summer

FAIRS, FESTIVALS TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

What better way to savor the long days of summer than by checking out these upcoming fairs and festivals? Or, consider clearing your calendar and making time to discover a new travel destination!

Lovers of live music will want to check out Fairfax Rock the Block, held on the fourth Friday of each month through September. This free, family-friendly outdoor concert series includes lawn games, local restaurant vendors and a beer garden. To learn more about this year's performers, visit www.fairfaxva.gov/RockTheBlock.

On June 6, experience the rush of harness racing while sampling some of the area's best wines at the Wine & Trotter

Festival, held at the Shenandoah County Fairgrounds in Woodstock.

On a similar note, the Shenandoah Wine & Jazz Festival on June 27 features lively jazz music in a wooded creek setting by the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. Your admission includes a souvenir glass and tastings from 14 wineries, along with craft and food vendors and a complimentary museum tour. To purchase advance tickets and learn more about the musical performers, visit www.frontier museum.org.

Celebrate the anniversary of our nation's founding at the Port Royal Annual Independence Day Celebration on July 4 along the shores of the Rappahannock. Hear a dramatic reading of the Declaration of Independence, enjoy 18th-century dancing and watch demonstrations of early trades and skills. There's no cost for parking or admission, with surrey carriage rides and many different games to enjoy.

Get a jump on fair season from July 8-11 at the Caroline County Agricultural Fair in Ruther Glen, where you can test your abilities in pie-eating and hog-calling contests, check out craft and home goods competitions or enjoy carnival rides and yummy treats. Not only will you experience time-honored traditions, but there will be new attractions to delight and entertain attendees of all ages.













This year's Virginia Lake Festival, or "LakeFest," as it is known by locals, is July 16-18 in Clarksville. Held along the shores of Buggs Island Lake, this event features free admission, a juried craft show, hot-air balloons, children's rides and more. Many of the nearly 100,000 visitors each year stay to watch the traditional "Gathering of the Boats" and fireworks show.

If the roar of an engine (be it car, plane or motorcycle) gets your heart pumping, then you'll want to make tracks on July 18 to Ingalls Field outside Hot Springs. At Wings and Wheels, the largest car and air show in the Allegheny Highlands, you'll see vintage planes and skilled aerobatics, stroll through antique, classic and muscle cars and vote for your favorite. There's a carnival, vendors, music, food, and you can even tandem parachute. For more information, visit www.wingsandwheels bathcountyva.com or call (540) 839-7202.

As midsummer approaches, the Chincoteague Blueberry Festival from July 24-26 celebrates this tasty and healthful fruit while serving as the open-

ing act for a week of festivities that includes the world-famous pony-swim, non-stop live music, unique arts and crafts and food offerings that include all things blueberry. Visit www.Chincoteague BlueberryFestival.com or the Chincoteague Blueberry Festival's Facebook page for details.

Instead of flashy rides and amusements, the Louisa Agricultural Fair from July 31-Aug. 1 highlights the kinship of a rural community enjoying food and fun, with live bands, 4-H animal exhibits, countrystyle kids' activities and much more. Insiders won't want to miss Dinner Under the Stars, which includes a delicious steak dinner, music and dancing after the fair closes on Friday evening. Visit www.louisacountyagfair.com or call (540) 894-3275 for more information and to purchase advance dinner tickets before they sell out!

The Harbor for the Arts Festival returns to Cape Charles from Aug. 7-16. Launched in 2012 by a National Endowment for the Arts grant, the Festival's success has attracted continued











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support from the town and its citizens, as well as several private sponsors who want to see this week-long annual event continue. Join us for free, live entertainment featuring jazz, soul and swing music, harbor and street parties and more. For more details, visit artsentercapecharles.org or harborforthearts.com.

Hosted by the Prince William Veterans Farm Club, the Prince William County Fair on Dumfries Road in Manassas from Aug. 14-22 features "Fun4U" competitions and low-cost admission on several days. From a demolition derby to a cute baby contest, there's everything you'd expect at one of Virginia's largest county fairs. For details, visit www.pwcfair.com and visit the fair's Facebook page for updates.

Named the nation's #1 agricultural fair by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions, the Rockingham County Fair, set for Aug. 17-22 in Harrisonburg, will feature live music by the legendary American Country band "Alabama," as well as monster trucks, demolition derby, a truck and tractor pull. While you're there, check out the new Virginia Poultry Industry Showcase, as well as other agricultural exhibits.

With summer winding down, what better place to show your children and grandchildren the heritage of harvest season than by visiting the Field Day of the Past, which will be held in Rockville from Sept. 18-20. This popular Richmond-area event offers live demonstrations of corn shuckers and other old-time farm equipment, historical reenactments and recreated pioneer homes, as well as carnival rides, truck and tractor pulls, arts & crafts, a rodeo competition and more.

Finally, for those seeking a more exotic experience, consider a 13-day Hawaiian vacation organized by Your Man Tours (YMT). The package includes sightseeing on each of the four Hawaiian islands, as well as agricultural tours of pineapple, coffee, orchid and macadamia nut producers.

Start planning now which of these annual attractions you'll check out this year, and which ones may have to wait until next year!



Departs Wednesdays & Fridays in January 2016. Experience a true tropical paradise with perfect climate, stunning scenery and exquisite beaches while visiting the islands of Oahu, Kauai, Maui and the "Big Island" of Hawaii. Sightseeing includes Pearl Harbor and Waikiki Beach on Oahu; enjoy an entertaining cruise on the Wailua River to romantic Fern Grotto and visit a Noni Fruit Plantation on Kauai; visit Lahaina, the old whaling capital and Maui Gold Pineapple Plantation on Maui; and on the "Big Island," a Macadamia nut factory, Orchid Nursery; Volcanoes National Park, Fish Farm, Mountain Thunder Coffee Plantation and more.

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