

December 20, 2007

What's New for Virginia Travel in 2008

Media Only

Tamra Talmadge-Anderson
Public Relations Director

TEL (804) 545-5573

EML ttanderson@virginia.org

Virginia Tourism Corporation

901 East Byrd Street
Richmond, VA 23219-4048 USA

TEL (804) 545-5500

FAX (804) 545-5501

www.virginia.org (consumer)

www.vatc.org (industry)

RICHMOND, Va. – The Virginia Tourism Corporation polled travel destinations across the state to see what's new and exciting for visitors to experience in 2008. From new exhibits at some of the state's 700 museums to new spas, wineries and hotels, Virginia continues to thrill travelers with a passion for travel. Here are some of the newest additions, also found on www.Virginia.org, to include in a getaway to Virginia in 2008.

History, Heritage and Culture:

Virginia is synonymous with American history. For those seeking to connect with their history and heritage and to experience the diverse richness of American culture, there is no place like Virginia.

Lynchburg Museum – Lynchburg

Early 2008 will mark the return of one of Virginia's traditional historical museums with the reopening of the Lynchburg Museum and the Old Court House. After a near-catastrophic ceiling collapse, the building and exhibits have undergone a \$2.1 million repair and enhancement. New exhibits and media programs will help make the museum a center for historical tourism in the Hill City.

Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park – Bristoe

A community preservation effort has resulted in a 127-acre park protecting the site of a Civil War battle. The Battle of Bristoe Station occurred in October 1863 after the campaign and battle of Gettysburg. Confederate general A.P. Hill authorized an ill-advised assault that resulted in significant casualties to a portion of his corps.

City Point Early History Museum – Hopewell

New exhibit tells the story of Hopewell's only china factory. Nearly 100 pieces all made at the Hopewell factory are on display. Includes display on how china was made at Hopewell in the 1920s and 1930s.

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden – Richmond

New and upgraded features include expansion of the Rose Garden from 3,000 square feet to 9,000 square feet. The garden will be home to more than 1,500 roses and is designed both for education and beauty. Opens spring/early summer 2008. A new daffodil area will open in conjunction with the American Daffodil Society national convention in Richmond. Scores of new bulb varieties will herald the onset of spring. Opening early March/late April 2008. From June 1 through October 15, Ginter visitors can experience *A Feast for the Senses*, an experience of the sight, touch, taste, smell and sound of plants.

NEWS

Jamestown Settlement – Jamestown

A New World – England’s First View of America is the name of a new exhibit open from June 15 through October 15, 2008, at Jamestown Settlement. Watercolor drawings by John White, the earliest visual record by an Englishman of the flora, fauna and people of the New World will be on loan from the British museum and on display as a group for the first time in 40 years.

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center – Virginia Beach

A total renovation of the center’s galleries will result in new interpretation and presentation. Aquarium visitors will be taken on two journeys: a journey across water that focuses on the diverse natural habitats across Virginia today and a journey through the habitats of Virginia’s past in a new 12,000-square-foot gallery titled *Restless Planet: A Journey Across the Planet that Brings You Closer to Home*. Immersive habitats will look, feel, sound and smell like a Malaysian peat swamp, a coastal desert, the Red Sea and an active volcano. Opening 2008.

George C. Marshall Museum – Lexington

Since it was opened on the Virginia Military Institute post by president Lyndon B. Johnson, this museum has told the story of the incredible life of Virginia native son George C. Marshall, soldier and Nobel Prize-winner. A new exhibit, the Soldier of Peace Gallery, illustrates Marshall’s contributions in the post WWII years as Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and as the head of the American Red Cross. On display is his Nobel Peace Prize medal awarded in 1953.

Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum - Alexandria

This apothecary closed its doors in 1933 after 141 years in business, but now it is a museum showcasing over 8,000 original objects. Original apothecaries created their medicine onsite using herbs and other ingredients. Tours of the museum show how the apothecaries plied their trade and give a glimpse into the “drug stores” of early America.

Historic Mount Vernon – Mount Vernon

A reconstructed slave cabin on the George Washington: Pioneer Farmer site reflects the living conditions of slaves on the Mount Vernon plantation. The cabin is a major enhancement of the interpretation of slave life at Mount Vernon.

Museum of Military History – Portsmouth

A stunning private collection of military uniforms, weapons and memorabilia now has its own museum in historic Portsmouth. Artifacts and displays recount all wars in which America has participated.

NEWS

Pamplin Historical Park & The National Museum of the Civil War Soldier – Petersburg

The cutting edge technology found in Pamplin Historical Park's museums and historic homes now finds its way outdoors. New self-guided tours presented on MP3 technology tell the stories of Tudor Hall Plantation, the Military Fortifications Exhibit and the Breakthrough Battlefield. MP3 players are available at the park and visitors can download audio tours from the website in advance for their personal players. Begins early 2008.

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

The summer home of Thomas Jefferson, Poplar Forest reveals the genius of the man in the same way as Monticello. Ongoing archaeological excavations and restorations make Poplar Forest a continuing historical work in progress. Jefferson's innovative Service Wing will be in the final phases of that work in early 2008, allowing visitors another glimpse into the mind of America's most famous Renaissance man.

Prince George Regional Heritage Museum – Prince George

A new museum celebrating the regional history of Prince George County will be housed in the 1883 Court House and Clerk's Office, both of which have been restored to their original architectural features. Artifacts, collections, programs and exhibitions tell the story of the region from prehistoric times to present. Opens early 2008.

King's Highway March to Freedom Trail – Prince William County

The King's Highway, also known as the Potomac Path, was a stage and post route that Generals Washington and Rochambeau used to move their troops to the siege of Yorktown. New walking trail includes interpretive signage detailing the trail's history.

Shirley Plantation – Charles City

One of Virginia's most historic places, Shirley Plantation continues to enhance the visitor experience with expert restorations, interpretation and displays. The land- and river-side porticoes of the Great House have been completely restored and basement window jack arches have been returned to their original appearance, the latter after matching brick was successfully kilned on site after much experimentation. The original early 18th century kitchen has new interpretation that sheds light on the lives of slaves and house servants. An archaeology room will showcase 40 years of excavations. Finally, an original military sword presented by Congress to midshipman Hill Carter in 1814 for gallantry returns to Shirley Plantation after having been on loan to the Virginia Historical Society since 1882.

Virginia Living Museum – Newport News

The museum has just added a new café featuring made-to-order sandwiches, wraps, soups, salads, pizza and other delectables with indoor and outdoor seating areas. A new amphitheater overlooking Deer Park Lake will open in spring 2008 and will be used for animal programs and special events. It can also be rented for group events.

NEWS

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts – Richmond

A special exhibition, *Landscapes from the Age of Impressionism*, will run from February 22 to May 11, 2008. Forty French and American paintings represent some of the finest examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century landscapes in the renowned collection of the Brooklyn Museum.

Main Street America:

Virginia is home to Main Street America, with charming small towns, historic cities, downtowns and neighborhoods with great shop, restaurants, museums and outdoor recreation.

Virginia Historic Garden Week's 75th Anniversary

One of Virginia's premier springtime tourism events, Historic Garden Week, celebrates 75 years, April 19- 27 ,2008, featuring more than 30 tours across the commonwealth of private homes and gardens. Sponsored by member clubs of The Garden Club of Virginia, the week is known as America's Largest Open House, as it is the oldest and largest event of its kind in the nation.

Historic Downtown Walking Tour - Bristol

A new self-guided audio walking tour with map of downtown Bristol gives visitors a chance to discover the rich history and musical heritage of this twin city. MP3 players are available for rent at the Bristol Chamber of Commerce along with tour maps – or visitors can download the tour and map from the website www.visitbristoltnva.com.

Eagle Rider of Central Virginia Motorcycle Rentals – Richmond

Get your motors running. Head out on the highway. You'll find adventure in whatever comes your way by taking to the roads on a Harley-Davidson, BMW, Yamaha or Honda motorcycle. Daily and weekly rates are available at this centrally-located service.

Lovingston Opry – Lovingston

A renovated historic Catholic church is now home to the spirit of Blue Ridge Mountain music. Live performances on Saturday nights set toes tapping and hands clapping. It's a chance to experience the magic of native mountain music in an authentic setting.

Piedmont Crossroads Visitor Center – Zion Crossroads

The new Best Western Zion Crossroads Hotel is home to a new visitor center created to promote Fluvanna, Louisa and Orange counties. Maps and brochures will direct visitors to nearby wineries, bed & breakfast inns, Civil War history and shopping.

NEWS

Winchester/Frederick County Visitor Center - Civil War Orientation Center – Winchester
Located in the new Shenandoah University History and Tourism Center, this facility will house a media room, a Civil War orientation center, exhibits and displays, restrooms and an expanded gift shop. A 24-hour touch-screen kiosk has phone with automatic free dialing and can print directions to local lodging, restaurants and attractions.

The Finer Things – Affluent Travel:

Virginia is a travel destination of distinction, brimming with the best of everything, including 130-plus wineries, luxurious spas, fine hotels, varied boutiques, antique stores and museums full of treasures.

The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg

A luxurious full-service spa done the Colonial Williamsburg way. Treatments feature ingredients used during colonial times. Housed in a 20,000-square-foot Georgian Revival building, the spa features 12 treatment rooms, indoor and outdoor pools, steam rooms, whirlpools, men’s and women’s locker rooms, three lounges and a complete fitness center. Located within easy walking distance of the Williamsburg Inn and the Williamsburg Lodge.

Art Museum of Western Virginia – Roanoke

In a building that is in itself a work of art thanks to the talents of designer Randall Stout, the new 81,000-square-foot museum will showcase inspiring works and offer special programs. Included is “Art Venture,” an interactive gallery and art center for children, a flexible theater/programming space, multi-purpose auditorium, research library, museum shop, studio classroom, works on paper study room and café with indoor and outdoor seating. In addition to holdings of important 19th and early 20th century American art, significant modern and contemporary art and design and decorative arts, the museum’s collection also includes European and ancient Mediterranean art.

Flying Fox Vineyard – Afton

Nelson County’s ninth winery tasting room is now open. Flying Fox Vineyard (named for the weathervane on the vineyard’s main building) specializes in Merlot, Viognier and great views from its patio.

Norfolk Botanical Gardens – Norfolk

The 155-acre treasure of Norfolk introduces the new World of Wonders (WOW) exhibit. Designed especially for children, the exhibit encourages interaction and the natural course of curiosity. The Gardens also invites freewheeling guests to enjoy Bike Nights (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from April through September.) Guests are invited to bring their bicycles and enjoy three hours of bike riding bliss. And for those who really, really love botanical gardens, Norfolk Botanical Gardens will offer the option to sleep overnight in the Family Overnight Package (June – August).

NEWS

Art By Night – Roanoke

On the first Thursday night of each month, downtown Roanoke is the place for art lovers. Thirteen galleries and display places will be open late to show their latest works. Free entertainment and refreshments are provided.

Sugarleaf Vineyards and Winery – near Charlottesville

Virginia's award-winning boutique vineyard rests on a 126 acre estate in the heart of the Monticello Wine Trail opened for visitors in September, 2007. This winery prides itself on producing superior fruit to create exceptional wines.

Wintergreen Resort's Stony Creek Golf Course

The Tuckahoe Nine at Wintergreen Resort's Stony Creek Golf Course is currently undergoing renovations improving fairways and bunker drainage; re-grassing fairways, greens, green surrounds and tees; re-seeding roughs; and installing additional landscaping. Upon completion, holes 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 will have nearly three times the drainage capacity. In addition, the golf staff has constructed several new professional and forward tees. Opening June 2008.

The Wine Trail of Botetourt County

The scenic views and old-fashioned hospitality of Botetourt County create the perfect environment to enjoy the fine wines of three charming family-run vineyards. Tours, tastings and special events throughout the year make the Botetourt County wine trail one to remember.

Accommodations:

In Virginia, visitors can choose from a five-star luxury hotel to mountain cabins – each offering a unique experience. Many Virginia lodging venues are destinations in themselves. Friendly innkeepers and staff complement outstanding facilities throughout the commonwealth, making visitors feel right at home.

High Meadows Vineyard Inn - Charlottesville

Featuring antique-furnished rooms, bedding by Anichini and spa products in the bath, the Inn will combine the best of indoor luxury with outdoor garden splendor. Refurbished gardens are now the domain of a flock of egg-laying hens. New outdoor pool and enlarged vineyard are on the calendar for summer 2008.

English Inn – Charlottesville

Eighteen new luxury suites, complete with dining area and kitchenette, will be completed by Spring 2008.

Hampton Inn & Suites – Herndon

New hotel with 96 rooms featuring 36-inch flat screen HD televisions, high-speed internet access, Cloud Nine bedding, microwave and refrigerator. Sits adjacent to Washington & Old Dominion walking/running trail.

NEWS

Hotel Floyd – Floyd

Downtown boutique hotel utilizes “green” technology to minimize impact on the environment and is a showcase of the art, music and culture of the Floyd County community. Each of the 14 rooms is themed based on an important person or place in Floyd.

Lawson House Inn – Floyd

Located in the heart of downtown Floyd, this three-bedroom bed & breakfast features a made-to-order breakfast made of local, organic ingredients. A massage therapist is on staff as well, making this the ultimate relaxing bed & breakfast.

The Mimslyn Inn – Luray

Originally opened in 1931, the Mimslyn Inn is undergoing a complete renovation and restoration to its original elegance with 44 guest rooms, spa, exercise room, tavern, dining room, meeting space, lobby bar, veranda and gardens.

Naked Mountain Bed & Breakfast – Shipman

The perfect retreat for the nature lover. The house sits on 20 wooded acres complete with hiking trails and mountain views. This is a birdwatcher’s paradise. Hosts fill fourteen birdfeeders per day attracting goldfinch, hummingbird, tanager, bluebird, titmouse and finch. Hosts provide some guided walks. Lovely home offers one guest bedroom with private bath, ensuring peace and privacy.

Holiday Inn Manassas Battlefield Park – Manassas

Full service 104-room hotel with restaurant, indoor pool and meeting rooms will open near Manassas battlefield, site of the first major battle of the Civil War.

Hampton Inn on the Appomattox – Colonial Heights

Five-story, 127-room hotel on banks of the historic Appomattox River will feature meeting room, free high-speed internet and signature Hampton Inn hot breakfast. Opening early 2008.

Holiday Inn on the Appomattox – Colonial Heights

The first of the Holiday Inn “Millennium” prototype in the greater Richmond area will have 143 rooms, 5,625 square feet of meeting and function space, full service restaurant, free high-speed internet and flat screen televisions in guest rooms. Opening summer 2008.

Hilton Garden Inn – Richmond airport

Serving the newly-renovated Richmond airport, the Hilton Garden Inn will offer 15,000 square feet of conference space and 26-inch, high-definition, flat screen televisions in the guest rooms.

Holiday Inn – Richmond airport

Full-service Holiday Inn will sit adjacent to new Hilton Garden Inn and existing Wingate Inn at the Richmond airport. More than 5,600 square feet of meeting and function space complement deluxe guest rooms with flat screen televisions, full service restaurant and free high-speed internet. Opening early 2008.

NEWS

Smithfield Station – Smithfield

This 44-room, newly-expanded hotel is nestled on the banks of the Pagan River and surrounded by a 100-slip marina. A few suites are in a reconstructed lighthouse. Downtown Smithfield, with quaint shops and restaurants, is within walking distance.

Westin Town Center – Virginia Beach

Located within the tallest building in Virginia, the 15-floor Westin Town Center hotel offers two luxury suites among its 236 guest rooms. Its 16,000 square feet of meeting space includes an 8,300-square-foot ballroom. Other amenities include a full service restaurant, indoor swimming pool and whirlpool.

Hilton Garden Inn and Suites – Winchester

Winchester's newest hotel will open Summer 2008. The lobby exudes a relaxing feel and comes complete with bar and food service, including full, hot breakfast. Rooms have internet hookups.

Meeting Facilities:

Some of America's most outstanding new conference centers are here in Virginia. They join traditional favorites that continue to set the standard in accommodating conventions, conferences, meetings and gatherings of all sizes.

Boar's Head Inn -Charlottesville

One of Virginia's favorite resorts has announced plans to build a \$10 million meetings pavilion, scheduled to open by mid-2008. The pavilion will include a 6,000-square-foot ballroom as well as a full-service business center.

Holiday Inn University Area & Conference Center – Charlottesville

All meetings and conference areas are undergoing a total renovation and expansion. When completed in early 2008 the facility will be able to accommodate more than 500 attendees for meetings and conferences.

Oak Ridge Estate – Arrington

The historic estate dates back 200 years and portions of the superb manor house are as old as 1802. This is the setting for the new Carriage House that can accommodate up to 362 banquet guests or as many as 775 guests in seminar configuration. The tranquil beauty of the Virginia countryside is a perfect setting for a meeting.

Please note anticipated opening dates may change. For more information about travel in Virginia go to www.Virginia.org or call 1-800-932-5827.