

On The Vine

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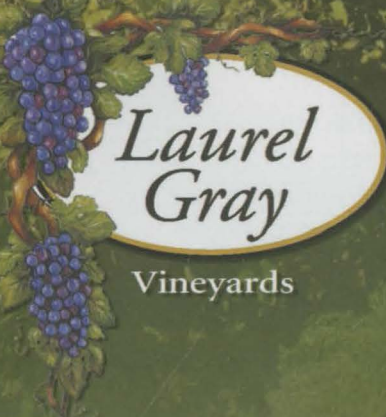
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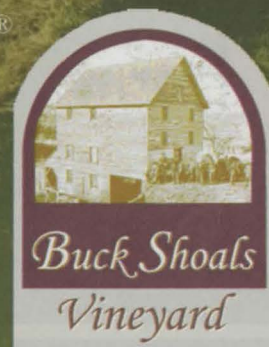
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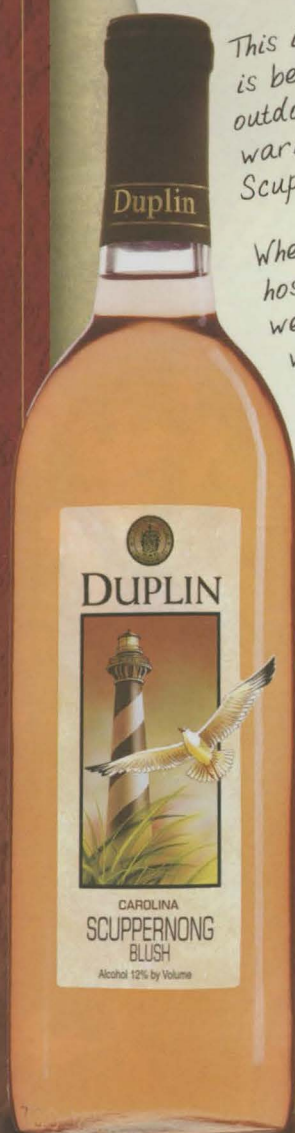
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On The Vine

YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

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On The Vine

On The Vine is published
bi-monthly by Mid-South
Management Co.-NC, Inc.

Subscription rates:

In the U.S., \$15 per year

FOUNDER

Susan Lyons

Hot off the wine press . . .

A new look

We've got a couple of new maps for you in this issue of On The Vine.

The maps originally drawn by Kim Myers of Laurel Gray Vineyards for our founding publisher, Susan Lyons of Raffaldini Vineyards, have been updated by our graphics director, Neil Brown, particularly with respect to the Yadkin Valley/Swan Creek area.

I first asked Kim if she would undertake redoing the maps, but she understandably begged off, given that she's not only hip deep in her own vineyard and the construction of the adjacent Yadkin Valley Wine Co., but has also just been installed as president of the North Carolina Winegrower's Association.

With the new maps we have striven for a more accurate placement of North Carolina's vineyards and wineries through the use of an unseen underlayer to set each dot. If we're off on some please let us know.

Three years ago, our first map had 12 wineries and vineyards in the Yadkin Valley and 24 more across the rest of the state. The latest has 22 in Yadkin Valley/Swan Creek and 45 more from the mountains to the sea. By the end of the year the total will hit at least 70.

Kim and Susan, of course, represent half the operating wine producers in Swan Creek, the state's newest American Viticultural Area, to which much of this issue is devoted. They're joined by Buck Shoals and Windy Gap, with several other vineyards expected to have wines for sale shortly.

Having more appellations can only improve the marketability of North Carolina's wines. Just look at what they've done for California, which has 101 AVAs, 16 in the Napa Valley alone. Within a couple of years we should also be adding Haw River to the list, and possibly areas out on the coast and down around Tryon.

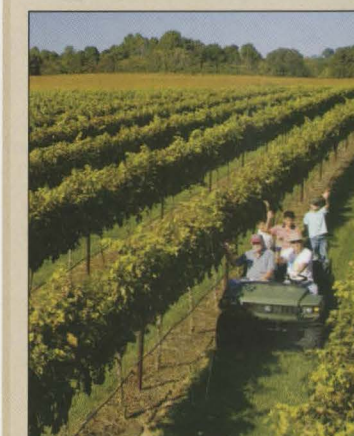


We need to correct a typographic error in our last issue's report on Cabernet Sauvignon. It was 2005 when Round Peak's cab grapes did not ripen adequately, not 2003.

Rebel Good,
Publisher



Rebel Good



On The Cover...

Harvest time last fall at
Laurel Gray Vineyards.

COVER PHOTO

Will & Deni McIntyre, Winston-Salem, NC

www.macfoto.com

SOMETHING Special



The spectacular view of the Blue Ridge Mountains across Raffaldini Vineyards.

• Swan Creek's new appellation second in state

By Brook Corwin

Nestled in the southwest corner of the Yadkin Valley, North Carolina's first federally recognized winemaking region, exists a small yet scenic space between some of the state's oldest mountains and one of its longest rivers.

Its wines have a strong following, as the thousands of cases produced annually from grapes grown in that soil routinely sell out. It has gained recognition, with many of those same wines winning dozens of medals at regional and national wine competitions on both coasts.

What it has lacked, at least in a national and international scope, is its own name — no small omission in the marketing-driven wine industry.

"Anytime something is named, whether it's a person, place or a thing, it carries more weight," says Susan Lyons, co-manager of Raffaldini Vineyards, along with her husband, Stephen. "It further legitimizes what you're doing."

But she isn't speaking in the conditional sense. She talks of the anticipated impact for a name that's about to arrive on labels, publications and reviews throughout the wine community at large — that of Swan Creek.

For more than a century, the name Swan Creek has come to symbolize the community and streams



Buck Shoals' label features an old mill.

where the western edge of Yadkin County, southeastern corner of Wilkes County and northern edge of Iredell County converge. It is just now, however, that the 96,000 acres of Swan Creek have reached the point of being officially designated a separate American Viticulture Area. The appellation recognizes the area's unique geologic and climatological conditions as something every consumer should know when choosing a bottle.

The Swan Creek AVA extends along the Yadkin River from Wilkesboro to Jonesville, then is bounded on the east by U.S. 21 southward to Turnersburg in Iredell County. From Wilkesboro it follows N.C. 115 southeast to Rocky Creek, and then follows the creek to Turnersburg.

The owners and managers of the four estab-

lished vineyards in Swan Creek — Raffaldini, Laurel Gray, Buck Shoals and Windy Gap — have known about their unique differences for many years. Some have family roots in that land going back generations. Others specifically chose their vineyard sites because of the special properties of Swan Creek soils and climate.

That's why, almost three years ago, they all agreed, despite already being in the Yadkin Valley AVA, to petition for Swan Creek to get its own federal designation as a winemaking region. The Lyonses then spent nine months assembling almost 50 pages of maps, facts and testimony as proof that Swan Creek can produce wines distinct from anywhere else.

The application was filed Feb. 28, 2005, with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, beginning a long bureaucratic process that includes approval on many levels. As the vineyards of Swan Creek waited to hear back, many told their customers of what makes the small region stand out while simultaneously urging their clientele to visit the other vineyards just a few minutes down the road.

"We want excitement to build. We want anticipation," says Kim Myers, co-owner of Laurel Gray Vineyards. "We want people to know why we applied and that we have something special here."

Patricia McRitchie, an attorney from nearby Elkin, successfully shepherded North Carolina's first AVA application through the lengthy procedure, resulting in the Yadkin Valley appellation. She says Swan Creek's application received no adverse comments nor requests to change its boundaries during the public comment portion of the approval process. As of press time, the application has cleared

all the bureaucratic hurdles and a formal announcement at the federal level is expected any day.

Across the country, there are 187 AVAs, with 108 of those in California. They range in size from thousands of square miles to just a few acres. But each has met the test of identifying unique growing conditions, a key component of winemaking that goes back centuries to the appellations of Europe's famous grape-growing regions.

In countries such as France, Italy or Germany, each appellation has become synonymous with a certain flavor or taste that reflects the land where the grapes were grown. Strict guidelines oversee how wines from these regions are identified on bottles and advertised to ensure consumers know where their wine comes from.

The AVAs of the United States follow a similar principal, although they don't restrict what type of grapes can be grown in each designated region. Each AVA is selected simply to reflect its distinct characteristics.

That leaves an open door for vineyards and wineries to maximize the name recognition and build a brand and market for their product. For the vineyards of Swan Creek, that means launching a comprehensive marketing campaign that will tout the AVA status to travel and wine publications across the nation and the world.

"Certainly it is useful for people who grow in the area to distinguish themselves in some way," says Margo Knight Metzger, director of the N.C. Wine & Grape Council. "It will be interesting to see how they leverage that designation. It's something they can use to their advantage, but it's something the people in that area have to decide how to utilize."

For their part, the owners of Swan Creek vineyards say they aren't sure exactly what sorts of new customers will be attracted by the lure of a new AVA. Serious wine connoisseurs will have a better understanding of an AVA's meaning, but casual wine drinkers might be more curious to try something new they read about.



The "Creekers," Benny and Kim Myers, Sandra and Allen Hincer, Susan and Stephen Lyons, and Joanne and Terry Crater.

"I want to post the letter announcing this up at the front door," says Joanne Crater, co-owner of Buck Shoals. "I want to see the reaction. Maybe even use a pencil and track which people bring it up."

One thing the vineyards won't be doing is letting the Swan Creek designation completely overshadow the broader Yadkin Valley AVA. That region encompasses a seven-county area that is more than 12 times the size of the Swan Creek AVA.

About 60 percent of Swan Creek, including all of its roughly 120 acres of established or developing vineyards, overlaps the Yadkin Valley AVA, allowing Swan Creek wines to have both names on their labels.

Owners and managers at all four vineyards say they plan to do just that, building upon the brand recognition the Yadkin Valley has developed during

its five years as an AVA.

"[Yadkin Valley growers] have used that designation to the fullest," Metzger says. "The words 'Yadkin Valley' are starting to mean something to consumers of North Carolina wine."

Sandra and Allen Hincer have seen firsthand the positive effect of such name recognition. The two started Windy Gap Vineyards 11 years ago, becoming the first to produce wine in the Swan

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Creek region when they started bottling in 2000.

The first couple of years were rough from a customer standpoint. Then the Yadkin Valley AVA was approved and new people — both consumers and other vineyards — began to arrive in the region.

"We saw a big difference in traffic," Allen Hincher says. "And a lot more press."

While the climate and conditions of Swan Creek can be similar to parts of the Yadkin Valley AVA, there's a stark contrast with certain portions of that broad region. According to recorded data from the Southeast Regional Climate Center, the Swan Creek region averages 48.6 inches of rainfall annually, compared to an average rainfall of 57 inches in parts of the Yadkin Valley AVA.

During some of the stormiest growing seasons, that gap can widen, as the Brushy Mountains that rise along Swan Creek break up many of the isolated storms that drench other Yadkin Valley grapes. The growing seasons of 2003 and 2004, both marred by significant rainfall, served to illustrate the protection Swan Creek can have from excessive precipitation.

"That's when some vineyards went on the record as saying they had bad grapes, and we had good grapes. That was the genesis of realizing that we had a micro-climate here," Allen Hincher says. "When you have 10-15 inches less rain, it makes a big difference."

In addition to shielding Swan Creek from storms, the Brushy Mountains also produce crisper breezes that can dry off grapes faster from morning fog. More importantly, they deposit rich mineral composites into the Swan Creek soil that reflect the mountains' age of three to five billion years.



Checkout the basset at Windy Gap.

When compared to the variety of mountain ranges and soil types in the Yadkin Valley AVA, Swan Creek stands out even after only a few years of hands-on research with local grape growing. Benny Myers, vineyard manager at Laurel Gray, says additional distinctions within Swan Creek could emerge with more observation and research.

"It's big enough that 10 years from now there could be another AVA within Swan Creek," says Myers, whose family has lived and farmed the land for 10 generations. "As we learn more about the weather patterns here, that could be a possibility."

Possibilities abound for the Swan Creek

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Laurel Gray's award-winning wines.

Vineyards as they enter their AVA era. Each has had limited production thus far, ranging from about 1,500 cases annually at Windy Gap and Laurel Gray to 3,000 cases at Buck Shoals and 5,000 at Raffaldini. After gradually building a customer base, however, the vineyards will soon have the potential to produce much more. A new winery opens this summer at Laurel Gray, with another one scheduled for construction at Raffaldini in 2008.

Combined, those wineries will have the capacity to produce 25,000 to 32,000 cases annually. And their completion frees up production capacity at Buck Shoals, the 20,000-case winery that has been making Raffaldini and Laurel Gray wines.

The owners of Windy Gap are looking to sell their vineyards and winery to someone who will invest in the property and keep it going as a producer of fine wine.

Laurel Gray will share ownership and operation of its new winery, Yadkin Valley Wine Co., with Shadow Springs Vineyard, a new 30-acre operation within the Swan Creek AVA that should harvest its first crop this fall. Dobbins Creek Vineyard, also located within Swan Creek, is set to produce its first vintages this year as well.

Both Buck Shoals and the Yadkin Valley Wine Co. wineries will use their excess capacity to make wines for other vineyards, opening doors for new enterprises in the Swan Creek region. Because 85 percent of grapes used in a wine must come from Swan Creek to be labeled with that name, vines planted within the AVA could take on greater value.

"It's a big help to have a built-in market," Crater says.

About 40 percent of the Swan Creek AVA is in a portion of Iredell County not previously included in an AVA. Although there are no vineyards there now, "conditions are ripe" for some to be planted, Stephen Lyons says.

Any business growth will require tourism infrastructure, the vineyard owners say, through the development of restaurants, gift shops and hotels or bed-and-breakfasts that can be part of an overall package to lure new visitors.

The Vineyards of Swan Creek, a trade and marketing partnership that already includes the four established vineyards, is branching out to include associate memberships for such businesses, even if they're located just a few miles outside the Swan Creek AVA. Through the partnership, the vineyards already promote one another and share a joint website and brochure.

"People will be here to stay," Crater says. "They need a place to eat and a place to sleep. We've widened our scope there."

Stephen Lyons compares the business growth to spokes on the wheel, with the added interest extending out to nearby municipalities and boosting the economy of all those nearby.

The center of this wheel is a little corner of the foothills perhaps overlooked before. But for those who tend the vines there day in and day out, having their own name means being noticed by the kind of folks who will be doing a whole lot of looking in the future.

"With the curiosity factor, they'll want to know what are the differences between us and the Yadkin Valley as a whole, and they're going to go out and taste the others," Lyons says. "It's not just going to affect us. It's going to affect the wineries all over the area."



Brook Corwin is a reporter for The Tribune, Elkin-Jonesville, N.C.

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Laurel Gray

THEIR ROOTS RUN DEEP

By Ed Williams

HAMPTONVILLE — Kim Myers' hands-on, deeply personal approach to nurturing her vines — and the guests who stroll her vineyard and family farm — sums up her marketing philosophy: "Make people happy and they'll probably tell three others. Make 'em mad and they'll tell 10."

Which is why she reminds anyone tangled in the romanticism of wine grape growing about this piece of the business: "We work to dark-thirty, eight days a week."

Six years after planting the first vines at Laurel Gray Vineyards, just off Old Highway 421 close by Interstate 77 and U.S. 421 in southwestern Yadkin County, Kim says what every other wine producer before her has said: "We thought we knew how much work it was. We studied hard. We volunteered at other vineyards. But this is still much more than we anticipated."

And this from a family with farming roots planted in 1773 in the Yadkin Valley region. Benny Myers, Kim's husband, manages the truck operations division for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, but he continues to farm the area with the help of his brother and father. The black angus cattle and tobacco may have surrendered to grape vines, but there is still corn, soybeans and wheat to rotate on 84 acres.

"We are gifted with a farm. The soils are very fertile and the grapes have really taken to them. The growing is easy," Benny says. "My biggest interest is in growing. I love to see things grow. I've never gotten tired of it. Planting the vineyard and watching it go through the four seasons is a lot of fun — the most fun as anything I've ever tried to grow."

But while the growing is easy, managing vines — pruning, spraying, leaf pulling — is altogether different. "Nobody prunes our vineyard except family," Kim says. Tending vines, she says, is key to quality, and tending nine

acres in vine is challenging.

"A lot of times I'm down there at four in the morning spraying because we have those breezes that come through in the day and it's the only time I can catch it before the winds come," she adds.

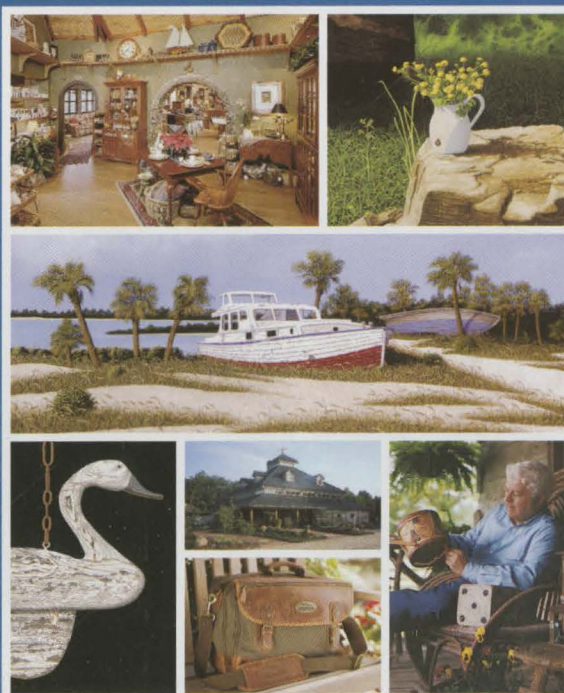
Then there's marketing, at which Kim excels — not only in the sales aspect, but also at putting wine country hospitality into proper context.

Having a good time? Great. Thanks so much for visiting. Enjoying your Easter weekend? Excellent. Nice weather we're having this Fourth of July. We'll see you again around Labor Day, right?

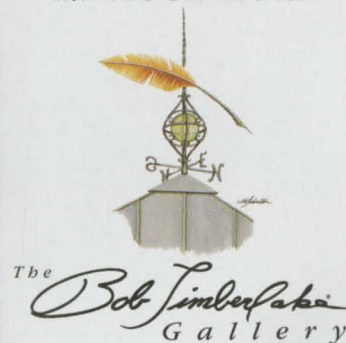
Because when droves are coming to enjoy nature down some winding road, she says, that's when wineries are revving up. In wine



Kim Myers at harvest.



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country, there are no restful weekends, no holiday getaways. Tasting rooms must be staffed, vineyard tours must be scheduled, wine festivals must be attended. In the wine world, the vacation window opens a crack only December through February.

Not that Kim and Benny Myers are complaining. Their wine passion grew from European travels and visits to California wine country. It was nurtured by Michael and Amy Helton at Hanover Park Vineyard to the east and fully fueled when massive Shelton Vineyards opened to the north.

Laurel Gray Vineyards started small, expanding in baby steps. In 2004, it produced just 900 cases. Today, annual case production stands at 1,300 and probably will never exceed 3,000. Laurel Gray — comparatively speaking — will remain small with its line of Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Viognier and Syrah. It also grows Merlot, Pinot Gris and Cabernet Franc.

But Benny and Kim have still bigger plans. After expanding its tasting room this spring, Laurel Gray will have taken a huge step in forming a new venture, the Yadkin Valley Wine Co.

In partnership with soon-to-open Shadow Springs Vineyard nearby, Yadkin Valley Wine Co. will operate as a management company over three bonded wineries. Laurel Gray will own the land and facility on which that winery sits. Shadow Springs will own the equipment inside. Both Laurel Gray and Shadow Springs will produce wine there under their respective labels.

And the Yadkin Valley Wine Co. will also custom-crush grapes for area growers. The



The tasting room at Laurel Gray.

concept is familiar to the Myerses; their wines have long been crushed and crafted by Stephen Rigby, winemaker for nearby Raffaldini Vineyards.

"There are a lot of smaller growers and they realize they'll never make money just growing the grapes," Kim says. "The only way to make money is to bottle your own wine and sell it. There are a lot of growers looking to do that, but they don't have the financial resources to."

Benny expects the Yadkin Valley Wine Company to be open by July. Laurel Gray also introduces this year a new winemaker — Kent Egon Smith, a Georgia native who had been making wine for Chateau Elan outside Atlanta.

Surrounded by a cluster of other wineries in

the new Swan Creek AVA — and with more to come — Laurel Gray Vineyards continues to enjoy what some provident highway widening of U.S. 421 five years ago brings, steady traffic from all points on the compass.

"Our largest market is the Charlotte-Lake Norman area. They're really flying up I-77," Kim says. "We have a good problem. We sell out of our wine quicker than we can bottle."

Ten years from now, Kim and Benny hope their two children, Ashley Laurel and Taylor Gray will be taking a larger role in running the vineyard that is named after them. The Myerses hope Laurel Gray will be a destination place for families interested in farming. They hope their facility will emerge as a venue for weddings, parties and special events.

"And it would be wonderful to think we could get in a position where we could pre-sell all our wines and when they're ready, just tell people 'come pick it up,'" Kim laughs.

How different will Laurel Gray be 10 years from now? More than anything, Kim hopes for what every other wine producer before her has hoped: "Paid for."



Ed Williams, Brand Marketing Manager for the News & Record in Greensboro, has written about the wine industry since 1990. His column "Uncorked" appears monthly in the News & Record. Williams' reporting, writing and editing have received state and national awards over the last 20 years.

Retreat to the heart of N.C. wine country

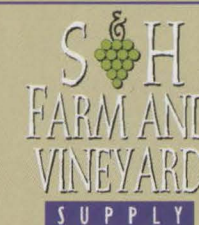
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Could Clef du Vin be an oenophile's magic wand?

By Ed Williams

The idea seemed a little . . . dippy?

Imagine dunking a metal wand into a glass of young wine and in scant seconds aging it five to 10 years. Imagine accelerating in an instant a wine's usually gradual oxidation and tannin softening — and then tasting it as it might taste years later.

Imagine knowing now whether a wine is worthy of cellaring or predicting when it will reach equilibrium — that enchanted moment when tannins recede just ahead of fruit.

Hard to imagine?

I couldn't even begin to get my head around it, my skepticism on a collision course with cynicism. In the wine world, predicting that anointed moment of balance is the Holy Grail, never to be trifled with.

Yet here we were trifling, alongside a handful of Yadkin Valley winemakers who agreed to offer their wines to test the Clef du Vin or "wine key" — the invention of a chemist and a sommelier in the mid-1990s.

The "key" combines metal alloys, including silver, copper and gold. Patrick A. Byrd, the U.S. sales rep for the wine key, won't confirm the exact composition that was three years in the making — and then seven years in testing and calibrating.

Clef du Vin (pronounced "clay du van") was introduced in 2004 and first hit the U.S. market last year. Since 2006, Clef du Vin has recorded \$4.5 million in sales worldwide, Byrd says, the single-piece pocket version retailing at \$99 and a two-piece version retailing for \$169.

When dipped, the alloy is claimed to reorganize wine at the molecular level, speeding up effects of oxidation. This is a natural but variable process every wine undergoes as it ages.

"This replicates key elements of the aging process," Byrd says. "There's a breakdown in tannins and a leveling of the acidity, revealing the actual wine taste that the winemaker intends."

Winemakers have long known about — and often employed — metals (particularly copper) in crafting wine. What distinguishes Clef du Vin, says Byrd, is that it is calibrated to precisely simulate the affect of one year aging for each second the alloy is exposed to wine.

"It produces a revelation of the authentic wine taste (as it ages)," says Byrd, who admits that it will not improve a wine already flawed or not cellar-worthy. "You can't polish a bad apple (with Clef du Vin)."

On The Vine put Clef du Vin to the test using Yadkin Valley-produced Merlot, Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon — even Chardonnay.

And with each dip of the wand, the wine was changing. The tannins were softening, the fruit flavors were emerging into an earthier, sometimes more complex recipe.

To be sure, the results were mixed. Most red wines lost rough edges after a few seconds — and perception of the wine seemed improved. But five to 10 seconds of wand contact transformed the



Grassy Creek's Jim Douthit gives Clef du Vin a several-second dip.

wines into a tired quaff, the fruit faded.

In a few cases, the wine took an immediate turn for the worse after only the fleetest dip, affirming

that most wines — particularly whites — should be enjoyed young.

So, is the "wine key" an accurate assessment tool for the winemaker? Does it provide practical protection for the wine consumer? Does it provide sufficient insight into how well North Carolina's wines will age?

The winemakers who joined *On The Vine* to experiment with the Clef du Vin blended some parts of curiosity, revelation or dubiousness in their assessments.

"It did seem to affect my perception and in a sense, gave the perception of some aged qualities. It may give some peripheral insight into how a wine may age, but I think that pinpointing exactly when a wine will peak is too elusive a target to wholly determine by this method," said Raffaldini Vineyards' winemaker Stephen Rigby.

Mark Greene, winemaker at Elkin Creek Vineyards, is more direct: "Because the taste is affected, who is to say it mirrors aging? It changes the taste when inserted — but so would a candy cane."

Derrill Rice, co-owner of Grassy Creek Vineyards, didn't dispute the wand's effect but said, "this takes away the journey of wine. It takes all the romance out of wine."

Countered Yadkin Valley Wine Company winemaker Kent Egon Smith: "Do you know what



A boxed set for the connoisseur.

takes the romance out of wine? Saving some special bottle in your cellar, storing it correctly, babying it for years. Then, when a special occasion finally tempts you to share it with friends or significant other, it's past its prime. This could help you keep that from happening."

Byrd says Clef du Vin is valuable on another level: While a wine's equilibrium naturally ebbs and flows over time, that magic moment of balance is highly subjective. "Your personal preference is the true judge. What better way to gauge what you personally like? What is your magic number? No one's will ever be the same."

Indeed, Clef du Vin has drawn raves and testimonials from winemakers and wine educators the world over. It's used at the Ritz-Carlton in New York and sold through Kroger grocery stores in the South.

At The Angus Barn in Raleigh — renowned for its wine program over the last 25 years — wine director Henk Schuitemaker has introduced Clef du Vin to guests to inject some fun into wine tasting at tableside.

The "wine key" not only gives enthusiasts some idea how red wine evolves, but it serves an immediate, pragmatic purpose: "We use it as a fun tool to reduce the tannin levels in younger wines," Schuitemaker said.

But Schuitemaker is somewhat reserved in his appraisal: "I don't think this ages a wine as it would in the cellar. If a wine sits at 55 degrees, in perfect stillness, in the darkness, it matures differently than through the Clef du Vin. I've tasted enough older wines in my tenure that I can say that."

Smith of the Yadkin Valley Wine Company believes Clef du Vin is primarily acting on tannin. "When a tannic wine like Cabernet Sauvignon ages, the tannins soften and you perceive them further back in the mouth. Think of tannins like sandpaper. Do the tannins feel like coarse grit, medium grit or fine grit? Maybe they feel satin-like or even silky?"

"I thought the Clef du Vin worked pretty well for what it was. It didn't change fruit quality or acidity or convert alcohol to an aldehyde. And it didn't change the color of the wine. What the device did was simulate aging of the tannin structure."

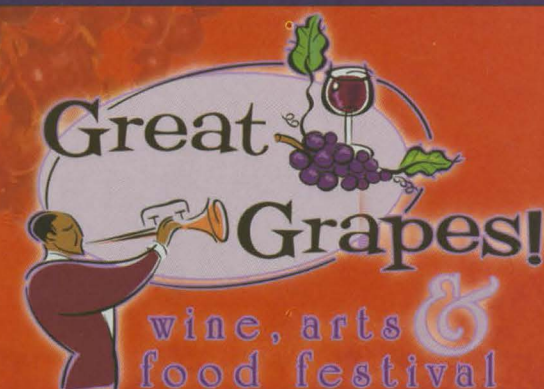
Experimenting with Clef du Vin, I subjected everyday Syrah, Zinfandel and Cabernet to the alloy. In each case, it further softened a \$10 house wine — usually to the point of turning them flabby in short order. I decided to press the issue, subjecting the wines to 15 to 20 seconds of exposure to stimulate 15-20 years of bottle aging.

I didn't expect vinegar. I did expect a train wreck. Yet I got neither. And I've experienced plenty of everyday wines opened after 10-plus years that have been dreadful.

This intrigued me enough to pull from my cellar a 1985 Robert Mondavi Napa Cabernet Sauvignon and a 1997 Clos du Bois Marlstone. I figured a 22-year-old Cab and a 10-year-old Cab-Merlot blend might provide some benchmark as to flavor and aroma and mouth feel after bottle age. I subjected neither to Clef du Vin, my purpose only to remind myself what cellaring can do to a good red.

Continued on Page 21

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OTV'S Q&A...

Hybrids or not?

By Norm Oches

If you have any questions about the North Carolina wine industry, or about winemaking, grape growing or wine marketing in general, email them to the attention of Norm Oches at onthevine@yadkinvalley.com.

QUESTION: I know about European grape varieties like Merlot and Chardonnay. Are varieties like Chambourcin and Seyval Blanc the same kind of grape?

— B.C., Charlotte, N.C.

The Story Behind the Story: Let's get one thing straight right from the start: Even though wine purists will never own up to it, all grape varieties are hybrids of something. Yes, the standard varieties we know today, like Merlot and Chardonnay, are propagated by taking cuttings from one vine and grafting them to an American rootstock to form a new vine, thus providing, theoretically, an exact copy of the parent vine.

But at some time in their long genealogical history, even these thoroughbreds of the wine world were mixing it up with other viti species, and they still carry some of the characteristics of their less-than-perfect ancestors.

A hybrid is a cross — as in the exchange of pollen — between two different varieties of grapes in order to get a new grape that has some of the properties of both parents. Technically speaking, if you cross two varieties within the same species, you simply have a "cross."

The German variety Müller-Thurgau is a good example, being a cross between Riesling and Silvaner, both vitis vinifera varieties. If you cross two varieties from different species, you have a true "hybrid." Traminette is an example, being a cross between a Gewürztraminer (vinifera) and previous hybrid cross called "Joannes Seyval."

So why would anyone want to cross vinifera with another species when we already have such

great vinifera varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cabernet Franc? Vinifera vines, although bred to produce great wine grapes, are somewhat temperamental and prone to injury, just like thoroughbred race horses. To address these issues, researchers have been working to develop vines that are more adaptable to cold weather and also more resistant to common maladies such as mildews and bacterial diseases.

The real work on hybridization of grapes began in the late 1800s when the Phylloxera root louse (to which American species are resistant) traveled to Europe and wiped out most of the vinifera vineyards there. French researchers, in an effort to find a grape resistant to phylloxera, but still possessing the qualities of the European grape, began crossing American species with their European cousins.

Unfortunately, the first hybrids were pretty rough, and the French turned to other methods to get around the phylloxera problem. Hybrids reappeared in the 1950s and '60s, when as much as one-third of European vineyards and many eastern U.S. vineyards were growing hybrids. Unfortunately, many of the vineyards tended to overcrop the vines, producing some very unremarkable wines, and they soon fell out of favor again.

How Things Stand: Cornell University has led hybrid breeding research in the U.S. and has introduced several popular varieties, including Melody,

Chardonnell (Missouri's No. 2 grape) and Traminette. Cornell just introduced three new hybrid varieties: Noiret, Corot Noir and Valvin Muscat.

Dr. Bruce Reisch, one of the researchers responsible for the new hybrids at Cornell, feels that many of the hybrid varieties being developed today are on a par with their European cousins. This is primarily due to the higher quality of the breeding stock, as researchers gradually weed out the challenging flavors and unfriendly characteristics that were common in past hybrids.

In fact, RagApple Lassie winemaker Linda King recently judged a competition in which wines made with the new Valvin Muscats were being evaluated, and she reports the wines were excellent.

Virginia has had a lot of success with a grape called Norton (also known as Cynthiana). While considered an American grape, its parentage is most likely a cross between an early vitis estivalis wild grape and some of the vitis vinifera vines that colonists brought over from the old world. The vinifera probably survived only a few seasons, but their hybrid offspring live on.

On the white wine front, Jim Law, one of Virginia's premier winemakers, has had a lot of suc-



By Norm Oches, Vineyard Specialist

cess at Linden Vineyards with a Seyval wine and a late harvest dessert wine from 100% Vidal Blanc grapes. Luca Paschina, winemaker at Barboursville Vineyards, has had excellent results with a Vidal Muscat blend sweet dessert wine, similar in character to the Italian Vin Santo wines of Tuscany.

In North Carolina, vineyard owners began planting hybrids back in the 1970s and '80s as a hedge in case the vinifera varieties didn't pan out. Now that vinifera varieties have established a firm foothold in our clay soils, wineries are turning to hybrids for blending duty, and in some cases, as straight varietal wines. A case in point is Chambourcin. It needs a long growing season to ripen well, and when it does, it produces a clean, easy-drinking red wine.

Chambourcin is doing so well here that many believe it could become North Carolina's signature red. Mark Terry, winemaker at Westbend Vineyards, admits he was pretty skeptical when he moved down here from Long Island and heard we were making hybrid-based wines. He says Chambourcin has turned him into a believer. He adds just a touch of Cabernet Sauvignon to soften some of Chambourcin's rougher edges and turns out a very nice red wine.

Several North Carolina vineyards have recently planted the white hybrid Traminette. King is using Traminette in RagApple Lassie's new blush wine and says it adds a wonderful spiciness that is very similar to Gewürztraminer, but with fewer mildew problems in the vineyard.

The Next Step: Don't expect to see a big influx of new hybrid-based wines in places like the Yadkin Valley just yet. Winemakers in this area are still trying to figure out what vinifera vines grow best, let alone which hybrids might add an interesting degree of complexity to their wine offerings. What you will probably see is additional Chambourcin offerings as winemakers learn to bring out more of the hot-weather character of this grape.

You will surely see growth in other hybrid varieties at higher elevations in North Carolina, where the cold hardiness of many hybrids is a plus. For example, even though Jimmy Coan's vineyard north of Boone is sitting at 3,500 feet above sea level, he still harvested some beautiful fruit off his 3-year-old Seyval vines last season.

Dick Wolf used these grapes to make a Seyval labeled wine at Banner Elk Winery and will probably purchase some of Jimmy's Marechal Foch (also a hybrid) this coming season.

Are the hybrids eco-friendly? Yes. As consumers

look for more variety, and as they come to realize that those great Chardonnays and Merlots come at a price, pesticide-wise, they may be more willing to take a chance on something a little more eco-friendly and a little less well known.

Hybrids won't replace vinifera, by any means, but hybrids could become a nice niche market for local vineyards and wineries. Law says it's not uncommon for California visitors to his Virginia winery to buy several bottles of his Seyval and Vidal offerings to take back home. Hybrids are not commonly grown out West and carry with them the cachet of their Eastern grape heritage.

The moral of the hybrid story is this: Hybrids are grapes, too. And just like their vinifera cousins, some

do better in our climate than others. What hybrids have going for them is better hybrid crosses, winemakers who are willing to take the time to learn more about how to bring out the best in these grapes, and an interest in growing more environment-friendly grapes.

With the continuing advances made by researchers, hybrids could be here to stay. What do they say? Variety is the spice of life.



Norm Oches designs and builds vineyards in North Carolina. He can be reached at noches@charter.net.

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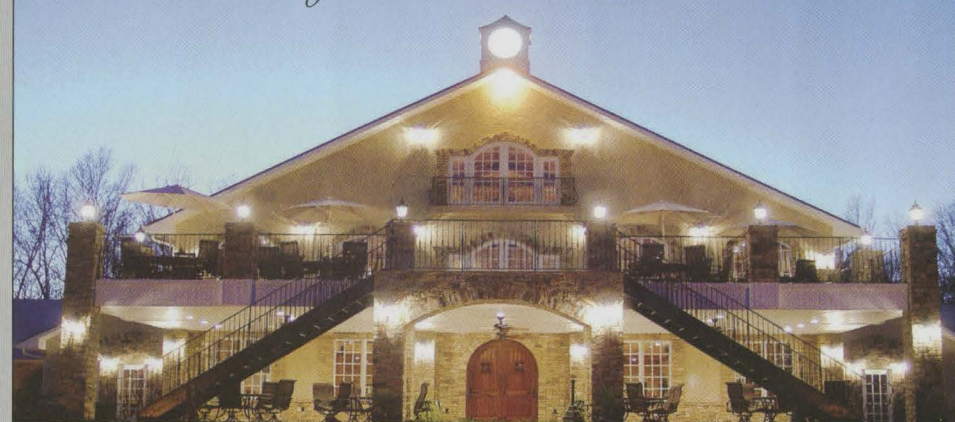
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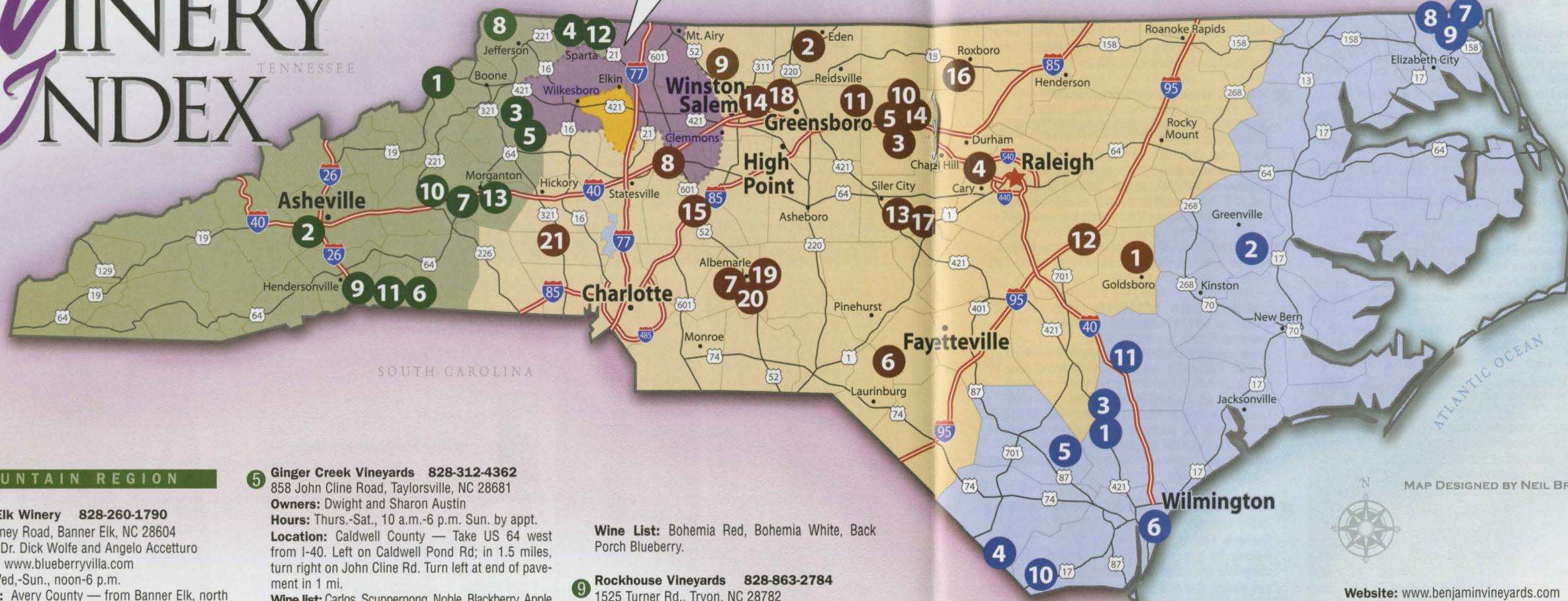
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WINERY INDEX

Yadkin Valley Appellation
Swan Creek Appellation
See Detailed Map on Page 18



MOUNTAIN REGION

- 1 Banner Elk Winery 828-260-1790**
135 Gualtney Road, Banner Elk, NC 28604
Owners: Dr. Dick Wolfe and Angelo Accetturo
Website: www.blueberryvilla.com
Hours: Wed.-Sun., noon-6 p.m.
Location: Avery County — from Banner Elk, north on N.C. 194 1.5 mi. Then left on Gualtney Road. Winery is 1/4 mi. on right.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Seyval Blanc, Blueberry, red and white blends.
- 2 Biltmore Estate Winery 800-543-2961**
One North Pack Square, Asheville, NC 28801
Owners: Bernard DeLille, VP/Winemaker
Website: www.biltmore.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., noon-7 p.m.
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.
- 3 Cerminaro Vineyard 828-754-9306**
4399 Wilkesboro Boulevard, Boomer, NC 28606
Owners: Joe and Deborah Cerminaro
Hours: Sat., noon-6 p.m. Other days by appointment.
Location: Caldwell County — In Kings Creek on Hwy 18 between Lenoir and Wilkesboro
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sangiovese.
- 4 Chateau Laurinda 800-650-3236**
690 Reeves Ridge Rd., Sparta, NC 28675
Owners: Linda and Larry Ehlers and Family
Website: www.chateaulaurindawinery.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m.
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

- 5 Ginger Creek Vineyards 828-312-4362**
858 John Cline Road, Taylorsville, NC 28681
Owners: Dwight and Sharon Austin
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sun. by appt.
Location: Caldwell County — Take US 64 west from I-40. Left on Caldwell Pond Rd; in 1.5 miles, turn right on John Cline Rd. Turn left at end of pavement in 1 mi.
Wine list: Carlos, Scuppernong, Noble, Blackberry, Apple
- 6 Green Creek Winery 828-863-2182**
413 Gilbert Road, Columbus, NC 28722
Owner: Alvin Pack et al
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., 1-5 p.m., or by appointment
Website: www.greencreekwinery.com
Location: Polk County — Exit 167 off U.S.74, south on N.C. 9, 3 mi. to Landrum Rd. Then right 1 mi. to Gilbert Rd. Winery on left.
Wine List: American Chardonnay, American Chardonnay Un-Oaked, N.C. Estate Grown Chardonnay, N.C. Estate Grown Cabernet Franc, Late Harvest Dessert Wine, American Merlot, Estate Grown Chambourcin Rosé and Estate Grown Cabernet Franc Rose.
- 7 Lake James Cellars 828-584-4551**
204 E. Main St., Glen Alpine, NC 28628
Owners: Mike and Betty Fowler
Website: www.lakejamescellars.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: From I-40, take Exit 100 to downtown Glen Alpine.
Wine list: French varietals, Italian blends, fruit blends.
- 8 New River Winery 336-846-1498**
106 N. Jefferson Ave., West Jefferson, NC 28694
(in Bohemia Gallery)
Owner: New River Wineries, Inc.
Winemaker: Dan Strickland
Website: www.newriverwineries.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Ashe County — downtown West Jefferson.

Wine List: Bohemia Red, Bohemia White, Back Porch Blueberry.

- 9 Rockhouse Vineyards 828-863-2784**
1525 Turner Rd., Tryon, NC 28782
Owners: Lee Griffin and Marsha Cassidy
Website: www.rockhousevineyards.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., 1-5 p.m.
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.
- 10 South Creek Vineyards 828-652-5729**
2240 South Creek Road, Nebo, NC 28761
Owners: Frank and Debra Boldon
Winemaker: Frank Boldon
Website: www.southcreekwinery.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. or by appt.
Location: McDowell County — Exit 90 off I-40 1/4 mi. to Harry Grove Rd.; right and winery is 2 mi. on right.
Wine List: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, The Maestro, Chardonnay, Chardonnay Reserve.
- 11 The Teensy Winery 828-287-7763**
3661 Painters Gap Rd., Union Mills, NC 28167
Owner: Bob Howard
Hours: By appointment only
Location: Rutherford County — Take I-40 Rutherford 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.
- 12 Thistle Meadow 800-233-1505**
102 Thistle Meadow, Laurel Springs, NC 28644
Owner/Winemaker: Thomas R. Burgiss
Website: www.thistlemeadowwinery.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., noon-4 p.m. (After April 1, Mon.-

Sat., noon-5 p.m.; Sun. 2-4 p.m.)
Location: Alleghany County — Off Blue Ridge Parkway, Milepost 246, then 3 miles on Elk Knob Road.
Wine List: French varietals, Italian blends, Fruit blends.

- 13 Waldensian Heritage Wines 828-879-3202**
4940 Villar Lane NE, Valdese, NC 28690
Owners: Joel Dalmás, Joe Jacumin, Freddy Leger, John Bourous, Tom Garrou
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., 1 p.m.-6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. by appt.
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.

PIEDMONT REGION

- 1 A Secret Garden Winery 919-734-0260**
1008 Airport Road, Pikeville, NC 27863
Owners: Gerald and Linda Hall
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.
Website: www.ascretgardenwinery.com
Location: Wayne County — From U.S. 70, take N.C. 117 North to Exit 94 (Pikeville). Turn right. Straight for 2 mi., then right onto Airport Road. Winery 1.25 mi. on left.
Wine List: Carlos, Noble, blends.
- 2 Benjamin Vineyards & Winery 336-376-1080**
6516 Whitney Road, Graham (Saxapahaw), NC 27253
Owners: Andy and Nancy Zeman

Website: www.benjaminvineyards.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., noon-5 p.m.
Location: Alamance County — Take Exit 154 off I-40/85 south 8.5 miles. Cross Hwy. 54 and continue 4 miles. Left on Whitney Road. Vineyard 1.2 miles on left.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Chambourcin, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Carlos, Magnolia, Scuppernong, Hunt and fruit-muscadine blends.

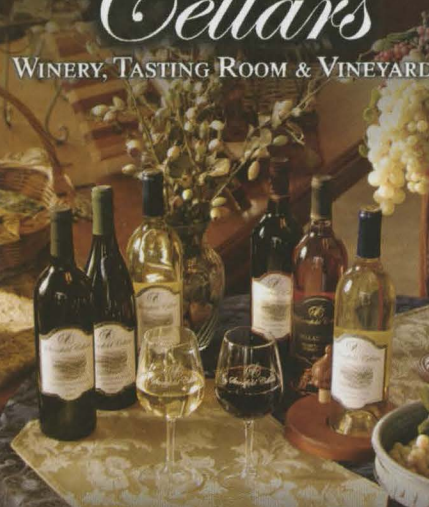
- 3 Chatham Hill Winery 800-808-6768**
3500 Gateway Centre Blvd. #200
Morrisville, NC 27560
Owners: Marek Wojciechowski and Jill Winkler
Website: www.chathamhillwine.com
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Wake County — Take I-40 Exit 285 toward Morrisville on Aviation Parkway. Take first right at Gateway Centre Boulevard. Right onto Northgate Ct. at 3500 sign.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, Zinfandel, Pinot Grigio, Riesling, Chardonnay, Viognier, Sweet Carolina Red and White and fruit blends.
- 4 Creek Side Winery 336-584-4117**
3515 Stoney Creek Church Road, Elon, NC 27244
Owners: Angie and Fred Wallace
Website: www.creeksidewinery.com
Hours: Mon., Thurs.-Sat., noon-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.
Location: Alamance County — Take Exit 140 off I-40 and stay on University Drive to the end. Right on Burlington, Ave, left onto Shallowford Church Road, Left onto NC 87 for 6.6 mi., right on Stoney Creek Church Road, winery 1.3 mi. on left.

Wine list: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Stoney Creek Red, Deep Creek Red, Shallow Creek Rosé, Creek Side Sunset, Port, Red Raspberry and Peach.

- 5 Cypress Bend Vineyards 910-369-0411**
21904 Riverton Road, Wagram, NC 28396
Owners: Tina and Dan Smith
Website: www.cypressbendvineyards.com
Hours: Wed.-Fri., Sun., noon-6 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Scotland County — Off US 401 (10 mi. north of Laurinburg) in Wagram, right on Riverton Rd. Winery is 3 mi. on left.
Wine List: Muscadine and Carlos blends.
- 6 Dennis Vineyards 800-230-1743**
24043 Endy Rd., Albemarle, NC 28001
Owners: Pritchard and Sandon Dennis
Website: www.dennisvineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; seasonal Sunday hours, call ahead.
Location: Stanly County — From Albemarle, take NC 24-27 west approx. 5 miles; at caution light at Endy Road, turn right; winery 1/2 mile on left.
Wine List: Muscadine varietals in Dry, Semi-Dry and Sweet; Strawberry, Blueberry, Blackberry and Cherry fruit wines.
- 7 Garden Gate Vineyards 336-751-3794**
261 Scenic Drive, Mocksville, NC 27028
Owners: Bob and Sonya Whitaker
Website: www.gardengatevineyards.com
Hours: Wed.-Sat. noon-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.; or by appt.
Location: Davie County — Exit 168 off I-40 to East US 64; right on Green Hill Rd.; left on County Home Rd.; right on Scenic Drive; vineyard on right
Wine List: Scuppernong, Raspberry, Scarlet Blush, Muscadine, Blackberry, Blueberry, Strawberry, JitterBug.
- 8 Germanton Vineyard & Winery 336-969-2075**
3530 Hwy 8 and 65, Germanton, NC 27019
Owners: Judy and David Simpson
Website: www.germantongallery.com
Hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call Sun. hours. Tastings only; no tours
Location: Stokes County — In Germanton. Tasting room in gallery on corner of Hwy. 8 and Friendship Rd. (8 miles north of W-S.)
Wine List: Niagara, Sweet Red, Blush, Seyval, Chardonnay, Chambourcin, Merlot, Vermillion.
- 9 Glen Marie Winery 336-578-3938**
1838 Johnson Road, Burlington, NC 27217
Owners: Glendale and Joyce Marie Dickey
Website: www.glenmariewinery.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., noon-6 p.m.
Location: Alamance County — From I-85, take Exit 150, proceeding north; right at fourth light to Bason Road; then left on Mebane Rogers Road; go over the lake and right on Johnson Road; fifth house on left.
Wine List: Syrah, Sweet Marie, Dallas Red, Chambourcin, Summer's Promise, Golden Nugget, Scuppernong, Chardonnay, Muscadine, Carolina Springtime.
- 10 Grove Winery 336-584-4060**
7360 Brooks Bridge Rd, Gibsonville, NC 27249
Owner: Max Lloyd
Winemaker: Bob Moncsko
Website: www.grovetwinery.com
Hours: Fri.-Sat., noon- 5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Guilford County — From 29, take Brown

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Robin F. Weant

is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition to Robin's 22 years of real estate experience she also holds a BA in psychology and owns a small vineyard in Lewisville, NC, and has earned certification in viticulture and enology. With her real estate experience and education, Robin is the right choice for your real estate needs whether selling or purchasing a property.

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Summit exit; go east 7.6 mi. on 150 and Osceola-Ossipee Rd; left on Brooks Bridge Rd. Winery .6 mi. on right.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Niagara, Eno River White, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Norton.

- 11 Hinnant Family Vineyard 919-965-3350**
826 Pine Level Micro Rd., Pine Level, NC 27568
Owners: Willard and Bob Hinnant
Website: www.hinnantvineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun. 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m.
Location: Johnston County — From Raleigh take I-40 east to US 70 East. Go 30 mi., then left at Peedin Ave. Vineyard 2 mi. on right.
Wine List: Muscadine varieties, Norton and fruit wines.

- 12 Horizon Cellars 919-742-1404**
466 Vineyard Ridge, Siler City, NC
Owner: Guy Loeffler
Winemaker: Chris Pearmund
Website: www.horizoncellars.com
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., noon-6 p.m.
Location: Chatham County — From U.S. 421, take Exit 168 right 1 mile to Old 421. Left on Old 421 .5 mi. to Vineyard Ridge. Right .4 mi.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chambourcin, Vioignier, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Prestige Reserve, Late Harvest Vidal, Carolina Comfort.

- 13 Iron Gate Vineyards & Winery 919-304-9463**
2540 Lynch Store Road, Mebane, NC 27302
Owners: Gene and Debbie Stikeleather
Website: www.irongatevineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.
Location: Alamance County — Exit 153 off I-40; approx. 3 mi. N. of Mebane on NC 119.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chambourcin, Pack House Red, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Brightleaf White, Flue Fire Sweet White, Dixie Dawn.

- 14 Old Stone Vineyard & Winery 704-279-0930**
6245 Hwy. 52, Salisbury, NC 28146
Owner: Mark Brown
Website: www.osvwinery.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Rowan County — Take Exit 76 off I-85 onto US 52 South. Winery is 5 miles on left (1 mi. south of town of Granite Quarry).
Wine List: White and Red Muscadine in dry to sweet styles, Carlos Riesling, Noble Cabernet and Peach.

- 15 Rock of Ages Winery & Vineyard 336-364-7625**
1890 Charlie Long Road, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541
Owners: Kevin and Kimberly Moore

Winemaker: Kevin Moore
Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 1-5 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.
Location: Person County — From Burlington, take N.C. 49 north. Inside Person County, turn right on Charlie Long Road. Winery is 1.9 mi. on right.
Wine List: Chardonnay (stainless), Chardonnay (oaked), Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Semi-Dry Muscadine, Sweet Muscadine.

- 16 Silk Hope Winery 919-742-4601**
2601 Silk Hope Gum Springs Road, Pittsboro, NC 27312
Owner: Wally Butler
Hours: Sat.-Sun., noon-5 p.m.; weekdays by appt.
Website: www.silkhopewinery.com
Location: Chatham County — Off U.S. 64 Bypass at Exit 381, north on N.C. 87 1.8 miles to Silk Hope Gum Springs Road. Left 2.5 miles. Winery on left at intersection with Emerson Cook Road.
Wine List: Vidal Blanc, Sparkling White Vioignier, Sparkling White Chambourcin, Grand Vista, Red Roots, Chambourcin.

- 17 Stonefield Cellars 336-644-9908**
8220 Hwy. 68 N., Stokesdale, NC 27357
Owners: Robert and Natalie Wurz
Winemaker: Robert Wurz
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., noon-6 p.m.; Sun. 1-6 p.m., or by appt.
Website: www.stonefieldcellars.com
Location: Guilford County — North off I-40 at Exit 210. Take NC 68 north 13 miles. Winery on right at intersection with NC 65 (entrance on NC 65).
Wine List: European varieties, French/American hybrids and blends.

- 18 Stony Mountain Vineyards 704-982-0922**
26370 Mountain Ridge Road, Albemarle, NC 28001
Owners: Ken, Marie and Devron Furr
Hours: Fri.-Sat., 12-6 p.m.; other days by appt.
Website: www.stonymountainvineyards.com
Location: Stanly County — Take Hwy 24-27 East from Albemarle. Turn left at Stone Mountain sign. Turn right on Mountain Ridge Rd.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot and American varieties.

- 19 Uwharrie Vineyards 704-982-9463**
28030 Austin Road, Albemarle, NC 28001
Owner: David Braswell
Hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m.
Website: www.uwharrievineyards.com
Location: Stanly County — Take Hwy 73 west from Albemarle. Turn right on Austin Road. Winery is 1/2 mile.
Wine List: Merlot, Cabernet, Noble, White Syrah, Chardonnay, Muscat, Magnolia, Semi Dry Noble, Semi Dry Magnolia, Carlos, Semi Dry Carlos.

- 20 WoodMill Winery 704-736-7733**
1350 WoodMill Winery Lane, Vale, NC 28168
Owners: Beverly and Larry Cagle and family
Website: www.woodmillwinery.com
Hours: Thurs., Fri., Sun., 1-6 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Lincoln County — I-85 Exit 17 north on U.S. 321. Exit 24 north on NC 27 to down town Lincolnton. Go north 8 mi., then right 2 mi. on Cat Square Rd; then left 1/2 mile on Beam Lumber Rd.; then right on John Beam Rd.; winery 1 mi. on right.
Wine List: Muscadine, blueberry, scuppernon.

COASTAL REGION

- 1 Bannerman Vineyard 910-259-5474**
2624 Stag Park Rd., Burgaw, NC 28425
Owners: Scot and Colleen Bannerman
Website: www.bannermanvineyard.com
Hours: Wed.-Sat., noon-4 p.m., or by appt.
Location: Pender County — Take I-40 Exit #398. Turn West on NC Hwy 53. Go 1 mile and turn left on Stag Park Rd and go 2.5 miles.
Wine List: Sweet White Oak Blend, Semi-Sweet White Oak Blend, Sweet Bay Blush, Red Oak Sweet, Red Oak Semi-Sweet, Weeping Willow, Marilyn.

- 2 Bennett Vineyards 877-762-9463**
6832 Bennett Vineyards Rd., Edward, NC 27821
Owners: Buddy Harrell and 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.

- 3 Duplin Winery 800-774-9634**
P.O. Box 756, Rose Hill, NC 28458
Owners: David Fussell and family
Website: www.duplinwinery.com
Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Fri., 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Duplin County — Take I-40 exit 380. Right on Hwy 117.
Wine List: Muscadine blends.

- 4 Grapefull Sisters Vineyard 910-653-2944**
4903 Ramsey Ford Road, Tabor City, NC 28463
Owners: Sheila Suggs Little and Amy Suggs
Website: www.grapefullsistersvineyard.com
Hours: Wed.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Columbus County — From NC 17, take NC 904 west about 15 mi. Left on Dulah Rd. in Pineway. Vineyard 1.2 mi. on left.
Wine List: Muscadine and Carlos blends.

- 5 Lu Mil Vineyard 910-866-5819**
438 Suggs-Taylor Road, Dublin, NC 28332
Owner: Lu Mil Vineyard, Inc.
Website: www.lumilvineyard.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.
Location: Bladen County — South at I-95 Exit 46 on NC 87 25 mi. to Dublin. Left on 4th St. for 1/2 mi., then right on Suggs-Taylor Rd. Vineyard on right.
Wine List: Bladen Blush, Cape Owen Red, Taylor Divine, Merry Christmas, Old Cumberland, Alcohol-free wines and ciders.

- 6 Lumina Winery 910-753-5299**
112 Unit A, S. Kerr Ave., Wilmington, NC 28403
Owner: David Hursey
Winemaker: David Hursey
Website: www.luminavine.com
Hours: Mon.-Wed., noon-6 p.m.; Sat., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; or by appt.
Location: New Hanover County — I-40 to S. College Rd. Right on Market St. Go 1 mi. and turn left on Kerr St.; .3 mi. on right.
Wine List: Merlot, Oleander Rosa, Oleander Bianca, Sweet Carlos, Noble.

- 7 Martin Vineyards 252-429-3542**
P.O. Box 186, Knotts Island, NC 27950
Owners: David and Jeanie Martin
Website: www.martinvineyards.com
Hours: Daily, noon-5 p.m. (closed Wednesdays)
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 varieties, Muscadine varieties, Fruit wines.

- 8 Moonrise Bay Vineyard 866-888-9463**
134 Moonrise Bay Landing, Knotts Island, NC 27950
Owners: Richard and Kate Morris
Website: www.moonrisebaywine.com
Hours: Daily, noon-5 p.m.
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 varieties, French hybrids, Fruit wines, American varieties

- 9 Sanctuary Vineyards 800-637-2446**
6957 Carotake Highway, Jarvisburg, NC 27947
Owners: Tom and Jerry Wright
Website: www.sanctuaryvineyards.com

Hours: Sat.-Sun., tasting room open.
Location: Currituck County — Off Hwy. 158 in Jarvisburg.
Wine List: Coastal Collage, The Lightkeeper.

- 10 Silver Coast Winery 910-287-2800**
6680 Barbeque Rd., Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469
Owners: John and Maryann Azzato
Website: www.silvercoastwinery.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m.
Location: Brunswick County — From Hwy. 17 (7 mi. north of S.C. border) take Hwy. 904 west. After 1.5 miles, take right on Russtown Rd. After 1.5 miles, take 4th right on Barbeque Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals, French Hybrids, Blends.

- 11 The Country Squire Winery 910-296-1727**
748 NC 24/50, Warsaw, NC 28398
Owner: Iris Lennon
Winemaker: Loraine Smith
Website: www.countrysquirewinery.com
Hours: Wed.-Fri., noon-9 p.m.; Sat., 2-9 p.m. or by appt.
Location: Duplin County — From I-40, Take Exit 364, Business 24 east to NC 50.
Wine List: Cabernet, Riesling, Pinot Grigio, Merlot, White Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Apple Orchard Riesling, Black Knight Cabernet, Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot.

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Events

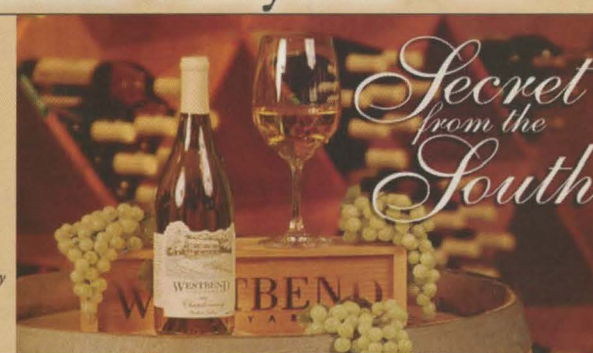
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June 23 • 12-5 pm

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Swan Creek
APPELLATION

1 Allison Oaks Vineyards 336-677-2659
2323 Old Highway 421 East, Yadkinville, NC 27055
Owner: Gene and Pam Renegar
Winemaker: Mark Terry/Westbend
Website: www.allisonoaksvineyards.com
Hours: tasting room opening next spring.
Location: Yadkin County — 1 mile east of Yadkinville.
Wine List: Orchard White and Proprietor's Blend red.

2 Black Wolf Vineyards 336-374-2532
283 Vineyard Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Owner: Dana Theis
Winemaker: Joyce Rigby
Website: www.blackwolfvineyards.com
Hours: M-Sat., 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Thurs.-Sat., 5-10 p.m.; Sun. 12-8 p.m.
Location: Dobson in Surry County — Off U.S. 601 at Vineyard Lane.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Seyval Blanc, Chambourcin, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, red and white blends.

3 Brushy Mountain Winery 336-835-1313
125 W. Main St., Elkin, NC 28621
Owners: Matthew and Ann Mayberry and family.
Winemaker: Sean McRitchie
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., noon-6 p.m.; Sun., 2-5 p.m.
Location: Surry County — Downtown Elkin, 1/2 block west of Bridge Street.
Wine List: Bugaboo Creek Red, Booger Swamp White, Merlot, Chardonnay, Blackberry, Raspberry.

4 Childress Vineyards 336-236-9463
1000 Childress Vineyards Road, Lexington, NC 27295
Owners: Richard Childress and Greg Johns
Winemaker: Mark Friszolowski
Website: www.childressvineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., noon-6 p.m.
Location: Davidson County — off US 64 just west of intersection with US 52.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Vignier, Pinot Gris, Pinnacle, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Sangiovese, Merlot, Classic Red.

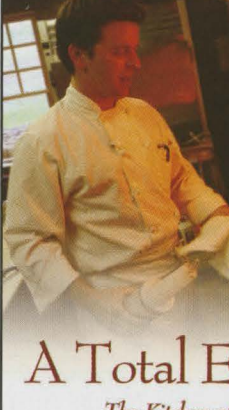
5 **Elkin Creek Vineyard** 336-626-1119
318 Elkin Creek Mill Road, Elkin NC 28621
Owner and Winemaker: Mark Greene
Website: www.elkinckreekvineyard.com
Hours (The Kitchen at Elkin Creek): Thurs.-Sat., 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Vineyard: Open daily, 11 am.-5 p.m.
Location: Wilkes County — West off I-77 at Exit 85 2 mi. to N. Bridge St.; right 3/4 mi.; left on Carter Mill Road for 1.5 mi.; left on Elkin Mill Road.
Wine list: Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Barbera, Rossa, Sangiovese, Dessert Wine.

6 **Flint Hill Vineyards** 336-699-4455
2133 Flint Hill Road, East Bend, NC 27018
Owners: Brenda and Tim Doub
Winemaker: Sean McRitchie
Website: www.flinthillvineyards.com
Hours: Fri., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat., noon-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Yadkin County — Off US 421 at Baltimore Road exit to Old 421. Turn right. Then left on Flint Hill Road. Vineyard 2 mi. on left.
Wine list: Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Chardonnay, Viognier, Olde Yattken, Crushed Velvet, Chambourcin

7 **Grassy Creek Vineyard**
336-835-4230
235 Chatham Cottage Circle, Elkin, NC 28621
Owners: Derrill and Lori Rice, Jim and Cynthia Douthit
Winemaker: Jim Douthit
Website: www.grassycreekvineyard.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat. 12-6 p.m.; Sun, 1-5 p.m.; or by appt.
Location: Surry/Wilkes Counties — West off I-77 at Exit 85 to US 21-Bypass North. left after first traffic light onto Klondike Road. Left into vineyard after about 1/2 mi.
Wine list: Chardonnay, Merlot, Guernsey Red (sweet), Red Barn Blend.

8 **Hanover Park Vineyard** 336-463-2875
1927 Courtney-Huntsville Rd., Yadkinville, NC 27055

11 RagApple Lassie Vineyards
866-RAG-APPLE
 3724 RagApple Lassie Lane, Boonville, NC 27011
Owners: Frank and Lenna Hobson
Winemaker: Linda M. King
Website: www.ragapplelassie.com



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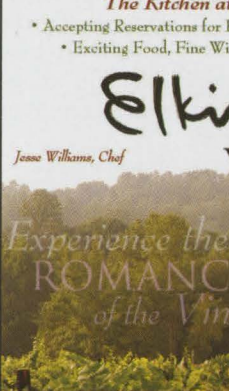
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ASK THE WINEMAKER

By Stephen Rigby, winemaker,
Raffaldini Vineyards



Dear Winemaker,
It's wine festival season and I don't have a thing to wear. What should I do?

Now that the seasons are changing and the weather allows for more time outside there will be a regular slate of wine festivals and winery events happening. This is the chance to get out and sample the new releases. The 2006 whites and rosés are becoming available, along with new reds from current and previous harvests. Also comes the chance to get to know more wineries by visiting those both new and established.

One of the obvious advantages of attending a festival is to be able to taste and learn about wines from several wineries at once. For those who really want to learn what's out there, festivals offer a great opportunity.

Still I thought I might offer a few suggestions on enjoying and enhancing the festival experience. First of all, wear something comfortable. I know that sounds incredibly obvious, but if you are going to make a concerted effort to taste and learn about various wines, physical comfort goes a long way in support of keeping your senses sharp and focused. Early and late season festival days can be deceptively cool and breezy. Summer festivals can be hot with a risk of sunburn. So be prepared. You often see lots of pinked wine tasters by mid-afternoon at a summer festival.

As for actually evaluating wines, the challenge is to keep your focus and your senses sharp. To help do this, remember the "s" words: swirl, sniff, sip, spit.

Swirling helps release the aromas of the wine. Sniffing puts you in sensorial contact with those aromas. Sipping gets you to the flavors and feel of the wine. Let it linger on your palate just a little while, move it around on your tongue. This can help you get a more complete "picture" of the flavors involved and the feel or weight of the wine, like the difference between water and oil. Spitting might be the least inviting part, but if you can step back where no one's in the target zone, this will go a long way toward helping you keep your senses from getting dulled.

Sure, swallowing a little bit will give you a better sense of the finish and length of the wine, but spitting will help you keep your ability to recognize the differences in the wines much longer.

I don't really expect several hundred people or more to go around spitting all over the place. It's not about spitting like a bunch of ballplayers. It's more like: purse your lips and push with your tongue. Practice at home with water. It might even become entertaining.

Spitting wine when evaluating is normal; not bad manners. It's the folks who taste your wine, grimace horribly, roll their eyes back in their head and expel the wine with a "GAAWW!" that might want to work on their manners.

Be sure to have plenty of water and food nearby while tasting. These should be in plentiful supply at the festival, and the snacks you're having while tasting should be rather neutral. Take your time; you can take hours to check out the wines. Many people will go around tasting whites and then go back around tasting reds; or tasting dry wines, then tasting sweeter ones.

The folks pouring are more than happy to greet you, to have the chance to get their wares into your glass, and to tell you all about their

wines and winery; though the reality often is that there are sizable crowds at these events that tend to hinder the chance to linger long. So you might be prepared with a couple of questions that you would like to know about the wines, but please don't be put off if the person busily pouring doesn't have the time to give a lesson in winemaking. A leisurely trip to the winery would be a better opportunity for this. Also, at crowded events, be prepared to "move sideways" at the table to let others in. We can pour multiple tastings while still answering questions. This may help keep the lines moving as well, which seems more important when you're the one in the rear. As a good friend of mine said, "I don't mind

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standing in line as long as I'm the first one in it."

Notice too the word "tastings" for sampling the wines, because that's what they are. Festivals allow for wine to be purchased by the glass as well as the bottle or case; but for learning about a wine and keeping the senses sharp enough to enjoy a broader spectrum, a "tasting" size serving is appropriate. It doesn't take much volume to get a good feel for a wine. Usually a tasting sample can provide at least two sips by which to evaluate the wine. I mention this because, though I think I pour a nice size sampling, occasionally I've had someone who will say something like, "Oh, come on, you can pour me more than that." And if I think I may have inadvertently shorted them then I'll give a bit more; but usually that's really a request to get more like a glass of wine than a tasting.

Also I've had compliments like, "Man, I really like that; how about letting me try it again," and this will be repeated several times in rapid succession. I'm not talking here about coming back later to review a particular wine. Sometimes others want such a tiny taste that they have a tendency to practically jerk the glass out from under the bottle while it's still being poured.

This may sound like too much structure to what is supposed to be a relaxing, enjoyable day. I'm just pointing out a few things that may allow you to get a little more out of the event. Bottom line though is to enjoy whatever is available that day: music, art, food, meeting old friends and making new ones . . . and especially the wines in all their different types and styles that North Carolina now has to offer. Oh, and wear something nice and comfortable.

CLEF DU VIN

Continued from Page 11

The '85 Mondavi Cab was, when purchased, touted as 25-years cellar-worthy from a glorious vintage. By March 2007, it was clearly over the hill and disappointing.

The 1997 Clos du Bois Marlstone — a much lighter blended red billed as best for drinking by 2005 — was exquisite.

Could the Clef du Vin have told me years ago that I should have opened my '85 Mondavi Cab in 1997? Or that my '97 Clos du Bois might have further improved past 2007? Can Clef du Vin really be expected to replicate the variable cellaring conditions of wine — some pristine and some, in my case, less so?

Raffaldini's Rigby, offered a parting thought: "There are too many nuances with normal aging situations that a quick dip of the wand can't recreate. I don't see how it could possibly thoroughly emulate the slowly evolving oxidation-reduction reactions that are a part of aging. The ongoing combining and breaking down of various compounds in the wine to give it its various nuances of flavor, aroma, bouquet and feel . . . well, I just can't imagine that can be done in a few seconds."

AT A GLANCE: Clef du Vin

•How age-worthy are North Carolina red wines? Maybe 2-3 years at this point. And most North Carolina winemakers readily admit this.

•Where can I find Clef du Vin? Look for it in fine wine retail wine shops or area Kroger stores or buy it through www.wineenthusiast.com

•Patrick A. Byrd, Clef du Vin sales rep, on its detractors — and another way to view Clef du Vin: "It is true not all winemakers may adopt this method, because as the truth in wine is revealed with Clef du Vin, not all truth is what we hope."



Ed Williams, Brand Marketing Manager for the News & Record in Greensboro, has written about the wine industry since 1990. His column "Uncorked" appears monthly in the News & Record. Williams' reporting, writing and editing have received state and national awards over the last 20 years.

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July 21
The Band Of Oz
6:00-9:00 PM

August 18
The Embers
5:00-8:00 PM

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THE GRAPEVINE

Early April frost damages some vineyards

Unseasonable weather in March and early April directly shocked and then indirectly stunted the growth of North Carolina vinifera vines.

From April 6-10, fruit crops were frozen through five straight nights of temperatures that dipped into the 20s and below for much of the state. At this point in the grape-growing season, which typically runs into October, that would have normally resulted in little damage. But near-record high temperatures consistently above 80 degrees through late March accelerated the growth process, causing some vines to bud early, only to be killed off by the April frost.

Terry Garwood, a fruit specialist with the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service who covers much of the Yadkin Valley AVA, said the percentage of budded vines varies by vineyard. But all it took was a single day of frost, let alone five, to destroy almost everything that had budded.

"The ones that came out earliest were burnt pretty bad," Garwood said. "But the ones that were still dormant and lying in wait are probably OK."

A variety of factors determined the percentage of vines that budded before the freeze. Several vineyard owners said most whites budded early, although the direction the vines faced also played a factor.

Vineyards in Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin counties reported losses of up to 50 percent. But some fared better than others. At Elkin Creek Vineyard, which is on the Surry/Wilkes border, owner Mark Greene said only about 10 percent of his vines had budded. That was because of the vineyards' sharp slope and a delayed pruning process that didn't encourage the vines to bud early.

When freezing temperatures entered the forecast in early April, Greene said he did nothing to prepare

besides mow the grass so the frost would move to the bottom of the vineyard.

Other local vineyards tried a variety of tricks to minimize the damage. Salt sprays were used by several to try and melt the frost. Shelton Vineyards in Dobson turned on giant fans to circulate warmer air. RagApple Lassie Vineyards in Boonville covered some vines with cloth. Grassy Creek Vineyards in State Road even had plans to light bonfires before learning of a local burning ban that ruled out that option.

In the end though, most said there was little if anything that could be done to save the buds.

"All those ideas have never really worked in the past," said Jim Douthit, vineyard manager for Grassy Creek. "When it gets down into the 20s there's not much you can do."

Provided damage isn't too extensive, secondary buds are expected to grow back in the coming months. Whether their grapes reach full sugar levels depends in large part on the amount of warm weather through the summer, along with the skills of the grower.

"Most everyone is concerned about the primary buds, but you also have secondary buds and tertiary buds," Greene said. "I'd argue that if you have a good grower, you can have just as good a grape on the second bud as you have had with the first."

Cultivating the secondary buds may push back the harvest schedule into mid- to late-fall. That could prove advantageous, as it would extend past the rainy hurricane season that can waterlog grapes as they're about to be picked. But it also runs the risk of early frost.

State viticulture experts as of press time were still traveling the state to assess the long-term damages of the frost, with the North Carolina Winegrower's Association planning a roundtable discussion to evaluate the effects at each vineyard.

For now, most growers are taking the same

approach to their vineyards as they did pre-frost, hoping for some extra sun to repair an outcome all farmers face periodically.

New wine festival planned at Westbend

Westbend Vineyards is planning what may be a first for the Tarheel wine community, a wine festival to which its local competitors are invited. Taste the Wines of the Valley is scheduled at Westbend in Lewisville for Saturday, June 23, noon-5 p.m.

In addition to Westbend, it will include wines poured and sold by Allison Oaks, Buck Shoals, Childress, Flint Hill, Hanover Park and Weathervane.

"I see this as being supportive of each other," said Lillian Kroustalis, Westbend's owner. "Hopefully, next year someone else will do it" at their site.

A portion of the proceeds — tickets are \$20 at the gate — will be donated to Victory Junction Gang, a charity benefiting terminally ill children.

Autumn Creek Vineyards opening in Rockingham

Rockingham County's first winery, Autumn Creek Vineyards in Mayodan, will be releasing its first seven wines this summer. The operation is

owned by Quint and Kim Haley and Scott Stanley.

Autumn Creek, formerly a century-old hay, cattle and tobacco farm, is in the midst of major construction and expansion. A winery and tasting room are scheduled for completion this summer. In addition, there will be a 10,000 square foot eight-room inn and conference center and a couple of cabins, one a restored log cabin. The inn and conference center will open early next year.

Autumn Creek started with two acres in vines planted in 2003 and since has expanded to eight. The wines to be released are Merlot, Chambourcin, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Viognier, Rockingham County Niagara and Muscadine.

Wine auction will benefit foundation

The Yadkin Valley Wine Auction, benefiting the Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital Foundation is set for the eve of the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, Friday, May 18, at the newly renovated and refurbished Holiday Inn Grand Ballroom in Jonesville.

The wine auction will benefit the Foundation's 2007 campaign to add a new regional emergency room and intensive care unit to Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital.

Wines from 20 area wineries will be available for tasting and wines will be auctioned at the event. Among other auction items donated will be rare wines, trips, jewelry, original art, furniture, clothing, fine dining, decorator items, and many other extraordinary gifts.

Tickets are sold in advance for \$50 a person. For more information, contact Foundation Director Jeannette Hendrick at 336-527-7457.

Childress amps up free music series

Childress Vineyards will present its free Music in the Vineyards series weekends beginning May 5. The Lexington winery will feature free performances on the lawn beneath the terrace every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 3 p.m., weather permitting.

The popular series will continue through June and include a talent contest in the American Idol style again this year. The winner of the Childress Idol contest will be given a chance to perform at The Barbecue Festival in Lexington.

A variety of musicians are set to perform, each with their own style, from jazz to oldies, R&B to country, Top 40 to acoustic guitars, and a Celtic group.

WHISPERS

The River House Winefest on the New in Grassy Creek has changed its date from July 14 to July 21 . . . Chatham Hill Winery has named Brian K. Norveck its vice president of sales and business development. He has more than 25 years of experience in the global wine industry . . . The wine industry is opposing efforts by the government to require allergen labeling

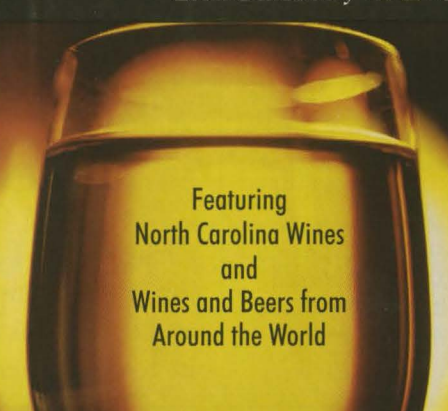
on wines . . . A recent national survey by the Travel Industry Association shows North Carolina trailing only California and New York in wine-related travel.

The Winery at Iron Gate Farm recently won bronze medals for its 2004 Chambourcin at the 2007 Dallas Morning News Wine Competition and for its 2005 Chardonnay at the 2007 Grand Harvest Awards in California. It also won five medals at the Finger Lakes International Wine Competition, silver for 2005 Flue Fire and bronzes for 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Chambourcin, Pack House Red and Dixie Dawn . . . Black Wolf Vineyards' 2005 Chardonnay also won a bronze at Grand Harvest. Its 2005 Chambourcin grabbed a gold at the American Wine Society

competition where its Wolfsbane Rosé took a bronze . . . Buck Shoals Vineyards' Vito's Pride, an Italian-style red blend, has won three awards in the past year, silvers at the North Carolina and Mid-Atlantic Southeastern competitions and a bronze from the International Eastern in New York . . . Duplin Winery's Hatteras Red, Scuppernon Blush, Carolina Red and Scuppernon won medals at both the Florida State Fair and Women's Winemaker's Challenge (Santa Rosa, Calif.) events, including golds for Hatteras Red and Scuppernon Blush in Florida. Midnight Magnolia, Pink Magnolia and Magnolia also won medals in Santa Rosa . . . Biltmore Estate captured four medals at Finger Lakes, including a gold for its Century White, silver for 2004 Chardonnay Sur Lies and Cardinal's Crest, and bronze for Cabernet Blanc de Noir. Other bronzes awarded at Finger Lakes went to Shelton Vineyards' 2004 Merlot, 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, and 2006 Riesling; Stony Knoll Vineyards' 2004 Cabernet Franc and 2005 Chambourcin and Merlot; Rag Apple Lassie Vineyards' 2005 Viognier; and Silver Coast Winery's 2004 Georgia Tesouro.

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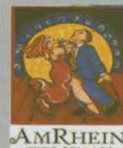
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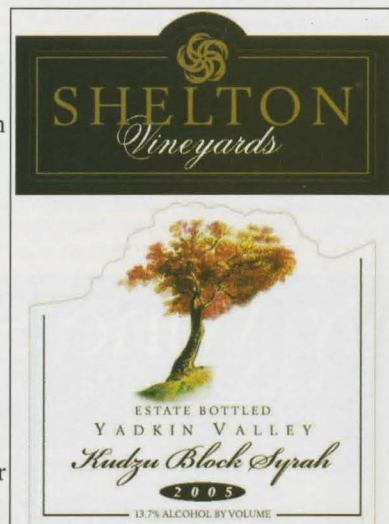
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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Shelton Vineyards '05 Kudzu Block Syrah

George Denka of Shelton tells us that "the original 1999 plantings of Syrah were from a clone with more vigorous growing traits than we would like. You could almost watch the shoots grow from day to day, and I mentioned that those vines grew as fast as Kudzu, so this was dubbed the Kudzu Block. We tried different techniques for four years and grew respectable fruit, but nothing with the character we were looking for. Gil Giese, our consultant, suggested that we might rip out (ouch) every other vine and extend the cordons to six feet on each side in an effort to stress the vines. This reduction of the vine count coupled with a lot of hands-on manual labor with hedging, pruning and leaf stripping worked and in 2005 we grew the most magnificent fruit packed with the smoky, spicy flavors that characterize Syrah. We knew immediately that only one name would work — Kudzu Block Syrah."

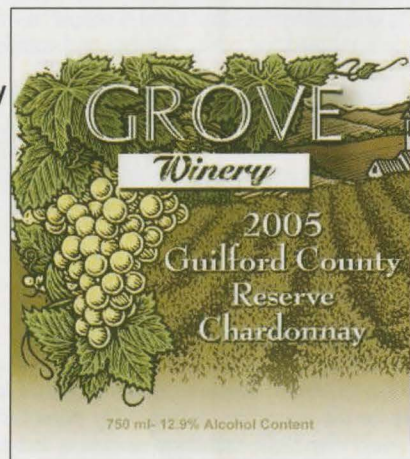


Grove Winery '05 Guilford County Reserve Chardonnay

Max Lloyd, owner of Grove Winery in Gibsonville, notes that "we've always used a very minimalist label to reflect our minimalistic winemaking philosophy."

"One of the girls who works in our tasting room, Pam Lynch, is a gifted graphics artist and was always bugging me to let her to do a wine label."

"So for our first reserve wine, our 2005 Estate Chardonnay, I gave in and let her. She did a real nice job with a drawing of the vineyard in the background and the grapes in the foreground. So we may continue to do fancier labels on our reserve wines."



PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

MAY

- May 2. Wacky Wednesday Dance Party at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach. From 5 to 8 p.m.
- May 5. Third Annual Shine to Wine Festival in Downtown North Wilkesboro. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring wine tastings, live music, food and exhibits highlighting Wilkes County's moonshining heritage. Tasting tickets are \$15 or \$10 if ordered in advance. Call 336-667-4875.
- May 5. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Ross Copley. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.
- May 5. Muscadine Jubilee and Vineyard Blessing at WoodMill Winery, Vale, NC. Event includes a vineyard blessing from 11 a.m. to noon, a music and art festival from noon to 6 p.m. and a spring fling dance from 7 to 11 p.m. Reservations required for the dance. Call (704) 736-7733 for more information.
- May 5. Lowe's Foods Extravaganza at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville. From 2 to 5 p.m. With a guest chef preparing foods to compliment Westbend wines. Free admission with donation to local food bank.
- May 5. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Featuring dinner, wine, music and comedy. Tickets are \$50 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.
- May 5-6. Art on the Haw River Wine Trail. With fine arts sales and demonstrations from local artisans at Benjamin, Creek Side, Glen Marie, Grove and Iron Gate wineries. Music and winery tours will also be on hand.
- May 5-6. Spring Festival at the Vineyards of Swan Creek. With new wine releases, music, food and fun at Raffaldini, Laurel Gray, Buck Shoals and Windy Gap, four wineries only 5 minutes apart. No fee. Call 336-835-9463.
- May 6. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Tracy Thornton. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.
- May 11. Mountain Voices: a dinner and reading with Virginia authors at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. Three course meal followed by a book signing. Starts at 6:30 p.m. \$35 per person. Call (540) 593-2865 for reservations.
- May 12. Salute! North Carolina Wine Celebration in Downtown Winston-Salem. From noon to 6 p.m. Featuring wine tastings, wine seminars, music and cuisine from local restaurants. Call 336-354-1500 for more information.
- May 12. Fourth Annual Spring Fling Pig Thing at Dennis Vineyards, Albemarle, NC. Featuring BBQ and music from Right Turn Clyde Band. Tickets on sale in April. Call (704) 982-6090.
- May 12. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Tin Can Alley. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.
- May 12. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. Featuring vineyard hayride tours by owner Frank Hobson from noon to 6 p.m.
- May 12. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Featuring dinner, wine, music and comedy. Tickets are \$50 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.
- May 12. A Buffalo Expedition hosted by Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. Guided hike up Buffalo Mountain and back to the winery for a gourmet lunch. \$45 per person. Call (540) 593-2865 for reservations.
- May 12. Marco Polo Days at Villa Appalachia Winery, Floyd VA. From noon to 4 p.m. Featuring foods sampled by the fabled explorer of the Orient.
- May 12 & 13. Mother's Day Weekend at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. From noon to 5 p.m. Featuring complimentary wine tasting and tours, live entertainment and souvenir glasses for Moms.
- May 13. Mother's Day Dinner Dance at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. From 5 to 9 p.m. Call (910) 287-2800 for reservations.
- May 13. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by The Cool Catz. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.
- May 18. Six course wine dinner at Grove Winery, Gibsonville. Call 336-584-4060.
- May 19. Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, Elkin, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring wine tastings, live music, artisans and food. Tasting tickets are \$20 or \$16 in advance. Visit www.yvfw.com.
- May 19. Beach Music Blast at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring shag music from Sea Cruz. Also features food, arts and crafts vendors. Tickets are \$5.
- May 19. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Andrew Holgate. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.
- May 19. Gears and Cheers bike ride at Grove Winery,

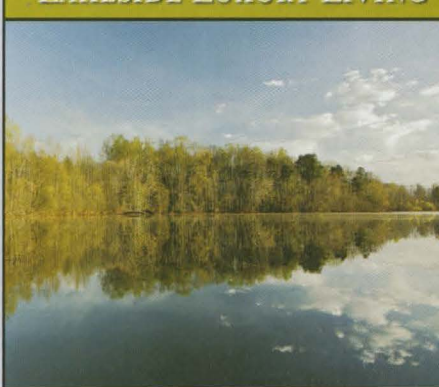
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Gibsonville. Ride costs \$40 or \$35 in advance and includes lunch, wine glass and beverage at the winery with live music. Ride starts at 9 a.m. Proceeds will benefit the National MS Society. Call 336-584-4060.

May 19. Vertical Wine Tasting at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 3 to 4 p.m. Relaxed setting teaching the ins and outs of wine production, tasting and food pairing. Led by the winemakers. \$20 per person. Call (540) 593-2865 for reservations.

May 19. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson NC. From 5 to 8 p.m. Featuring The Breeze. Tickets are \$25, with a \$5 discount for advance purchases and an additional \$5 discount for wine club members.

May 20. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by The Poindexter Jazz Trio. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

May 25. Band Night at Valhalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. With live music and dancing.

May 26. Antique BMW Car Rally at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. With antique cars on display along with food and music. Free admission.

May 26. Spring Fling at RayLen Vineyards, Mocksville. From 1 to 5 p.m. Featuring beach music from The Mixed Emotions and BBQ available for purchase. Admission is \$10 per person.

May 26. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Keith Burkhardt. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

May 27. Mediterranean Winemakers' Dinner at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. At 7 p.m. \$95 per person. Call (540) 593-2865 for reservations.

May 27. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Reggie Buie. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

JUNE

June 2. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson NC. From 5 to 9 p.m. Featuring Spring Swing and Vintage Years Orchestra. Tickets are \$25, with a \$5 discount for advance purchases and an additional \$5 discount for wine club members.

June 2. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by The Ladies Auxiliary. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 2. Festival of the Vino, Chapel Hill, NC. From 1 to 6 p.m.

Featuring wine tastings, live music and gourmet cooking demonstrations. Tasting tickets are \$17.50 or \$15 in advance. Visit www.festivalofthevino.com.

June 2 & 3. New release weekend at Moonrise Bay Vineyard, Knotts Island, NC. From noon to 5 p.m. \$5 per person for tasting.

June 3. Third Annual Day of Wine and Roses and Raffaldini Vineyards, Ronda, NC. From 1 to 4 p.m. Stroll the vineyards' rose garden and learn how to care for roses from expert James Helms. \$8 per person and includes glass of wine.

June 3. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Joel Venditti on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

June 3. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Wishful Thinking. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 9. Brick Oven Saturday at Villa Appalaccia Winery, Floyd VA. From noon to 4 p.m. Featuring music and a variety of foods prepared in a replica Pompeii wood-fired brick oven.

June 9. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. From 4 to 8 p.m. Featuring a karaoke and stand-up comedy competition with cash prizes. Also a book signing with published authors Mary Mica Terry and Fred C Hobson Jr. Admission is \$5 plus a 24-ounce jar of peanut butter. Call 1-866-RagApple for more info.

June 9. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Tin Can Alley. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 10. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Grace Notes on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

June 10. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Bradford Reaves and Renee Henry. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 16. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Blarney Pilgrim. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 16 & 17. Father's Day Weekend at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. From noon to 5 p.m. Featuring complimentary wine tasting and tours, live entertainment and souvenir glasses for Dads.

June 16 & 17. Wine, Cider and Mead on the Blue Ridge Wine Trail. A progressive tour from winery to cidery to meadery paired with local foods in unique mountain settings. Stops include AmRhein Wine Cellars, Villa Appalaccia Winery, Chateau Morrisette Winery, Foggy Ridge Cider and

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June 16 & 17. Wine and food weekend at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. Featuring a private wine tasting, winery tour, vineyard hayride, five-course gourmet dinner, an overnight stay in the guest house and Sunday brunch. \$300 per person, limited to 12 people. Call 1-866-RagApple for more info.

June 17. Father's Day Festivities and story-telling at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. Featuring live music from the Almost Irish Band, an open grill and story-tellers. Free event.

June 17. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by The Marble Alley. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 22. Band Night at Valhalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. With live music and dancing.

June 23. First annual "Taste the Wines of the Valley" at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville. From noon to 5 p.m. Featuring music by the King Bees, food and tastings from seven local wineries. Tasting tickets are \$20, with a portion of the proceeds donated to The Victory Junction Gang.

June 23. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Davis Tucker Trio. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

June 23. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson NC. From 5 to 9 p.m. Featuring The Tams. Tickets are \$25, with a \$5 discount for advance purchases and an additional \$5 discount for wine club members.

June 24. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Jonathan DeBoe on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

June 29. Moonlight Gourmet Wine Dinner at Valhalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. \$95 per person. Call (540)-725-WINE for reservations.

June 30. Music in the Vineyards series at Childress Vineyards, Lexington, NC. From noon to 3 p.m. Featuring live music by Billy Stone. Food and wine available for purchase. Free admission.

JULY

July 1. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Billy Jo Chambers on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

July 8. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Kat Mills on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

July 14. Sixth Annual Sip-n-Shag Beach Bash at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. From 4 to 9 p.m. Featuring food, wine, children's activity tent and music by the Key West Band. Tickets are \$15.

July 14. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. From 6 to 9 p.m. Featuring music by the Coastline Beach Band. Food available or bring a picnic basket. \$15 per person plus 24 oz. jar of peanut butter.

July 14. Black Dog Wine and Blues Festival at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Featuring three musical acts on multiple stages, artisans, crafters and vendors. \$20 per person or \$12.50 in advance. Call (540) 593-2865 for more info.

July 15. Sunday Sounds at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. From 1 to 4 p.m. With music by Leslie Brooks on the winery lawn and food from an open grill available for purchase. No charge.

July 21. Fourth Annual Summertime Jam Luau at Dennis Vineyards, Albemarle, NC. Hawaiian-themed festival featuring music from a steel drum band.

July 21. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson NC. From 5 to 9 p.m. Featuring The Band of Oz. Tickets are \$25, with a \$5 discount for advance purchases and an additional \$5 discount for wine club members.

July 21. Summer Wine Celebration at Moonrise Bay Vineyard, Knotts Island, NC. From noon to 5 p.m. \$5 per person for tasting.

July 27. Band Night at Valhalla Vineyards, Roanoke, VA. With live music and dancing.

July 28. Full Moon Festival at RayLen Vineyards, Mocksville. From 6 to 9 p.m. Featuring a Van Morrison tribute from The Vagabond Saints Society and seafood available for purchase. Admission is \$10 per person.

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1

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2

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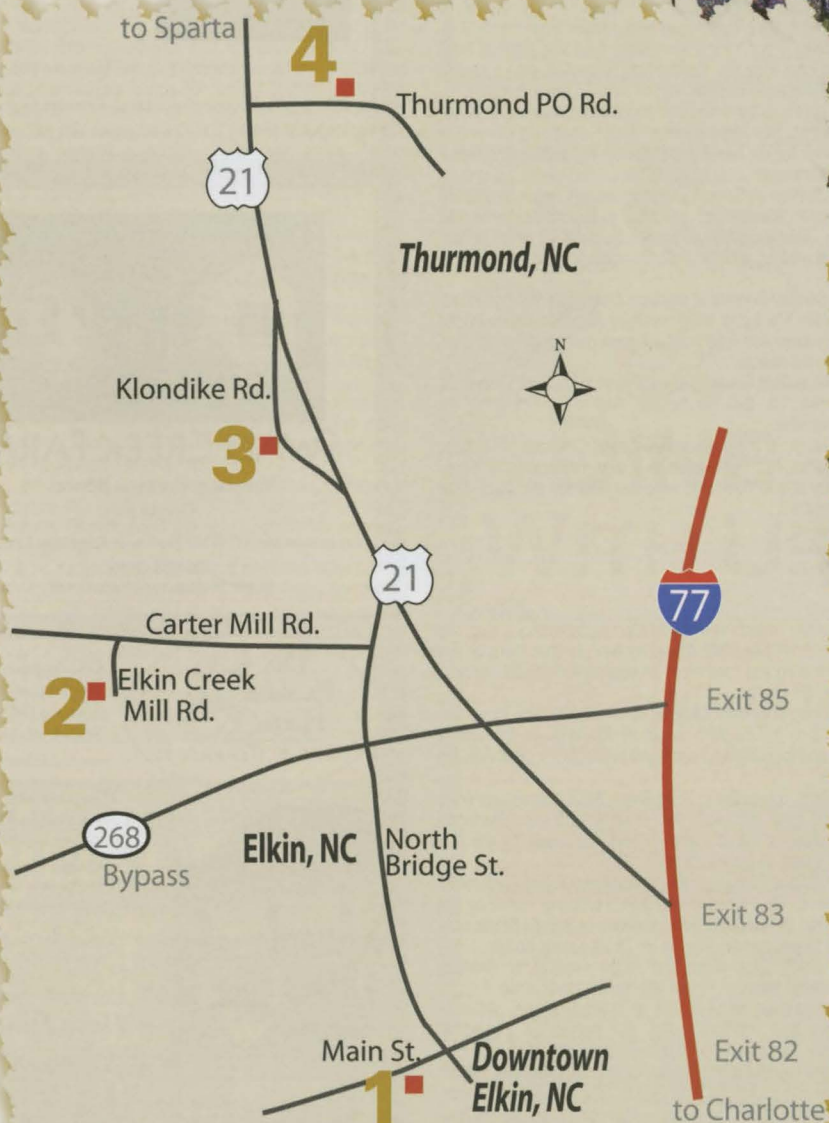
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3

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