mud, he checks 40 rows of 50 bags containing either full-size oysters or spat. Spat are young oysters that have attached themselves to a surface to form a shell.

It doesn't sound like an ideal boat day — temperatures hover around 27 degrees, it's windy, and he has to jump in and out of water that's up to his waist, but Van Nortwick doesn't seem to mind. His sole focus is the health and growth of the oysters he planted a year ago.

Oyster farming, he has learned, requires advanced planning, “You're always

thinking 12 months ahead,” he said. “Even around now, when I'm harvesting, I'm thinking about what I'm going to plant next year, and how many more bags I need to buy. You're basing this year's market info on last year, but also what it is going to be 12 months from now.”

Preparations begin a year in advance, because farm-raised oysters typically need between 12-18 months to grow. That may sound like a long time, but wild oysters typically take three years to reach maturity or about two-and-a-half to three inches.

Van Nortwick's oysters, however, need between 12 and 18 months to grow to market size. As soon as they are market size, he sells them.

For now, Van Nortwick is the only employee of his farm — Belhaven Oyster Company. He plants the oysters, harvests



**Oyster farming requires a year of careful planning. Van Nortwick is always thinking about how many bags of spat he will need to reach next year's harvest goals.**





**Belhaven Oyster Co. spans more than two acres in the Pungo River. Van Nortwick wanted to honor his hometown when naming the oyster farm.**

them, sells them and delivers them to local restaurants like Slammin' Sammy's Oyster Bar in Washington and several restaurants in Raleigh.

"It's just me, and everybody says I'm crazy," Van Nortwick said. "It started as a hobby, really, just to see, something different..." He began farming in 2020 with 50,000 oyster seeds. His latest crop had five times that amount growing on more than two acres on the Pungo River.

In total, Van Nortwick is tending to an estimated 600,000 oysters - that's the 250,000 oysters from last year and a batch of 400,000 he planted earlier this year.

"By this time next year, I'm certain I'll have to have help or I'll go crazy," he added.

As a teenager, Van Nortwick traversed the Pungo fishing for blue crabs. A student at Northside High School, he planned to be a crabber after graduation in 2009. However, the

instability between seasons — one year being great, but the next being terrible — made him reconsider.

"My first year was terrible, and I'm glad it was," Van Nortwick said. At 17 years old, he spent a summer crabbing. "It was bad. We weren't making any money," he said. He and his brother made \$20 in one week.

Still interested in commercial fishing, Van Nortwick wanted to find a similar job, close to the water, that he could do on his days off from work as a paramedic. That's when he saw a video on YouTube about oyster farming. He met other farmers in North Carolina to learn about the trade and why they chose to do it. Their enthusiasm persuaded him to continue exploring the idea of starting an oyster farm in Belhaven.

Starting in 2018, Van Nortwick worked to get a lease from the North Carolina

Department of Environmental Quality to farm over two acres of the Pungo River. After getting the lease, it was time to purchase the first batch of oyster seeds.

What happened next is what he called an "expensive lesson." Van Nortwick explained that 50,000 oyster seeds are divided into groups of 250 then placed into bags to grow from about six millimeters to three inches. As they continue to grow, they are divided further into additional bags.

Van Nortwick, on his first batch, decided to put 300 seeds per bag then leave them alone for one year.

"It was a cold winter, they weren't low enough in the water and they all died," he said. "So my first 12 months I didn't have a single oyster sale." He tried again with a new batch of seeds but they died, too. On his third attempt, the oysters lived and he began selling







**Nathan Van Nortwick carries bags of young oysters that he will inspect for size and shape.**

bushels as Belhaven Oyster Company.

The naming of his farm was probably the easiest decision he's faced in the last two years. A Belhaven native who loves his hometown, Van Nortwick wanted to honor the area with the name of his company.

"I want to keep it as local as I can," he said.

In talking about why he loves Belhaven, he said, "I just love the comfort of knowing everybody, seeing everybody. It's just the small town feel."

Not only is Van Nortwick honoring his hometown with the name of his company, but his oyster farm is helping the environment by improving the water quality of the river.

Excess nutrient runoff from the land that enters coastal waters causes an increase in the number of algae which creates environmental problems, but oysters feed

off of algae. Farm-raised oysters eat the algae until they are harvested. Farmers then plant another batch of oysters thereby reducing the presence of algae and improving overall water quality, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration explains. Adult oysters alone can filter out 50 gallons of water per day and clusters of them create reefs that provide shelter to other organisms and act as natural barriers that combat flooding and erosion.

By starting Belhaven Oyster Company, Van Nortwick has turned oyster farming into a profitable hobby that in the future could add jobs to the area while improving the water quality of the Pungo River. In addition, restaurant patrons locally and in Raleigh can enjoy homegrown oysters.

Not bad for a hard day's work on a freezing December morning.





GET OUTSIDE

# RACING TOWARD GREATNESS





Shannon Jarvis is a mother, successful assistant district attorney and quite the accomplished runner.

## Inside the mind of ultra runner Shannon Jarvis

STORY BY **JASON O. BOYD** PHOTOS SUBMITTED

**S**hannon Jarvis has been pushing herself to greater things nearly all her life.

She became a lawyer and has been working at the district attorney's office in Washington for six years. She has a happy family with children and a busy lifestyle when not at work.

She left a broken home while living on Kelly Road in Bath at age 16, graduated from Northside High School in December of 2001 and left for Florida soon after to pursue one of her law degrees on her own.

One of the things that has kept her going all these years is another love she developed. She's become a runner ... a very successful one at that.

It's that running bug that has been part of the spark that has helped her reach incredible heights and accomplishments in her career. That includes two big feats: finishing a 100-mile race and taking part in an annual 24-hour event.

"I didn't really come from a very lavish family, like I grew up in a trailer here in Beaufort County, my family had a lot of substance abuse problems and domestic violence and things like that," Jarvis said. "Those things also take a lot of, like kind of mental grit, you know, to kind of persevere above substance abuse and domestic violence and things like that, and then also put yourself through school without any money. So I did all of that and I guess, you know, maybe you call me an overachiever of some sort, but I think some of the drive to do these types of races is like 'Do I have it in me, like can I push myself to a limit?'"

### Developing the passion

Jarvis' list of accomplishments is pretty remarkable.

She's been a lawyer for 15 years after graduating from Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville, Fla., with a Juris Doctorate. She also has an associate's degree in paralegal technology from Pitt Community College and has served on the paralegal board

there for around 20 years.

It wasn't long after she became a lawyer that she realized she had to change some of her ways. She jumped into CrossFit, a high-intensity fitness program that combines strength training, conditioning, and aerobic exercises. While she said she enjoyed that, she soon gravitated into running and literally took off.

"When I became a lawyer, my job became very sedentary," Jarvis said. "And so I started sitting, and then started gaining weight, and tried to figure out like 'Oh how can I not pack on all this weight or whatever,' and that kind of developed into trying to find some different exercises.

"I didn't really find something that I really liked until I hit running."

She said what began as 5K races turned into 10K and then half marathons and beyond. She jokes that peer pressure from her friends helped push her to take on bigger races. When she found success there, she kept going.

"You know they're like, 'I'm signing up for this race, you should come,' and you say 'OK,' and then you sign up," Jarvis said. "So we just had a little marathon that we did around Greenville in the neighborhood,"

"But we just did this little, you know, fake marathon because there wasn't a race to sign up for. And so that was my first marathon, was running around Greenville with my friends and once I did that, they were just like 'Oh you should run this.'"

She had a baby in 2021 but "really bounced back really quick because you know, I was just in such good shape, kind of going into that second pregnancy and then that's kind of just where all these ultra (runs) started," Jarvis said. "You know, my friends were like 'Oh you signed up for this one and this one and this one and this one,' and so that's kind of how I got into running ultras."

## The buildup

Ultra races are defined as those that go past the standard marathon distance of 26.2 miles like you'd see in the Boston Marathon or the New York Marathon. They cover distances of 31, 50 or 100 miles.

That's the next challenge Jarvis was ready to tackle.

"I was thinking from a standpoint of training and stuff ... I mean, I guess, you know, you can train a certain way, certain level for those types of races, but it seems like you really have to elevate your game or loop it 10 times to be able to do something like (ultras)," Jarvis said.

Something else that really helped her train for and be able to be fit enough for those ultra races was the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic gave her more free time to run — and she did a lot — because things like taking her kids to school and getting everyone ready for their day in the morning weren't necessary.

"My training went up because I went from running five miles a day to seven to 10 miles a day and multiply that times five or six days a week, you know, that jumped my mileage almost double every single week that I was able to run," Jarvis said. "So then it made these races so much easier because my mileage was already kind of high."

She ran a 24-hour race in Rockingham County at Henson Lake. The purpose of that race was to go as far as you can in 24 hours. She had friends help her along the way and found so much success that it became a race she continued to go back and participate in several times.

"It's nice too because if you're not planning on running a certain amount like you don't have to get a certain distance, you can just run whatever you want," Jarvis said. "They do give out a medal if you hit a 100K. So I would run that race and kind of use that as my motivation."

She hurt her knee at the



One of Shannon Jarvis' biggest accomplishments was taking part in the 24-hour race run annually in Rockingham County at Henson Lake.

Henson event and didn't run for a couple of months. That and her family's move from Greenville to a new home in Washington slowed her progress. Then, she met a new friend and got back into training again.

"I ended up meeting Cherie and she was like my running buddy savior," Jarvis said. "She was like, 'Yes, I wanna help you train for this race, and she was training for 50K, her first 50K.'"

### The ultra Ultra

Jarvis said all of these things, from injuries to moving and making new friends, led up to her first 100-mile ultra race at Umstead 100 at William B. Umstead State Park in Raleigh.

"You have to have like extreme mental toughness and, you know, as a prosecutor in court, a lot of people have said I'm a fairly aggressive type of personality, I'm a fairly blunt type of person," Jarvis said. "Whether in the courtroom or out, that's just kind of how I am."

She said running at Henson and the Umstead Marathon, a race just before the Umstead 100, helped her achieve the goal of the Umstead 100. The training, listening to podcasts from motivational speaker David Goggins and music eventually put her in the mindset that she could accomplish the tall task.

"Believing you can do it, you probably can do it, and I felt like that was kind of when I went into Umstead, I had this like, I can't even explain it," Jarvis said. "It's like almost like an intense mental focus when I went into that race that I was going to finish it and there was nothing that was going to stop me."

The mission is accomplished and she looks back on it with great satisfaction. She still enjoys running and time with her friends but thinks the ultra race was just that, the ultra. She even equated her accomplishment to a famous movie character.

She won't completely stop, but she's done for now.

"I haven't signed up for anything past December so far," Jarvis said. "I kind of, in a Forrest Gump way, you know, when he says, 'OK, I think I'm done now,' I kind of had that moment after the 100. Like, I think I'm done now,"

"Like, I checked this box and I just, you know, what else is there? But then I had signed up for all these races already. So I've run, since Umstead, I've run 250Ks, some halves, some other stuff."

So there's no really stopping her. But that's the way she is even in her job. Some things never change.



"It's like almost like an intense mental focus when I went into that race that I was going to finish it and there was nothing that was going to stop me," Shannon Jarvis said.

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# *Spend more time outdoors and tune in to nature*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY **CAPT. RICHARD ANDREWS**

**F**ishing is a wonderful sport. It's fun, exciting, and interesting. You can't ever really master it, so you are always learning and improving as an angler. Even the most accomplished anglers are only scratching the surface as to the understanding of the fish they chase and the marine environment in which they live.

Everyone who has fished enjoys the thrill of catching big fish, but it's not the catch or even the act of fishing that is the true appeal. Most Americans spend most of their lives in the confined comfort of their homes and conditioned spaces.

There are many days when the weather is not fit for any human to be outside; however, there are so many gorgeous days where I see no one outside. With a little adventurous spirit and some decent clothing, so much benefit can be achieved from being out under the sun. Being out in the elements and a little out of your comfort zone builds character, and most importantly, it can put you more in touch with your natural environment in a day where modern comforts and conveniences detach you from your natural surroundings.

On the Pamlico, we have many reasons to get out and tune in to nature. On the



Tar-Pamlico, the Neuse, and Roanoke Rivers, we have a spectacular winter striper fishery for those willing to brave the weather. Since they are northern fish and more adapted to cold water, the stripers tend to be more active during the winter months than the other species.

Speckled trout can be caught all winter, and they are far more active on warmer days during high pressure and clear weather. Cold fronts and arctic blasts creating cold nighttime temperatures tend to slow their metabolism and their feeding.

Winter fishing for trout can be tough during cooling trends in the weather and the water temperature, but if you play the weather and fish during the warming trends, the fish are more active.

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# GAME ON!

## Score big with super appetizers for Super Bowl

FOOD PREP, PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY BY VAIL STEWART RUMLEY



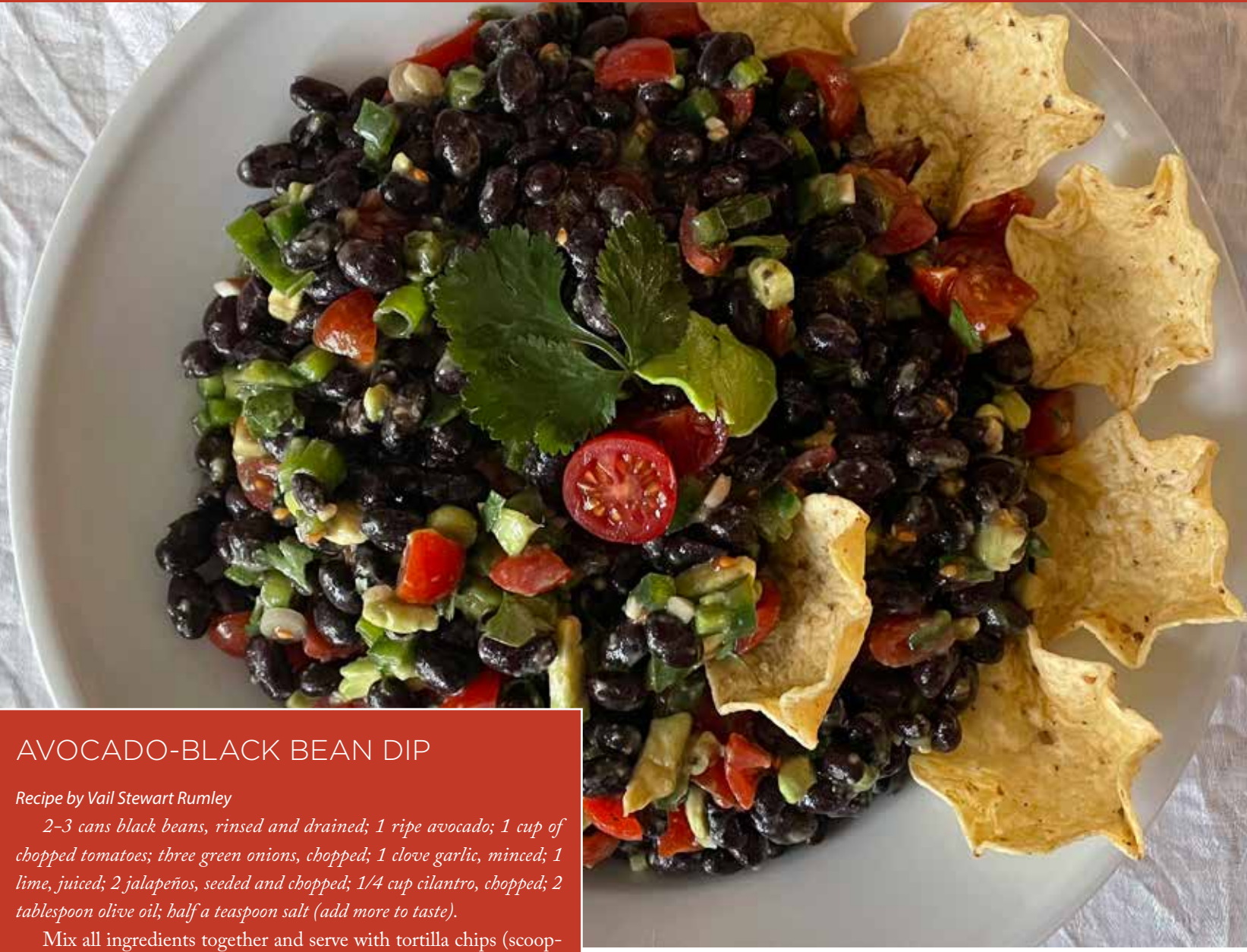
**B**aseball may be called America's national pastime, but come a certain Sunday in February, all eyes are glued to the televised gridiron game of the year.

Super Bowl Sunday is an ideal opportunity to gather friends and family, and with any gathering, food will follow. But not just any food—as the focus is on the play, on the score and even on the halftime show, there'll be no sit-down dinner. Instead, it's all about the appetizers and loading one's plate up like padded players on a fumbled ball.

Some of the best cooks, past and present, Beaufort County has to offer have shared some of the most appetizing appetizers to be found at any given gathering. From Faye Toler's Moist 'N' Tender Chicken Wings and Naomi Fulcher's Swedish Meatballs to Susan Watts' Olive Nut Spread and Ella Mae Smith's Hot Cheesy Beef Dip, there's plenty to appeal to football-frenzied appetites. Add in Catherine Partrick's Helen's Veggie Bites or an Avocado-Black Bean Dip for a fresh-veggie option that will score big with guests.

Step up your appetizer game this Game Day for the Super Bowl win — go (insert the name of your team here)!

Enjoy!



## AVOCADO-BLACK BEAN DIP

Recipe by Vail Stewart Rumley

*2-3 cans black beans, rinsed and drained; 1 ripe avocado; 1 cup of chopped tomatoes; three green onions, chopped; 1 clove garlic, minced; 1 lime, juiced; 2 jalapeños, seeded and chopped; 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped; 2 tablespoon olive oil; half a teaspoon salt (add more to taste).*

Mix all ingredients together and serve with tortilla chips (scoop-shaped works best). This recipe also doubles as a great side dish or lunchtime fare.

## SWEDISH MEATBALLS

Recipe by Naomi Fulcher

*"Asbury's Old Tyme, Good Time Recipes II," Asbury United Methodist Church, Washington*

*1 1/2 pounds ground beef; 1/2 cup bread crumbs; 1 egg, beaten; 1 1/4 teaspoon salt; 1/2 cup milk; 1 tablespoon chopped onions; 1 teaspoon sugar; 1/4 teaspoon pepper; 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg; 1/4 teaspoon ginger; 1/4 teaspoon allspice. Gravy: 2 tablespoons corn starch; 2 beef bouillon cubes; 1 cup cold water; seasoned salt to taste.*

Mix first eight ingredients well. Shape into balls (walnut size); place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes (can be frozen for later use). Prepare gravy; add meatballs; heat gently for 20 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

## MOIST 'N' TENDER WINGS

Recipe by Faye Toler

*"Scent from Heaven," New Smyrna OFWB Ladies Auxiliary, Blounts Creek*

*5 pounds uncooked chicken wing sections; 1 (12-ounce) bottle chili sauce; 1/4 cup lemon juice; 1/4 cup molasses; 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce; 6 garlic cloves, minced; 1 tablespoon chili powder; 1 tablespoon salsa; 1 teaspoon garlic; 3 drops hot pepper sauce.*

Place the chicken wing sections in a five-quart slow cooker. Combine the chili sauce, lemon juice, molasses, Worcestershire sauce, garlic cloves, chili powder, salsa, garlic salt and hot pepper sauce. Pour over the chicken wings and stir to coat. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours or until chicken is tender.



## OLIVE NUT SPREAD

Recipe by Susan Watts

*1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened; 1/2 cup mayonnaise; 1 cup chopped pecans; 1 jar olives (5.75 ounce), chopped.*

Reserve a little of the olive juice. Mix all ingredients together and serve with wheat crackers.



## HOT CHEESY BEEF DIP

Recipe by Ella Mae Smith

*"Cooking with Grace, Volume II," Bath Christian Church, Bath*

*2 1/2 ounces dried beef; 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened; 2 tablespoons milk; 1/4 cup green onion, finely chopped; 1 clove garlic, minced; 1/2 teaspoon white pepper; 1/2 cup sour cream.*

Chop dried beef. Combine cream cheese and milk in bowl; beat on medium speed until smooth. Stir in beef, onion and garlic, mixing well. Stir in sour cream. Spoon into 1-quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Serve hot with crackers. (I always double the recipe.)

## SHRIMP WITH VODKA DIPPING SAUCE

Recipe by Judy Van Dorp

*"Plate & Palette," Arts of the Pamlico (formerly Beaufort County Arts Council), Washington*

*2 cups mayonnaise; 1/4 cup sour cream; 3/4 cup bottled red chili sauce; 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce; 4 teaspoons A-1 Sauce; 2 tablespoons finely chopped green onions; dash of black pepper; 1/3 cup vodka; steamed shrimp, peeled and deveined.*

Whisk together all ingredients except the shrimp. Refrigerate overnight to allow for seasonings to blend. Yield: 3 1/2 cups.



## HELEN'S VEGGIE BITES

*Recipe by Catherine Partrick*

*"Keys to the Kitchen, Gracefully Re-Keyed," St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Washington*

*1 package crescent shaped rolls; 1/2 cup mayonnaise; 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened; 1/2 packet dry ranch dressing mix; 1/2 cup minced broccoli; 1/2 cup minced carrots; 1/2 cup minced green pepper; 1/2 cup minced green onions; 1 medium tomato; 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese.*

Roll crescent-shaped rolls onto cookie sheet, sealing perforations to form a solid sheet. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool.

Combine mayonnaise, cream cheese and dressing mix. Spread evenly over cooled rolls.

In a food processor, using steel blade, process separately until minced, the broccoli, carrots, green pepper and onions. Sprinkle over rolls. Pat to embed into cheese mixture. Adding vegetables to rolls separately makes for a prettier appetizer.

Finely chop by hand the tomato and sprinkle over the vegetables. Sprinkle Cheddar cheese for last layer.

Cover. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. Cut into bars. Yield: 24 to 36 bars.

# Oyster, oysters, oysters... best ways to serve at home

BY JAMIE DAVIS

**B**eing a North Carolina native I've always loved fresh seafood, but I really fell in love with oysters - any and all ways prepared! I seek them anytime I see them on a menu.

Growing up, Stump Sound Oysters were my mother's go-to. Today, I'll share a recipe for one of my favorite preparations - raw.

Before I get to that, growing up we only ate oysters in the months ending with the letter "R," but I'm here to tell you that's a thing of the past.

Farmed oysters are sustainably grown, eco-friendly and available year-round. North Carolina fisheries are some of the toughest in the country, and oyster farms are heavily regulated.

Did you know one oyster can filter 50 gallons of water a day? Oysters are not only

great for our waters but also our bodies. They are high in b-12, zinc, copper, iron, magnesium and Omega-3 and six fatty acids, among other things. Who would have thought these things that we bake, steam, grill, fry and shuck are so healthy?

I usually go for higher salinity with a buttery finish type of oyster, but this recipe can complement any oyster of your choosing. I love to visit a local farm for tomatoes and fresh herbs then stop and get some capers.

Capers and tomatoes are like peas and carrots, a perfect combination for almost any seafood, so keep that in mind for future recipes.

In addition you'll need onions or shallots. I personally prefer shallots, there's just something about that taste, but use whatever you have on hand. I also add fresh ginger, white

balsamic, fish sauce and honey. My favorite honey is from Honeybee Honey, right here in Washington. I simply mix these ingredients together, let set for at least 15 minutes or up to 24 hours, top with your favorite oyster and enjoy!

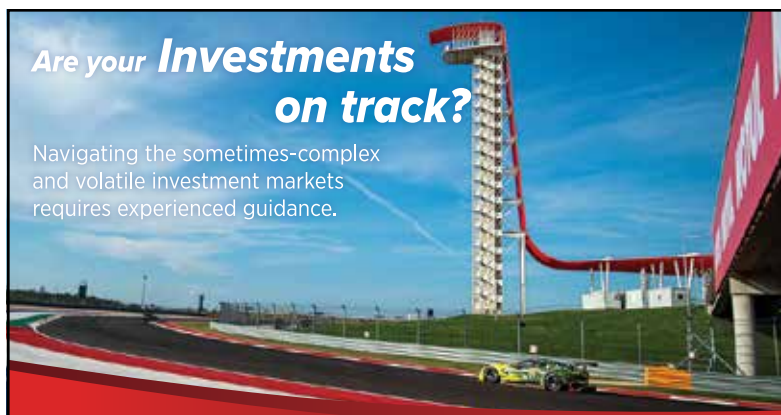
*Jamie Davis is the Executive Chef at The Hackney Restaurant and Gin Distillery.*


For the perfect oyster accompaniment:

- 2 tomatoes (diced)
- 1 shallot (diced)
- 2 ounces of capers (rinsed and chopped)
- .25 ounce of fresh ginger (diced)
- ½ cup of white balsamic
- splash of fish sauce
- 1 ounce of honey


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# When Pigs Fly Inn... Discoveries are made

FROM JEFF FURST AND LINDA HARRINGTON

*Stay & Play on the Pamlico gives local bed and breakfast and boutique hotel owners the opportunity to share their best to-do, don't ever and who cares hosting tips with you! From advice on how to plan perfect dinner parties, decorate cozy and inviting guest bedrooms and all the small details that make every visit special, Stay & Play is the locals' guide to entertaining at home.*

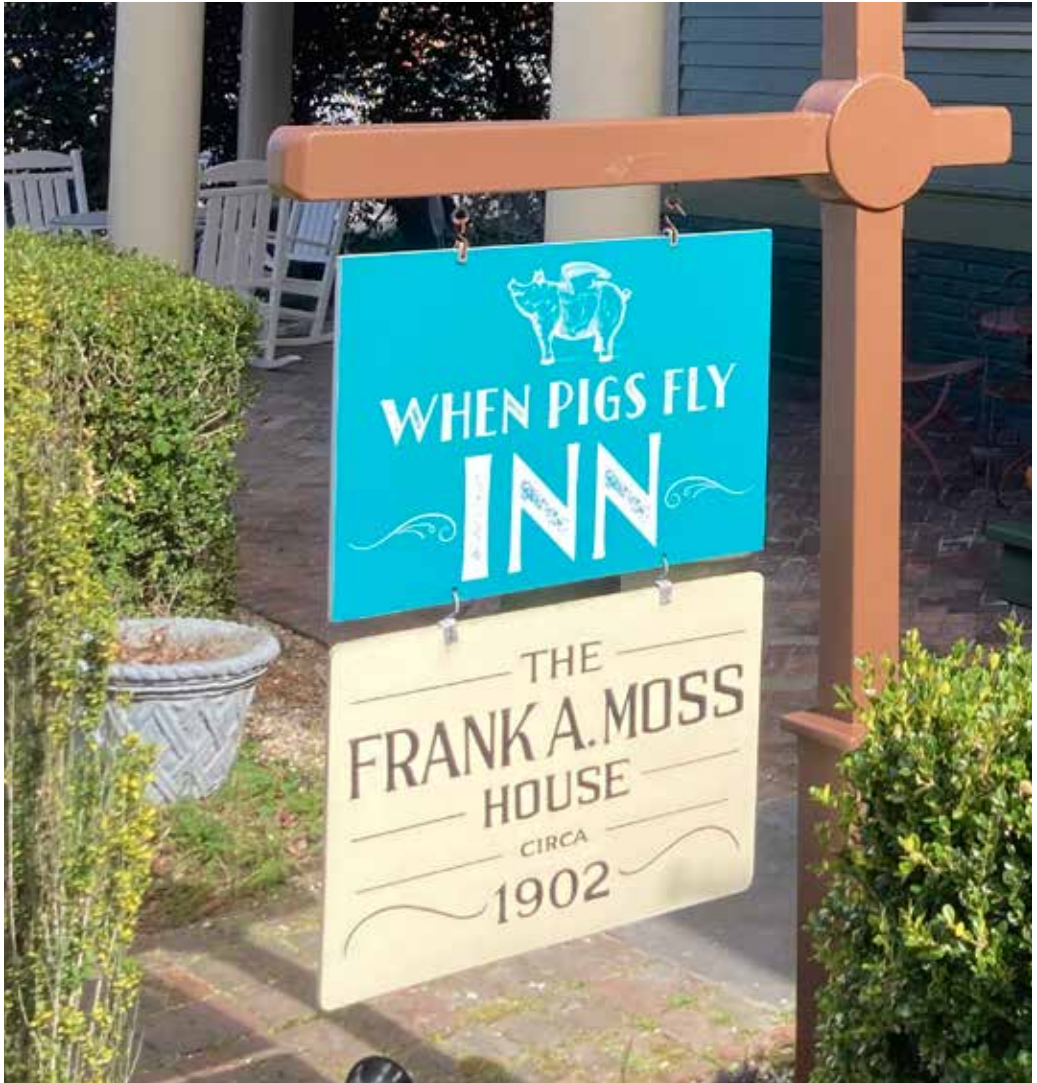
For Jeff Furst and Linda Harrington, it's a "thrill to see people -- many for the first time -- experience Washington!" Hosting guests at their bed and breakfast, When Pigs Fly Inn, takes them back to when they first discovered Washington years ago.

"How wonderful this little town on the river is, then quickly learning how wonderful the people are, too. Seeing the excitement and enthusiasm in visitor's eyes gets us excited about being here all over again," they said.

"When we started our Inn we didn't know if we'd like it. You know, having strangers in our home. But we jumped in to test the waters...and the waters were fine. Our doubts were quickly allayed."

Furst and Harrington had no hospitality experience before opening When Pigs Fly, but opening the Inn became something they both enjoyed.

"We try to make our guests stay special from the time they first make their reservation by reaching out to them immediately to let them know all will be ready. We also give them helpful and detailed check-in instructions (directions to our place, where to park, etc). Once here we always try to spend a little time with each guest. Each of our rooms has a wonderful book Linda put together with restaurant listings, special attractions, things to do. Some of our guests read it cover to cover. Plus we have all the amenities you'd expect...around the clock



coffee, tea and hot chocolate, complimentary snacks and water, fridge, microwave. Plus we have shelves full of books and board games guests can use while they're here - even one shelf guest can pick a book from...and keep it. Plus, with Linda and I living on-site, if there are any questions or problems, we are right there. We're available in person."

This is where hostesses at home can create magic for their guests. Anticipating what guests may want to do or have when they arrive to make their stay more enjoyable and comfortable can be a pleasant surprise. Also, listening to what guests say about their

experience can make their next trip even more enjoyable.

A piece of advice Furst and Harrington wished they had before entertaining guests



for the first time comes down to one word, "Relax."

*Jeff Furst and Linda Harrington are the owners of When Pigs Fly Inn.*





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## WHERE TO STAY

📍 **The Casso** A vibrant and stylish 126-room boutique hotel centrally located downtown between Glenwood South and Warehouse Districts with locally inspired décor and a plant-forward restaurant called Good Day Good Night.

📍 **The Longleaf Hotel** Modern, mid-century gem at the northern gateway to downtown Raleigh. The longleaf pine tree inspired every aspect of this modern renovation of a vintage motor lodge, including the swanky Longleaf Lounge and patio.

📍 **Heights House Hotel** This historic pre-Civil War-era 1858 Italianate-style mansion was lovingly renovated and revitalized into an intimate nine-room boutique hotel. Grand common spaces are crafted with immaculate detail and decorated with modern and vintage touches, including in The Parlor cocktail bar.

📍 **The Umstead Hotel and Spa** Five Star and Five Diamond independent hotel drawing inspiration from art and nature. The property features privately curated fine art, 150 spacious guest rooms and suites, world-class cuisine at Herons, a stimulating spa and a serene woodland setting.

## DAY 1

### Breakfast

- Begin your first day in Raleigh with a nutritious and energizing breakfast from 📍 **Raleigh Raw**, an organic raw juice bar and cafe.
- If you're extra hungry, consider 📍 **Benchwarmers Bagels**, wood-fired bagels and craft coffee at 📍 **Transfer Co. Food Hall**.

### Morning

- Grab a coffee or tea from 📍 **Heirloom Brewshop** or 📍 **Black & White Coffee Roasters** and spend your morning perusing the 📍 **Warehouse District**. This buzzing area includes 📍 **CAM Raleigh (Contemporary Art Museum)**, a bean-to-bar chocolate factory, food hall, antique and boutique shopping, breweries and wine bars.

### Lunch

- Treat yourself to a barbecue lunch at 📍 **Longleaf Swine BBQ** with whole hog barbecue and smoked meats on the traditional all wood smoking methods. Recipes are rooted in their upbringing while incorporating a modern flair that makes them special, with additional delicious options for vegetarians.
- Other excellent BBQ options downtown include 📍 **Sam Jones BBQ** and 📍 **Midwood Smokehouse**.



📍 N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences



📍 N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences



📍 N.C. Museum of Art

### Afternoon

#### EXPLORE THE MUSEUMS

- 📍 **N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences** The largest natural science museum in the Southeast with four floors of exhibits, live animals, 3D movies, gift stores and cafes. The Nature Research Center offers a mixture of a visitor destination, research hub and hands-on student laboratory. **FREE**
- 📍 **City of Raleigh Museum** Works to “preserve Raleigh’s past for the future” with exhibits, artifacts and programs that emphasize the history and culture of Raleigh. **FREE**

#### WORTH THE DRIVE

- 📍 **N.C. Museum of Art** More than 5,000 works of art spanning from antiquity to the present day make up the bulk of masterpieces you’ll find at NCMA. The museum is home to the Southeast’s largest collection of Rodin sculptures and the 📍 **Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park**, which is 164 acres of woodlands, open areas and walking trails that are complimented by monumental works of art. **FREE**



📍 Museum Park



📍 N.C. Museum of Art

### Dinner

- Enjoy some of the best southern cooking in the world right here in Raleigh. Visitors can’t go wrong with 📍 **Poole’s Diner**, James Beard Foundation-winning chef Ashley Christensen’s flagship restaurant.
- 📍 **Crawford and Son** JBF semi-finalist for Best Chef Scott Crawford’s casual-yet-elegant neighborhood eatery.
- 📍 **Whiskey Kitchen** one-part whiskey bar, one-part Southern kitchen where regionally inspired dishes are served.



📍 Whiskey Kitchen

### Night Cap

- Complete your day with cocktails and dessert at James Beard Semifinalist 📍 **Bittersweet**, a dessert, coffee and cocktail bar with a local, all-natural, seasonal menu.
- Other suggestions: 📍 **Trophy Brewing Company** for wonderful local beer and cocktails or 📍 **Foundation** for handcrafted, seasonal cocktails that showcase the finest offerings from nearby sources.



📍 Bittersweet

## DAY 2

### Breakfast

- **Big Ed's City Market Restaurant** Known for hotcakes bigger than your hands, Big Ed's is the perfect spot for breakfast. Antiques and farm equipment hang from the ceiling, adding to the unique Southern charm of this Raleigh institution.
- Head to **Bouted Bread** An authentic bakery and stone mill serving craft bread and pastry made with organic, heirloom and locally sourced grains.

### Morning

- **North Carolina State Farmers Market** Considered one of the nation's best and most modern markets, visitors enjoy 75 acres of indoor/outdoor specialty shops, restaurants and garden center with fruits, vegetables, meats and gift products from across the state.
- **Dorothea Dix Park** Explore this 308-acre land parcel full of historic architecture and rich landscapes. The park is undergoing a transformation, which will include installing play areas, relaxation space, trails, water features, public art and more.

### Lunch

- Grab lunch at **A Place at the Table**, a pay-what-you-can café providing community and healthy food for all meals that nourish your body and soul, ensuring each guest is treated with dignity and respect, regardless of means. Just one of 60 other pay-what-you-can restaurants in the global One World Everybody Eats network.
- Or head over to **Transfer Co. Food Hall**, a space for food producers, makers, vendors and restaurateurs to enjoy great food, all housed within the historic Carolina Coach garage and shop.
- Another option for those seeking classic Southern food is **Beasley's Chicken + Honey**, a fried chicken-focused restaurant by James Beard Award-winning chef Ashley Christensen.





📍 Downtown Cary Park



📍 Mural Trail



📍 Gallo Pelón

### Afternoon

- Stroll through 📍 **Person Street** and 📍 **Historic Oakwood District**: This up-and-coming district north of downtown is surrounded by historic neighborhoods and 📍 **William Peace University**. Explore clothing boutiques, bookstores, historic attractions, bakeries, craft cocktail bars, breweries, wine shops and James Beard award semifinalist Scott Crawford's restaurants in this burgeoning district.
- Enjoy public art on the 📍 **Mural Trail** Hit the streets to find inspiring pieces that will have you clamoring for the perfect photo. Discover the area's 30+ murals by checking in at each one you visit on your mobile device.

### WORTH THE DRIVE

- 📍 **Downtown Cary Park** A newly opened iconic, seven-acre public gathering space including food and beverage facilities, interactive water features, a great lawn and an outdoor entertainment pavilion. Then explore the rest of downtown Cary, home to renowned restaurants, great shopping and top-tier arts and entertainment.

### Dinner

- Experience some of Raleigh's most authentic and fresh Mexican and Latin American cuisine at 📍 **Centro**, born from the creative heart and mind of Angela Salamanca. Head upstairs for drinks at N.C.'s first Mezcaleria, 📍 **Gallo Pelón**, specializing in exotic mezcals, hand-crafted cocktails and South/Central American small plates.
- For Mediterranean and Middle Eastern-inspired flavors, head to Cheetie Kumar's 📍 **Ajja**, with a menu that draws inspiration from diverse foodways and cultures, vibrant spices and cooking techniques of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and beyond.

### Nightcap

- For an after-dinner drink, head to the 📍 **Raleigh Beer Garden**, Guinness World Record holder for most beer on tap and the largest selection of beer on draught in the world.
- Elevate your evening with the meticulously curated menu of Italian-influenced craft cocktails, an all-Italian wine list and local beers at 📍 **The Parlor at Heights House Hotel**.



📍 Historic Oakwood District



📍 Raleigh Beer Garden

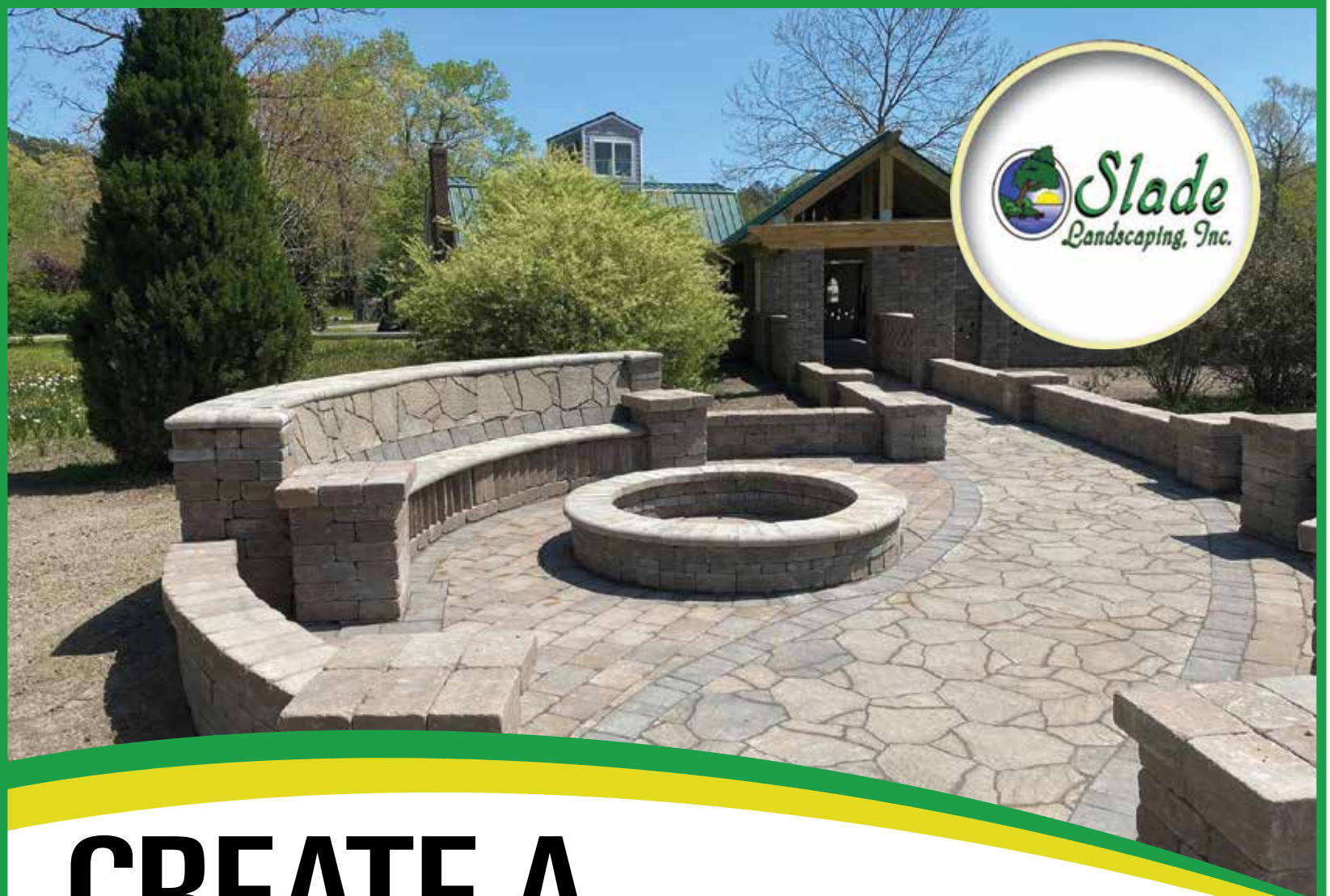


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# Hunting heartland pheasants

WRITTEN BY SHAWN BENNETT

I was not familiar with the term “bucket list” until a movie by the same name was released in 2007. In it, two men with little time left on this side of eternity compiled lists of everything they wanted to do before they “kicked the bucket.” Hence the movie’s title.

As I get closer and closer to the age of Social Security eligibility, I have come to realize that through the years I have created my own bucket list. It’s practically all travel and adventure, combined with heavy doses of fishing distant waters and hunting new species.

Top on that list was *Phasianus colchicas*, otherwise known as the beautiful Ring-necked Pheasant. I have always been an upland hunting guy. I prefer bird hunting to most any other type of game, and I have always wanted to hunt pheasants. They are big and rude birds that angrily screech unmentionable things when you flush them. Yet they are one of our most beautiful gamebirds and are equal to chicken in taste, if not better.

The problem is pheasants are not native to North Carolina. In fact, they’re not even native to the United States. Pheasants originated in Asia and were imported by the U.S. consul to Shanghai, China. The original stock was released on the West Coast, and all of the pheasants currently in the U.S. can be traced back to that original release. Pheasant hunting quickly became popular, and hatcheries were established in an effort to build a nationwide population of birds. In the early 1900s, a severe windstorm in Iowa wrecked a bird breeder’s coop, and released 2,000 Ring-necked Pheasants into the wild. They thrived and spread, extending their range, creating the vast population of birds that the Midwest states are now so famous



for.

Over the past 100 years, there have been several attempts to release them in North

Carolina, but with little luck. In fact, the only area that had a sustainable pheasant habitat was the Outer Banks. Cape Hatteras,



Portsmouth Island, Core Banks, and Ocracoke Island all had pheasant populations, likely due to the lack of predators on the islands. I have a good friend who was in the Coast Guard, stationed at Ocracoke, and he often saw them roaming freely in his yard. I was tempted to hunt for them there, as others have done, but the better part of me told me these birds were best left for the natives. O'cockers can get mighty testy when dingbatters like me infringe upon their territory.

In addition, the sand spurs on the 'Banks create havoc on a poor dog's feet unless you have special dog shoes. I didn't want to introduce my Labrador, Breaker to this catastrophe. And now I've probably lost my chance anyway, as I hear those birds are gone from the area.

To whet my appetite, I tried hunting pheasants on a local game preserve. Now, these birds were crated from the pens directly to the field and released. As you might well imagine, captive birds do one of two things when they taste freedom. They either hit the ground running, never to be seen again, or they're shocked into sitting so tight you can't make them flush. Breaker brought back several healthy and fully alive pheasants that he just ran to and picked up. No sport in that. But the day wasn't a total loss. What made it interesting was that sometimes the pheasants would hold just long enough to be roused, and then they would rocket skyward, wings loudly flapping to gain altitude, cackling like a witch in the most magnificent flush in front of Breaker. A smooth follow through with the gun would put'em on the ground and in the bag.

That experience had me wanting more. An authentic pheasant hunt in South Dakota, widely considered the pheasant hunting capital of the world, was now on my "bucket list".

Last month I was finally able to realize that dream. Arriving into Aberdeen, South Dakota, I was in awe of the landscape. It is a stunning state if the heartland appeals to you. For miles you only see open farmland, interrupted by little havens of giant trees that surround two-story farmhouses with big

wraparound porches and children's toys in the yard. Our guide Troy had a cozy lodge on a farm that my group bunked in along with him, other hunters, his chef Geo and four splendid Griffon Wirehaired pointers. There was also a big-screen TV that could find football most any time of day. The set up felt more like a vacation rather than a hunting trip, but hunt we did.

By the time we arrived in November, the corn crops in South Dakota had already been harvested into bare ground, leaving only the milo (sorghum) fields, which provided excellent cover and food plots for the pheasants. Once the milo is harvested, the birds move to thick and dense grass covers. We were there to hunt the milo strips.

On the first morning it was drizzly and frigid with a chance of snow flurries. We disembarked from the lodge's muddy Suburban and entered the first field, all walking side by side, spaced about 20 feet apart. The hot-rod Griffons were released and they worked the cover like mad, trying to zero in on bird scent. It wasn't long before Lexie flushed one, sending it rocketing skyward. Every story I've ever read about pheasant hunting was replayed right in front of my eyes, as one of the hunters cleanly took the bird, dropping it onto the black, fertile soil of South Dakota. At the end of the milo strip we switched over to an adjacent plot and began pushing forward again with the dogs. I had Iggy excitedly working directly in front of me. I would get quick glimpses of her tail as she jetted back and forth in the dense milo crop. She obviously knew a pheasant was close and she was instinctively doing her job to locate it. Suddenly she stopped and Troy quickly said "Shawn, Iggy's on point, about 40 feet ahead of you". Slowly moving forward, I came upon her, locked up in a rock-solid point, muscles taught and trembling, daring the pheasant to move. I stomped my feet in the dirt as I approached, which spooked the hidden bird, making him flush. After my 16 gauge rang out, good 'ol Iggy fetched me my very first South Dakota Ring-neck Pheasant. Scratch one off the bucket list.

I flushed my next bird on my own. He was at the very edge of the field hiding in an area away from the dogs. He sat there completely motionless until I was nearly on top of him. I began waving my arm until it made him nervous enough to flush, and I shouldered my gun. Afterwards, I picked up the whopping bird myself, admiring the weight and heft of this 100% wild and cunning pheasant. The remainder of that day was just as productive, with all of us getting our limit of three birds per hunter. The following day was twice as bitter, but the bright sun in the cloudless midwestern sky made it pleasant. Troy switched us to another field that had not been hunted recently, and again we had success. Not all the hunters got their limit that day. The birds ran more and the Griffon pointers really had to work at it. But once again they worked flawlessly, putting up birds in range for us to get a shot. At the lodge, Geo's meals were warm and satisfying, as was the solidarity we all felt. I don't think you can ask for much more than that.

On the flight back to Raleigh, I was forlorn that the trip ever had to end. All I could think about were the wonderful traditions of South Dakota pheasant hunting that I experienced and the great people I met. When I closed my eyes, I could still see those magnificent ring necks bolt straight upward like they were on a spring, with loud complaints that would startle me, every time. I recalled how it felt stepping in Midwest soil so fertile it was literally black and gooey with the moisture. How the dampness beaded up on my briar pants while kicking through the grainy milo, following the dogs. I thought about how my unfamiliarity with Griffon pointers turned into admiration at how they never stopped or slowed their pace in their nonstop quest for birds.

I still have many adventures on my bucket list, but now it's one item lighter. If I learned anything from my trip to South Dakota, it's the importance of making those dreams turn into reality. I still have plenty of adventures to choose from on my bucket list, and I'll bet you do too. There's no better time than now to make it happen.

# *A brief history of mulled wine*

WRITTEN BY **MARY MEHLICH** PHOTOS BY **HOLLY JACKSON**

**I**t's not a question of if you're going to drink mulled wine this holiday season, it's a question of whose mulled wine you will drink. Warm mulled wine has become a winter standard, as much a part of the collective culture in snowy locales as gift-giving, fireplaces and bearskin rugs (well, at least gift-giving).

Mulled wine — that ever-variable mix of inexpensive red wine, cloves, cinnamon and citrus — is so prevalent simply because the concept has been around since less-than-great wine has been around. So, forever. Here is the story of how mulled wine once again made it into your hands this year (probably).

## **The Ancient Greeks**

The Ancient Greeks weren't really the type of people to leave extra wine on the table, but there was always a part of the harvest that didn't make it. In order to prevent waste (and to make sure as much alcohol as possible was palatable), the Greeks would dump spices into the wine and heat it up.

## **The Ancient Romans**

Always the Greek copycat, the Romans heated their extra wine with spices to save any from being wasted. But the Romans added a twist and called their wine "Conditum Paradoxum," and a version of this recipe is still sold today.

A 5th- or 6th-century Roman cookbook by a guy named Apicius details out the recipe. The recipe was a mixture of one part wine and one part honey that was boiled and then reduced. Added to the mix was pepper, bay leaf, saffron and dates.

## **The Medieval, Northern European Swill**

Mulled wine really took off in the Middle Ages. The added spices were believed to make people healthier and had



the benefit of tasting much better as well. The selection of wine wasn't so great back then, after all, and it's not like people could

drink the water. Not to mention people had to deal with the Black Death, so they surely needed a drink anyway.



## Victorian England to the Present

The common perception of mulled wine today comes from Victorian England. Despite the prudish outlook on life, mulled wine was a fine and dandy holiday season drink (in moderation).

Charles Dickens even wrote about a version of mulled wine called Smoking Bishop in his 1843 novel “A Christmas Carol.” Henceforth, mulled wine’s association with the holidays was solidified.

Most modern-day versions have orange, cinnamon, nutmeg, a (cheap) dry red wine and a bit of port or brandy. Everything is to taste (here are our eight favorite recipes), and the only right way to drink it is to drink it when the temperature starts to drop.

Below, a country-by-country guide to mulled wine, and a simple recipe to make chilly fall evenings more festive and keeping the heating bill down. Simply, start with a good (but not expensive) bottle of red wine—Rhône blends or Tempranillo work well— and a crockpot or heavy bottomed pan. Toss in a combination of spices, and set off on a vinous fall adventure.

Despite the many opinions on mulled wine, it is a holiday classic merely meant to warm your bones on a cold winter day and shared with family and friends!

*Mary Mehlich is the owner of Wine and Words, located in Downtown Washington.*

## MULLED WINE VARIETIES

### The Classic French Vin Chaud

- 2 Cinnamon sticks
- 20 whole cloves
- 1 Sliced orange
- 1/2 cup Cognac

### Portuguese Vinho Quente:

- 1/2 750mL bottle red port
- 1/2 750mL bottle Madeira
- 1 orange, sliced thin
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 10 cloves

### Spanish Vino Caliente

- 1 clementine with peel, sliced
- 4 strips of lemon peel
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 vanilla bean, halved
- 1/4 cup Brandy de Jerez
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg

### German Glühwein

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 star anise
- 1/2 lemon, sliced
- 3 cloves
- 3 cardamom pods

### Medieval Hippocras

- 2 cinnamon sticks, crushed
- 24 cloves
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 long pepper (available at spice stores)

### Cleopatra’s Elixir of Life:

- 4 large sage sprigs
- 3 large mint sprigs
- 3 figs, chopped
- 10 cloves

### Nordic Gløgg:

- 1 750 ml bottle red Port
- 1/2 750 ml bottle brandy
- 25 whole cloves
- 10 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- 1 tsp. cardamom seeds
- 2 cups sugar
- zest of 1 orange

### Ancient Roman Piment

- 10 strands saffron
- 1/2 piece ginger, chopped
- 1/2 tsp cardamom seeds
- 1/4 cup honey

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# THE PERFECT BLEND

## *History, nature, and community combined*

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

**W**hen I left Washington back in 1995, I thought to myself – I will never live here again, and I really and truly believed that. I went to school and visited "home" occasionally, but never really considered moving back to our wonderful town.

Living in Washington is a joy rooted in its blend of history, natural beauty, and a strong sense of community. This charming, historic port city offers a lifestyle that feels both relaxed and vibrant, making it a place I am proud to call home. I am originally from Aberdeen, North Carolina. A town of similar size and is an integral part of the Moore County micropolitan area which includes Southern Pines and Pinehurst. I relocated to the heart of downtown Washington in July of 2020 after accepting a job with the City of Washington in the George H. & Laura E. Brown Library, John A. Wilkinson History Room.

One of the main reasons I love living in Washington is the city's rich history. As the Curator of Special Collections in the Brown Library's History Room, I have had the opportunity to meet, interact, and grow relationships within the community while exploring the history of Washington, and the neighboring landscape. These relationships throughout the area help connect me to the generations that shaped Washington into what it is today. From its waterfront history to its role in shaping regional culture, the city's story is everywhere, and I am proud to be a part of it.

The waterfront area, being the heart of the city, where residents and visitors gather to stroll along the boardwalk, enjoy local events, and take in the serene beauty of the water has become part of my daily life. Washington's waterfront



**Stephen Farrell, curator of special collections at George H. & Laura E. Brown Library**

is often characterized by its breathtaking views and I take pride in living and working in an area in which I help to educate and preserve its natural and cultural heritage.

Another reason I cherish life in Washington is the community spirit. Despite being a small city, Washington is alive with a sense of connection and neighborly kindness. Whether on afternoon walks with my wife Mariah, or sharing in a meal with friends and family in award-winning downtown restaurants, there is always an opportunity to engage with others and feel a part of something larger. The citizens, natives and newcomers alike, are always welcoming and their dedication to supporting local businesses

and preserving the city's heritage creates a unique, close-knit atmosphere.

The city's rich history also adds depth to daily life in Washington. The city has long been a center for the arts, business, and community gatherings. Living here, I feel connected to the past in a way that enriches the present. Ultimately, Washington is a city that combines natural beauty, a warm community, and a deep appreciation for history. Its charm lies not just in what it offers but in how it makes you feel: at home, at peace, and truly part of a special place.

*Stephen Farrell is the Curator of Special Collections at the George H. and Laura E. Brown Library.*

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