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## Vino Volo will no longer be just a terminal wine bar

By [Dave McIntyre](#)



Vino Volo will come in for a landing this fall in Bethesda, the company's first non-airport location. (Vino Volo)

[Vino Volo](#), the wine bar chain that has been a grape haven at beer-saturated airports across the country, will land in Bethesda Row this fall. It will be the company's first non-airport location as it seeks to expand its customer base beyond harried passengers waiting for a flight. A second location is due to open in Tysons Corner.

"Many of our customers have been asking us to open in urban locations so they can enjoy the Vino Volo experience without a boarding pass," company founder and CEO **Doug Tomlinson** said in a phone interview.

Vino Volo opened its first location at Washington Dulles International Airport in 2005. It now operates 18 airport locations, including a second at Dulles and one at Thurgood Marshall Baltimore-Washington International. Another 12 are planned, including the first "city stores."

Tomlinson said the concept — offering flights of three different wines with a menu of small plates, plus wine for retail sale — will continue at the Bethesda location. The new location will have more space than the airport outlets, "giving us more flexibility to spread our wings," he said.

"Vino Volo means 'wine flight' in Italian, and we have made wine tasting fun and interactive by putting together tasting flights that allow guests to discover which wines they enjoy most, in a way you can't do if you're just buying wine by the glass," Tomlinson explained.

Other wine bars and restaurants offer flights as well, of course, and Vino Volo will be competing directly against local favorites without the benefit of a captive airport audience. Tomlinson said Vino Volo's national customer base and established reputation will enable it to compete, and the company's size and ability to seek out deals on boutique wines will give it an advantage over smaller, one-location wine bars.

Tomlinson also makes sure his staff is knowledgeable about the wines on offer. "I have every one of my teammates join me in a different wine region each year for a wine training retreat," he said. "We get our feet and hands in the dirt, meet winemakers and get to understand a wine region in a way that you really can't without going there."

Presumably, they go by plane.

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