



ON THE VINE

CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

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Photo by Will & Deni McIntyre

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A Couple, A Cow, and A King

By Joe Mills

When Linda King first visited RagApple Lassie Vineyards in the late winter of 2002 construction of the winery had only just begun, and she found herself looking at a hole in the ground. Owners Frank and Lenna Hobson showed her plans, research about the area's soil and climate, and walked her through the vineyards, urging her to envision the hole half-full. As a professional wine judge and award-winning winemaker for Chalet Debonnet, the largest estate winery in Ohio, Linda wasn't looking for a new job. But the couple's enthusiasm and the opportunity for more control over crafting her wines helped convinced Linda and her husband to move south.

For the Hobsons, hiring a winemaker was the last piece of a puzzle that had taken them two years to fit together. A third generation tobacco farmer, Frank, pictured above in his barrel room at RagApple Lassie, had already begun looking for alternative crops in light of the regulated downsizing of tobacco. Lenna says, "Frank always has a Plan B."

Cont'd on page 4



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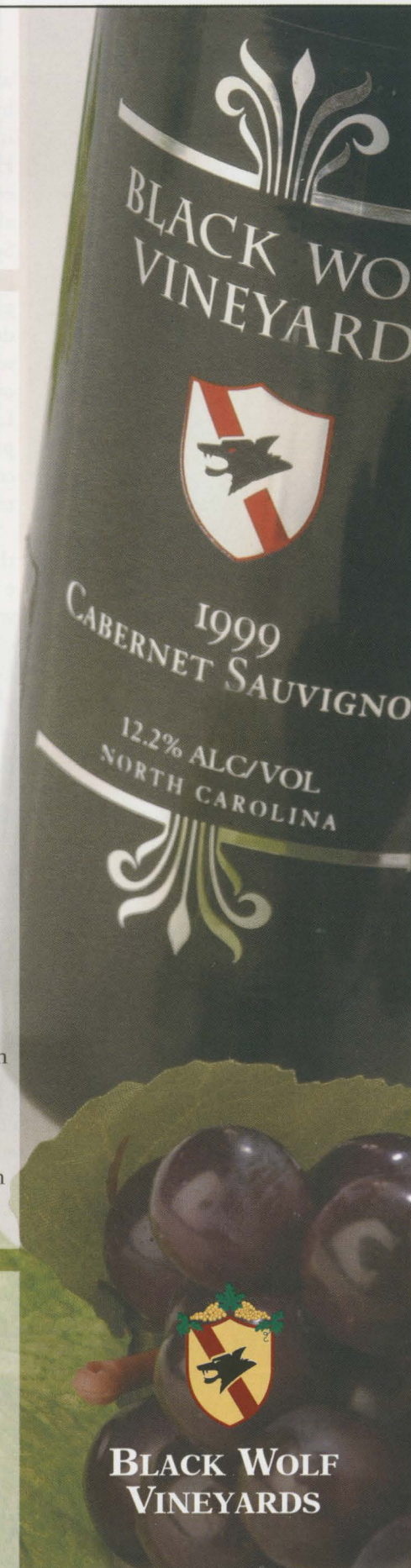
MON THRU SAT – 11am to 2:30pm
SUN – NOON to 3pm

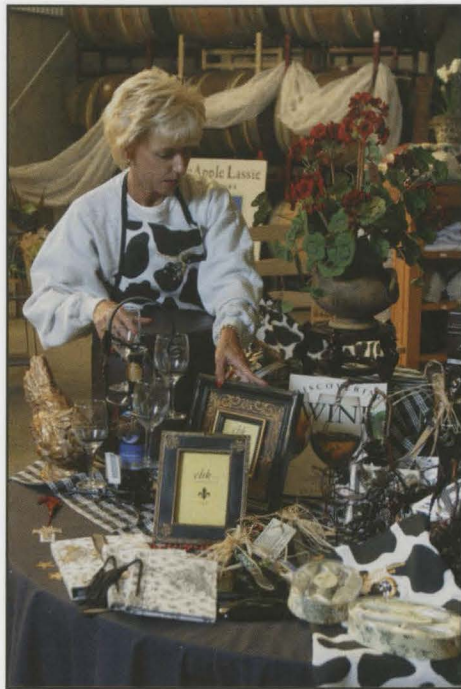
DINNER

THURS THRU SAT – 5pm to 10pm
SUN – 4pm to 8pm

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283 VINEYARD LANE
DOBSON, NC 27017





Donna Edwards arranges display in the tasting room at RagApple Lassie.

Photo by Will & Deni McIntyre

Shepard, winemaker at RayLen Vineyards, turned them on to Linda, whom he'd known professionally for decades. They hung up with Steve and dialed Linda.

In some ways, that call seemed like fate to the Kings. Linda had already planned on attending the annual Winegrape Growers Conference to see what all the buzz was about and her husband, Tom, had always thought, "we'd retire in North Carolina, but I never knew how we were going to get there." The most convincing reason to move, however, was found in the Hobson's fields.

Although the winery was still only blueprints and bulldozers, the vineyards were already impressive. Linda says, "Frank has been a real forerunner of doing it right. It's a pleasure as a winemaker to have the person who is controlling your vineyard have such precision—wanting it to look the best, to be the best, pruning it exactly right, having the right amount of fruit."

Frank's attention to detail and a cooperative long warm summer with just enough rain resulted in "wonderful fruit" with "lots of rich deep flavors for the 2002 harvest," says Linda.

Linda can laugh (now) about how wild it was getting the grapes crushed and pressed, while the winery was not yet completed. She recalls, "I'm trying to make wine and I've got an electrician hanging off one arm and a plumber hanging off the other arm saying 'you have to come look at this' and I'm saying, 'wait, wait, wait, let me process these grapes!'"

Everyone at RagApple Lassie is pleased with the 2002 vintages. In particular, the Viognier. "When you open a bottle of it you can smell it all over the

Cont'd from page 1

In this case, Plan B was grapes. Inspired by Shelton Vineyards in Dobson, the Hobsons began to educate themselves about viticulture. Soon after Frank had put in several acres of grapes the couple decided to go all the way and build their own winery, RagApple Lassie, named after a prize-winning dairy cow Frank raised as a teen-ager.

The Hobsons knew they needed an experienced winemaker with "lots of life-earned wisdom" as Lenna puts it. A phone call from Steve

room. It's really lovely." She believes the Viognier will grow well in the area, and it may become one of RagApple Lassie's signature wines. In fact, unbeknownst to Frank and Lenna, she secretly entered both the 2002 Viognier and the 2002 Merlot (Frank's favorite) in the Indy International Wine Competition and both took bronze medals in the July event. Not bad for young wines up against 3300 entries from 15 different countries!

Both the Viognier and Chardonnay boast the new Yadkin Valley Appellation on their labels. Other RagApple Lassie releases include Cabernet Sauvignon, Evening Sunset, a sweet, aromatic wine made from the Symphony grape, and Boonville Blanc, a sweet white that literally walks out the sales room doors.

RagApple Lassie bottled 3500 cases in 2003 and expects to double production next year, eventually topping out at a 10,000 case production. Linda will have plenty of opportunities to experiment. Frank has planted over fifteen different varietals, including Malbec and Marsanne, blending grapes used in Bordeaux and Rhone wines respectively.

Frank and Lenna laugh at what has been "a helluva ride," and they know it isn't over yet. More construction lies ahead: the completion of a banquet area and a more finished tasting room. Despite this year's weather-related challenges, the Hobsons are proud of what they've accomplished so far and have high hopes for the future. Linda insists she's been "blown away" by the level of enthusiasm and support for the industry, and adds, "There is something very exciting about being on the ground floor. I feel like I'm going to be a part of history here."



Linda King & Mario Calderon checking labels on bottling line.

Photo by Will & Deni McIntyre

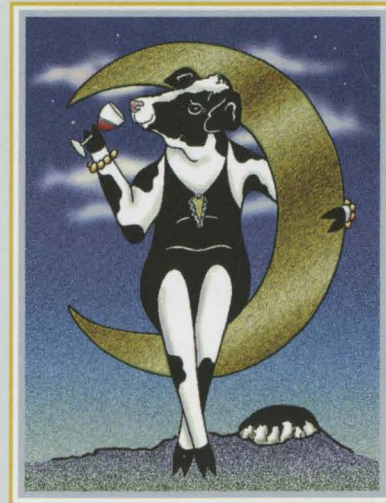
RagApple Lassie VINEYARD & WINERY

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67; South at Rockford Road

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3724 Rockford Road
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1-866-RagApple
www.ragapplelassie.com



View from the tasting room deck at Raffaldini Vineyards

Roasted Eggplant & Red Pepper Panini

From the Kitchen of Bella Barbara Raffaldini

Panini means rolls or "little breads" in Italian. In the U.S., we think sandwich, in Italy they think panini. The perfect wine pairing for this panini would be Toscana, a blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Syrah in the Super Tuscan tradition. Toscana wines pair well on their own with Brie or Havarti cheese.

Ingredients

- 1 loaf fresh Italian hard-crust bread, sliced in half and cut into 6 sections
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 unpeeled eggplant, cut crosswise into 6 rounds about 1/2 inch thick (approx. 1 lb)
- slices of fresh roasted red bell pepper (or jarred drained, patted dry)
- 12 ozs mozzarella cheese, sliced into 6 pieces
- 1 large tomato, sliced into 6 pieces
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- fresh basil leaves
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Lightly drizzle the eggplant with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Arrange eggplant slices in a single layer on a baking sheet. Broil 3" from heat 5 minutes; turn over and broil another 5 minutes or until lightly browned.

Brush Italian bread sections with olive oil and rub with peeled cloves of crushed garlic. Broil 2 minutes per side, until golden brown. Place eggplant, roasted pepper, basil, tomato, and mozzarella cheese on bread sections. Broil until cheese melts, about 15-20 seconds. Watch closely. Yield: 6 panini.

RAFFALDINI VINEYARDS ...

... located within the Yadkin Valley Appellation in the Swan Creek area of Ronda, NC, reflects the Raffaldini Family vision that honoring the life essence of the land rather than trying to change it enables the vineyard to produce grapes of exceptional quality. The Raffaldini farm in Lombardy, Italy dates back to 1348.

Raffaldini Vineyards' tasting room opens at 1 p.m. on May 21, 2004, the Sunday following the 3rd Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival in neighboring Elkin, NC.

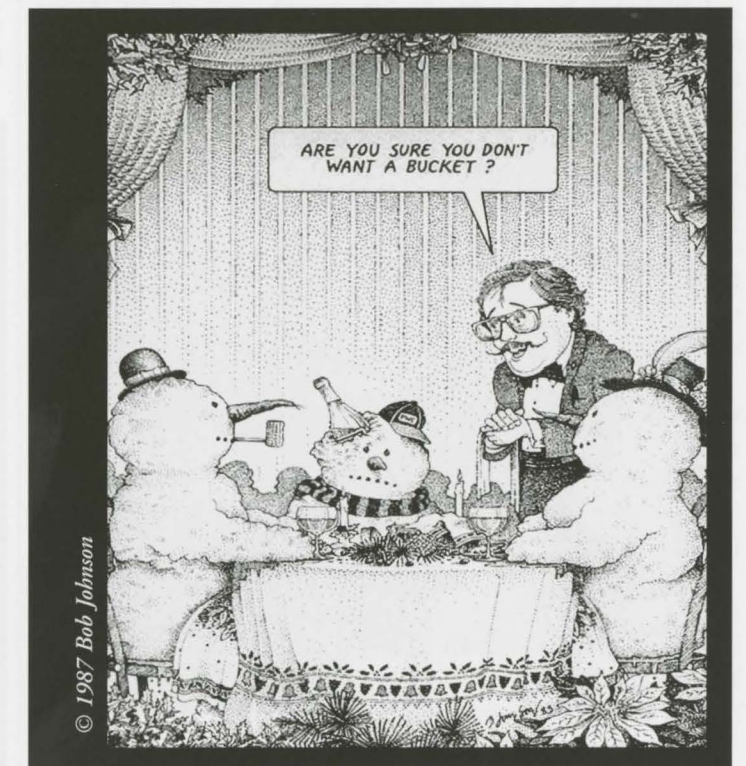
Phone: 336-835-9463

Email: info@raffaldini.com

Website: www.raffaldini.com

The word "toast" comes from the Roman practice of dropping a piece of roasted bread into a glass of wine.

The charcoal tempered some of the wine's less desirable qualities.



© 1987 Bob Johnson

Come Away With Me and Watch a River Run

*The River House Inn in Ashe County
by Susan Lyons*

Do you long for that “aah” experience of going home to a favorite relative’s without doing the heavy lifting? Then come away to Ashe’s County’s River House Inn in Grassy Creek, nestled close to the Virginia Border in northwest North Carolina, about two hours from the Triad.

The gentle, northern-running New River, proclaimed to be the second oldest on earth, services the inn’s guests like a kindly country doctor in residence. Situated on a hill among 170 acres in the bowl of the Blue Ridge, River House features a rocking chair front porch for river gazing out over an idyllic field of green leading to the river’s edge. And cut into those 170 acres are *landscaped* walking trails.

Don’t get me wrong: River House Inn and surrounds aren’t exactly your quaint, country get-away. Cozy, yes, but the seven guest rooms in converted farm buildings feature private bathrooms, king-sized beds, gas-log fireplaces and the de rigueur Jacuzzi tubs.

The place has drama, like its dynamic innkeeper Gayle Winston, formerly of Ashe County, Virginia, Broadway, Winston-Salem and ... Ashe County.

This fascinating woman has reinvented her life in tandem with reinventing her art. Out of college and off to New York, the twenty-three year old “fell into” producing (as she puts it). Her first production was the legendary Broadway play *Bullfight*. She went on to produce Joanne Woodward’s first play, among others. Ask



The River House Inn

her about Paul Newman hanging around the stage door. Gayle also enabled -- fund-raising for Adlai Stevenson, the Kennedys and the Democratic Party, even after returning to Winston-Salem.

Lucky for us Gayle returned to her great-grandfather’s farm 15 years ago, and turned the country estate into a gathering spot where she mixes the remarkable with her “guest family.” As she puts it, “It’s like having friends over every day.”

While we were there, popular pianist Emile Pandolfi, whose musical madeleines draw ardent fans to concert appearances all over the map, “noodled” (with a nod to Steve Allen) on the grand piano in the dining room. Friends of Gayle’s, Emile and wife Judy were in the county for Emile’s annual Arts Council concert. This is a typical River House scenario: Artists, entertainers, writers, and Gayle’s wide coterie of friends, sharing their downtime with guests of the River House.

And the food! We’re talking serious four-star gastronomy. Dinner seatings are at 6 pm and 8 pm, available to the public Wednesday through Sunday and to guests seven nights a week. Chef Bill Klein, who trained in Paris and San Francisco, serves up succulent creations like rainbow trout over rice beans, delicately laced with bits of chorizo and zucchini, or duck breast medallions over a julienne of fingerling potatoes and chanterelles. The presentation is tasteful, and *not* overly architectural.

Desserts are Gayle’s specialty. Her famous hot bread pudding with brandied currants is so popular that guests “won’t let me retire it,” she laments. My husband ordered the basil ice cream with Zinfandel berries. After his first bite, he laid his forearm between the dessert and me. (I’ll remember that, even though my lemon tartlet with blackberries and orange caramel made me giddy up.)

No need to rise early in the morning for the management-appointed breakfast hour. Breakfast, included with the cost of your stay, is served until 10 am. Order off the menu of omelettes, sherried eggs, French toast, fresh fruit, and that endless cup of coffee or tea.

Cont’d on next page



View from front porch at The River House Inn

Cont’d from previous page

The wine list is long and deep for an inn, fairly priced and generously poured by manager Amy Hart who’s managed things at the River House for nine years. Selected North Carolina wines will be carefully folded into the existing menu of California, French, Australian Chards, Cabs, Champagnes, Pinots and dessert wines. After-dinner libations are available from the charming little bar that looks out onto that renowned front porch.

River House offers wine dinners and cooking classes with Chef Klein that include discounted lodging packages (see Places to Go, p.10). Gayle’s latest production debuted in July 2003, the River House Wine Fest, which paired North Carolina wines with delicious food and local music played out on the wide lawn by the river. Next year’s reprise takes place July 17, 2004.

Guests visiting during the holidays are welcome to get into the act: potato peelers are available for those inclined (not to mention other culinary devices). “Once you’re here the place is yours,” proclaims Gayle on River House’s website. She’ll see to it.

Sunday Evenings, the River House offers a Salon Series that includes a 4-course tasting menu, 5 pm entertainment ranging from story telling, live music, poetry, discussions, films or a swing band!—followed by dinner at 6 pm.

Trip Details: From Winston-Salem, take US 421 North to Wilkesboro. Turn right on NC16. Ten miles beyond the town of Jefferson take a sharp left immediately after crossing the North Fork New River Bridge. Go 1.2 miles to the Inn.

Costs: \$135-150 per night including breakfast. Reservations required.

Contact: phone, 336-982-2109; email, riverhouse@skybest.com; website, www.riverhouseenc.com

In the area: North Carolina and Virginia mountain attractions. Blowing Rock and Abingdon, VA—one hour away. Blue Ridge Parkway—20 minutes away.

Hours: Open 7 days a week for guests; Wed-Sun to the public for dinner. Closed January. Valentine’s Dinner for Lovers opens the season on February 14.

Ask The Winemaker

By Stephen Rigby, Winery Consultant

Like to hear something spicy? Then let’s talk about the use of wood in winemaking. I say “spicy” because the use of barrels in winemaking is often compared to the use of spices in cooking. Cooks have a sense of which spices work best with certain recipes. However, there’s always room for experimentation. It’s much the same with choosing oak for winemaking.

I use “oak” generically because white oak by far predominates as the wood of choice. A quick glance at a winery buyer’s guide shows about 30 different sources of barrels, with some sources representing several cooperages.

The difference between one cooper’s barrels and another’s can begin with the source of the wood, where it grew. First there’s the country – such as France, America or Hungary—then there’s the particular forest within that country.

The degree of “tightness” of the wood grain can depend upon both of these variables. How, and for how long were the staves (the “boards” that run the length of the barrel) dried and aged, or seasoned? Typical aging of the wood can be from 18 months to three years. Good seasoning (aging) is crucial: it can help cleanse the wood of some of its most bitter components.

Next, winemakers must choose what level of barrel toasting to use, from light through medium to heavy, but not charred like a whisky barrel. The stated degree of toasting may be somewhat different from cooper to cooper as well.

Then there’s the winemaking. Some wines never touch wood at all, but for those that do there are a number of decisions ahead. As the understanding of wine and oak and their interactions improves, some of the approaches to use of the oak evolve as well. How the oak is used with reds or whites is not always too different. Many a chardonnay has been fermented in the barrel, and though it’s less common, these days many reds are being separated from the skins much earlier in their fermentation and allowed to finish in the oak. Generally the reds spend a longer stint in the oak than do the whites.

Other decisions involve such things as putting the wine in oak only after the fermentation is complete, leaving the wine in contact with its sediment in the barrel (sur lie) and occasionally giving the wine a stir. The stirring brings the sediment (mostly yeast cells) back up into the wine. This can modify the wine’s sensory balance between the wood, fruit, and yeast by somewhat diminishing the former two components and enhancing the latter.

In some cases a portion of the wine will be put into new barrels while some goes to used, more neutral barrels, or even kept in the stainless steel tanks. These different components can then be blended in various percentages to enhance or reduce the new barrel oaked element, or the fruit-driven stainless steel-ed one. It’s all about style and “increasing the complexity” of the wine.

Next time you’re touring a winery, take a closer look at the barrels...the spice rack. By checking the head or end of the barrel you’ll be able to identify such things as the cooper, the source of the wood, and the toast level. Then you can raise your glass of barrel-aged beauty and actually toast toasting. I wood.





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MOUNTAIN REGION

- 1 Biltmore Estate Winery 800-543-2961**
One North Pack Square, Asheville, NC 28801
Bernard DeLille, VP/Winemaker
Website: www.biltmore.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 am-7 pm; Sun, 12 pm-7 pm
Location: Buncombe County—On the grounds of Biltmore Estate in Asheville. Take I-40 Exit 50A and go north on Hwy 25 two blocks to Biltmore House entrance.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 2 Cerminaro Vineyard 828-754-9306**
4399 Wilkesboro Boulevard, Boomer, NC 28606
Joe & Deborah Cerminaro
Hours: By appointment only
Location: Caldwell County—In Kings Creek on Hwy 18 between Lenoir and Wilkesboro
Wine List: French Hybrids
- 3 Château Laurinda 800-650-3236**
690 Reeves Ridge Rd., Sparta, NC 28675
Linda & Larry Ehlers & Family
Website: www.chateaulaurindawinery.com
Hours: Tues-Sat, 10 am-7 pm; Sun, 12-5 pm
Location: Alleghany County—From I-77, take Exit 83 to Hwy 21 towards Sparta to 221 South. Turn right on Hwy 93. Go 1.5 miles to 2nd road on left.
Wine List: French Varietals, Fruit Wines, Muscadine Varieties
- 4 Ritler Ridge Vineyards 828-665-7405**
5 Piney Mountain Church Rd., Candler, NC 28715
Tim Ritz
Hours: Wed-Sat, 11 am-5 pm; Evenings, Thurs-Sat by appt.
Location: Buncombe County—From I-40, take Exit 44 for US Hwy 19/23 West. Turn right onto US Hwy 19 South. Turn left onto NC Hwy 151 North.
Wine List: French Varietals, Table Wines
- 5 Rockhouse Vineyards 828-863-2784**
1525 Turner Rd., Tryon, NC 28782
Lee Griffin & Marsha Cassidy
Website: www.rockhousevineyards.com
Hours: Thurs-Sun, 1-5 pm
Location: Polk County—Take Hwy 74 to Hwy 9 Exit 167. Travel 2.2 miles south on Hwy 9 to Turner Rd. Turn left on Turner Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals
- 6 The Teensy Winery 828-287-7763**
3661 Painters Gap Rd., Union Mills, NC 28167
Bob Howard
Hours: By appointment only
Location: Rutherford County—Take I-40 Rutherfordton exit. Take Hwy 221 south to Thermal City. Turn west on SR 1321 then right on SR 1328 (Painters Gap Rd.).
Wine List: French Varietals
- 7 Thistle Meadow 800-233-1505**
102 Thistle Meadow, Laurel Springs, NC 28644
Thomas R. Burgess
Website: www.thistlemeadowwinery.com
Hours: Fri, 11-4; Sat, 10-4; Sun, call ahead
Location: Alleghany County—From Hwy 18, 2 miles south of Sparta, turn left on Elk Knob Road. First drive on right.
Wine List: French Varietals, Italian Blends, Fruit Blends
- 8 Waldensian Heritage Wines 828-879-3202**
4940 Villar Lane NE, Valdese, NC 28690
Joel Dalmas, Joe Jacumin, Freddy Leger, John Bourous, Tom Garrou
Hours: Thurs-Sun, 1 pm-6 pm; Mon-Wed by appointment
Location: Burke County—Take I-40 exit 112 North to Valdese. Go north on Eldred St. to N. Laurel St. Turn left on Villar Lane (2.4 miles from I-40).
Wine List: American Blends

"Here's to good friends who know all your faults and still refuse to believe them!"

—Tommy and Helen Mitchell

YADKIN VALLEY APPELLATION

- 1 Black Wolf Vineyards 336-374-2532**
Tasting Room and Restaurant
283 Vineyard Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Dana Theis
Website: www.blackwolfvineyards.com
Hours: M-Sat, 11 am-2:30 pm; Th-Sat, 5-10 pm; Sun 12-8 pm
Location: Surry County—Off Hwy 601 at Vineyard Lane.
Wine List: French Varietals, French Hybrids, Blends
- 2 Hanover Park Vineyard 336-463-2875**
1927 Courtney-Huntsville Rd., Yadkinville, NC 27055
Michael & Amy Helton
Website: www.hanoverparkwines.com
Hours: Thurs -Sat, 12-6 pm; Sun, 1-5 pm
Location: Yadkin County—Take Hwy 421 to Hwy 601. Go south 4 miles on Hwy 601. Left on Courtney-Huntsville Rd.
Wine list: French Varietals, Blends
- 3 Laurel Gray Vineyards 336-468-8463**
Tasting Room and Gift Shop
5726 Old Hwy 421, Hamptonville, NC 27020
Kim and Benny Myers, Owners
Website: www.laurelgray.com
Hours: Wed, 1-5; Thurs, 10-5; Fri, 10-6; Sat, 10-5; Sun, 1-5
Location: Yadkin County—Hwy 421 North to Windsor Road, 1.5 mi. North of I-77. Exit right. Vineyard .1 mi. on left.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 4 Old North State Winery 336-789-9463**
308 North Main Street, Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Members of the ONS Winegrowers Co-op Assn.
Stephen Rigby, Winemaker
Website: www.oldnorthstategrowers.com
Hours: Opening October 4—Call ahead
Mon-Sat, 10-6; Sun, 1-6
Location: Surry County—From I-77, take I-74 East to US601 into Mt. Airy. Follow signs for Visitor Center. Winery is on left past the Visitor Center on Main St.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 5 Rag Apple Lassie Vineyards 866-RAG-APPLE**
3724 Rockford Road, Boonville, NC 27011
Frank and Lenna Hobson, Owners
Linda M. King, Winemaker
Website: www.ragapplelassie.com
Hours: Wed-Sun, 12-6 pm
Location: Yadkin County—From Hwy 67, 3 miles east of Boonville, go south on Rockford Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 6 RayLen Vineyards 336-998-3100**
3577 US Hwy 158, Mocksville, NC 27028
Joe & Joyce Neely, Owners
Steve Shepard, Winemaker
Website: www.raylenvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 am-6 pm
Location: Davie County—Via I-40 West, left on 801 South, right on 158 West; winery is 4 miles on right.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 7 Round Peak Vineyards 336-352-5595**
Tasting Room /Winery
765 Round Peak Church Rd., Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Susan & George Little, Janet & Lee Martin, Owners
Mark Golding, Manager
Website: www.roundpeak.com
Hours: Late Fall Opening - Call ahead
Thurs, 11-6; Fri, 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun, 12-6. Closed Jan. & Feb.
Location: Surry County—I-77 to Exit 100. Left on NC89 toward Low Gap. Right on Round Peak Church Rd. for approx. 1.4 mi. Vineyard is on left.
Wine List: French and Italian Varietals
- 8 Shelton Vineyards 336-366-4724**
286 Cabernet Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Charles M. Shelton and R. Edwin Shelton, Owners
Matt Dyar, Winemaker
Website: www.sheltonvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 10 am-5 pm; Sun, 1-5 pm
Location: Surry County—I-77 to Exit 93 Dobson. Turn right, then take first right onto Twin Oaks Rd. Go 2.5 miles to the Shelton Vineyards entrance on the right.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

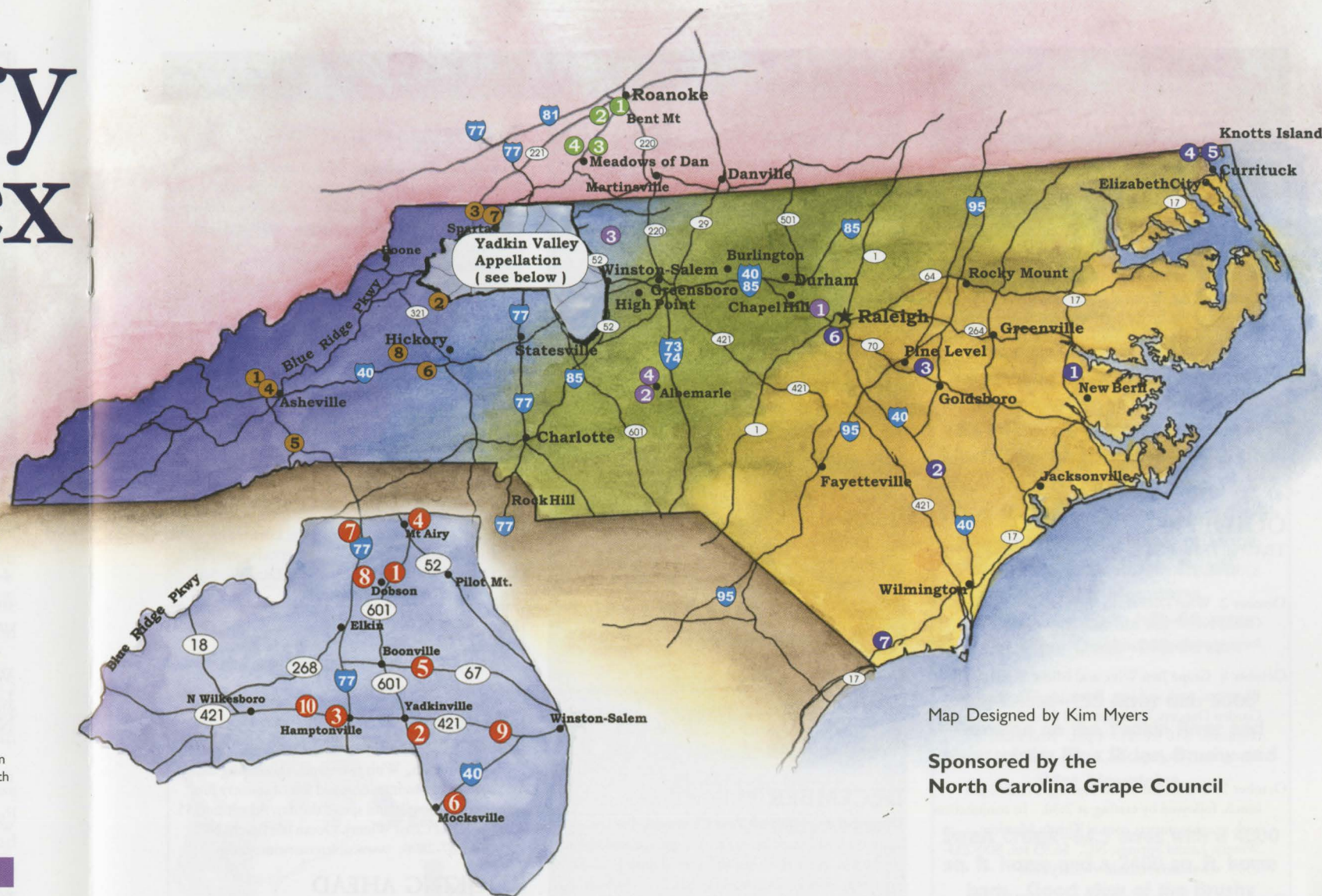
Winery Index

Call ahead to confirm hours.

- 9 Westbend Vineyards 877-901-5032**
5394 Williams Rd., Lewisville, NC 27023
Jack & Lillian Kroustalis, Owners
David Morrison, Winemaker
Website: www.westbendvineyards.com
Hours: Tues-Sat, 11-6 pm; Sun, 1-6 pm
Location: Forsyth County—Go 15 miles west of Winston-Salem on Highway 421. Take Shallowford Rd., Exit 246, and turn left. Go 2 mi., turn left onto Williams Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 10 Windy Gap Vineyards 336-984-3926**
837 Pardue Farm Rd., Ronda, NC 28670
Allen and Sandra Hinchey
Website: www.windygapwines.com
Hours: Thurs, Fri. 1-5 pm; Sat, 10-5 pm; Sun, 12-5 pm; or by appointment
Location: Wilkes County—177 to Exit 73B Wilkesboro-Boone. Take Hwy 421 North 6 ½ miles to Exit 272 Clingman Rd. Turn right on Clingman Rd. After approx. 1 mile turn left onto Pardue Farm Rd. Go ¼ mile and turn left again on Pardue Farm Rd. Go ½ mile and turn right onto paved driveway. Winery is at end of driveway with parking in rear.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

PIEDMONT REGION

- 1 Chatham Hill Winery 919-380-7135**
3500 Gateway Centre Blvd. #200
Morrisville, NC 27560
Marek Wojciechowski, Paul Henkens & Robert Henkens
Website: www.chathamhillwine.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11-6; Sun, 1-5, or by appointment
Location: Wake County—Take I-40 Exit 285 towards Morrisville on Aviation Parkway. Take first right at Gateway Centre Boulevard. Right onto Northgate Ct. at 3500 sign.
Wine List: French Varietals, French-American Hybrids, Blends
- 2 Dennis Vineyards 800-230-1743**
24043 Endy Rd., Albemarle, NC 28001
Pritchard & Sandon Dennis
Website: www.dennisvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 9 am-6 pm
Location: Stanly County—From Albemarle heading toward Charlotte on Hwy 24-27, go 5 miles into the Endy community. Turn on Endy Rd.
Wine List: Muscadine Blends, Fruit Wines
- 3 Germanton Vineyard & Winery 336-969-2075**
3530 Hwy 8-65, Germanton, NC 27019
Judy & David Simpson
Website: www.germantongallery.com
Hours: Tues-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat, 9 am-5 pm. Call Sun. hours.
Location: Stokes County—In Germanton. Gallery is on corner of Hwy 8 and Friendship Rd. (8 miles north of VV-S.)
Wine List: French Hybrids, American Varietals
- 4 Stony Mountain Vineyard 704-982-0922**
Call ahead for opening date.
26370 Mountain Ridge Road, Albemarle, NC 28001
Ken, Marie and Devron Furr
Hours: By appointment
Location: Stanly County—Take Hwy 24-27 East from Albemarle. Turn left at Stone Mountain sign. Turn right on Mountain Ridge Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals



Map Designed by Kim Myers

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SAND HILL/COASTAL REGION

- 1 Bennett Vineyards 877-762-9463**
6832 Bennett Vineyards Rd., Edward, NC 27821
Buddy Harrell & Robert Thornton
Website: www.ncwines.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 2-5 pm. Please call ahead.
Location: Beaufort County—35 miles south of Greenville, off Hwy 33. Follow signs.
Wine List: American Blends
- 2 Duplin Winery 800-774-9634**
P.O. Box 756, Rose Hill, NC 28458
David Fussell & Family
Website: www.duplinwinery.com
Hours: Mon-Thurs., 9-5 pm; Fri., 9-10 pm; Sat., 9-6 pm
Location: Duplin County—Take I-40 exit 380. Right on Hwy 117.
Wine List: Muscadine Blends
- Hinnant Farms 919-965-3350**
826 Pine Level Micro Rd., Pine Level, NC 27568
Willard and Bob Hinnant
Hours: Tu-Sat, 10 am - 5 pm
Location: Johnston County—From Raleigh take I-70 east. Travel 30 miles to I-70A. Go 2 miles to Pine Level; left at light.
Wine List: Muscadine Varieties
- Martin Vineyards 252-429-3542**
P.O. Box 186, Knotts Island, NC 27950
David & Jeanie Martin
Website: www.martinvineyards.com
Hours: Daily 12-5 pm
Location: Currituck County—From Rt. 168, take scenic free ferry (800-BY FERRY) across Currituck Sound to Knotts Island. Follow NC 615 north 2.7 miles to Martin Farm Lane.
Wine List: French Varietals, Muscadine Varieties, Fruit Wines
- 5 Moonrise Bay Vineyard 866-888-9463**
134 Moonrise Bay Landing, Knotts Island, NC 27950
Richard and Kate Morris
Website: www.moonrisebaywine.com
Hours: Thurs-Sun, 12-6 pm or by appointment
Location: Currituck County—From Virginia Beach, take Princess Anne Rd. south to Knotts Island. Bear left at the Knotts Island Market and proceed one mile to vineyard on left. Or take the Ferry from Currituck, NC.
Wine List: French Varietals, French Hybrids, Fruit Wines, American Varietals
- 6 Silk Hope Winery 919-742-4601**
2601 Silk Hope Gum Springs Rd, Pittsboro, NC 27312
Wally Butler
Hours: By appointment
Location: Chatham County—From Pittsboro, go 4 miles north on Hwy 87. Left on Silk Hope Gum Springs Rd.
Wine List: French and American Hybrids
- 7 Silver Coast Winery 910-287-2800**
6680 Barbeque Rd., Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469
John and Maryann Azzato
Website: silvercoastwinery.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 am-6 pm; Sun, 12-5 pm
Location: Brunswick County—From Hwy 17 take Hwy 904 West (8 mi. from SC border). Go 2 miles to Russtown Rd.; turn right. Go 1.5 miles to Barbeque Road; turn right.
Wine List: French Varietals, French Hybrids, Blends

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

- 1 AmRhein Wine Cellars 540-929-4632**
9243 Patterson Drive, Bent Mountain, VA 24059
Website: www.roanokewine.com
Hours: Fri-Sun, 12-5 pm or by appointment
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 2 Château Morrisette 540-593-2865**
Meadows of Dan, VA 24120
Website: www.chateaumorrisette.com
Hours: Mon-Thurs, 10 am-5 pm; Fri-Sat 10 am-6 pm; Sun 11 am-5 pm (call for restaurant hours)
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends
- 3 Valhalla Vineyards 540-725-9463**
6500 Mt. Chestnut Road, Roanoke, VA 24018
Website: www.valhallawines.com
Hours: Fri, 4-7; Sat, 12-5, Sun, 1-5
Closed January through March.
Wine List: French and Italian Varietals
- 4 Villa Appalaccia Winery 540-593-3100**
752 Rock Castle Gorge, Floyd, VA 24091
Website: www.villaappalaccia.com
Hours: Thurs-Sat, 11 am-5 pm; Sun, 12-4 pm
Wine List: Italian Varietals and Blends

PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

SEPTEMBER

September 20 Harvest Celebration/15th Anniversary. Food, entertainment and wines. Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. 336-945-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

September 20 Third Annual Moonlight Stomp. Celebrate our harvest under the harvest moon. Stomp grapes, sip our German-style wines, and roast marshmallows by the bonfire. Entertainment by local musicians. Pork BBQ dinner available. Fee for food. 4 p.m. AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. 540-929-4632. www.roanokevine.com

September 27 Whitetop Mountain Band and The Mixed Emotions. 4-8 pm. \$25 fee. Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC. 336-366-4724. www.sheltonvineyards.com

OCTOBER

TBA Fall Festival. RayLen Vineyards, Mocksville, NC. 336-998-3100 for date and details.

October 2 Wine Dinner. River House Inn, Grassy Creek, NC. 7 pm. 336-982-2109. Discounted lodging packages available.

October 4 Grape Jam Wine and Music Festival. Folk, Bluegrass, rock and jazz. Featuring "The Lotus Garden Dancers," international dancing in exotic costumes. \$10 fee. 11 - 4 pm. Wolf's Lair Restaurant, Dobson, NC. 336-374-2532.

October 5 6th Annual Wine Tasting. 11:30-2 pm lunch, followed by tasting at 2:30. In conjunction with grape stompers.com at Thistle Meadow Winery, Laurel Springs, NC. \$6.95 fee. 800-233-1505. www.thistlemeadowwinery.com

October 5 Randy Fulk Folk Music at Villa Appalaccia Winery, Floyd, VA. 12:30-4:30pm. www.villaappalaccia.com.

October 11-12 Grand Opening of Laurel Gray Vineyards, Hamptonville, NC. 10-6 pm Sat., 1-6 pm Sun. 336-468-8463. www.laurelgrayvineyards.com.

October 11 Black Dog Jazz Concert Series. Music, wine tasting, food. \$10 fee. 12-5pm. Château Morrisette, Meadows of Dan, VA. 540-593-2855. www.thedogs.com.

October 18 Loosen your Lederhosen! Come listen to the Harbor Fest Big Band, try out your yodeling and eat the best German food prepared by Janet and Mark of *Your Place or Ours*. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800 www.silvercoastwinery.com.

October 18 Oktoberfest Jazz & Wine Fest. Festival benefits the American Cancer Society. Award-winning German-style wines and fall red wine releases. Live Jazz and authentic German cuisine. \$10 fee. 1-5 pm. AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. 540-929-4632. www.roanokevine.com

October 25-26 Fifth Annual Grape Stomp and Harvest Celebration. 12-5pm. Vallahalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. 540-725-9463. www.valhallawines.com

NOVEMBER

November 4, 5 Evening Cooking Classes with Chef Bill Klein. River House Inn, Grassy Creek, NC. 336-982-2109. Discounted lodging packages available.

November 15 Festa Italia—Bocce anyone? We're celebrating everything Italian – food, wine, music and games. Bring your favorite Italian and *be* Italian for the day. CIAO will be here to help us celebrate. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800 www.silvercoastwinery.com

November 15 Wine Dinner featuring Flora Springs Vineyards. River House Inn, Grassy Creek, NC. 7 pm. 336-982-2109. Discounted lodging packages available.

November 15-16, 22-23 'Holly Days' Open House. Share the joy of the season with holiday gourmet desserts, German-style award winning wines. Special prices on our 'Medal Wine Packs.' 1-5 pm. AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. 540-929-4632. www.roanokevine.com

November 22-24 Holiday Open House. 12-5pm. Vallahalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. 540-725-9463. www.valhallawines.com

November 29-30 Holiday Open House. Special tours, tastings and holiday promotions. \$5 fee. Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC. 336-366-4724. www.sheltonvineyards.com

DECEMBER

December 1-23 Silver Coast Christmas. For the month of December we'll have gift specials, open houses, party planning and wine shipping. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800 www.silvercoastwinery.com

December 2,3 Evening Cooking Classes with Chef Bill Klein. River House Inn, Grassy Creek, NC. 336-982-2109. Discounted lodging packages available.

December 6 Holidays in the Vineyard. Wine tasting, food and entertainment by musicians from the Virginia Beach Symphony Orchestra. \$15 fee. Moonrise Bay Vineyard, Knotts Island, NC. 866-888-9463. www.moonrisebaywine.com

December 6-7, 13-14 Holiday Open House. Celebrate the season with complimentary tours, wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres. Discounts on wine and gifts. 12-15 pm. Château Morrisette, Meadows of Dan, VA. 540-593-2855. www.thedogs.com

December 13-14, 20-23 'Holly Days' Open House. Share the joy of the season with holiday gourmet desserts, German-style award winning wines. Special prices on our 'Medal Wine Packs.' Free. 1-5 pm. AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. 540-929-4632. www.roanokevine.com

December 20-21 Christmas in the Cave Celebration. Visit our 60-foot below ground barrel cave, decorated for the holidays. 2-5 pm. Vallahalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. 540-725-9463. www.valhallawines.com

JANUARY

January 17 The Ultimate Wine Glass Competition and Toast. Join us as we search for the perfect wine glass. Artists will display their creations and compete for best of show. Help us decide. We'll toast the New Year. Prizes for most creative toast. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

FEBRUARY

February 14 Sweetheart Dance. Dance the night away in the barrel room. Reservations required. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

February 14 Valentine's Day Special. Enjoy handcrafted wine-filled chocolates with your favorite red wines. Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. 336-945-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

February 14 Valentine's Day Puppy Love Dinner. Prix fixe menu. \$42 fee. 6-9 pm. Reservations required. Château Morrisette, Meadows of Dan, VA. 540-593-2855. www.thedogs.com

February 21 Mardi Gras Festival. Chef Alex's Gumbo and entertainment. 12:30-4:30 pm. RayLen Vineyards, Mocksville, NC. 336-998-3100. www.raylenvineyards.com

MARCH

March 20 Blue Grass Festival – 2nd Annual. Gates open at noon. With two stages, music, hog calling, corn eating competition and lots of country fun, bring the family and spend the day. Admission: \$5 fee. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

LOOKING AHEAD

TBA Bud Break Party. Enjoy spring with us! Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. 336-945-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

April 17 Bacchus Bash. Bacchus will reign over the winery. Music, gods, goddesses, Greek foods, and mystic mayhem shall rule the day. \$5 fee. Wear a toga and get in free. Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

April 17-18 and 24-25 Spring Open House. Celebrate the arrival of spring! Tours, tasting, hors d'oeuvres, wine and gift discounts. 12-5 pm. Château Morrisette, Meadows of Dan, VA. 540-593-2855. www.thedogs.com

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

September 27 The Grape and Wine Industry: Is it for Me? Seminar conducted by Dr. Bob McRitchie. \$50 fee includes lunch. Surry Community College. 336-386-3244.

October 13 & November 10 Vineyard Series. Information on disease control, pest identification, vine physiology. Class conducted by Gill Giese. \$50 fee. Surry Community College. 336-386-3244.

January 2004 Wine Appreciation: Advanced. \$100 fee. Surry Community College. 336-386-3244.

Atlanta International Wine Summit Awards

August, 2003

Biltmore Estate
Gold Medal—Cabernet Sauvignon
2001 Chateau Reserve

Shelton Vineyards
Silver Medals—Sauvignon Blanc
2002; Viognier 2002; Blush Table
Wine NV

Rockhouse Vineyards
Silver Medal—Viognier 2002

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Tasting Promise

By Michael Hastings

A recent tasting of 18 North Carolina wines revealed more than ever the promise of the burgeoning wine industry in the state.

Many winemakers in North Carolina are dealing with young vines that have yet to reach their maturity and full potential. That NC winemakers have risen to the challenge to come up with wines that are interesting and appealing in their third, second or even first vintage may be the clearest signal of all that North Carolina is ripe for a respected place in the world of wines.

A blind tasting of a handful of recent vintages of Viognier, Chardonnay, Merlot, red blends and Cabernet Sauvignon revealed that there's plenty to like in NC wine, despite an overall lightness in style. Some favorites in each category came from newcomers working with their first vintage.

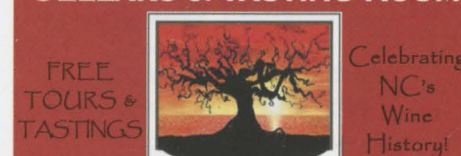
Below is a look, by no means comprehensive, at a few promising selections:

VIOGNIER

Westbend Vineyards 2002—This features an alluring aroma of sweet apple and tropical fruit. It also has a refreshing acidity, and a smooth mouth feel. Westbend's '01 Viognier won a gold medal at the NC State Fair's wine competition last year, and it's easy to see why in this latest vintage, too.

Also noted: Chatham Hill Winery 2002—Viognier is one of the more popular varietals produced at Chatham Hill in Morrisville, and they routinely sell out of it. The 2002 has green apple, citrus and melon aromas, and a floral touch combined with good balance.

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CHARDONNAY

Round Peak Vineyards 2002—Round Peak in Mount Airy is so new that it won't be open to the public until late fall of this year. The winery is a partnership of Janet and Lee Martin and Susan and George Little of Winston-Salem. It planted its first 8 acres of grapes in 2000. Its 2002 Chardonnay is greenish-gold in color with a pleasing green apple and floral nose. It's smooth and well-balanced on the palate, with classic apple flavor and just the right amount of oak. A real pleaser.

Also noted: Black Wolf Vineyards 2001 Reserve—Grapes for this wine come from owner Dana Theis' vineyard in Surry County, but Theis contracts with Marek Wojciechowski, the winemaker at Chatham Hill, to make this and other Black Wolf Wines. Here he has turned out a slightly unusual Chardonnay for this state, with a touch of toast but little fruit in the nose. The palate, too, doesn't boast much fruit but has a refined, slightly mineral flavor more in keeping with an Old World wine. A fair amount of complexity in combination with good balance keeps this interesting on subsequent sips.

MERLOT

Rockhouse Vineyards 2001—From Tryon in the NC mountains south of Asheville comes this ruby red Merlot with its inviting nose of toast and plum. Its blackberry and plum flavors on the palate contribute to a fresh, soft and supple mouth feel.

RED BLENDS

Category 5 from RayLen Vineyards—On the heels of its successful Carolinus red blend, RayLen has just released this five-grape blend that is primarily Cabernet Sauvignon but also contains Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petite Verdot and Syrah. The hurricane allusion in the name provides a tip-off to the intensity and full body, with plenty of alcohol and oak. Countering that onslaught is good blackberry and dark cherry flavor, slightly sweet for a dry red, and a touch of vanilla. The tannins are firm, and the overall effect is a ripe, though not overpowering, mouthful.

Michael's Red from Hanover Park Vineyard—Winemaker Michael Helton named this new release after himself. The blend is 55 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, combined with Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Chambourcin and a lesser amount of Sangiovese. Lighter than RayLen's Category 5, this bright young wine is light raspberry in color, with blackberry and oak on the nose. The fruit is light on the palate, but the overall balance makes this red awfully inviting.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Moonrise Bay Vineyards 2001—This wine from Knotts Island, just west of the Outer Banks, has good blackberry color, and, though a bit heavy on oak, it is overall light and pleasing on the palate. Blackberry and cedar mingle nicely for a satisfying Cab encounter that doesn't require a big steak to enjoy.

Also noted: Laurel Gray Vineyards 2002—This is another newcomer, in Hamptonville, where owners Kim and Benny Myers have reaped only one harvest. Although Cabernet grapes typically don't yield much depth in the first harvest, this light Cab is eminently drinkable, with nice cherry and vanilla notes.

Michael Hastings is the food editor of the Winston-Salem Journal.

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—W.C. Fields, about to drink a glass of water

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CHILDRESS WINERY HIRES PINDAR WINERY WINEMAKER

Mark T. Friszolowski, one of the premier winemakers of the East Coast and known to many in the business as the Special Events Coordinator for Wineries Unlimited, has retired his 17-year tenure at the renowned 110,000-case Pindar Winery on New York's Long Island. He has assumed the general manager and winemaking position for the Childress Winery in North Carolina. Mark has already begun overseeing the project on site at the intersection of Highway 52 and 64 near Lexington.

In addition to the 33,000 square foot winery, an amphitheater and a deli are part of the overall plan. The winery is set to open sometime next summer. Pending are plans for a restaurant and hotel within the project site.

Childress Winery will produce 8500 cases next year with a goal of becoming a 50,000-case producer in the future. Sounds like another legend in the making crafted by Richard Childress and Company.

MOTHER'S BLEND

Mother Nature rained big time on the berry parade in 2003. Growers began picking their white grapes two to three weeks earlier than usual, and their reds soon after, hoping to bring in the harvest before continuing rain impacted the sugar levels and total acidity—two key components in wine quality.

A long, cool, exceedingly rainy spring during fruit set, and more rain after veraison (when the berries "color up") set up challenges for winemakers who pray for rain in the spring, a fairly dry summer and no rain during harvest, which generally runs from August through the end of October.

We may see a lot of blended wines from the 2003 harvest, which is not a bad thing.

In Europe, blending decisions have always been based on the climate, which is more tempestuous than California's or Australia's, where single grape varieties are counted on year after year. (Though this year California has been hit by damaging rain as well).

Maybe we should look at Europe's approach to the vine, where optimal weather patterns are not the norm. Overseas, they plant varieties that ripen over an 8-10 week period and produce grapes that express their provenance instead of a singular flavor profile.

Anyone in agriculture knows you've got to make the best of whatever Mother Nature serves up. Steve Lawrence, former President of the NC Winegrowers Association recalls, "When I grew grapes here in the 70's and 80s, we had a lot of rain, variable conditions. This is typical for our state—variations in climate, more typical than what we've had

in recent years with long, hot, dry summers. People forgot that's not normal weather for North Carolina."

As the old Chinese adage goes, "The only constant is change." We'd best learn to bend, or rather, make that blend.

THE SHIPPING NEWS

Hip hip hooray! North Carolina has legally come of age with the signing of the state's interstate shipping bill on August 7 by Governor Easley. The bill allows shipments of up to two cases of wine per month per consumer, either within North Carolina or to other states with reciprocity. A limit of 1,000 cases applies annually to direct shipping. But the limit doesn't include purchases made in person at a winery and later shipped home. Common carriers must receive approval to ship.

It's not over yet though for the states given the go-ahead. Shippers like Fed Ex and UPS are still uncomfortable and confused by the diverging regulations from state to state, as are the wineries themselves. A phone request from a Texas consumer to a California winery gleefully requesting shipment of his favorite sparkling Pinot resulted in a "no-can-ship" due to confusion about the new laws. Regulations vary from state to state.

It's going to take some time to iron out the process and the permits. The North Carolina law takes effect October 1, 2003. Similar laws took effect in neighboring states of Virginia on July 1, and South Carolina in June. Interstate shipping laws continue to be challenged in several other states and contradictory rulings may send the issue to the Supreme Court for resolution.

*"I drink to your charm,
your beauty and
your brains, which gives
a rough idea of how
hard up I am for a drink."*

—Groucho Marx



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UNCORKED

North Carolina continues to explode with new tasting rooms and wineries. Fourteen more are in the hopper for 2004. Plus, the three below are coming online this fall! So hop into your car and motor over! The views from our latest "Uncorkers" are magnificent in autumn: The Blue Ridge and Brushy Mountains are in full-color view. (Check the map on pp.8-9 for details and directions.)



View of tasting room at Laurel Gray Vineyards

Photo by Kim Myers

Laurel Gray Vineyards—Hamptonville

Owned by Benny and Kim Myers, Laurel Gray is named after their two children, Ashley Laurel and Taylor Gray. The vineyard has provided the Myers with a way to keep the family farm intact for future generations. The industrious couple has meticulously maintained this 5-acre vineyard devoted to French Viniferas. Rose bushes surround the 75-year old milking parlor converted into the tasting room and gift shop. A picturesque farm pond and a big ol' red barn attract friendly wildlife and make for friendly front porch gliding. "Southern hospitality with a touch of elegance" is how Kim puts it.

Grand Opening: October 11-12, 10-6 pm. Wine varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay.

Old North State Winery—Mt. Airy

The 55 members of the ONS Cooperative Association are about to pull it off! Main Street's former Belk's Department Store building, built in 1890 has been retrofitted to house a working winery in the basement, a barrel room with a nifty old tin ceiling, and a retail and tasting room on the street-level floor. The members formed a Quality Alliance and top growers will win awards based on their fruit. Judges will be Stephen Rigby, winemaker for the Co-op, and Gray Draughn, general manager. Gray states, "The only way you can do a Co-op is to have a handle on your quality." Ninety percent of the members have taken classes in viticulture at Surry Community College.

Capacity this year: 5800 cases. Wine varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chambourcin, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay, Viognier and blends. Grand Opening: October 4.



Round Peak Vineyards—Mt. Airy (above)

A search by two couples that shared a love of the grape since the husbands first met as roommates at Davidson College resulted in the selection of a 30-acre vineyard site in the Round Peak area of Surry County. Trips to Tuscany and California by owners Lee and Janet Martin and George and Susan Little committed all four to growing Italian varieties, in addition to French varieties. They plan to max out the vineyard, now in its fourth growing season, at 15 acres. This allows them to handcraft their wines in limited amounts. Round Peak's first commercial harvest was vinified into wine at RayLen Vineyards, under NC's wine producer legislation.

The Tasting Room is scheduled to open late fall of 2003. Call ahead. The winery is under construction.

Capacity this year: 460 cases. Varieties: Merlot, Sangiovese, Chardonnay.



Stephen Rigby & Gray Draughn, The Old North State Winery

What's the difference between a Winery and a Wine Producer?

Simple. A Wine Producer doesn't have its own winery (yet...though many are DTR- down the road). Wine producers with 5 or more acres of vines may have their wine produced and bottled at a bonded winery and shipped back to them for sale at their tasting rooms. The producer's permit allows smaller NC growers to get their wines on the market.

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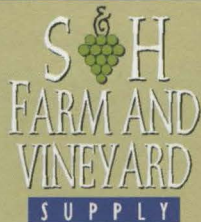
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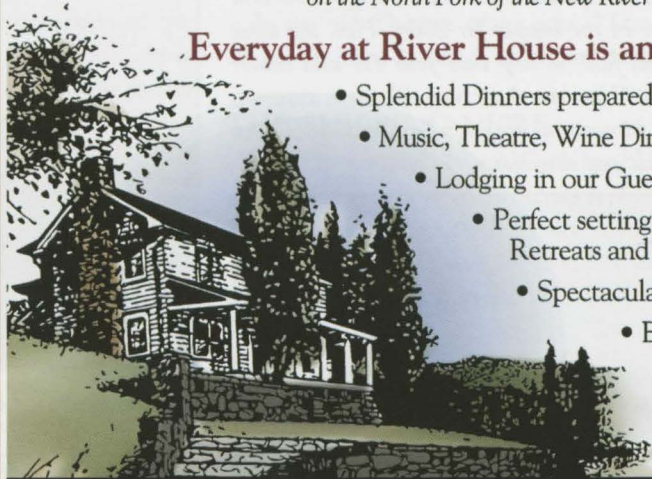
www.sandhfarmandvineyardsupply.com

River House

country inn and restaurant

on the North Fork of the New River

Everyday at River House is an Event!



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*We'd love to hear from you.
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Villa Appalaccia Winery A Tarheel Winery in Virginia

Susanne Becker and Stephen Haskill, Tarheels, built this Tuscan farm winery on the hillside of the Blue Ridge Parkway close to both scenic attractions (Mabry Mill) and wilderness. One of the first vineyards in the East to specialize in Italian varietals, the vineyard was planted in 1988, in Patrick County VA, bordering on Surry County in North Carolina. A



true Virginia Farm winery, with a capacity for 4000 cases, all wine is produced from Villa Appalaccia grapes. Villa Appalaccia produces award-winning wines from Pinot Grigio, Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc and Primitivo, and innovative Italian-inspired blends.

WHERE ARE WE? One & a half hours from the Triad; less than 3 hours from RDU.

HOW TO GET THERE: Located near milepost 170.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway at an altitude of 3500 feet, one mile North of Château Morrisette Winery. Take gravel road 720 at milepost 170.3 to the East. Look in the distance for the Italian banner flying in front of the winery visible from the Parkway. No signs are allowed on the Parkway.

WHAT HAPPENS THERE? Villa Appalaccia has many wine-related special events and features, tasting and tours. Enjoy a glass of wine along with Italian breads, salamis and local cheeses.

HOURS: Thursday through Saturday 11 am until 5 pm and Sunday 12 until 4 pm. Call 540-593-3100 for more details and visit www.villaappalaccia.com. If you are interested in touring the other wineries in the area, in staying at a great Bed and Breakfast or enjoying the unique sights and music of Floyd, VA, visit www.blueridgewinetrail.com.