

# A Perfect Pair

## Something Old Something New

### THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS PAST AND PRESENT MEET AT WEDMORE PLACE IN WILLIAMSBURG

By Patrick Evans-Hylton | Photography by Jim Pile

**L**ike a long, winding roadway of water, the James River flows south from its headwaters in the Allegheny Mountains through Richmond, past Williamsburg and into Hampton Roads Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay.

In fact, early Virginia settlers used the navigable portions of the river as a highway for exploration, socialization and commerce.

It was some of those settlers who sailed from Jamestown about 20 miles upstream to the current site of Berkeley Plantation in Charles City County. Then known as Berkeley Hundred, the approximately 8,000-acre settlement was named after Richard Berkeley, one of the founders of the 1618 land grant.

The settlers arrived Dec. 4, 1619, and Captain John Woodleaf, who led the group of 38, called for an annual observation of a “day of thanksgiving”:

*“Wee ordaine that the day of our ships arrival at the place assigned for plantacon in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty god.”*

It was the first Thanksgiving—beating observers in the Plymouth Colony by more than a year—in the English New World.

Just downriver from Berkeley, Wedmore Place is ready to observe its first Thanksgiving, too. The country hotel at the Williamsburg Winery opened earlier this year. Some 28 different European-inspired rooms greet guests, as well as the fresh, regional cuisine from Executive Chef Abby Stanfield.

Chef Stanfield received her certified executive chef appointment through an apprentice program by the American Culinary Federation, having most recently worked at Kingsmill Resort & Spa in Williamsburg.

At Wedmore Place’s Café Provencale, she pulls from local ingredients and the winery’s historic location for inspiration.

“The Duffellers (the family who owns and operates Williamsburg Winery and Wedmore Place) are European, and are really into French and Mediterranean cuisine,” says Stanfield. “I like to take fresh, local ingredients and give them a Provencale twist.”

That is also the approach Chef Stanfield is taking with Thanksgiving dinner, offering a menu rich with Old World and Virginia flavors alike. Ingredients like Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, Dijon mustard, croissants and prosciutto come together with rockfish, butternut squash, turkey and pumpkin and marry through classic preparations.

It’s a combination of old and new—and tasty—traditions.

#### SALAD

**Poached Pear Salad:** pears poached in Williamsburg Winery’s J. Andrewes Merlot and presented on a bed of baby spinach and arugula with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and a vanilla bean vinaigrette.

*Pair with: Kluge Estate Blanc de Blanc. “Made exclusively from the estate’s best Chardonnay grapes, it has classic apple flavor notes with underlying nutty aroma.” – Ben Eubanks, restaurant and wine director, The Jefferson Hotel, Richmond.*

#### FISH COURSE

**Rockfish:** Lightly sautéed rockfish basted lightly with Dijon mustard, topped with croissant crumbs with fresh herbs, oven baked, and served with a beurre blanc sauce.

*Pair with: Williamsburg Winery Vintage Reserve Chardonnay. This rich, smooth, round and toasty Chardonnay is 100 percent barrel-fermented in French oak for at least six months and bottled aged for several additional months.*

*Recommended by Executive Chef Abby Stanfield, Wedmore Place at Williamsburg Winery, Williamsburg.*

