

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## America's Next Great Wine Destination? Northern Virginia

Within driving distance of Washington, D.C., there's a wine region you'll want to get to before the crowds do, offering a warm welcome and winemaking that leans more European than Californian. The prices aren't bad, either.



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While most Virginia wineries are in the state's southern part, near Charlottesville, there is a growing number of producers in the state's northern half. Some may be less focused on quality than others, but I found engaged and talented winemakers making good wines.

My next stop, Boxwood Estate Winery, just outside Middleburg, boasted a large patio set with tables and chairs and a striking main building designed to give visitors access to the whole winemaking process, from barrel room to bottling line.



Boxwood Estate Winery offers a warm welcome to visitors. PHOTO: THOMAS COOKE

Boxwood's owner, John Kent Cooke—son of Jack Kent Cooke, legendary owner of the Washington Redskins—bought a former horse farm in 2001 and planted vineyards four years later. The first wines were produced in 2006, under the guidance of Stéphane Derenoncourt, the famed Bordeaux-based wine consultant, and the winery formally opened in 2012, noted Sean Martin, the winery's vice president and Cooke's stepson.

Martin and I tasted wines in the barrel room, at one of many tables scattered throughout the welcoming winery. Bordeaux-style red blends are the focus at Boxwood, at prices ranging from \$29 to \$55, though Boxwood makes a few whites as well. The 2020 Boxwood Estate Reserve Red (\$55) impressed me the most: soft and supple with attractive notes of spice and red fruit.

While Cooke had the financial wherewithal to create a winery almost anywhere, he focused on Virginia: "He felt there was great potential here," Martin explained. "He saw the opportunity to become a player in the Virginia wine market."