

RAPPAHANNOCK BIKE, HIKE & PADDLE TOUR GUIDE

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I. General Information

A. Accommodations

Camping RV & Tent Camping is available at Belle Mount Vineyards on the banks of Cat Point Creek. Sites are shaded and each has a picnic table and grill. A bath house with hot showers is located in the middle of the camping area. There is a second bathhouse up the hill at the winery. Visit the [Heritage Park Resort](#) website for more information and reservations



Cabins The five cabins at Belle Mount Vineyards are very comfortable and are set in a private area high on a hill overlooking the Rappahannock River. Cabins have a living room/kitchen, two bedrooms, and one bath. Visit the [Heritage Park Resort](#) website for more information and reservations.



Hotel The [Best Western Hotel](#) in nearby Warsaw is another option for accommodations. It is a short 3.8 miles from Belle Mount Vineyards.

B. Food

The cabin kitchens are fully furnished allowing meals to be prepared on-site. Each campsites has a grill and picnic table. The [YellowPages.com](#) lists selected restaurants in the area including Chinese, Italian, and Mexican. Many have take-out if you want to enjoy the ambience of Belle Mount Vineyards. [The Northern Neck Gourmet](#) offers a Tapas menu on Friday evenings.

C. Bikes

No rental bikes are available. A road, touring, or hybrid bike with a wide gear range would be appropriate. All routes are paved, except for the roads within the National Wildlife Refuge Areas.



D. Terrain

The terrain in Richmond County and Westmoreland County is flat, but the occasional stream valleys provide a few "hills" along the way.

E. Daily Mileage

Daily mileages range from 10 to 55 miles and are listed in the day-by-day itinerary. Short mileage options are available to allow beginning recreational cyclists to enjoy this tour. Review the **Cue Sheets** to choose the tour route that suits you best.

II. Suggested Itinerary

Arrival

Arrive at [Belle Mount Vineyards](#). Relax on the deck at your lodging, or explore the grounds and hiking paths on the 234 acres situated on the Cat Point Creek. Bring your canoe or kayak and explore this tributary of the Rappahannock River. Consider a tapas dinner at the [Northern Neck Gourmet](#) in downtown Warsaw, 10 minutes from Belle Mount.



Day 1

Route 1A Family Loop – 10 Miles

The cycling is easy, and the short mileage is "family friendly" as the roads are lightly traveled. In season lunch or a snack is available at the Naylor's Beach snack bar.

Route 1B Menokin Loop – 24 Miles (28 or 36 miles adding options)

Your first stop is [Menokin](#) (ca. 1769). Learn how the partial ruins of the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, signer of the Declaration of Independence, is being preserved and interpreted. Also along the route are two Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge areas, which you can visit now or after the bike ride. Back at Belle Mount you may want to hike the grounds and keep an eye out for ospreys and eagles. Belle Mount is an official stop on the [Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail](#). Watching wildlife from your canoe or kayak as you glide on Cat Point Creek is a perfect way to unwind before dinner.



Route 1C Rappahannock Ramble – 50 Miles

This route is the Menokin Loop plus two extra loops out in the countryside. One goes to Jones Creek Landing on the Rappahannock River. This scenic spot is a perfect place for a rest stop. Be sure take plenty of water and energy food as the only services along the route is the Naylor's Beach snack bar, open in season.

Day 2

Route 2A Potomac Ramble – 17 Miles (Remote Start from Kinsale)

This is the perfect leisurely countryside spin to the Potomac River leaving from [Kinsale](#), a short drive away. Enjoy views of the Potomac River and visiting historic Yeocomico Episcopal Church (1706). Food is available in Kinsale.

Route 2B Potomac Ramble + Vineyards – 30 Miles (Remote Start from Kinsale)

The second route also leaves from Kinsale but loops out farther to include two wineries – [Vault Field Vineyard](#) and [Generals Ridge Vineyard](#). Food is available in Kinsale and vicinity.



Route 2C Potomac Explorer - 50 miles (Loop from Belle Mount Vineyards)

The third route leaves right from Belle Mount and loops out to the Potomac River before returning to Belle Mount. It incorporates the Potomac Ramble route and visits the two vineyards. Food is available in Kinsale and vicinity.

III. Things to Do and See

Hiking & Bird Watching

The [Wilna Unit](#) of the Rappahannock Valley National Wildlife Refuge is great place to hike and watch wildlife. There is also a canoe launch at this site. Wilna Pond is an official site on the [Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail](#).

The nature trail at Menokin is also a great place to hike and spot birds and wildlife. Be sure to bring your [Menokin Woodland Trail Guide](#).

The Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a birdwatcher's paradise. The Refuge was established in 1996 with a goal of protecting 20,000 acres along a 65-mile stretch of the lower Rappahannock River. To date, over 7,700 acres have been acquired. Some species that might be

sighted in the appropriate season are: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Great Blue heron, Bald Eagle, Barn Owl, Woodpecker, Cardinal, and many others.

Paddling

Cat Point Creek can be explored by launching a canoe or kayak from Belle Mount Vineyards. Wilna Pond can be explored by using the boat access at the Wilna Unit of the [Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge](#).

History

The Northern Neck of Virginia – the land between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers - is called "Historyland" for good reason. Three of our Nation's presidents were born here – George Washington, James Madison, and John Monroe. The southern area of the Northern Neck around Kilmarnock, Irvington and White Stone have many attractions including the Steamboat Museum, the Mary Ball Washington Museum, and Christ Church (1735) built by the wealthy planter Robert "King" Carter.

Here are selected websites with links to history:

Websites

Belle Mount Vineyards www.bellemount.com
Christ Church www.christchurch1735.org
George Washington National Monument www.nps.gov/gewa/index.htm
Ingleside Plantation Winery www.inglesidevineyards.com
Menokin www.menokin.org
Northern Neck Tourism Information www.northernneck.org
Northern Neck Today www.northernnecktoday.com
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail www.nps.gov/pohe/index.htm
Stratford Hall www.stratfordhall.org
Westmoreland State Park www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/wes.shtml

Vineyards

The [Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail](#) lists nine vineyards open for tastings. Two – Belle Mount Vineyards and Vault Field Vineyards- are located along the bicycling routes. Visit the website for location and hours of operation of all of the vineyards.

IV. Before & After Your Tour

You might consider extending your stay at Belle Mount Vineyards or on the Northern Neck by adding more biking days (see *Stratford Hall Self-Guided Tour*). Other activities on these extra days might include canoeing or kayaking, birding, photography, and visiting historical sites and museums not included in the Rappahannock Bike, Hike & Paddle itinerary.

Books

The Lees of Menokin, An Early American Love Story. Suzanne Hadfield Semsch

The Stronghold, A Story of historic Northern Neck and Its People. Miriam Haynie.

V. Directions

Day 1: Start and End

[Belle Mount Vineyards / Heritage Park](#)
2570 Newland Rd, Warsaw, Virginia 22572
Phone 804-333-4700

Day 2: Start and End

[Kinsale Town Square](#)