

# ROAD TRIP

## | Montpelier Wine Festival

**WHERE:** James Madison's Montpelier, Orange, Va.

**WHY:** Country stores, classic diners and croquet on the way to Virginia's best wines.

**HOW FAR:** 75 miles from the District.

Maybe the world is getting smaller. In the past few years, promising vineyards—once a plane ride from Washington—have become just a morning's drive off.

The secret lies in the rise of Virginia's wine country. Clustered mainly in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the vineyards are turning out award-winning wines. And if you want a taste of that success, you're in luck: Next weekend, May 3-4, you need drive to only one place—the annual Montpelier Wine Festival—to try over a dozen.

Once at James Madison's manse, look for standouts like Barbourville Vineyards' Italian varietals or specialties like Horton Cellars' food-friendly Norton wine. The festival also will offer gourmet noshing and live music, plus face-painting and kite contests for kids.

But this is only the capper. On your way, stop at the general store in Greenwich for a local map or the country hams. Or pack a picnic and enjoy the hiking trails and paddle boats at C.M. Crockett Park. Just south, Route 15 near Locust Dale is a pretty drive, and the pick-your-own farms nearby will have branches loaded with fruit. History buffs, oenophiles and adventurers will find plenty to keep them happy all spring and summer long. (See [www.orangevachamber.com/winefest.html](http://www.orangevachamber.com/winefest.html) for more info on the festival.) — **Chris J. Petropoulos**

