



# BLACK ANKLE

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## *vineyards*

At Black Ankle Vineyards, we strive to produce wines that express the land on which they are grown, enhance the food which they accompany, and most important of all, are a joy to drink.

From the beginning, our goal was to make wines from grapes grown only by us on our land, and to grow them as sustainably as possible. We planted our first vines in 2003, and opened our Tasting Room doors in 2008.

We have just the right mix of rolling hills, rocky, low-fertility soils, regular breezes, sunshine, and rain to be the home of some truly delicious wines. In pursuit of this, every grape for every bottle of wine that we produce is grown on our farm - and always has been.

Through the years our vineyard crew has worked to make sure every vine has the perfect balance of fruit and leaves, with the best possible sun and wind exposure. Each of our now approximately 150,000 vines is hand-tended at least 8 times per season as we make small adjustments to crop load, leaf density, and fruit position. We are in awe of our little piece of land, and do our best to showcase it in each bottle.

Through the hard work of our incredible vineyard crew, the hospitality of our tasting room team, a lot of trial and error, and a little bit of luck, we are humbled to have been recognized by the New York Times, Washington Street Journal, and renowned wine writers across the world.





## **Tasting Room Construction**

- Sigi Koko, architect, specializes in straw bale construction (@buildnaturally on Instagram)
- Building designed to use as many materials from our farm as possible, including wood, straw, soil, rain and sun.
- Buildings are framed from locally milled wood that was harvested from our forest.
- The square tables all came from one tree on the farm, a curly maple tree.
- Walls are insulated with straw bales grown on our site and finished with handmade plasters that are formulated largely with our own clay and water. The walls are finished with linseed oil which provides the color.
- We utilize passive solar design, the location and solar orientation of the building allows it not to be in the direct sun in the summer, and more direct sun in winter.
- Clean-burning Masonry fireplace provides supplemental heating; fueled with wood from the farm; heats up to 2000 degrees.
- Solar Panels on the tasting room roof, plus solar panels on the winery/storage roof provide for 80% of the electricity that we use at BAV.
- A living roof to capture and use rainwater while providing excellent insulation in winter and naturally cooling the building in summer.
- Constructed almost exclusively with local, sustainable and healthy materials.





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### The Farm

- Red Varieties
  - Syrah
  - Cabernet Sauvignon
  - Cabernet Franc
  - Merlot
  - Malbec
  - Petit Verdot
  - Pinot Noir
  - Grenache
  - Mourvèdre
  - Tempranillo
- White Varieties
  - Albariño
  - Chardonnay
  - Grüner Veltliner
  - Muscat
  - Viognier
  - Sauvignon Blanc
- Within each variety, we grow a few different clones, which adds complexity to each wine. Our rootstocks, varieties and clones were chosen for the soil and climate in Maryland.
- European style of planting - The vineyard is planted following French tradition, with much more dense spacing than most vineyards in the East. The French believe that small vines make great wine - the yields per acre are the same, so denser planting means each vine produces fewer but possibly riper grapes. The rows at Black Ankle are seven feet apart, with one vine planted every meter within the row. Vines 1 meter apart, rows 7 feet apart. May plant syrah further apart in the future because it is so vigorous.
- At BAV, we expect about four pounds of grapes per vine (10-15 pounds is typical for other eastern US vineyards). This works out to about one bottle of wine per vine, or about 10 bunches of grapes per vine for the red wines.





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## New Properties

- Live Edge (Clarksburg). Named for the woodwork that has become so well known at Black Ankle (our tables, bars, shelves, barn siding, etc.). This property is about 243 total acres and will have about 80-100 acres under vine.
- Rinehart (Westminster). Property is 159 total acres; will have about 50-60 acres planted. Plan to plant Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah here. The soil is very rocky and perfect for red grapes. Elevation of the property is about 850-900 ft above sea level. Many trees have been removed from the property; The ground is resting before vines are planted.
- Tortuga (Clarksburg) We planted our first grapes there in 2022 and decided to experiment with some of our favorite Rhône varieties – adding to our collection of Syrah acres and planting Grenache and Mourvèdre for the first time.

## Photos and Contacts

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