



# A little of the Grape...

## The Farmville Wine Festival Sets Spring in Motion with Local Flavors

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On Saturday, April 19th, local vendors of wine and other goods came out to share their collections with the people of Farmville and surrounding areas. From 11:00 until 6:00, nine wineries represented some of Virginia's best local tastes. These nine were Spring Creek Wine Cellar, Thistle Gate Vineyard, Rebec Vineyards and Winery, Annefield Vineyards, Foggy Ridge Cider, Bright Meadows Farm Vineyard and Winery, Tomahawk Mill Vineyard and Winery, DeVault Family Vineyards and Sans Soucy Vineyards. The festival was held at Riverside Park beside North Main Street near the Appomattox River.

Visitors paid \$20 at the entrance and received a complimentary wine glass to enjoy samples of different wines all day long. Wineries offered full glasses or bottles for sale, and though the weather was somewhat overcast, the festival was bright with conversation and smiles. Two local Farmville bands, Los Carleenos and Class Act, provided entertainment throughout the day.

One of the most popular wineries among the visitors was Sans Soucy Vineyards from Brookneal, Virginia. Sarah Luongo, working with Sans Soucy, described their most popular drink. "We are most known for our Blackberry Ginger Sangria," Luongo said. "I've been working here a while, and I've never met someone who didn't like it."

The workers at Annefield Vineyards shared their knowledge of wines and wine-and-food combinations with the visitors. Stephen Ballard, a founder of Annefield, said, "We are doing really well with the Cabernet Sauvignon and the Voignier... Our wine-makers are in Charlottesville. One trained in France, the other in California, but the French style predominates." Beyond these two wines, Annefield offered other higher-end wines including Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and other red and white wines.

DeVault Family Vineyards was the first tent beyond the festival entrance, and it was popular with visitors. DeVault operates out of Concord, Virginia on 11 acres of farmland. "We try to make something for anybody," said Tim Perry, working with DeVault. "We're probably better known for our sweeter wines. We also have the Virginia Norton which is made from a native grape." The Norton is a red wine combining blackberry, apple and spice flavors, and according to Perry, it has "really taken off." DeVault will be hosting a "Spring Fling" music, beer, and wine festival on May 31st of this year.



Besides the nine wineries, vendors of food, jewelry and other craftsmanship received publicity at the Virginia Wine Festival. Elissa and Jakob Gustafsson represented Premier Designs jewelry, a company which focuses on the versatility of jewelry as well as aesthetic beauty. Elissa Gustafsson described the founding of Premier Designs: "Our company was started going on 30 years ago by husband and wife. All of the extra revenue goes to world missions, and that was something our founders focused on."

Other vendors displayed more jewelry, plate ware and other goods for sale. A great deal of the crafts had been handmade by the vendors themselves. Barbara Foster, working with Faith's Creations, was selling her own hand-crocheted necklaces. "I can make ten of them in a night," Foster said. Vendors with Day Three Inspirational Bath and Body sold organic soaps made from all-natural and all-pronounceable ingredients.

The festival was hosted by Meals on Wheels, an organization powered by help from volunteers. The profit from festival admission went to providing meals for families and individuals in Prince Edward County, Prospect, Worsham and further towards Cumberland County. Jeff Smith, a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, spoke highly of the organization. "What makes us different," Smith said, "is we deliver a hot meal five days a week." For Smith, the work is just as much about visiting with people as it is about delivering food.

As long as the Farmville Virginia Wine Festival was open, people were talking and tasting wine and enjoying great music. It brought people of many creative trades and interests together to share their wines and enjoy a tradition. The wine festival is a yearly tradition for many, but even for first-time visitors, the festival made for a day of excellent fun and conversation.