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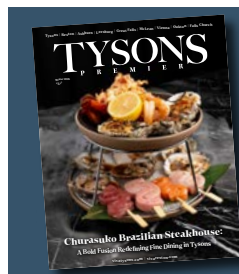
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PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER Johnny Hanna
**ART DIRECTOR / PRODUCTION MANAGER/
WEBSITE DESIGNER** Robin Long
TRAVEL CONTRIBUTOR Allison Chase Sutherland
WINE EDITOR Linda Barrett
VIDEOGRAPHY Kari Cannistraro
PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTRIBUTORS Greg Knott
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Marcia McAllister

Tyson's Premier Magazine | 703.585.3354 | 2108 Robin Way Court, Vienna, VA 22182
General inquiries and comments about this publication can be sent to: info@vivatyson.com.

www.vivatyson.com | www.tysonstoday.com

Please address requests to Tysons Premier, 2108 Robin Way Court, Vienna, VA 22182, or call us at 703.585.3354.
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Churasuko Steakhouse:

A Bold Fusion Redefining Fine Dining in Tysons

A Revolutionary Concept Born from Vision

Churasuko represents America's first Japanese Fusion Brazilian Steakhouse. Churasuko, a groundbreaking concept that marries the precision of Japanese culinary artistry with the bold spectacle of Brazilian churrasco. The restaurant's name itself tells the story—"Churasuko" is the Japanese pronunciation of "churrasco," the South American tradition of carving grilled meats tableside directly from the skewer.

The journey to opening began over two years ago when the founding team toured a vacant 9,200-square-foot space in Tysons Corner that had previously housed Jack's Ranch barbecue restaurant. The unusual two-level layout, complete with dual kitchens, an elevator, and multiple service areas, sparked an ambitious vision. Rather than simply opening another traditional Brazilian steakhouse to compete with established chains like Fogo de Chão and Chima, they decided to create something entirely unique.

The restaurant officially opened on December 17, 2024 FFXnow, following months of construction, preparation, and a soft-opening period that allowed the team to refine their operations and introduce themselves to the Tysons community.

The Visionaries Behind the Experience

Churasuko is the brainchild of restaurateur Derek Liu, who brought extensive experience in Japanese cuisine to the project. Liu previously founded Gyuzo Japanese BBQ in 2020 and Uzu Revolving Sushi in 2024, both successful establishments in Rockville, Maryland. His vision for Churasuko was clear: create a memorable, decadent fine dining experience that would stand apart from traditional Brazilian steakhouses.

Liu partnered with Edward Wong, founder and CEO of the prolific IVEA group, who helped secure the lease and provided strategic support. IVEA is a major player in the Northern Virginia dining scene, with ownership stakes in popular restaurants including Tiger Dumplings in Clarendon, and Gyu Shige and Urban Hot Pot in the Mosaic District. Project manager Danny Nguyen rounded out the leadership team, bringing operational expertise to transform the ambitious concept into reality.

The unique aspect of this partnership is the owners' hands-on approach. Early visitors report that the owners are frequently present, creating a welcoming atmosphere and personally connecting with guests—a hallmark of hospitality that distinguishes independent restaurants from corporate chains.

Prime Location in Tysons' Vibrant Boro District

Churasuko occupies 1755 Tysons Central Street in Vienna, Virginia, situated within The Boro Japanese Restaurant, a rapidly developing mixed-use community in Tysons Corner. The location offers exceptional accessibility, with major roadways including Leesburg Pike and the Dulles Toll Road nearby, plus proximity to the Capital Beltway. For metro commuters, the Greensboro Metro Station on the Silver Line is within walking distance. The restaurant provides both retail parking (with two hours free) and valet service.

The 100-seat space features multiple dining areas designed to accommodate different experiences. A striking 30-seat bar with gold, cage-like overhead lighting serves as the dining room's centerpiece. Seven high-top tables offer casual seating, while an upscale dining area with 15 tables hosts The Churasuko Experience, the restaurant's signature prix-fixe offering. A private party room accommodates 25-30 guests and features two disco balls and a customizable LED screen—perfect for celebrations.

An Extraordinary Menu That Defies Convention

The culinary offerings at Churasuko represent a dramatic departure from traditional Brazilian steakhouses. The signature experience is The Churasuko Experience, priced at \$200 per person—a multi-course journey showcasing the full spectrum of their fusion concept. This includes premium sashimi, miso lobster bisque, Wagyu fried rice, and unlimited servings of A5 Japanese Wagyu, American Wagyu, and Australian Wagyu Arlington Magazine, all carved tableside in the traditional churrasco style.

The menu's showstopper is the Fire & Ice Seafood Tower, a theatrical two-tier presentation. The flame-heated upper level features oysters Rockefeller, grilled lobster, and tiger shrimp, while dry ice chills raw oysters and jewel-toned sashimi skewers on the lower tier—creating a stunning visual and sensory contrast.

For those preferring à la carte options, the menu includes beef gyoza, lobster tempura, edamame purée salad, and Golden Umami Corn. Perhaps most innovative is the omakase sushi buffet, which replaces the traditional salad bar found at other Brazilian steakhouses. A vaporizing mist keeps the sushi chilled while adding theatrical flair.

The beverage program features Japanese whisky and sake selections alongside creative cocktails, including a crème brûlée martini and the upcoming "Full Moon" cocktail, which contains galaxy glitter and a flaming ice sphere designed to resemble the moon.

Early Reviews and Community Response

Customer feedback highlights tender, well-seasoned meats and sweet, kind staff DoorDash, with several reviewers praising the friendly owners who frequently interact with guests. One enthusiastic diner called it a "hidden gem" after sampling the Takoyaki, Chicken Karaage, and Chicken Teriyaki with flank steak from the carryout service.

The restaurant currently operates Wednesday through Sunday, with dinner service starting at 5:00 PM on weekdays and lunch service beginning at noon on weekends. The unique concept has already attracted investor interest for potential expansion to New York City, Miami, and Las Vegas, though the team remains focused on perfecting the Tysons location first.

For Northern Virginia diners seeking an adventurous culinary experience that transcends traditional steakhouse offerings, Churasuko delivers an unforgettable fusion of cultures, flavors, and theatrical presentation that truly lives up to its promise as America's first Japanese-Brazilian steakhouse. ❖

Churasuko

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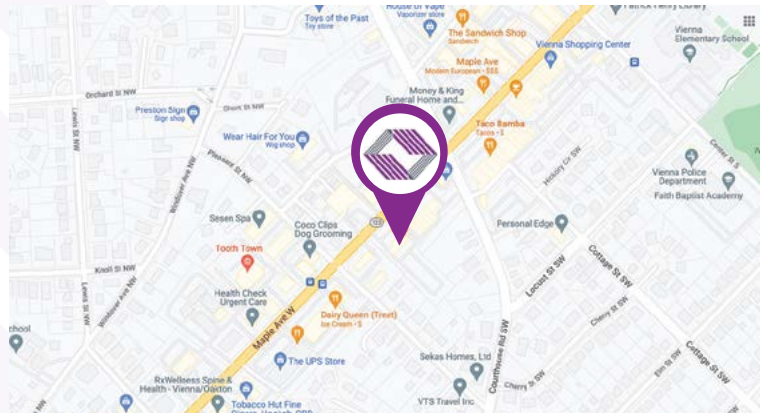
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European powers once had factories in Mocha, and all trade on the Red Sea passed through its gates. Jewish and Banyan merchants led its coffee trade, relying on Ethiopian beans delivered by Somali traders. Eventually, Aden took over the trade, and Mocha's influence declined.

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Afternoon Tea in the Fairfax Area of Northern Virginia

Afternoon tea is a delightful tradition that offers a perfect pause from the day's hustle. In the Fairfax area of Northern Virginia, there are several charming venues where you can enjoy this experience. Here's a look at some notable places, with a special spotlight on Café Renaissance in Vienna.



Café Renaissance

163 Glyndon Street SE
Vienna, VA 22180
www.caferenaisance.com

Café Renaissance is a local gem in Vienna, known for its cozy atmosphere and exquisite tea offerings. The café captures the essence of a European tea room, making it an ideal spot for afternoon tea. Guests can indulge in a variety of teas paired with delicious pastries, scones, and sandwiches, all beautifully presented.

The café often features seasonal themes and special events, enhancing the afternoon tea experience. Whether you're celebrating a special occasion or simply enjoying a leisurely afternoon, Café Renaissance provides a memorable setting.



tea with
MRS. B

Tea with Mrs. B

136 W. Jefferson Street
Falls Church, VA 22046
www.teawithmrsb.com

Located in Falls Church, Tea with Mrs. B is a family-friendly destination that hosts themed tea parties and workshops. It's particularly popular for children's events, such as the "Manners, Tea & Craft Camps." This venue is perfect for birthday celebrations and mother-child tea outings, offering a unique and engaging experience for young tea lovers.



THE RITZ-CARLTON
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www.ritzcarlton.com

For those seeking a more luxurious afternoon tea experience, the Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner in McLean offers an elegant setting. With live piano music accompanying the service, guests can enjoy a selection of canapés, scones, and petit fours every Saturday and Sunday. Guests can also opt for a glass of champagne or creative mocktails to complement their tea.

Whether you're looking for a cozy café or a luxurious hotel experience, the Fairfax area has a variety of options for afternoon tea. Café Renaissance stands out as a must-visit spot, offering a delightful experience that satisfies both the palate and the spirit. ❖



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Peking Express

A Quarter-Century of Community and Cuisine

Nestled in the heart of Vienna, Virginia, at 103 Center Street North, Peking Express has been a beloved fixture in the local dining scene for an impressive 35 years. Established in 1990 Yelp, this family-owned Chinese restaurant has evolved from a modest carryout operation into a cornerstone of the community, offering dine-in, takeout, and delivery services to residents of Vienna, Tysons Corner, and Oakton.

The Owners and Their Vision

While the owners maintain a relatively low profile, their presence is deeply felt throughout the establishment. Regular customers consistently praise the friendly owner who greets patrons by name and has built genuine relationships with families across multiple generations. One loyal customer shared their experience of patronizing the restaurant for 25 years, highlighting the owner's warm and welcoming demeanor that has remained constant through the decades.

The restaurant's commitment to quality extends beyond mere business transactions. The owners have cultivated an atmosphere where customers feel like members of an extended family, creating a sense of community that transcends the typical restaurant experience. This personal touch has proven so powerful that one couple who moved to North Carolina drove four hours just to satisfy their craving for Peking Express's distinctive flavors.

Mission and Philosophy

Peking Express operates on a straightforward but powerful philosophy: quality above all else. The restaurant emphasizes using only the finest and freshest beef, pork, and chicken in their meals, setting themselves apart in an increasingly competitive market. Their mission statement reflects a commitment to customization and health-conscious preparation, with chefs available to accommodate special dietary requests including no oil, no salt, or steamed preparations.

The establishment exclusively uses 100% soybean vegetable oil and offers brown rice as an alternative to white rice, demonstrating their attention to health-conscious diners. This flexibility in preparation has earned them a loyal following among customers with various dietary preferences and restrictions, from families with young children to health-focused adults.



Menu Highlights and Specialties

Peking Express offers an extensive menu that balances traditional Chinese-American favorites with house specialties that have become legendary among regulars. The restaurant's most popular items reveal both the quality of their execution and the preferences of their devoted customer base.

The General Tso's Chicken stands as one of the restaurant's flagship dishes, with customers praising the perfectly seasoned sauce and the option to request all white meat. The dish arrives piping hot, featuring tender chicken with fresh-chopped green peppers that add a sweet, crisp contrast to the savory sauce.

The Orange Chicken represents another customer favorite, showcasing tender chicken chunks sautéed with a unique blend of slivered orange peels and spicy Chinese peppercorns. The dish exemplifies the restaurant's ability to balance sweet and spicy flavors in perfect harmony.

Perhaps the most distinctive offering is the Mongolian Beef, which has achieved near-cult status among devotees. Customers rave about its wonderful smoky flavor that sets it apart from versions found elsewhere. The dish features tender beef with onions in the restaurant's special sauce, creating a flavor profile that has inspired at least one couple to drive hundreds of miles for their fix.

The Szechuan Shredded Chicken has emerged as a personal favorite for many long-time customers, offering the perfect balance of heat and flavor. This dish demonstrates the kitchen's skill with traditional Szechuan preparation techniques while maintaining broad appeal.

Another standout is the Spicy Noodle Peanut Pasta, which diners describe as having the perfect combination of spicy and peanut flavors with noodles cooked to ideal texture. This dish showcases the restaurant's ability to create addictive flavor combinations that keep customers returning.

The menu also features classics like Sesame Chicken, Kung Pao dishes, homemade lo mein, shrimp with various preparations, Moo Shu selections, and an array of fried rice options. The restaurant offers special lunch combinations that include a vegetable egg roll and choice of egg drop, wonton, or hot and sour soup, providing excellent value for the midday crowd.

Celebrating 35 Years of Service

As Peking Express marks over three decades in business, the milestone represents more than just longevity—it reflects consistent quality, unwavering commitment to customers, and the ability to adapt to changing tastes while maintaining core values. The restaurant has witnessed Vienna's transformation over the years, serving multiple generations of families and becoming woven into the fabric of community life.

Long-time customers recall ordering from Peking Express for family gatherings, holiday celebrations, and weekly takeout rituals. The consistent quality has made the restaurant a reliable choice for everything from casual weeknight dinners to special occasion meals. Families with members ranging from children to seniors all find dishes they enjoy, a testament to the menu's broad appeal.

Value and Accessibility

Operating seven days a week from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Peking Express maintains convenient hours for both lunch and dinner service. The restaurant offers generous portions at reasonable prices, with delivery available within a three-mile radius including Vienna, Tysons Corner, and Oakton. Minimum delivery orders are set at \$15 for lunch and \$20 for dinner.

The establishment provides free Wi-Fi for dine-in customers and accommodates various ordering preferences, from phone-ahead pickup to online ordering and third-party delivery platforms, though they encourage direct ordering to avoid additional fees.

A Local Institution

Peking Express of Vienna has earned its place as a neighborhood institution through decades of consistent service, quality food, and genuine hospitality. As it continues serving the community, the restaurant remains a testament to the enduring appeal of family-owned establishments that prioritize relationships alongside revenues, quality alongside convenience. ❖

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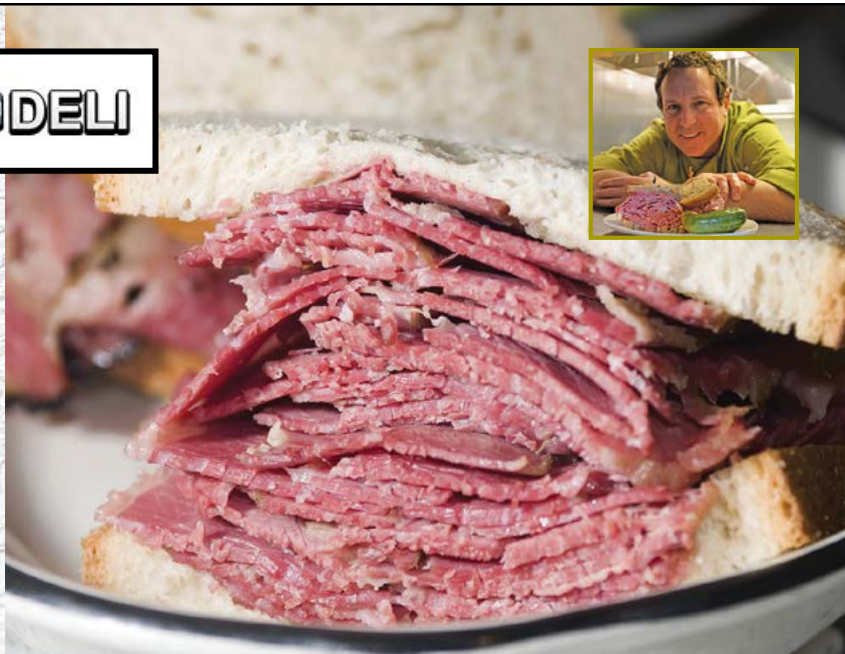
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The Buzz About Mead

by Linda Barrett

Photos by Linda Barrett

Once a reminder of Renaissance fairs and fantasy fiction, mead is making a welcome return to the modern palate. With roots in ancient civilizations and a growing following among craft beverage enthusiasts, this honey-based drink is blurring the lines between wine, beer and something entirely its own. Across Virginia, new and heritage meaderies are championing its revival and bringing an age-old drink into the spotlight.

What is Mead and How is it Made?

Though often labeled “honey wine,” mead isn’t technically wine. It’s made by fermenting honey with water rather than grapes or grains. This alone gives it a category all its own. It can be dry or sweet, still or sparkling, and flavored with everything from fruit (melomels), spices (metheglins) or even hops (braggots). Some meads resemble white wine, while others read more like cider or light beer.


Its alcohol content typically ranges from 6% to 14%, overlapping with both wine and stronger craft beers. A dry mead might register 10%, while a rich, dessert-style mead can push towards 15% or higher. The sweetness, mouth feel, and even aroma depend not only on how the mead was made, but on the type of honey used.

“Mead is the oldest fermented beverage known to man, and predates the wheel,” Copeland says.


Clover honey is widely used for its neutral profile. It creates a balanced base that lets added flavors shine. Orange blossom honey delivers a flora-citrus perfume. Buckwheat honey is dark and malty, and produces meads with a richness not unlike molasses or toasted brown sugar. Wildflower honey is a catchall term for honey sourced from mixed blooms, and its flavor changes with the seasons and the bees’ environment, giving each batch a distinct sense of terroir.


Mead’s production begins with combining honey with water into a mixture called “must.” Yeast is added, which converts the sugars into alcohol, just like wine. Fermentation can last a few weeks or a few months, depending on the style. After that, it can be bottled, or aged for complexity, sometimes in stainless steel or oak barrels.

Mead Pairing Suggestions

 Spicy Cuisine >>> Dry Meads

 Cheese Boards >>> Semi-sweet or Floral Meads

 Charcuterie or Roasted Meats >>> Bold, Barrel-aged Meads

 Desserts >>> Sweet or Spiced Meads

A Global Heritage

Mead's origins stretch back more than 9,000 years. Archaeological evidence shows that honey-based fermented drinks were consumed in Neolithic China, Viking-era Scandinavia and ancient Ethiopia. In Greek mythology, mead was considered the "drink of the Gods," and in early England, served as a staple of feasts and ceremonies. The term "honeymoon" is even thought to come from a tradition of gifting newlyweds a month's supply of honey wine to ensure fertility and happiness.

Yet despite its global and mythic past, mead fell out of fashion for centuries. The rise of beer and wine eclipsed it in many parts of the world. But now, thanks to the craft beverage boom, mead is making a serious comeback. And in Virginia, a new generation of meadmakers is redefining what this ancient drink can be.

Visit These Two Meaderies

To get a taste of the mead culture in Virginia ourselves, we ventured out to two meaderies.

Negus Winery & Meadery

Negus Winery & Meadery is an urban tasting room in Alexandria founded by Gize Negussie in 2023. Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Negussie wanted to recreate the flavors of his childhood—particularly Tej, a traditional Ethiopian honey wine. At Negus, he uses wildflower honey and ferments his meads on site. The result is Mama's Honey Wine, a smooth, golden mead available in semi-sweet and semi-dry versions.

With a moderate 10% ABV, Tej is approachable for wine drinkers and refreshingly unique for anyone looking for a tasting experience. Visitors can enjoy a glass or a guided flight in elegant wine glasses or opt for Ethiopian-style berele glassware—a nod to tradition.

As a former tour and travel company owner, Negussie got to know principals in the California wine country who encouraged him to bring Tej to the United States. "Negus is the Ethiopian word for 'King', and Tej was formerly a drink made for royalty, but is now commonplace in Ethiopian households," Negussie explains. "My recipe comes from my mother, which is why we call it Mama's Honey Wine."

The tasting room, located in an industrial stretch of Vine Street, is warm and welcoming, and filled with Ethiopian art, music and small bites or local food trucks. Negus Meadery is a celebration of cultural heritage, a neighborhood gathering space, and a small business with big ambitions. Notably, it was the first meadery in the U.S. dedicated specifically to Ethiopian-style honey wine.

Misty Mountain Meadworks

An hour and a half away, on farmland outside of Winchester, lies **Misty Mountain Meadworks**, Virginia's oldest commercial meadery. Founded by Richard "Rick" Copeland after decades of experimentation, Misty Mountain began selling to the public in 2004. Operating as a true farm winery, Misty Mountain maintains its own bees and fruit orchards and handcrafts small-batch meads that celebrate local honey varietals.

Misty Mountain embraces mead in all its variety. Its flagship Wildflower Mead is a rich, sweet offering with about 11% ABV and 6% residual sugar—a perfect match for a dessert course or cheese board. But the real fun comes in the flavored meads like the Sip-A-Delic, a strawberry-kiwi blend; LITHA, made with blueberry and lemon; and Wildfire, a limited-edition smoked mead with a savory edge, among others. Seasonal and experimental batches are common, so you'll have to visit often to taste them all. Their medieval-decorated tasting room is open Friday through Sunday, and you are welcome to bring along a picnic.

"I have a degree in medieval history and noted that mead was mentioned in Beowulf at least 100 times. That sparked my original interest, but I was self-taught," Copeland said. "I found a 1945 English recipe book that had a recipe for mead, and I started making mead in my basement about 1983."

Enjoy Virginia's Meaderies

Meadmakers are committed to preserving the integrity of their key ingredient, using minimal additives and focusing on balance, character and craft. Buzz on into one of Virginia's meaderies, give mead a try, and learn more about its fascinating history. ❖

Negus Winery & Meadery

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Alexandria, VA 22310
neguswines.com

Misty Mountain Meadworks

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Negus Winery & Meadery



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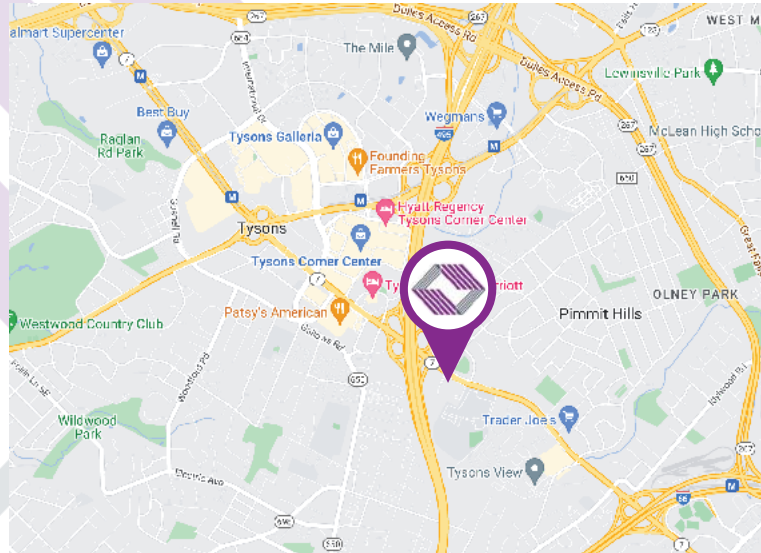
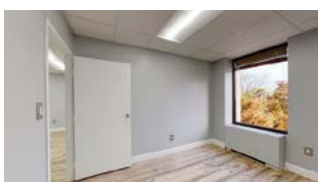
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In the quiet aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, while much of the world was still standing still, Ballroom Asia Dance Studio began to move—literally. Established in 2020 as a private space for practice sessions only, the studio was managed by Ballroom Asia Inc. It offered dancers a safe, focused environment to keep their passion alive during uncertain times. Later, it stepped into a new chapter, rebranding itself as Step In Joys Dance Studio.

In 2024, the studio expanded into a larger, open-concept space—free of columns and visual barriers—making it especially beloved by American Smooth dancers, who thrive in wide, uninterrupted movement. The thoughtful design reflects the studio's commitment to meeting the needs of serious dancers while creating an environment that feels inspiring and unrestricted.

Today, Step In Joys provides high-quality ballroom dance training for both adults and children. It specializes in *competitive sports dance*—teaching not only elegance and rhythm but also discipline, confidence, and perseverance. Young dancers are encouraged to participate in competitions, and many have earned awards, bringing pride to their families and recognition to the studio.

But the impact goes far beyond trophies. Step In Joys has become a cultural ambassador, promoting the rich traditions behind ballroom dance and sharing its mental and physical health benefits with the broader community. Each class is more than just training—it's a step toward personal growth, cultural awareness, and community spirit.

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The Tysons Casino Gamble:

Northern Virginia's High-Stakes Debate

A proposed entertainment district with a casino has divided one of America's wealthiest communities

By The Numbers

The proposal on the table is massive: a 4-million-square-foot entertainment complex in Tysons Corner featuring a 200,000-square-foot casino, luxury hotel, convention center, performing arts venue, restaurants, retail shops, and workforce housing. The site? Near the Spring Hill Metro station, just off Route 7 in the heart of Northern Virginia's economic engine.

For three consecutive years, Virginia lawmakers have introduced legislation to bring this vision to life. Each time, the bills have sparked fierce debate, with the most recent attempt in 2025 passing the Senate 24-16 before stalling in a House subcommittee. Now, as the 2026 legislative session approaches, battle lines are being drawn once again.

The Promise: Jobs And Revenue

Supporters paint an attractive picture of economic transformation. Advocates estimate the project could contribute \$140 million in annual revenue to Fairfax County, potentially easing the burden on property taxpayers in an era of declining commercial real estate values and remote work.

Virginia Diamond, president of the Northern Virginia Labor Federation, champions the project's potential to create pathways to the middle class. Labor unions negotiated agreements with developer Comstock Companies that would create 5,000 unionized jobs with higher wages and benefits, representing what Diamond calls "transformational" opportunities for blue-collar workers and immigrants.

The economic argument extends beyond job creation. A 2019 state gambling study found that Northern Virginia appeared to be the most lucrative location for a casino in Virginia, potentially recapturing gaming revenue currently flowing to MGM National Harbor in Maryland. Proponents argue this isn't just about gambling—it's about creating a world-class entertainment destination that could rival anything in the region.

State Senator Scott Surovell, who championed the most recent legislative effort, contends that Virginia needs a "crown jewel" to compete with neighboring states and generate critical tax revenue for schools, Metro funding, and county services.

The Opposition: Traffic, Crime, And Community Character

Yet for every supporter, there seems to be an equally vocal opponent. A recent poll by Global Strategy Group found that 75% of Fairfax County residents oppose bringing a casino to Tysons, with opposition crossing party lines—77% of Democrats, 74% of independents, and 73% of Republicans reject the plan.

The concerns are multifaceted. Lynn Mulston, chair of the No Fairfax Casino Coalition representing 27 community associations and over 50,000 voters, warns that every tax dollar gained from a casino is accompanied by three to five dollars in social costs, including crime and gambling addiction.

Traffic congestion tops many residents' worry lists. Tysons is already one of the region's busiest commercial hubs, and critics question whether existing infrastructure can handle an estimated 25,000 daily casino

visitors without creating gridlock. Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert echoed concerns shared by neighboring communities, emphasizing that the town is "very concerned about the safety and wellbeing of our residents and the harmful economic impacts a casino may have" given Tysons' proximity to family-friendly areas.

Senator Jennifer Boysko, who represents parts of Fairfax County, has emerged as a leading critic. She argued that the legislation targets a specific location without broader local input, noting that previous Virginia casino proposals had backing from the communities they would impact most. This process, she contends, bypasses proper local land-use planning.

The Politics: Millions In Lobbying

Behind the scenes, developer Comstock Companies has spent over \$2.5 million since 2023 on lobbying, political contributions, and campaign support related to the casino proposal. This aggressive advocacy has raised eyebrows among good-government advocates who question whether such concentrated developer influence should drive major land-use decisions.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has remained largely neutral officially, though individual members have expressed skepticism. Board Chairman Jeff McKay has voiced concerns about the revenue-sharing formula, under which the state would receive 70 percent of casino tax revenue, leaving only 30 percent for the county—a split some supervisors consider unfavorable.

Interestingly, neither of the state senators who have championed casino legislation—Dave Marsden and Scott Surovell—actually represent Tysons, leading critics to question why lawmakers from other districts are driving this initiative.

The Broader Context: A County At A Crossroads

The casino debate reflects deeper questions about Fairfax County's future. The pandemic fundamentally altered Northern Virginia's commercial landscape, with office vacancy rates climbing and Metro ridership declining. County officials face pressure to find new revenue streams to maintain services without perpetually raising residential property taxes.

Senator Saddam Azlan Salim argued that Tysons Corner, one of the wealthiest and fastest-growing areas in Northern Virginia,

doesn't need a casino to thrive. Supervisor Jimmy Bierman echoed this sentiment, warning that a casino could actually undermine the Tysons Comprehensive Plan and make the area less attractive to Fortune 500 companies that have been relocating there.

This tension—between maintaining Tysons as a corporate hub versus transforming it into an entertainment destination—lies at the heart of the debate. Can both visions coexist, or are they fundamentally incompatible?

What Happens Next

Even if legislation passes in a future session, Fairfax County voters would have the final say through a referendum. The proposed process requires approval from both the General Assembly and the governor before the Board of Supervisors could schedule a public vote.

As the 2026 legislative session approaches, the No Fairfax Casino Coalition is organizing opposition while the Fairfax County Jobs Coalition mobilizes supporters. Both sides are preparing for what promises to be one of Virginia's most contentious political battles in years.

The stakes extend beyond Tysons. This debate will help define what kind of growth Northern Virginia wants—whether it's willing to embrace gambling as an economic development tool, and how much influence developers and outside legislators should have over local land-use decisions.

For now, the casino remains a proposal, a promise, and a point of profound disagreement in one of America's most affluent and rapidly changing communities. The only certainty is that the conversation is far from over.

The debate over a Tysons casino encapsulates the broader challenges facing American suburbs in the post-pandemic era: how to generate revenue, create jobs, and maintain community character while adapting to profound economic shifts. Whatever happens in Tysons will likely influence similar debates across the country. ❖

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Virginia has been Ahmed's home since 1998 which gives him exceptional knowledge of the DMV market and community. He has always loved real estate and received his REALTOR® license in 2016. To further his mission to provide top-quality service and provide expert advice to his clients, he continued his education and completed ABR® designation, PSA certification, and SFR® certification. He is always available to help you achieve your homeownership dreams and looks forward to connecting with you!



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Building Tysons:

The Transformation of Northern Virginia's Urban Core

From suburban office parks to a 24-hour city: Inside the massive development boom reshaping one of America's wealthiest communities

The cranes dotting Tysons Corner's skyline tell a story of dramatic transformation. What was once synonymous with sprawling office parks and traffic-choked highways is becoming something entirely different: a dense, transit-oriented urban center designed to house 100,000 residents and 200,000 employees by 2050. And that transformation is happening right now.

The Comprehensive Plan's Grand Vision

The blueprint for this metamorphosis came in 2010, when Fairfax County adopted the Tysons Comprehensive Plan. Designed to capitalize on four new Metro stations that opened in 2014, the plan envisions adding 50 million square feet of new construction over four decades. The goal is audacious: transform Tysons from a commuter-driven edge city into a walkable, green urban center—essentially, Fairfax County's downtown.

Three-quarters of this growth is concentrated within a half-mile of Metro stations, with many offices and homes designed to be just a three to six-minute walk from transit. The vision includes extensive public spaces, streetscapes connecting multiple parcels, and a distinctive urban character that rivals any major metropolitan center.

The Residential Boom: From Towers To Townhouses

Perhaps the most visible transformation is residential. Multiple major projects are currently underway or recently approved, each adding hundreds of units to Tysons' housing stock.

The Piazza at Tysons represents one of the most ambitious proposals. Just approved conceptually, this project envisions three towers—two rising 33 stories and one at 30 stories—featuring an Amalfi Coast-inspired design. The development would include approximately 777 residential units, a 310-room hotel, over 800,000 square feet of office space, and 83,000 square feet of retail. At its heart lies a 1.75-acre publicly accessible piazza stretching from Leesburg Pike to Broad Street, envisioned as a vibrant gathering place with potential for concerts, outdoor markets, and even a seasonal ice skating rink.

The project would replace the Tysons 3 shopping center, an Exxon station, and surface parking—emblematic of the old Tysons giving way to the new. Between 64 and 109 of the units will be designated as workforce housing, depending on whether they're built as rentals or condominiums.

The Mile, a three billion dollar mixed-use development, is taking a surprising turn. Originally conceived as a dense hub of luxury apartment towers, developer Link Logistics is now proposing up to 250 modern townhouses throughout the project. This pivot reflects post-pandemic buyer preferences for more space, private entrances, and outdoor living areas. It also addresses market saturation—the area already features multiple luxury apartment complexes like Jones at Tysons, Highgate at The Mile, and Brentford. Construction costs for high-rises have soared while financing for multifamily projects has become more challenging, making townhouses a more economically viable path forward.

Multiple apartment projects are filling in Tysons' residential puzzle. The Flats at Tysons, currently under construction on Gallows Road, will deliver 86 one- and two-bedroom condominiums, plus 17,000 square feet of publicly accessible park space. Sales are expected to launch in early 2026. At 1950 Old Gallows Road, Insight Property Group and Southern Management are seeking approval for 304 luxury apartment units that would replace an eight-story office building—another example of office-to-residential conversion.

Meanwhile, Renaissance Centro is working on the final building in the Park Crest neighborhood, a 206-unit residential building designed for active adults. The seven-story structure will include 260 garage parking spaces and amenities like a dog spa, gazebo, and covered patio. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2026.

Affordable housing is finally arriving in Tysons. The Exchange at Spring Hill Station broke ground in December 2023 and will deliver 265 affordable units—the first 100% affordable multifamily project in Tysons. Another 225 affordable units are being built atop an existing parking garage at 1750 Old Meadow Road. These projects represent critical progress in a community where housing costs have become the highest in the Washington region.

The Retail Revolution

Tysons Corner Center, the region's largest shopping mall, is undergoing a \$100 million redevelopment. Macerich is investing \$66 million in retailer upgrades, including a redesigned Apple store, and \$45 million in mall improvements. The goal is to reimagine the west end of the mall—from Bloomingdale's to Macy's—into a vibrant, walkable retail, dining, and entertainment

district anchored by upscale dining and a luxury market.

New entertainment options are coming too. Level99, an adult-focused gaming venue with 40 immersive challenge rooms and a taproom, is slated to open in spring 2025. Maggiano's Little Italy is relocating from Tysons Galleria to a new first-level space. The redevelopment may result in the removal or relocation of the American Girl store as the mall shifts toward more adult-oriented and experiential offerings.

The Office Market: A Tale Of Two Cities

While residential and retail boom, the office market tells a more complicated story. Tysons' office vacancy rate reached 22% as of September 2024, up from 14% in mid-2020. Year-to-date negative absorption exceeded 750,000 square feet, with companies like WeWork, Baker Tilly, and Cvent downsizing their Tysons footprints.

Yet this headline number masks a critical divide. Trophy-class office buildings maintain a vacancy rate of just 13.9%—on par with the regional average—while other classes sit at 25.8%. Trophy offices rent at an average of \$61.33 per square foot, compared to \$35.60 for all other buildings. Without the still-empty Tysons Central building, trophy office vacancy would be as low as 6.2%.

This "flight to quality" trend has market analysts arguing that Tysons actually needs new trophy office development to compete with Reston and Arlington. Class A and B properties show vastly different performance: Class B buildings maintain a 14.5% vacancy rate, while Class A properties face 27.3% vacancy.

Some positive signs are emerging. Northern Virginia's overall office vacancy rate dropped from 25.5% to 22.8% year-over-year, with defense contractors driving demand. Nine of the top 10 leasing deals in the third quarter occurred in Reston, Herndon, or Tysons, led by CACI's agreement for 134,000 square feet in Reston. The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority's planned relocation to nearly 78,000 square feet at Valo Park represents one of the largest Tysons deals of the quarter.

Office-to-residential conversions are accelerating. Recent projects include McLean Corporate Ridge and 8221 Old Courthouse Road, both repurposing existing office space into residential use. A 14-acre site at 2000-2500 Chain Bridge Road—once considered for a casino—is being marketed for massive mixed-use redevelopment, including 2 million square feet of residential, office, and restaurant space.

Infrastructure And Connectivity

Development isn't just about buildings. Tysons is implementing its "Grid of Streets" designed to improve walkability and connectivity. New pedestrian amenities, sidewalks, and crosswalks are being incorporated into virtually every project. The Tysons Community Circuit—a trail network connecting developments—is expanding with each new project.

Several projects now include permanent park space. The Trillium recently delivered new parkland adjacent to its residential building. The Exchange at Spring Hill will provide a community center. Park Crest's final building promises additional green space in a neighborhood that lost its Harris Teeter grocery anchor.

The Residential Reality: High Demand, High Costs

Despite massive new supply, residential demand remains robust. About 94% of Tysons' residential units are occupied, even as rents continue rising. Tysons now has the priciest rental rates in the D.C. region. Retail vacancy sits at just 2.2%, down from 2.6% a year ago. Hotels have returned to pre-pandemic levels with 72% occupancy.

Visitation to Tysons has bounced back to 92% of pre-pandemic levels based on cellphone location data. While much of that traffic is shoppers and leisure visitors, workplace visits have also recovered substantially.

Challenges And Questions

This transformation doesn't come without concerns. Traffic congestion remains a constant complaint, with infrastructure struggling to keep pace with growth. The debate over the proposed casino highlighted deep community divisions over what kind of development Tysons should pursue.

The office market's bifurcation raises questions about the fate of Class B and C buildings. Many may face conversion or demolition as tenants flee to newer, higher-quality spaces. The county also faces fiscal pressure: declining commercial property values mean less tax revenue at a time when infrastructure needs are growing.

County officials are wrestling with whether current zoning and development patterns truly serve the community's long-term interests. Some argue that trophy office space and high-end residential development benefit the county fiscally while providing jobs and housing. Others worry about affordability, traffic impacts, and whether Tysons is becoming too expensive for middle-class families.

The Future Unfolds

What's clear is that Tysons in 2025 looks nothing like Tysons in 2010, and the transformation is far from complete. Billions of dollars in development are in various stages of planning and construction. The area is evolving from a place people drive to for work or shopping into a place people actually live—a genuine 24-hour urban center.

Whether this vision fully succeeds depends on multiple factors: continued transit investment, successful office market stabilization, sufficient affordable housing, and infrastructure that can support the density. But one thing is certain: the cranes won't stop rising anytime soon.

For developers, planners, and residents alike, Tysons represents one of America's boldest experiments in suburban transformation. Its success—or failure—will influence urban planning decisions across the country for decades to come.

As Tysons continues its evolution from edge city to urban center, the construction sites scattered across its 4.1 square miles represent not just buildings, but a fundamental reimagining of what American suburbs can become in the 21st century. ❖

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