Summertime in RVA

Cherry blossoms are blooming, frisbees are flying, and final exams are just finishing up. Relax by exploring RVA!

By EMMA HULTGREN

While VCU’s spring break has come and gone, in case you need entertainment ideas for the rest of the semester here is a list of 12 popular places or events coming soon in RVA! All are either extremely affordable or free and celebrate an entire spectrum of cultures. Visit the websites for more information!

VISUAL ARTS
Arts in the Park: Carillon in Byrd Park on May 5th, 11-6 p.m. and May 6th, 11-5 p.m.

Arts in the Park is one of the most popular art festivals in Richmond. From paintings to jewelry to clothing, Arts in the Park is one of the best places to support local, professional and personal artists in one place.

richmondartsinthepark.com/

MUSIC
Virginia Jazz: The Early Years - DAILY until April 30, $8 for students!

This exhibit at The Valentine on Clay Street celebrates the founders of Jazz in Virginia, from as early as the turn of 20th century to the modern day. Feed your musical interest and take a day to learn even more about the history behind the city you live in.

vajazz.org/rjs-jazz-preservation/

Richmond International Film & Music Festival: April 23-29

Art majors and music lovers should consider buying a ticket for this inspiring 6-day long festival. Featuring over 50 bands and 150 films, the RIFF is always one of the hottest annual festivals - don’t wait til next year to check it out!

rvafilmfestival.com/

Friday Cheers @ Brown's Island: May 4, 11 and 25, and every Friday in June

Last summer was my first year attending the Friday Cheers Summer Concert Series where I got to see one of my favorite bands, Car Seat Headrest. Every Friday night for two months straight, a lineup of breakout bands makes their way to Brown’s Island for a crazy night next to the river.

venturerichmond.com/events/venture/cheers.html

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FOOD & DRINK
RVA French Food Festival: April 27-28
Fine cuisine, desserts and local chefs come together for one weekend to celebrate French culture at the annual French Food Festival. All proceeds from the event go directly to supporting Little Sisters of the Poor, who care for Virginia’s elderly poor.
rvafrenchfoodfestival.com/

¿Qué Pasa? Festival: Saturday, May 5, 12 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Hosted by the Virginia Hispanic Chamber, the ¿Qué Pasa? Festival brings an opportunity to party on Cinco de Mayo. Located on the Canal Walk, ¿Qué Pasa? Offers traditional Latin food, artisans, crafts, musicians, and dancers from the Latin Ballet.
www.vahcc.com/que-pasa

42nd Annual Greek Festival: June 1-4
In case Irish, French and Latin food weren’t enough for you, try Greek! A personal favorite of mine, the Greek festival is the place to celebrate Greek food, dancing, and music with local vendors.
www.greekfestival.com/

Broad Appetit: June 3, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Last but not least, Broad Appetit is an outdoor food event that doubles as a competition for Best Dish in RVA.
broadappetit.com/

OUTDOOR & ACTIVITY
Riverrock: May 18-20
Riverrock is by far the event I’ve had the most fun at in Richmond. This festival combines outdoor sports, food and music on Brown’s Island for a beautiful weekend next to the James. This is a great chance to register for some athletic events such as hiking, mud runs, and paddleboarding. If you’d rather not participate, grab some food and head down to the river to watch the competition unfold. The festival also features live bands all day long!
riverrockrva.com/

James River Park Pipeline Walkway
It’s likely that you’ve taken a walk down the canal before, but what about on the pipeline? This walkway is just above water level and is a great place to walk so close to wildlife and the water. As the weather gets nice, take a trip down here instead of Belle Isle.

Maymont Grounds & Gardens
Springtime is the best time to visit Maymont’s blooming gardens. Maymont is one of Richmond’s many parks that will be the most beautiful in their full floral glory, so take a trip and take some pictures before it gets too hot.
maymont.org/

Support each other
Again, this is useful in romantic relationships but can apply to friendships as well. Be a buddy! Develop a good understanding of each other from the beginning
Know what both of your expectations are. If you want to spend a lot of meaningful time together, make it clear from the get-go, but also understand that everyone can get busy. Recognize each other’s needs.

Give space. Enough said.
Don’t lose yourself! You are your own person with or without your bae. Hang out with your friends because you have a life, and your friends are just as important as your S.O.

Practice time management
Yes, the dreaded 2 words, but they’re important when pertaining to romantic relationships and otherwise. Time is a major cause of interpersonal fights. So whether it’s a date, or you’re chillin’ with your besties, make sure that you and everyone near and dear to you understands time limitations.

Be a good communicator
Whatever kind of relationship you’re in, both people need to be on the same page. Friends, parents, etc., if anyone is confused or there’s some sort of misunderstanding, talk it out. Get it all out there so you can go back to the group hugs.

Love is the Message
By KIRAN SHARMA
Most of us have experienced a life-changing relationship, and this month, we at Le Monde want to encourage you to pay attention to the special people in your life. You may not have come to college looking for a romantic relationship but might’ve been pleasantly surprised by the arrival of a significant someone. You might’ve even set your mind against a college romance. Regardless, we have some excellent advice from someone experienced in relationships should you find yourself a spring love:

Be loyal
This is especially important if you’re in it for the commitment and if your relationship is official and exclusive.

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I love my S.O. and friends... but what if I can’t stand the person I share an apartment with?
Another type of relationship often experienced by college students is the hair-pulling, messy, but (usually) worthwhile one had with roommates. We have some advice for this as well!

It’s OK to have small fights (“I’m not cleaning up your mess for you!”) and get all the frustration out, but don’t let it drive a wedge between your friendship. Draw a line between what it means to be a “friend” and a “roommate”. Don’t let a fight stop you two from hanging out together. That being said, establish some house rules, ground rules that all of you can agree on. They’ll help keep the peace.

I’m cool with my college roommate, but not the ones I grew up with (my parents). What should I do?
All of you, whether you’re single or taken, rooming alone or sharing an apartment with the five biggest slobs on the planet, can relate to this one. Your relationship with your parents may be, after all, the longest relationship you’ve had in your life. No fear, we’ll help you here as well.

We know you think they’re annoying, but at the end of the day, they care for you, and are concerned for you. They were at your spot one day too, and it’s up to you to step up and remind them of that. Be patient and empathize with them (again, see above tip list). Who knows, someday you might be in their position!
Q: What inspired you to create a photography club at VCU?
A: The Fall SOVO fair represented over 400 clubs with different passions and opportunities, but strangely enough, the nation’s #1 art school did not have a photography club. I have loved the art of photography for eight years now and have taught and competed as well. I didn’t want any non-VCUarts students to miss out on the art that is my creative outlet.

Q: What are some benefits to joining the club?
A: The Photography Club at VCU provides a creative outlet for the photographic arts—an essential art in modern society, as each and every one of us equipped with a small camera most of the time. Headed by experienced officers and sponsored by Adobe, Photography Club at VCU features unique and frequent competitions (such as “Make Shafer Food Look Good with Food Photography”) with great prizes (such as an Adobe Creative Cloud 1-year full subscription and gift cards), one-of-a-kind events (Maymont Fall Group Shoots) found nowhere else on campus, and a scintillatingly pleasant exec. board. Just kidding, but we are friendly. Aside from these events, we also offer special volunteer opportunities that allow members to connect with the community by providing photographic documentation and advertisement for nearby organizations.

Q: How long have you been seriously involved in photography?
A: Eight years ago I started with filmmaking, but quickly saw the importance of manipulating each individual frame. Since then, I have competed and won in several, local, state, regional, and international competitions for my fine art and fashion photography and have done several commercial shoots as well (for weddings, senior portraits and such). I better stop now or else this’ll start looking like a CV.

Q: Do you use more digital or film, and with what kind of equipment?
A: I have a strong appreciation for shooting film and the tedious process of developing, but I am definitely a digital shooter (Nikon and Sony a7s Mark II). While I do favor good monochrome images from time to time—especially because of their classic, timeless feel—I believe that since the advent of color photography popularized by William Eggleston (fun fact), the millions and millions of hues we have been endowed should be used to its full potential in picturing a wide palette of emotions, culture, and aesthetic tastes.

Q: Do you have any favorite techniques or genres of photography?
A: Portraits and fine art photography are surely my favorite genres. I think every person is beautiful in their own respect, and that this beauty comes from many characteristics unique to that individual. A special note on black & white photography: Although I absolutely love color photography, black & white photography has a powerful aura that can reach audiences over many generations. Often I oversaturate photos just to unsaturate them completely.

Q: What would you recommend to people who have no experience with photography but are interested regardless?
A: Shoot all the time. Fill up your memory on your phone if you don’t have a DSLR or mirrorless camera, and keep buying new cards. By consistently shooting and constantly improving yourself, photography will be less of a tool and more of an art. Also, the final, yet most essential skill great photographers should have: communication. Communication itself is an art, and by knowing the best ways to talk to your model (for portrait or other “human-related” work), you have full control over all aspects (posing, makeup, lighting, costume, hair, location, depth-of-field, etc.) of your scene.

For more information about meetings, events, and contests, the Photography Club at VCU can be found on Facebook and Instagram @ photoclubatvcu.
Q: Tell me about your background in art/photography before college.
A: As a child, I was always interested in the arts (especially drawing) and this love only escalated as I grew older. Despite moving regularly in high school, art always remained a constant for me. Before college, I mostly concentrated on using materials like charcoal or graphite and solely focused on realism and figurative portraits. It wasn’t until this year, my first year in college, that I was introduced to photography, sculpture, and more abstract ways of thinking.

Q: How has VCU (as well as honors, keeping in mind the core curriculum) helped shape your vision as an artist?
A: I came to VCU and joined the Honors College so that I would have the opportunity to surround myself with peers and professors who are passionate about art as well as subjects outside of the arts, like philosophy, psychology, or biology. I didn’t want to join a program that would separate art from everything else. Having the opportunity to study a diverse array of topics while practicing art is incredibly valuable as it helps me to grow as an artist and help to provide deeper, more engaging ideas to instill in my work. I believe art gives me an opportunity to utilize knowledge and create something impactful: something that invites the viewer to think about social norms, cultural diversity, psychological theories, and countless other topics. However, I cannot create successful, thought-provoking art in a void, so I hope that I can always have intelligent peers and professors to draw from.

Q: Can you tell me a bit more about your intention behind Pineapple Skies, Retrograde, and some of the other portraits?
A: I’ve always had a really intense love for portraiture, no matter the medium, so many of my photographs focus on capturing direct human expression. As an artist most familiar with highly rendered drawings, I wanted to take photographs which had a lot of movement and ephemeral lighting — things I can’t quite capture in a black and white drawing. In most of my photographs, I wanted to capture the sense of warmth and familiarity that comes with being around people I love while also giving the viewer a sense of the person I’m trying to capture.

The sculpture Retrograde was my first experience with mold-making and is comprised of five wax faces which were cast from alginate molds. The wax faces are held to each other by thin, white thread. For this piece, I wanted to explore preservation and deterioration with the wax faces, each one becoming smaller and dirtier than the next. Though this piece does not confront the viewer with eye contact (as in my photography portraits), it does confront the viewer with a reflection on mortality and decay.

For my charcoal drawing Obscured Visions, I wanted to explore memory distortion through manipulated images and drawings. We know from our own experiences that memory is not a perfect record of the past. Memory is a mix of true information, details one heard from someone else, saw in a photo, or even something one imagined. Remembering is a creative, constructive process, it’s an act of imagination. Through the repetitive act of remembering, memories become more and more distorted. To almost replicate this concept, I took my own photos as well as childhood photos and went through the process of printing each image, taking a photo of the printed image, and repeating until the image was distorted. As a final gesture, I drew each image with charcoal as a way to create the images from scratch, just we do when recalling memories. This particular image is my favorite from the series which depicts my twin and I as babies.

Q: What is your ultimate goal in creating art and photography?
A: My goal as a photographer and artist is not to objectively capture reality but to capture illusory emotions or transitory moments that are often lost in time. I love using portraiture as a means to convey feelings or memories, as human forms are universally identifiable and familiar. Though I have a background in portraiture outside of photography (painting, drawing, sculpture, etc), I find photography to be the most sensitive and evocative. Many of my photos explore the relationship between light and human form – how light interacts with the subject and how it can manifest into something tangible. As an artist, I’m constantly trying to challenge the inherently descriptive nature of photography in order to create images that are sensitive, implicit, and reflective. In my paintings and drawings I’m slowly learning to break away from highly rendered forms in order to construct imagery that is subtle and experiential.
Red Eye vs. Insomnia

Which Cookie do VCU Students Like Best?

By KIRAN SHARMA

We at Le Monde wanted to know what VCU students thought of the two most well-known cookie eateries on campus: Red Eye and Insomnia. Here are the results of our poll.

What is VCU’s favorite cookie?

Which do you prefer overall?

35 responses

66.2% Red Eye
33.8% Insomnia

A split straight down the middle! Students preferred either Red Eye or Insomnia equally. We read your responses trying to understand why this was such a polarizing question, and we stumbled upon some pretty funny answers:

“Gooey cookies.” (Without reference to company)

“Bigger cookie, better taste.”

“Red Eye tastes a bit fake to me.”

Here are our personal favorites:

“I am sick and tired of the red velvet cookie.”

“Tastes richer”

Despite the fact that both Red Eye and Insomnia advertise delivery service as one of their main attractions, it doesn’t seem to match up with the results from the poll. VCU students also preferred Insomnia’s flavor variety to Red Eye’s (53% vs. 23%).

Some of these results are shocking, especially with the exact divide in numbers between the two brands. In any case, it was fun to hear everyone’s opinion and if you haven’t tried either cookie, you may be missing out! Thanks to everyone who took the survey. Now go and have a cookie on our behalf!