

CHEF'S TABLE

IT'S FOOD, WITH A VIEW

CHATTOOGA BELLE FARM BRINGS
AGROTOURISM TO THE UPSTATE

AND A PURPOSE

By Charles Sowell
Contributor

Ed Land seems to have proved that if you build it, they will come — particularly if you've got a great view and outstanding food.

Land, 55, started Chattooga Belle Farm in 2010 on a hill in Long Creek that overlooks the mountains of Georgia and the Chattooga River basin. He opened the farm for you-pick by 2011 and was hosting weddings on the open terrace of the rustic main building.

If you're going to get married, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more scenic backdrop. The terrace falls away to rolling hills covered in vineyards, orchards and pastureland.

WANT
TO GO?

From Greenville take U.S. 123 to Westminster. Bear right on U.S. 76 to Long Creek. In Long Creek turn left on Damascus Church Road at the Long Creek Fire Department. Chattooga Belle Farm will be on the right after about a mile. Look for the water tower with the farm's logo emblazoned on the side

For more information, or for tickets to the seasonal dinners, call 864-647-9768 or email info@chattoogabellefarm.com.

But food and weddings aren't Land's main business. He specializes in agrotourism and has cobbled together disparate parts to form a seamless whole of goods and services that will give him a profit this year, after only four years in business.

"Here at Chattooga Belle Farm our main business is agrotourism, and we do a lot of things, and we try to do them well," said Land. "Agriculture is our main passion, though. We have a small fruit production here on the farm and grow 23 varieties. We have our own cattle operation and grow our own grass-fed beef for use in the restaurant and for sale to the public."

The restaurant is open for lunch from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. daily. Patrons dine on the covered terrace. Land has started catering lunches for rafters featuring his homegrown produce and beef as well as fowl.

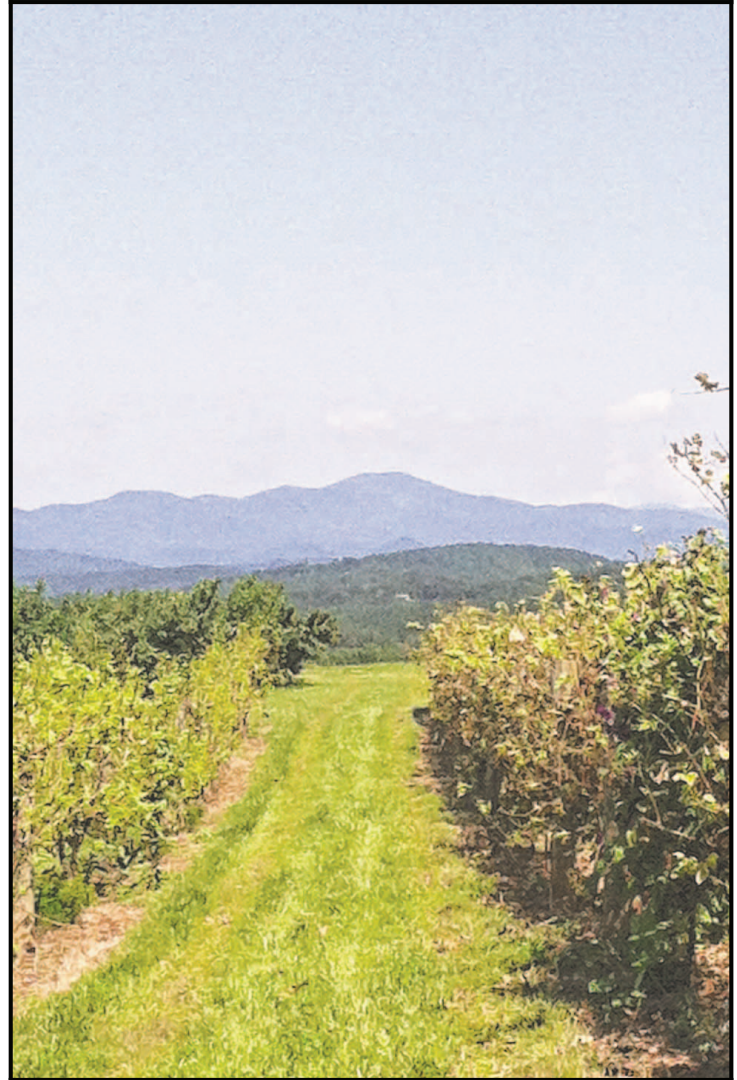
He also does a considerable business with vacationers from Atlanta, the Midwest and Greenville.

The farm has its own store, which features canned goods produced on the farm in its own cannery and Chattooga Belle Farm's own wines.

"We've gotten approval from the state to start our own microbrewery here," said Land. "We hope to build this winter and start production of fruit brandies from the overflow of our orchards as well as grains that we produce here and buy from local farmers."

The farm produces eight varieties of sweet Southern wines and has a new, European-style wine due to come out in a few weeks. The farm will feature the new wine at its farm-to-table dinner the first Sunday in October.

The seasonal dinners are among the farm's most popular events, Land said. Only 200 tickets are sold; about 100 are left. Diners will feast on local produce served at tables set up in the vineyard. The food will be prepared by two top chefs coming from resorts in Georgia for the event.



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