

CHATHAM County Line

where all voices are heard

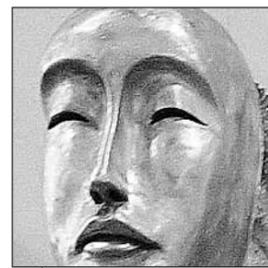
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vol. 8, issue 10

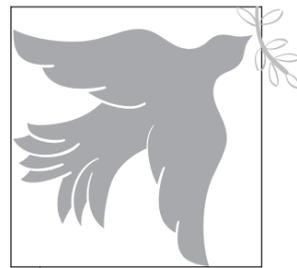
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Dec. 2010/Jan. 2011

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Jeff Starkweather salutes Lucier, Thompson and Vandenberg; Jennifer Kendall on saving species of Heritage Cattle

Raising a toast to Chatham

By Julian Sereno

Cheers to Chatham. Slowly, Chatham has moved steadily to relax restrictions on alcoholic beverages. Now you can raise a glass of wine, beer, even mead, created in Chatham, at Chatham establishments.

It wasn't always that way. A quarter century ago, Chatham was dry. Patrons of the Fearington House Restaurant who wanted wine with dinner needed to brown bag it and bring their own.

In 2009 Chatham voted to allow the sale of mixed drinks – the most recent step in its liberalization of liquor laws. There was the hope that this would boost business by attracting big hotels to Chatham. Pittsboro Mayor Randy Voller points to the availability of mixed drinks at places across Pittsboro as a sign of its success.

At the General Store Café you can now get a martini, a margarita, a mojito and more. Vance

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Christmas Cheer in Chatham

*On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my family enjoyed with me:
Twelve cups of Circle City Java,
Eleven jugs of CatDaddy moonshine,
Ten shots of NC Hooch,
Nine bottles of Silk Hope Scuppernong,
Eight pitchers of Santa's Secret Winter Ale,
Seven glasses of local cider,
Six mugs of bourbon eggnog,
Five saucers General Store hot chocolate,
Four liters of Nectar of the Tarheels,
Three champagne mimosas,
Two gallons sweet ice tea,
And a Chatham County Line paper to read!*

Living in Chatham County affords us with the opportunity to holiday travel to the mountains or the beach within a couple of hours; however, there are also many reasons to stay in Chatham County to enjoy the local traditions or to make some new ones.

Downtown Pittsboro is offering a Candlelight Christmas on December 11 that includes everything from carolers to carriage rides; Fearington Village presents Holiday Storytelling with Donald Davis on December 18; the Pittsboro General Store Café has live music Thursday through Saturday evenings; the Spa at Bell House is offering couples massages; New Horizons Trading Company and French Connections both offer unique gift options; Pittsboro Toys carries locally handmade toys and a hands-on buying experience for the little ones and the little ones at heart; Katie Leigh Dresses has 100 percent handmade dresses for little girls to wear for the holiday. For more information about what is happening in Chatham County for the holidays please visit pittsboronc.net or visitpittsboro.com.

— Heather Leigh Wallace



SilkHope Winery's wine draws national praise

By David Nestor

SilkHope Winery is more than a name — it has history, it has quality, it has character, it has personality. Situated at one of the higher points in Chatham County (700 ft. above sea level) it stands alone.

As you come in off of Highway 87 onto Silk Hope Gum Springs Road and then take that left hand turn up one fairly steep driveway (motorcycle riders tend to stand on their pegs if that tells you anything). You will come upon a metal Quonset hut as well as a small out-building backed up by the vineyard. There you will find a parking place with one of the finest views in the area. Looking down towards the hut you will find the only evidence of what's to come, a sign that reads "honk for wine tastings" on the side of the Quonset hut.

Without many other options, you find a door that leads into the all-metal building and are immediately met with a handshake by either Wally Butler or one of his crew. You will then be invited to take a seat at one of the four tables in the tasting/processing room. Most likely, if there are not many people there, you will be invited to sit at the big table— no little kids here. There you will be presented with a list of 14 wines that you can sample. Once you have chosen which to sample, you will be amazed at the quality of the product before you.

Wally has taken his last 20 years of experience in wine making, along with his heart and soul, to come up with some of the finest vivifera wines produced in the state, if not the country. SilkHope recently sent a bottle of their 2007 Chambourcin out to California where it

was evaluated by California Grapevine, a wine evaluation publication highly regarded within the wine industry. The 15-member panel came back with positive remarks across the board. That's our Wally!

One thing Wally will say is that anybody can make wine. I for one do not agree with that, but I will concede that one at this point. What he does say is that his ability to grow grapes is one of his wines' greatest assets. The ground, as stated before, sits high above the land around, has a East facing slope (no matter whether you are in France or California or North Carolina, East facing slope is key) and the land is full of rocks. There the vines are carefully taken care of year-round with a harvest in August and September.

The three and a half-acres vineyard yields a variety of wine grapes, including Chambourcin, Cabernet Franc, Norton, Vidal Blanc, Seyval Blanc, Traminette plus others. The prime location of the vineyard allows for a late-season harvest, enabling them to grow the highest quality fruit.

SilkHope gets its name from Quakers who settled the community of Silk Hope in the 1600's; they brought with them silk worms, mulberry trees and the hope for silk. Today SilkHope Winery appears to be dedicated to crafting wines with the same smooth, rich quality of silk.

Come on up for a visit, I believe you will label and remember it as more of an event than a visit.

David Nestor partnered up with Wally Butler. He and wife Dawn reside in Sanford. SilkHope Winery is located at 2601 Silk Hope Gum Springs Road, Pittsboro.