

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Richmond’s New Tearoom, Floris at VMFA, Offers
Unique Culinary Experiences Centered Around Tea and the Arts**
Floris at VMFA Opening December 10 in the Pauley Center Parlor



Diners will savor these plates in the newly transformed parlor, whose vibrant color palette marries contemporary and historical aesthetics to create a fresh atmosphere. Photo by Travis Fullerton 2023 © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Richmond, VA — The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA) today announced that its new dining concept, Floris at VMFA, will open in the museum’s Pauley Center Parlor on December 10, 2023.

Floris at VMFA will offer guests an enjoyable, authentic tea experience. Tearoom staff have been trained in tea culture, inspired in part by classic English and French salon tea service. Menus will change seasonally and with special exhibitions. Each rotation will offer a culturally enriching experience that links the traditions of tea with VMFA’s global art collection.

“We invite you to take part in this celebration of the world of tea, art and social connection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts,” said Director and CEO Alex Nyerges. “Floris will have a warm, welcoming atmosphere, and our tearoom staff will work closely with the museum’s education and curatorial teams to tell art-centric stories through its culinary offerings and environment.”

Nestled in the museum’s Richmond campus, Floris at VMFA is in the parlor of the Stan and Dorothy Pauley Center. Guests will enter the tearoom from the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden. Noted for its architecture based on eighteenth-century plans for the White House, the Pauley Center — a longstanding favorite location for wedding receptions and soirées — houses elegant and inviting reception rooms restored in the Colonial Revival style.

“Floris at VMFA will be a refreshed interpretation of what a tearoom can be,” said VMFA’s Senior Director for Food Service and Events, Chef Cody Dickey. “Within the historical context of the Pauley Parlor, we will bring new life and meaning to a community-driven tearoom, providing delicious beverages and foods to the diverse and culturally thriving community of Richmond.”



Richmond’s new dining experience, Floris at VMFA, links the traditions of tea with the museum’s global art collection.
Photo by Travis Fullerton 2023 © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

To form a truly bespoke experience, Chef Cody and VMFA Lead Sous Chef Chainey Kuykendall have co-curated a robust tea menu using fresh ingredients from local vendors and importers. Guests may order local handcrafted teas from Dominion Tea in Purcellville, Virginia; Roots Tea Blends, a holistic, Richmond-based Black and Queer-owned tea and lifestyle brand; and Savory Blends Tea Company, a Black woman-owned business in Richmond’s Scott’s Addition neighborhood. There will even be a signature VMFA Blend, thoughtfully composed by chefs Cody and Chainey. This flavorful tea is an aromatic fusion of vanilla, floral and smoky elements that symbolize Richmond’s industrial roots in food extracts, bakeries and tobacco.

Floris at VMFA’s rotating selection will be influenced by tea-centric regions worldwide and will also include a selection of Fortnum & Mason brews. Imported from the U.K., this historic tea has royal recognition. The Royal Blend was originally created for King Edward VII in 1902, and has an iconic, honey-sweet flavor. Floris at VMFA will offer this esteemed cup, as well as Fortnum & Mason’s Earl Grey and Green Tea with Elderflower blends.

Cuisine offerings will include freshly baked breads and internationally inspired dishes, such as Japanese kabocha squash and herbs prepared over traditional Indian puri, and vadouvan spiced chicken salad on fresh brioche. Floris’

changing menu will also present opportunities for special collaborations with local chefs and purveyors of locally sourced ingredients.

Diners will savor these plates in the newly transformed parlor, whose vibrant color palette marries contemporary and historical aesthetics to create a fresh atmosphere. Local artisans have contributed their craft to nearly every decorative detail, from sconces to drapery, ensuring a truly unique and exceptional dining space. Art and tea lovers alike may also purchase a variety of tea accoutrements created by local makers.

Floris at VMFA will be open Sunday through Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. until the last seating at 2:30 p.m. The restaurant will serve a curated menu of specialty teas, savories and sweets for a fixed price. Beer and wine will be available à la carte. VMFA members receive a 10% discount in the museum's three dining venues. Reservations are strongly recommended, as seating is limited, and can be made on OpenTable beginning on Monday, December 4. Customers with questions can call (804) 340-5785.

Steeped in art, culture and community, Floris at VMFA will leave diners satiated and inspired. To learn more about Floris at VMFA, visit www.vmfa.museum.

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About Dominion Tea

[Dominion Tea](#) values tea as a vehicle for cultural awareness, personal connections, adventure and a connection to the land. Their mission is to search the globe for authentic tea and great products from which to develop small-batch, artisan tea blends. Their name, Dominion Tea, symbolizes both global and American history, conjuring visions of ships under sail and tea as a force impacting the spread of culture and ideas.

About Roots Tea Blends

Founded by Richmond-based Sydney Collier, [Roots Tea Blends](#) provides organic tea and herbal blends handmade with the intention to heal. As an educator, artist and entrepreneur, Collier created Roots Tea Blends to inspire mindful living, meditation and herbalism, and to promote a more holistic, present life.

About Savory Blends Tea Company

Founded by Richmond-based Lori Whitmore, [Savory Blends Tea Company](#) offers premium herbs and spices blended in small batches to ensure consistent quality and taste. Whitmore's inspiring entrepreneurship enables her to share her lifelong tea enthusiasm and custom blends with the world. She is passionate about educating people on the many ways tea can heal, unify and inspire.

About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 6,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass nearly 50,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is also home to important collections of Chinese art, English silver, and French Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing I after a transformative expansion, previously the largest in its history. A new expansion, the McGlothlin Wing II, is planned to open in 2028. Comprising more than 170,000 square feet, it will be the largest expansion in the museum's history and will make VMFA the fifth largest art museum in the United States.

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone (804) 340-1400 or visit www.vmfa.museum.

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