



# SIPsational

Story | HALEY SHAPLEY

**Y**ou've likely spent years enjoying others' spirits, beer and wine—now it's time to make your own with these bucket-list beverage experiences. Bring your creations home and wow your friends at your next dinner party.

## GET INTO THE SPIRIT OF SPIRITS MAKING IN WASHINGTON

Known for tasty spirits like Brown Sugar Bourbon, Blood Orange Vodka and Elk Rider Gin, Heritage Distilling Co. doesn't stop at just delectable drinks. The craft distillery based in Gig Harbor, Washington, also features innovative programs like the Cask Club—through which you get your own 10-liter cask

to age vodka, gin or whiskey to your preferred flavor profile before it's bottled—and the My Batch program, the only one of its kind in the country.

As part of My Batch, head into Heritage Distilling's beautiful flagship location for the chance to apprentice under a head distiller for a few hours. You'll learn about the distilling process from start to finish, getting up close and personal

with the stills (each with its own name meaningful to the owners). While your concoction is cooking, tour the facility, then come back in time to hand-bottle your spirit (it might be vodka, gin, rye whiskey or something else) and add a personalized label. The experience also includes samples served with food—the tough part is deciding just what to taste among the many flavorful choices.

## HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO DRINK

Grab a cup of coffee with a view of the water at Java & Clay Cafe in idyllic Gig Harbor. In addition to coffee from Seattle roaster Caffè Umbria, the shop serves tea, smoothies, beer and wine. While you're there, paint a ceramic pottery piece as a memento of your visit.



**BREW AND BOTTLE YOUR OWN BEER IN VIRGINIA**

What started as a home brew supply store evolved into a craft brewery and tasting room at Shenandoah Valley Brewing Co. The business never forgot its roots, though, so in addition to offering beers on tap, this Staunton-based Virginia brewery also has everything home brewers need to whip up their own creations.

Come on in and experiment with a variety of recipes—Shenandoah Valley Brewing Co. will help you make everything from cream ales and oatmeal stouts to mild porters and imperial India Pale Ales. Whether you're a beginner hoping to follow a kit or an adventurous home brewer looking to tweak a recipe of your own, SVBC has the tools you need, including dry extracts, wet extracts, grains (they'll grind them if you prefer), yeast, bottles, carboys, kegging equipment and more. If you need a little inspiration, take a seat in the taproom, where you can sample from a dozen rotating varieties of brews in a friendly, old-world atmosphere. You're bound to come up with something drinkable, but if not, you can always try again! ♣

HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO DRINK

Sit down at Zynodoa Restaurant in Staunton and have a glass of wine—you'll find everything from a local riesling to a California chardonnay to a malbec from Argentina. The craft cocktail list is worth perusing, too.

**HAVE A VINE TIME MAKING WINE IN ITALY**

If you've ever wondered what a winemaker's life is like, find out for yourself with a trip to Terra Jovia in Italy, offered by Winerist. You'll spend eight days in the small town of Gioia del Colle, immersing yourself in the vino lifestyle. It starts with a welcome drink and a traditional Apulian dinner. And get a good night's sleep in your room at Alsecondopiano B&B, because the next day is when the work begins. You'll head out for a day of harvesting, followed by a morning of grape mixing in the cellar and an afternoon sommelier course. In between sightseeing excursions to caves and castles, you'll work in the vineyard and cellar, making sure everything is ready to go.

Because you're in the birthplace of the primitivo grape, you'll learn all about this style of wine and what makes this region of Italy famous. The trip is a gift that keeps on giving, but you'll have to be patient—four months after you return home, you'll receive your supply of Gioia Del Colle Primitivo DOC, produced with your own hands and decorated in your own labels. That's certainly worth a cheers!

HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO DRINK

Take a break from wine with a visit to Gioia del Colle's Pasticceria Dolci Momenti, where you can grab a cup of tea, coffee or hot cocoa and pair it with a pretty pastry or a bite of gelato.

