

Del Ray Murals Walking Tour 2021

Overview

- This tour explores some of the murals in Del Ray.
- Please note that this is just a sampling of the many wonderful murals in Alexandria.
- The route is about 1.2 miles long, with stops at 13 sites.
- Go to <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/37417707> for cuesheets or turn-by-turn directions.

1. Starting point: The Garden, 1503 Mount Vernon Avenue.

The Garden is home to two murals.



The first mural depicts a girl and a dog, and also incorporates the Del Ray street grid. The muralist, C.E. Brady, studied art at the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore. "I always wanted to be an artist, but I also needed to eat and pay the rent," Brady said. To meet those needs, Brady worked at the animal shelter in Alexandria, where he got the opportunity to paint his first murals. "I had always worked on canvas and on a smaller scale," Brady said. "Then I painted life-sized cats on the walls in the cat room." Brady's first commercial job was at St. Elmo's Coffee Pub, and he has also created a number of other murals in Del Ray.

Brady has since moved out of Virginia, but he still considers Del Ray one of his favorite places and returns occasionally – including to paint this mural, which he did in 2018.

The other murals, on the north side of the lot, are a legacy from when this site was occupied by Eclectic Nature, a garden center. The murals were created by Marie C. Dyer, a self-taught artist whose medium is described as "acrylic on anything." Dyer has been known to paint everything from clothing to furniture to automobiles. She painted these murals as part of Eclectic Nature's art show in 2006.



Sources: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2004/sep/08/painting-a-new-facade/>;
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2006/sep/12/nature-calls-artists-answer/>.

Start your walk by turning heading north along the eastside sidewalk of Mount Vernon Avenue. After passing the Walgreen's on the corner, turn right onto E. Monroe Avenue, staying on the southside sidewalk. Stop in front of the murals on the E. Monroe Avenue side of Walgreen's.

2. Walgreen's, 1517 Mount Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: in front of the murals on the E. Monroe Avenue side of the building.

The murals on the E. Monroe Avenue side of Walgreen's are a legacy from when this site housed an antiques store. When Walgreen's arrived in Del Ray in 2013, it displaced five existing businesses: Norge Laundry and Dry Cleaning, J&M Electronics, Universal Market, Not Too Shabby Antiques, and Potomac West Interiors and Antique Gallery.



The Del Ray Citizens Association's Land-Use Committee was unhappy about the arrival of the chain store, and they asked Walgreens to consider saving the murals painted on the building's north-facing façade, keeping the awnings, and preserving the Art Deco integrity of the building.

Source: <https://patch.com/virginia/delray/del-ray-walgreens-project-ready-to-move-forward>.

Retrace your steps back to Mount Vernon Avenue. Cross E. Monroe Avenue and continue walking north on Mount Vernon Avenue until you reach Kaizen Tavern.

3. Kaizen Tavern, 1909 Mount Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: in the parking lot on the north side of the building.



Artist Rives Wiley painted this sunset-inspired mural in 2020 and also did some beautiful art inside the restaurant. Rives Wiley (b. 1990) is an artist working in Washington DC. She holds a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and is represented by the Hamiltonian Gallery. Her recent solo exhibitions include "DIY Laser Eye Surgery", "How to be Photosynthetic" (Hamiltonian Gallery), and "Dinner Party Download" (Hillyer Art Space). Wiley has exhibited in art fairs such as Satellite Art Show

during Miami Art Basel Week and SPRING/BREAK Art Fair during New York City's Armory Arts Week. Wiley is a 2016 Hamiltonian Fellow, a recipient of a 2017 DC Commission for the Arts and Humanities Grant, and has been a Trawick Semi- Finalist. Along with her personal work, she creates murals/painting commissions for breweries and restaurants.

Amy Eggers designed the new Del Ray Flower Wall. Eggers lives with her family in Del Ray. She describes herself as follows: "I am a life-style brand always embarking on new projects - including textile, botanical, and floral design to art installations, workshops, event design, production, and planning."



Sources: <https://riveswiley.com/about>; <https://amyeggers.com/>.

Continue walking north on Mount Vernon Avenue until you reach the southeast corner of Mount Vernon Avenue and E. Windsor Avenue.

4. House at SE corner of Mount Vernon Avenue and E. Windsor Avenue

Stopping point: on the sidewalk.

This mural, created by C.E. Brady, is painted with an eye-catching mural that seems to sprout right out of the ground. The plants, birds, and butterflies make it feel like springtime year-round when you walk by this house.



Source: <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/things-to-do/great-walks-in-alexandria/#mural>;
<https://blog.visitalexandriava.com/walking-tour-of-del-ray-murals-in-alexandria-va/>.

Continue one block north on Mount Vernon Avenue to Vélocity Bicycle Cooperative.

5. Vélocity Bicycle Cooperative, 2111 Mount Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: on the north side of the building.

Patrick Kirwin is the local artist who proposed the idea of painting an outdoor market scene. Kirwin has taught at the Alexandria Art League, the Corcoran College, and the Smithsonian Institution. Initially, he worked with children from the Community Kids Club, a group of nine 4th and 5th graders from Mount



Vernon Community School, to paint the flower pots along the bottom of the length of the mural. He painted his own two children into the mural, as well as the child of one of the staff members of the nearby nail salon and other neighborhood children. He can tell you the name of every child and dog pictured in the mural. Kirwin says the mural exemplifies the character of Del Ray, a celebration of healthy living, children and dogs.

Source: <http://diydelray.com/2016/11/07/meet-the-mural-artist-patrick-kirwin/>.

Continue one block north on Mount Vernon Avenue to The Dog Store.

6. The Dog Store, 2301 Mount Vernon Avenue
Stopping point: on the south side of the building.

The mural is titled “Dream Forest,” and it was created by Alex Cook in 2012. Alex Cook is a multi-disciplinary artist living in Boston, MA. Since 1997 he has created over 180 murals in 18 states and 4 countries. In 2014 he created the YOU ARE LOVED mural project, collaborating with organizations of all types to artfully express that important message. He has written and recorded 6 albums of original songs and performs around the United States.



Source:

<http://www.stonebalancer.com/murals/v1pfc5rufpcn5g2gw40xwrr81v5hl>.

Continue half a block north to Bagel Uprising.

7. Bagel Uprising, 2307A Mount Vernon Avenue
Stopping point: in the courtyard area



Renowned biscuit maker Nicole Jones, an owner and chef at Stomping Ground, teamed up with self-taught baker Chad Breckinridge to move his Bagel Uprising brand into a space next-door to her booming Southern cafe. The IT lawyer started baking bagels for family brunches before becoming a hit at the Four Mile Run Farmers Market a few years ago. After getting to the point where he’d sell out of 600 bagels a day — a job that resulted in 80-pound sacks of flour piling up in his study — he leased this space in 2019. Breckinridge’s sister, Liz Silbaugh, painted the mural outside the store.

Source: <https://dc.eater.com/2019/6/19/18691228/bagel-uprising-coming-to-del-ray-summer-2019>.

Continue north on Mount Vernon Avenue to the next building, Stomping Ground.

8. Stomping Ground, 2309 Mount Vernon Avenue
Stopping point: on the north side of the building

“The story behind the mural is based on a mural in Dunedin, Florida,” explains Karen Johnson, Co-Founder of PawsGo. “Maurine Schweers, who does communication for the Del Ray Business Association, saw a Facebook post of the mural in Florida, and she emailed me and Pat Miller and said, ‘This would be something fun to do in Del Ray. How can we do it?’ So Pat Miller, who knows everybody, contacted the owner of Stomping Ground, who is a dog-lover. He said, ‘I think it’s a great idea.’”



Of the numerous artists Pat and Karen interviewed, Patrick Kirwin was the perfect fit for this project. Now, the mural of dozens of dogs adorns the entire wall of Stomping Ground overlooking Pat Miller Square. The artist spent about 300 hours on the project, working off photos from the dogs' owners. Dog owners paid \$50 for each portrait.

Sources: <https://thezebra.org/2021/05/07/the-dogs-of-del-ray-mural-at-pat-miller-square-unveiled-dedicated-by-awla/>; <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/northern-virginia/del-ray-mural-goes-to-the-dogs/2711100/>.

Continue north on Mount Vernon Avenue for half a block, then stop at Cheesetique.

9. Cheesetique, 2411 Mount Vernon Avenue
Stopping point: on the south side of the building



The fun thing about this mural by C.E. Brady is it showcases a side of Del Ray that people rarely see any more – trains and horse racing! In the background lies the D.C. skyline, but front and center it's all about connecting with Alexandria's past: when train lines ran through the neighborhood, and the St. Asaph Racetrack was a hub of political intrigue and gambling excitement.

Source: <https://redtri.com/dc/cool-backdrops-for-instagram-photos/>.

Continue north on Mount Vernon Avenue for half a block, then stop at Piece Out.

10. Piece Out, 2419 Mount Vernon Avenue
Stopping point: on the north side of the building

This mural is also by C.E. Brady. It highlights some beloved Del Ray traditions, including the Saturday farmers' market, the Alexandria Aces, the Christmas tree lighting, the Halloween Parade, Del Ray's Art Deco architecture, and Art on the Avenue.

At the traffic light, cross Mount Vernon Avenue and continue north on the westside sidewalk. Pass Mount Vernon Community School, then turn left onto the path by the playground.



11. Mount Vernon Recreation Center, 2701 Commonwealth Avenue
Stopping point: on the north side of the center

Leisa Collins recruited fellow local artists Forest Allread and Corinne Marlow for this project, which depicts a Del Ray street scene that shows how human rights play an integral part in any true community.



The main painting event took place during the 2010 Art on the Avenue festival in Del Ray, when throngs of enthusiastic children armed with brushes and paint containers got to work. Meanwhile, thousands of onlookers stopped and watched “art in action” as the mural took shape throughout the day.

The project involved the creativity of five youth teams, each painting their own sections. The mural includes a number of articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, namely, “The Right to Education,” “The Right to Play,” “Right to Nationality,” “Freedom of Expression” and “Workers Rights” integrated into a portrayal of life in Del Ray. The costs of paint and materials for the mural were donated by Art on the Avenue, and all participation by artists, youth, parents and community workers was carried out on a volunteer basis.

The mural was meant to be temporary, but citizens loved it so much they petitioned to keep it.

Sources: <http://usahumanrights.com/star-project-del-ray-mural>;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2014/04/04/mural-art-in-the-suburbs-colors-outside-the-city-lines-heres-where-to-view-the-best/>.

Retrace your steps back to Mount Vernon Avenue, then head south on Mount Vernon Avenue. Stay on the westside sidewalk, then stop at St. Elmo’s Coffee Pub.

12. St. Elmo’s Coffee Pub, 2300 Mount Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: on the south side of the building

This mural, also by C.E. Brady, pays tribute to legendary musicians, including Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Jim Morrison. Morrison lived in Alexandria as a teenager, after his father received a promotion in the military and was reassigned to the Pentagon. During his high school years in Alexandria, Morrison developed into a multi-media artist. He would create oil paintings and collages in his basement bedroom, and he would venture into D.C. to listen to bands and see films at local art house cinemas. Friends who knew him at the time were surprised when Morrison later became the lead singer for The Doors. In high school, his only involvement in making music was to hum in the Alexandria library just to drive the librarian crazy.



Sources: <https://blog.visitalexandriava.com/walking-tour-of-del-ray-murals-in-alexandria-va/>;
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2006/aug/02/jim-morrison-the-high-school-years/>.

Continue south on Mount Vernon Avenue to Junction Bakery.

13. Junction Bakery and Bistro, 1508 Mount Vernon Avenue

Stopping point: on the north side of the building

The blue mural outside the bakery, painted by Torie Partridge and Cory Bernat, has a vintage feel that nods to Del Ray's railway and streetcar past. Check out the mural, but be warned: pastries and other goods are baked on-site daily, making it hard to resist a treat (or two) when you can smell the deliciousness from outside.

Sources: <https://www.visitalexandriava.com/things-to-do/great-walks-in-alexandria/#mural>;
<https://blog.visitalexandriava.com/walking-tour-of-del-ray-murals-in-alexandria-va>.

Cross Mount Vernon Avenue at the traffic light to return to the tour's starting point.