



The [Virginia Craft Beer Summit & Gala](#) is a professional development, networking, awards program, and celebration for the independent craft beer industry in the Commonwealth. **Designed by independent craft brewers, for the independent craft beer industry.**

EVENT PROGRAM

1 PM | Opening Remarks

Bill Spence, Chairman, [Virginia Craft Brewers Guild](#); President, [St. George Brewing Company](#)

1:10 PM | Bringing Sexy Back: Real Ale, Cask-Conditioned Beer, & Cask Marque Certification

David Goodman, Owner, [The Fiddlin' Pig](#)

Bill Spence, President, [St. George Brewing Company](#)

Explore the tradition and craftsmanship behind cask-conditioned beer and learn how Cask Marque Certification is helping breweries and pubs elevate quality and revive interest in this iconic serving style.

1:40 PM | Tasting Session Break

1:50 PM | New VCBG Retail & Distribution Programs

[Cheryl Wilson](#), Executive Director, & [Brooke Betts](#), Integrated Marketing Director, [VA250](#)

David Hunter, Founder, [Fans of Virginia Craft Breweries](#)

Jeff Maisey, Publisher, & Jennifer McDonald, Advertising & Marketing Director, [Virginia Craft Beer Magazine](#)

Brett Vassey, President & CEO, [Virginia Craft Brewers Guild](#)

Participants will be introduced to the following programs:

- [VCBG x VA250 Commemorative Program](#)
- Virginia Revolutionary Beer Trail™



- Virginia Craft Beer Graphic Design Award™ with Fans of Virginia Craft Breweries
- Virginia Craft Beer Collector Weeks™ & Virginia Pint Days
- Virginia Collaboration Beer™
- Gold Road Beer Trail™
- Virginia Craft Beer Magazine – New Program Announcement
- VCBG Guide to Virginia Beer Distribution© 2025

Market access, product differentiation, and taproom sales are crucial to the success of independent craft breweries. VCBG and strategic partners will unveil a portfolio of new and enhanced programs designed to increase taproom customers, build brand awareness, reward enthusiasts, grow independent craft beer retail sales, and celebrate America. Made in Virginia. The programs are designed to reach 1 million consumers over the next 18 months.

2:50 PM | Changing Trends in Packaging

[David Hayslette](#), Sr. Director of Craft Beverages, Media & Special Packaging, [Smurfit Westrock](#)

Participants will get insights into what's happening in the evolving world of packaging across craft breweries and other beverage segments. Hayslette will also unveil a new VCBG retail program.

3:10 PM | Tasting Session Break

3:20 PM | Award-Winning Beer: How to Increase Sales, Brand Awareness, & Customer Loyalty

[Bill Butcher](#), Founder, [Port City Brewing Company](#)
[Eric McKay](#), Co-Founder, [Hardywood Park Craft Brewery](#)
[Dakota Rust](#), Operations Manager, [Virginia Beer Distribution Company](#)
Chad Ritter, Co-Owner/Head Brewer, [Hidden Wit Brewing Co.](#)

Turn medals into money! Learn how award-winning beer & the VBDC can drive sales, boost brands, and build lasting customer loyalty.

4 PM | Keynote | The State of the Craft Beer Industry: Headwinds or the New Reality?

[Bart Watson](#), President & CEO, [Brewers Association](#)

Join Bart for an in-depth look at the current landscape of the craft beer industry—examining whether today's challenges are temporary headwinds or a new long-term reality. With insights shaped by policy, market trends, and industry advocacy, Bart brings clarity to where craft beer stands today, where it's going tomorrow, and why independent craft beer matters.

5 PM | Sip & Stroll: Beer Share, Exhibit Hall Bingo, & Networking

*Kick off the evening with fellow brewers, suppliers, and industry professionals while checking out the latest innovations, products, and services from exhibitors. Play **Exhibit Hall Bingo** for a chance to win great prizes—just visit booths, complete your card, and turn it in. It's the perfect way to recharge, make new connections, and gear up for the night's festivities.*

Final votes for The Best Firkin Beer in Virginia™ will be collected.



6 PM | Virginia Craft Beer Gala: Awards Ceremony, Dinner, Live Band, & Cornhole Tournament

As the sun sets, the celebration kicks off with bold brews, epic flavors, and nonstop fun. Grab a drink and make your way through Mosaic's hibachi bar and taco train for crave-worthy cuisine. Then, cheer on the winners of the Virginia Craft Beer Cup™, Virginia Brewery of the Year™, and The Best Firkin Beer in Virginia™ Real Ale Competition.

Special Guests:

- [Bart Watson](#), President & CEO, [Brewers Association](#)
- The Honorable [Dan Helmer](#), Virginia House of Delegates
- The Honorable [Joseph Guthrie](#), Commissioner, [Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#)
- Charlie Harr, Head Judge, [Virginia Craft Beer Cup](#)

*After the awards ceremony, the party begins with a lively **cornhole tournament** sponsored by [Blueprint Financial](#), live music by [Funhouse RVA](#), and the largest beer share in Virginia. This is a can't-miss blowout for craft beer peers from across the Commonwealth!*

9 PM | After Party: Camp Craft Beer

The party doesn't end after the doors close! The festivities move to the [campsite](#) for those brave souls and night owls. [Rent an RV](#) and impress your friends.

SPONSORSHIP AND EXHIBITOR OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE! CONTACT [KIMBERLY NOONAN](#) TO GET STARTED.