

# Drink

Bar seats around Charlottesville are filling up again, which means area bartenders are finally able to put pouches and to-go cups behind them and offer patrons in-person crafted cocktails. While making use of the abundance of locally produced spirits and ingredients is not new to our bartending scene, the opportunity to delight customers with creative libations has certainly taken on a whole new meaning in this summer of reopening. Growing season is in full swing—and the number of liquor producers and distillers calling Virginia home keeps growing, too. Local bartenders are happy to create cocktails to share this summer. Here's a sampling of the best local hard suttff in town.—*By Carrie Meslar*



IMAGES: EZE AMOS



## Espresso Martiki

**The Bar:** Vitae Spirits Tasting Room

**The Bartender:** D

The espresso martini has become a modern classic, picking you up and calming you down with each sip. Vitae Spirits' take on the drink uses the distillery's own coffee liqueur, a local collaboration with Mudhouse Coffee Roasters. The liqueur gets a vacation vibe with an infusion of coconut, then it's amped up with Mudhouse cold brew, housemade orgeat, and Typhoon Bitters from D.C.'s Modern Bar Cart. It's a powerhouse matchup that is equal parts tropical and Charlottesville.

## Violet B

**The Bar:** Tonic

**The Bartender:** Cris Morales

Morales starts each Violent B by using local blueberries to create nuanced and tart flavored vodka. The brilliantly purple spirit is then shaken up with Vitae gin, lemon and demerara syrup. The end result is a cocktail with a classic sour tang and a little extra backbone thanks to the split base of vodka and gin. When asked about the source of the blueberries, the staff jokes that there couldn't be a more local purveyor for that batch: They came from a team member's garden.

## .38 Special

**The Bar:** The Local

**The Bartender:** Alec Spidalieri

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. This stalwart of The Local's cocktail menu is one of the first cocktails Spidalieri created when he arrived at the Belmont restaurant, and there are no plans to bid the drink farewell any time soon. A variation on the old fashioned, this particular iteration uses Bowman Brothers Virginia straight bourbon, Domaine de Canton ginger liqueur, Peychaud's bitters, and local honey. It meets the needs of many a thirsty patron, while incorporating both a bourbon and honey brand that call Virginia home.

# CHARLOTTESVILLE

# A guide to uber local cocktails to enjoy all summer long



## The Original WJ Moonshine Punch

**The Bar:** The Whiskey Jar

**The Bartender:** The Stuff of Legend

Another long-standing bar item, this deceptively powerful mixture's popularity keeps it a menu staple. Moonshine has played a significant role in the history of drinking in America—until fairly recently it was an illegal product, only shared among friends in Mason jars with dubious labels. At the Whiskey Jar, Richmond-based Belle Isle Moonshine gets dressed up with a mix of seasonal fruit and citrus, with some dashes of orange and angostura bitters thrown in for good measure. While its staff has changed since the drink's creation, The Jar shows no sign of slowing down, with Kayla Cohron now at the helm of the bar program.



EZE AMOS

Matthieu Finot expands his family's winemaking legacy with a new Virginia bottling.

# New domaine for the Old Dominion

By Paul Ting

Most people think of their parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles as their family tree. For award-winning King Family Vineyards winemaker Matthieu Finot, it would be more accurate to call it a family vine. Finot's relatives own vineyards and make wine in their native country of France. The recent launch of the Domaine Finot label in Virginia marks the debut of Finot's personal project, but is also a nod to the family's eponymous Domaine Finot winery across the pond.

The idea of this nascent project started in 2016 when Gilbert Tallard hired Finot to assist with the management of Tallard's Turk Mountain Vineyards. For Finot, growing grapes in the vineyard and winemaking go hand in hand, and he was excited by the opportunity to produce wine "from grapes to bottle." He also wanted to get closer to his roots as a winemaker by working in the vineyard. After three years of trial and error, the first release is from the 2019 vintage.

In contrast to the state-of-the-art equipment that Finot uses at King Family, his approach to Domaine Finot wines is simpler and minimalistic. He is intentionally pursuing a philosophy referred to as "garagiste," a term that implies small-batch winemaking done in a garage. All of the wines are made whole cluster (not

requiring equipment for destemming) and without added yeast or sulfur. This mirrors the philosophy of French wineries, where organic farming is practiced and wines are made with minimal intervention.

Finot is excited to see more small, personal labels in Virginia. He calls these projects "honest and interesting" and feels they represent an opportunity to tell a different, perhaps more personal, story and present another style of winemaking often not seen in larger wineries. Like others with personal projects, it's obvious the primary motivation for Finot is simply the love of wine.

The Domaine Finot 2019 Malbec is a wonderful surprise, as malbec is not usually a grape variety that flourishes in Virginia. The nose presents with blackberry and black plum with some brighter notes of red cherry and raspberry. On the tongue, it exhibits bright acidity, red fruit flavors of strawberry and cherry, and some darker fruits such as blackberry jam. It is balanced, complex, well concentrated, and lingering.

Finot will also produce petit verdot, tannat, cabernet franc, and merlot with his Turk Mountain grapes. His 2019 Tannat is bottled and will be ready for release in about six months. An early sample showed a big, bold, structured wine full of black fruits, stewed fruits, and a hint of licorice. It's built to age and will reward those who are patient with its evolution.

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All about town.  
SUMMER 2021

A VISIT TO TRUTH FARM | GET TO KNOW MATT EICH | DO ME A FLAVOR, WILL YA?

GO  
YOUR  
OWN  
WAYFOR THEIR **SECOND**  
**ACT**, THESE **FIVE**  
**PEOPLE** ANSWERED  
AN IMPOSSIBLE  
QUESTION: "WHAT IF?"

cville

## What is 434?

It's recreation, it's culture, it's society — it's how we live in Charlottesville. In this full-glossy quarterly magazine, you'll meet townspeople from all corners of our area, from creatives to CEOs, each with their own story to tell. Every issue will connect readers with the best things to buy, see, and get involved in that season.

**This is the 434,  
and we're all about town.**

**ON STANDS NOW!**

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## Reason to believe

By Paul Ting

At first, making beer was just a hobby for Mark Fulton—when he finished punching the calculator during his day job as an accountant, he'd head home to his lab. Then, in 2010, the amateur beer enthusiast snagged a craft brewing apprenticeship with the American Brewers Guild. He untied his tie, quit his accounting gig, and moved to Maine to brew beer full time. Before long, he was the director of brewing operations at Maine Beer Company.

The mountains of Maine were beautiful, but the Blue Ridge called Fulton back. In 2017, he returned to Charlottesville and joined two friends from his student days at UVA—Patrick Adair and Jeff Raileanu, both avid home-brewers in their own right—to start Reason Beer.

Fulton says the business has enjoyed the support of the Charlottesville community since day one and is also seeing growing support throughout Virginia.

The brewmaster credits the popularity of Reason Beer to a focus on approachable and balanced beer, with recipes designed to produce depth and complexity while remaining complementary to food. The current offerings at Reason include a large range of classic beer styles, but also a wild ale program that focuses on beers aged in barrels obtained from local wineries.

When asked, Fulton says he believes the current popularity of hazy New England-style India Pale Ale is here to stay. For the future, he sees a growing interest in and demand for lower calorie, lower alcohol beers (known as "session" beers). Reason currently offers examples of each, a double-NEIPA style known as Unreasonable, which comes in at 8.5 percent alcohol by volume and the aptly named and contrasting session India Pale Ale named Reasonable, which is a lighter drinker at 4 percent ABV.

Unreasonable is a big, bold beer that is full of both flavor and alcohol. It manages to present a fine balance of biscuit and citrus fruit flavors while maintaining a nice mouthfeel despite lower alcohol. If you are looking for other styles of lower alcohol beer, Reason also has a blonde ale that comes in at 4 percent ABV (Hoppy Blonde), a German-style pilsner with 4.3 percent ABV (AOK), and a Saison farmhouse ale at 4.5 percent ABV.

On September 18, Reason celebrates its fourth anniversary with a block party at the brewery with new releases, food trucks and other programming. As if you needed another reason to check it out.

Vitae Spirits, founded by Ian Glomski, recently opened a new tasting room on Water Street.



EZE AMOS



Mark Fulton left a desk job to learn the brewing process before founding Reason Beer with college buddies from UVA.

EZE AMOS

## A glass act

Lizzy Trevor became wine director at Tilman's on the Downtown Mall a year ago, coming to the position by sheer force of will. The oenophile, who recently aced the Wine & Spirit Education Trust's level 2 examination, is completely self-taught and self-driven. She started working at Tilman's two years ago as a team member and climbed into the wine director's chair with no previous professional experience.

Trevor says her focus is on making esoteric wine varieties approachable to casual consumers. Courtenay Tyler, the restaurant's co-owner, who also operates Tonic on Market Street, says she couldn't be happier with Trevor's programming, which involves setting the eatery's wine menu, selecting wines for its wine club, organizing events, and training staff.

Prior to turning her hobby into a career, Trevor had been an esthetician. Now, she only has eyes for the vine and is looking ahead to taking the WSET level 3 and 4 tests. "I just love geeking out on wine," she says.—*Shea Gibbs*



JOHN ROBINSON

As the self-taught wine director at Tilman's wine and cheese bar, Lizzy Trevor offers customers a chance to explore pairings by way of her wine geek wisdom.

# Water of life

By Paul Ting

Sea anemones provide shelter and protection for clownfish; in turn, clownfish keep predators away from the anemones and stir up nutrients nearby. Red-billed oxpeckers eat pesky bugs off of rhinoceros' backs. Nature is full of examples of symbiosis—two organisms living together in a mutually beneficial way.

For a while, Charlottesville had its own example, down on Harris Street, where Vitae Spirits and Ace Biscuit & Barbecue sat next to each other. Ian Glomski, head of Vitae, says the relationship was key in the years after the distillery's 2015 founding.

Distilleries are required to be in areas zoned for manufacturing, and there usually isn't much in the surrounding area to drive foot traffic. But Ace drew customers, and Vitae provided liquid spirits to match the barbecue spot's greasy fare. Glomski says customers were attracted to Vitae by a desire for something new and a curiosity about the process of distilling.

Both partners have moved on to greener pastures: In 2019, Ace moved to a large building down the street, and Vitae opened a tasting room on the Downtown Mall. Unfortunately, the move coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and delayed opening until last August. While numbers were initially sluggish, growth and sales are now returning.

Vitae Spirits distills from sugar cane, which makes it rum by definition and has the added benefit that its products are gluten free. The one exception to this is a spirit produced by distilling beer made at Champion Brewing Company, a partnership that exemplifies a commitment to locally sourced ingredients and collaboration with other area businesses. Other examples include Golden Rum made with sugar cane grilled on housemade charcoal at Ace, and coffee liqueur using coffee roasted at Mudhouse Coffee Roasters.

Vitae has a core product line that's always available and can be found in stores, and a Distiller's Reserve line com-

posed of limited release products sold only at the distillery that allow more creativity and recipe testing. The core line includes two versions of rum, a gin, the orange and coffee liqueurs, and an anisette liqueur that will please licorice lovers. My favorite remains the orange liqueur, which uses locally grown Hardy oranges and showcases pure orange flavor while remaining light and bright on the palate.

Of the Reserve line, I can highly recommend the Barrel-Aged Rum, which spends about two and a half years in barrels sourced from local wineries and distilleries. In addition to the amber color, aging gives it a deep and inviting nose and warm flavors of toffee, nuts, cedar, and hints of tobacco and chocolate.

Conifer is a recent release, incorporating tips of spruce and fir trees from Bit-O-Honey Christmas tree farm to produce a subtly flavored spirit reminiscent of gin. Without juniper berries it can't be called gin, but Vitae's Tips and Tonic cocktail will substitute nicely for a refreshing gin and tonic on a hot summer day.

# F I N A L F R O N T I E R S

**Earl Swift turns his eye for detail to space travel**

BY MARY JANE GORE

SUPPLIED PHOTO

## → “It’s a dirty place,” says Earl Swift. He’s talking about the moon.

The moon is covered in fine dust, an endless desert of gray particles that smear when disturbed in the breezeless atmosphere. When the Apollo 15 mission landed there in 1971, the astronauts found that the dust meant danger for them and the brand-new rover they’d brought. The moon dirt worked its way into the seals of the astronauts’ helmets and gloves, making them difficult to remove. Dirt coated the instrument panels of the rovers, making them nearly impossible to read. Fine dirt lined the angled walls of the moon’s craters—if the rover slid into a crater, there’s no guarantee that it would ever make it out. On Earth, the astronauts had been swaggering cowboys, but on the moon, they moved slowly, crossing the barren expanse one dust particle at a time.

Swift’s eye for fine, granular detail is a hallmark of his writing. In his latest work, the esteemed Nelson County journalist and author turns that passion for detail to space. *Across the Airless Wilds: The Lunar Rover and the Triumph of the Final Moon Landings* tells the story of Apollo missions 15, 16, and 17, which took place in 1971 and 1972 and saw three moon rovers wheel across the lunar surface.

Even chatting in a cozy coffeehouse in Crozet, Swift can conjure the vastness and loneliness of space travel. “Forget about interplanetary colonization,” he says, “lunar colonization might not be practical.” The Apollo 17 mission took the rover as far as any human has ever gone, he says. As he writes it: “Here they’d leave humankind’s outermost footprints.”

Swift’s earlier books and magazine articles describe more terrestrial, but perhaps equally dramatic, environments—the sinking Tangier Island (*Chesapeake Requiem*, *A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island*, on many Best Book of 2018 lists); points where native Americans and then colonists aimed to prosper along the James River (*Journey on the James*); and the beauty and the beastliness of America’s interstate highway system (*The Big Roads*). There’s also a book about a risky sojourn to locate, identify, and honor the remains of a crew of a U.S. helicopter downed in Laos (*Where They Lay*) and the tale of one ’57 Chevy told through the many stories of its owners (*Auto Biography*).

Swift, 62, keeps his feet on the ground nowadays. He starts almost every day with a five-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail, which is near his house. Sometimes he strolls out to a protected ledge on the trail and scribbles away before returning home to write through the evening. Don’t be fooled by the steady routine: He hasn’t been to the moon, but he’s been just about everywhere else.

As a kid, his father’s job with Firestone tires took the family all around the country. Swift inherited a “geeky appreciation for cars,” he says, learning to tell the difference between a Chevy and a Pontiac based on design elements from year to year, and taking joy in the numbering scheme of the North American highway system. His father was also a huge aviation fan, and by the time Swift was 11 he could identify nearly every commercial airliner.

The fascination with cars remains: Swift has owned “six or seven” convertibles, he says, and he whizzes around town in a Miata MX-5. “A two-seater forces you to make decisions

about what’s important to you—and who’s important to you,” he says. “You have to be careful about how much you pack, and you can only bring one other person with you.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Swift doesn’t shy away from technical details in describing the moon missions. When he talks about the moon rover’s drive train, his voice speeds up with excitement. Each wheel was powered by a device that produced just 1/4 horsepower per wheel, or one horsepower for the whole lunar rover. (A Prius has 121 horsepower.)

“The transmission for each wheel was made of just three parts and only two of those moved,” Swift says. “It violates all of your suppositions about a transmission.”

The rover weighed 460 pounds on Earth, but much less on the moon. When a Velcro clasp in a cord would not open up easily, one astronaut nearly picked up the entire rover by accident.

Up there, instant invention was a constant necessity. When a fender broke off the rover, the Apollo 17 team used U.S. Geological Survey maps bound with duct tape to shape a makeshift fender that lasted long enough to let the scheduled work continue.

In his younger days, before settling in Nelson to hike, write, and tinker with his automobiles, Swift traveled widely. Everywhere he’s been triggers vivid and fond memories. When he moved to Alaska in 1984 for a job at the Anchorage Times, the Last Frontier State was just right for him.

“There was a boomtown feel about the whole state. Money was everywhere and cocaine was a terrible problem in Anchorage. Organized crime was a terrible problem, too,” Swift recalls. It was “one of the most dangerous places to live in the United States, per capita, but boy, what a great place to be a reporter.”

He adjusted to wild Alaskan life. “If you’re not at the top of the food chain, you have to have a gun,” but he quickly adds, “It’s the kind of place, if you see a motorist broken down by the side of the road, you have to stop.”

After Alaska, Swift worked for the Virginian-Pilot from 1987 to 2008. Recalling his days at Norfolk’s daily newspaper, he kvells. “One of the best newspapers in the country, story for story. Best job in the world,” he says. The Batten family, who owned the paper at the time, “had installed really smart,



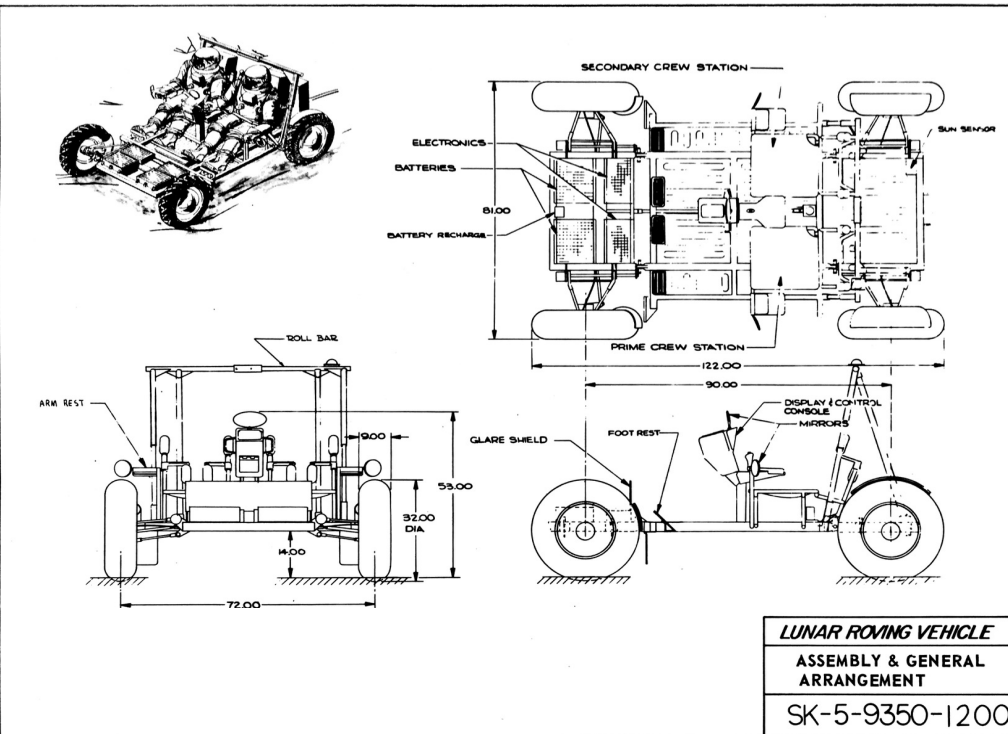
JOHN ROBINSON

↑  
Writer Earl Swift says the final three Apollo moon landings were distinguished by the astronauts’ use of the brand-new rovers they brought along.



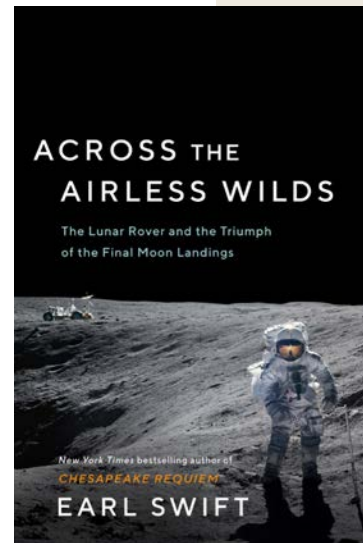


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In his new book, the Nelson County author tells the story of Apollo missions 15, 16, and 17.



hard-thinking management who had hired exceptionally well from top to bottom. It was a writer's newspaper."

The paper liked him, too, and granted leaves of absence to write books, some developed from his newspaper work.

In 1998, Swift took a 22-day sojourn on the James in a canoe, and returned with 22 dispatches from the wilderness. From his campsites, he wrote on a Tandy 1000 computer that "gave you one line of text as you typed, so you had to remember what you had typed." The project was a big hit, and UVA approached him about becoming a Virginia Humanities fellow, a position he still holds.

His Virginian-Pilot work also took him to Tangier Island, the isolated crabbing village in Virginia's Chesapeake Bay. He wrote a few stories about the island's local life before convincing his editors that the real story was about the water creeping

over the island's shores and not receding. When Swift returned to the island in 2016 to work on his book, he says he was "completely floored" to see how much more of the Tangier land mass had gone under water. "Tangier is a test case that announces we have got a problem," he says. "Respond as you will, but how you respond will say much about how we are going to get through this problem—or not."

After his years in Norfolk, where he enjoyed the beach and bay life immensely, he now enjoys the trees along the mountains in Nelson County. He's proud to have raised his daughter from age 11, with the support of "the proverbial village of friends and relatives," he says. "Looking back, I think there were far fewer challenges along the way than there were rewards. She reordered my whole existence. She introduced me to true joy, pride, worry, and more joy."

Swift takes about two years to write a book, and says his next project is already underway. He assures that his next book will be as different from *Across the Airless Wilds* as that book is from *Chesapeake Requiem*. Swift has to sell his next project, one he's been working on for a decade. Much of the research is done, but he will not divulge the subject. "I won't jinx it," he declares.

Like in his previous work, he'll try to become "the expert" on his new subject.

Actual experts don't talk to each other, he explains, and are full of slights, competition, and secrets. "But they will all talk to the reporter," he says. "You are the sum of their collective wisdom."

"Expertise may reach its sell-by date, and it may be outdated by the time a book is published," the author continues. "But you have exercised the ability to dive deep"—or even go to space.

**"A two-seater forces you to make decisions about what's important to you—and who's important to you."** EARL SWIFT

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# THE POWER ISSUE

## Each summer, C-VILLE publishes the Power Issue.

Traditionally, that's meant a roundup of the same old bigwigs and string pullers—politicians, landlords, and so forth. This year, we're taking a different tack, and focusing on the city's next generation of leaders. Get to know these

# under

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June 23 – 29, 2021 [c-ville.com](https://www.facebook.com/cville.weekly) facebook.com/cville.weekly

all-stars—people who are making a difference here in town, with their ideas, passion, dedication, and youthful energy. (Warning: This feature might make you feel old.)



By Alana Bittner,  
Amelia Delphos,  
Brielle Entzinger,  
Shea Gibbs,  
and Tami Keaveny

EZE AMOS



## Zeniah and Zaneyah **BRYANT**, 15

**FIGHTING AGAINST SYSTEMIC** racism and injustice runs in the family for the Bryant twins. They grew up watching their mother, Zeneida Howard, stand up for Black residents in town. And you already know about their older sister, Zyahna, who has become a global powerhouse in the years since she first petitioned City Council to remove the Robert E. Lee statue.

Now, the 15-year-old activists are making their own mark on Charlottesville. Following the murder of George Floyd last year, the pair led multiple demonstrations demanding justice for Black people killed by police. They also founded the Charlottesville Black Youth Action Committee to address racial issues in policing and education, like the school-to-prison pipeline.

But activism is way more than just protesting, the sisters emphasize—it's mutual aid, too. Throughout the pandemic, BYAC has distributed free food, water, money, and other necessities to unhoused people on the Downtown Mall, as well as paid for their hotel rooms. The new group has also hosted teach-ins on student activism, fundraisers for young Black mothers, and a Black joy festival.

This fall, the rising Charlottesville High School sophomores plan to revive CHS's Black Student Union—started by their sister—and encourage their peers to take advanced classes. They ultimately hope to inspire other Black youth to speak up for themselves, and refuse to be silenced.

"There are generations coming after us," said Zaneyah (standing on the right in the photo). "If we set things in place, they may not have to go through what we're going through right now."

## Ti **AMES**, 26

**TI AMES' THEATRICAL** roots grew early. Ames began singing as a child in church, and was attending Live Arts summer theater camps at age 9; by 12, they had joined the Virginia Consort, Charlottesville's chamber chorus. After graduating from Oberlin College with degrees in theater and Africana studies, Ames returned to Charlottesville to dive even deeper into its theater and music scene. Ames is now leading those summer camps at Live Arts, and considers the Charlottesville Player's Guild their "second home."

It was with the CPG that Ames directed *Black Mac*, an all-Black adaption of *Macbeth*, and more recently, staged their own original radio play, *See About the Girls*. Ames also teaches vocal lessons, using an Africana aesthetic that plays off of call and response. As they explain in a video for the Front Porch, "The song itself is a character. It gives you things to work with, and it is your job to respond to whatever it's giving you."



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JOHN ROBINSON

## Henry **BORGESON**, 28

**HENRY BORGESON KNOWS** his way around a board meeting—and a charcuterie board. The avid cook and passionate foodie has been bringing his combination of epicurean passion and business savvy to his profession since 2017, when he became an indispensable member of the team at Charlottesville-born restaurant group Roots Natural Kitchen.

The Roots empire launched in 2015 with just a single restaurant on the Corner. In less than six years, the eatery chain has grown to include three Virginia locations—in Charlottesville, Richmond, and Blacksburg—as well as further afield in Newark, Delaware, and State College and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Borgeson, a 2014 UVA grad, began serving as Roots' director of finance in 2017 and quickly moved into the C-suite, starting as chief financial officer in November 2018. If you want to turn leafy greens into greenbacks, Borgeson's your man.

# THE POWER ISSUE

## Shelby Marie **EDWARDS**, 26

**WHEN GEORGE FLOYD'S** murder sparked worldwide protests against police violence last year, actor and poet Shelby Marie Edwards felt a shift inside herself. She wanted social justice to play more of a role in her day-to-day life, but was unsure what her next move should be. She soon learned that the Public Housing Association of Residents was hiring its first-ever executive director, and—after a pep talk from activist Joy Johnson—felt called to continue the work of her mother, former vice-mayor Holly Edwards.

For years, the elder Edwards served low-income Charlottesville residents as a program coordinator for PHAR and a parish nurse for the Jefferson Area Board for Aging. Following her mother's death, Edwards moved back to Charlottesville in 2019 from Chicago, where she'd been teaching theater and writing classes for Black youth. She began working as a development coordinator for Live Arts, and offering performance arts classes through the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia.

Since joining PHAR in December, Edwards has hired a leader for the nonprofit's Residents for Respectful Research program and revamped its website and online presence. She's also working to bring on more resident organizers, as well as expand the resident-led redevelopment of the city's public housing.

Edwards hopes to act full-time one day, but plans to stick around at PHAR long enough to build up the next generation of young Black resident leaders. And she doesn't rule out following in her mother's footsteps.

"If I just so happen to be in Charlottesville for a long time, it is not outside of the possibility that I would run for City Council," she says.



ZACK WAJSGRAS

## Jeremiah **JORDAN**

**WHEN JEREMIAH JORDAN** started working at Ivy Provisions in 2017, he was a line cook with little passion for food and zero professional culinary experience.

Jordan had tasted excellence before—he went to college to play football and had a bright future ahead. But legal issues brought him home and away from his athletic career. That's when a friend helped Jordan get his foot in the door at Ivy Provisions. In just two months, the restaurant promoted him from cook to kitchen manager. By May of this year, he had worked his way up to Ivy Provisions' sous chef.

"Ivy welcomed me back with open arms," Jordan says. "I love food. It's become more of a passion because I take pride in my work."



TRISTAN WILLIAMS

## Karina **MONROY**, 28

**KARINA MONROY ARRIVED** from California a couple of years ago, and since then she's wasted no time getting involved in the Charlottesville community. She's the executive director of Creciendo Juntos, on the planning committee at the Bridge Progressive Arts Initiative, and co-creator of the wellness podcast Cultivando Tu Bienestar. That on its own would be enough to merit a mention as a rising star, but Monroy is also a gifted artist. Lately, she's been creating delicate needlework renditions of figs, cantaloupes, and pomegranates, fruits she remembers from her grandmother's orchard in Southern California.

For Monroy, a daughter of Mexican immigrants, a typically feminine task like needlework is an entryway to exploring the nuances of womanhood in Mexicano and Chicano culture. As she puts it in a video made for New City Arts, "It's been my way of showing the women in my culture that the work we're doing is appreciated and an art form." She's spreading that feeling of appreciation and sisterhood with La Cultura Cura, an intergenerational support group for Latinx women and femmes, that promotes "sisterhood, culture, social solidarity, and self-actualization."



TRISTAN WILLIAMS

# THE POWER ISSUE



EZE AMOS

## Raylaja WALLER, 24

**RAYLAJA WALLER HAS** always been passionate about working with kids. Born and raised in Charlottesville, she grew up babysitting her siblings and cousins. Since graduating from CHS in 2015, Waller has served as a camp counselor for Charlottesville Parks & Recreation and a substitute teacher for the city schools. And now she is the fifth- through eighth-grade pathway coach at City of Promise, which prepares youth living in Westhaven, 10th and Page, and Starr Hill for college and careers.

Waller joined City of Promise's first youth council as a high schooler, helping to organize free community events for children. While earning her degree in criminal justice and political science from Virginia State University, she returned to City of Promise multiple times to speak about her college experience.

Now, as a pathway coach, Waller helps kids explore career options and extracurricular activities. She's currently creating a curriculum of skills for students to develop before high school, including critical thinking, media and technology literacy, time management, leadership, and self-empowerment. In the future, she plans to collaborate with City of Promise to create her own nonprofit to help divert youth who are headed in the wrong direction by providing them with mentorship, jobs, and career development.

"Become that teacher, become that lunch lady or man, become that school janitor—they also make a difference," she says. "Having that Black person in the building that cares for these kids, even if you're not the one teaching them, is giving us a better outcome of how our kids act and what they get involved in."



EZE AMOS

## Alicia SIMMONS, 27

**HAVE YOU HAD** a great meal in Charlottesville recently? If so, there's a good chance Alicia Simmons was involved. She began her career in cuisine at Tavola, in Belmont, after graduating from the Piedmont Virginia Community College culinary arts program. A standout sous chef at the Italian eatery from 2015 to 2020, Simmons left Tavola last year for a gig as the sous chef at Restoration Crozet at Old Trail Golf Club.

But now she's back in Belmont—as Tavola's executive chef, a job Simmons chose over several other offers.

"She got her start here, and the talent was immediately obvious," Tavola owner Michael Keaveny says. "[We] watched her grow into a leader and are very excited to have her take on the next era of Tavola."



TRISTAN WILLIAMS

## Abel LIU, 21

**ABEL LIU IS** a UVA Echols Scholar, Royster Lawton Fellow, Truman Scholar, and the nation's first university student government president who was openly transgender when elected.

Before winning the Student Council presidency in a landslide last spring, Liu served as a Student Council representative and chair of the Representative Body for two years. The rising fourth-year says he's passionate about building systems of dual power by using an institution like Student Council alongside a counter institution, such as Young Democratic Socialists of America at UVA, Minority Rights Coalition, or the Virginia Student Power Network, to exert the maximum amount of pressure and leverage against the ideological and political hegemony of the university.

In recent months, Liu worked alongside YDSA, Minority Rights Coalition, and the Covid Action Now campaign to secure optional credit/no credit grading policies for the entire 2020-2021 school year and a tuition freeze for 2021-2022. Currently, he's teamed up with Housing and Residence Life, the Equity Center at UVA, UndocUVA, the Black Student Alliance, PLUMAS, and the University Police Department to set up alternative sources of care in non-violent situations, such as mental health crises or alcohol poisoning. He hopes this will lead to long-term funding in Student Health and Counseling & Psychological Services.

With that many initiatives underway, it might seem like Liu is all business, but he has a more relaxed side, too. In his free time, he enjoys bird watching and hiking with Chip, his 6-month-old puppy.

## Milla CIPRIAN, 21

**MILLA CIPRIAN IS** a standout volleyball player—but also a standout for her work off the field, where she’s become an important advocate for Black student-athletes at UVA. Milla helped start an organization called BOSS, or Black Student-Athletes Offering Service and Support. BOSS aims to create and build community among Black athletes and to create a safe space where they can authentically be themselves.

Throughout COVID, Ciprian worked to set up talks with Black alumni, and orchestrated conversations between the Black student-athlete community and the non-Black student-athlete community to figure out how they can work together to move the needle forward within the athletic community. Last fall, BOSS collaborated with the university’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee to register all student-athletes on every team to vote. And if all that wasn’t enough, Ciprian was also chosen to sing the national anthem before the start of the UVA men’s basketball team’s 2019 Final Four appearance. Oh say can you see a bright future for Ciprian? Because we sure can.



SUPPLIED PHOTO



SUPPLIED PHOTO

## Ibby HAN, 26

**IBBY HAN IS** an organizing powerhouse—not just in Charlottesville, but throughout the commonwealth. As the co-executive director of Virginia Student Power Network, Han has supported students across the state in organizing efforts, from VCU’s campaign to get police out of mental health crises to UVA’s Covid Action Now campaign, calling for better support for students and workers during the pandemic. Han’s work centers around creating sustainable student organizing, which can be difficult when student leadership turns over every four years. VSPN spends a lot of time running training and leadership development programs for student organizers. In addition to helping students directly, VSPN does statewide legislative advocacy, and has advocated for financial aid for undocumented students and marijuana legalization.

Han says one of her proudest moments was the community’s COVID response last year. She worked with Cville Community Cares and Congregate Charlottesville to design mini-grant programs to move money quickly to those who needed it.

Han emphasizes that everything she’s worked on has been with a tight-knit team of people who have deep trust in each other. Still, it’s clear that any team with Han on it is a team that gets things done.

## Alex BRYANT, 28

**WHEN IT COMES** to working for your community, Alex Bryant walks the walk. In addition to serving as the new associate director of IX Art Park, Bryant is president of the Downtown Business Association, secretary for the African American Teaching Fellows, and a board member at Bennett's Village and Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Blue Ridge.

"These one-on-one connections are the ripples that will start creating a really cohesive community," he says. "I want to do whatever I can do to help to foster and build that community. In Charlottesville it hasn't always been that way, and there's a lot of work to do ahead."

After receiving a degree in music from the University of Virginia in 2015, Bryant, originally from Richmond, became the coordinator of Monticello's Heritage Harvest Festival, highlighting the impact and influence enslaved laborers had on Southern food. He then began volunteering with the Tom Tom Foundation's food programs before serving as the nonprofit's project manager, operations director, and, eventually, managing director.

"It's so easy to just give money to a nonprofit...but everyone's got time and talents that they have," he says. "Just showing up and asking, 'How can I plug in and use what I know to help you guys?'—that's what I really love."

At IX, Bryant says he'll work to make the arts more accessible through community outreach, educational programming, and partnerships with local art galleries and organizations. He also plans to expand The Looking Glass immersive art space this fall, as well as collaborate with diverse local artists to redo the art park's murals and sculptures. And most importantly, he will make sure IX remains free for everyone.



EZE AMOS

## Allison WRABEL, 28

**IF YOU LOVE** local news, you owe Allison Wrabel a big thank you. Over the past six years, she has written more than a thousand stories for The Daily Progress.

After receiving a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in 2015, Wrabel, a Cleveland native, was tapped to apply to the Progress by a mentor at her school. Then-Progress editor-in-chief Nick Matthews had reached out, and was looking to hire new grads from his alma mater.

Wrabel started off at the Progress reporting on the local business community, and has been on the Albemarle County beat since 2017. In addition to covering hours-long government meetings, she writes about transportation, housing, land use, and other pressing issues that impact the county.

"I really enjoy talking to people. That's the part I like most about it," she says of her job. "I love helping people know what's going on in their community."

It's no secret that journalism is in a period of upheaval, with layoffs and pay cuts happening at news organizations across the country. But Wrabel wants to stay in the business for good. She sees herself doing long-form investigative reporting in the future, perhaps in a bigger city.

"When will that happen? I don't know," she says. "But eventually someday, hopefully!"



EZE AMOS



SUPPLIED PHOTO

## Sabrina HENDRICKS, 18

**SCHOOL PHOTOS ARE** the worst. The artificial pose. The forced smile. That cloudy blue background. The set up leaves almost everyone looking awkward.

Enter Sabrina Hendricks. When she chose photography as an elective in her freshman year at Charlottesville High School, she couldn't have imagined that she'd graduate with her own thriving portraiture business—as an alternative to the corporate school picture services that create the same posed images over and over, Hendricks spent much of her junior and senior years taking photos of her fellow students.

"I created an Instagram account (@shendricksphotography), which attracted attention, and my business grew from there," says the 2021 grad. She estimates that she's snapped over 5,000 shots since launching in 2019, and says Sabrina Hendricks Photography will remain in business while she attends the University of Virginia in the fall.

# THE POWER ISSUE

## Yas WASHINGTON, 23

**YAS WASHINGTON IS** running for City Council. Oh, and she's only 23.

After graduating from Albemarle High School in 2015, Washington served as an administrative assistant for the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program and as a youth counselor in the city's human services department. In 2019, she founded Rocket Science Integrated, which uses art to raise awareness about equity issues.

Working on campaigns for Albemarle Commonwealth's Attorney Jim Hingley in 2019 and Congressional candidate Dr. Cameron Webb in 2020, Washington came away with a passion for criminal justice reform, affordable health care, and environmental sustainability. She realized she wanted to be more involved in setting critical policies and making systemic change.

"Just because [someone] lives in a particular area and wouldn't typically have access to certain things or opportunities, that shouldn't cause them to be put in a predicament where they're not able to see themselves in a different position," she says.

If elected to City Council, Washington's top priority is to work with the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail to allow people charged with low-level offenses or nonviolent crimes to be released before their trial with affordable bonds. She also wants to reallocate ACRJ funds to social work, education, and civic programs, and see more people diverted to alternatives to incarceration.

No matter the results in November, Washington sees herself in politics for the long run. "The true way to bring about change and break down barriers is by having more Black Americans not just in elected positions, but positions of power," she says.



EZE AMOS

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## Cabrel HAPPI, 22

**ZIMBABWE NATIVE AND** UVA soccer player Cabrel Happi has been a winner in the student-athlete community on Grounds. As president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, he's made it his mission to empower student-athletes and utilize the power and platform that they have. Happi says student-athletes have a unique college experience, living season by season rather than semester by semester, which makes it easy for them to forget that life exists outside their sport. He says he hopes to remind his peers that they're students first, and that the platform student-athletes are given should be used for the betterment of society. He pointed to the Groundskeepers initiative, started last fall by Black football players, as an example of student-athletes taking advantage of their platform to empower and educate others.

You might think that a soccer player's feet are his most valuable asset, but Happi has another trick at his fingertips. When he's not advocating for change or speeding down the pitch, he works as a hand model—his wrists have appeared in multiple watch advertising campaigns. So watch out, everyone!

## Priscilla Martin CURLEY, 29

**IF PRISCILLA MARTIN CURLEY** tells you to drink garnacha with your margherita pizza, by god grab the garnacha. A certified sommelier and expert on little-known and indigenous Italian wines, Martin Curley is a Culinary Institute of America grad, alumnus of Boka (one of Chicago's most successful restaurant groups, which features in its portfolio everything from Italian to sushi), former Tavola wine director, and co-owner of The Wine Guild of Charlottesville. Before arriving at Dairy Market's Springhouse Sundries, her food and wine skills were put to good use at Monticello and The Wool Factory.

Now, she's turned her talents to the specialty beverage and food store, which features local cheeses, artisanal olive oils, fancy jams, and the like—y'know, the good things in life.



JOHN ROBINSON