

On The Vine

FREE

YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

MARCH-APRIL 2007

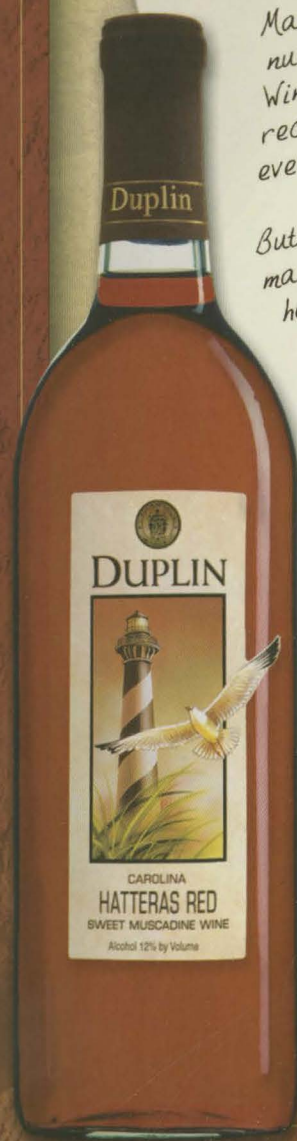
ROMANCE & Mystery

AT BLACK WOLF VINEYARDS

See Page 4

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On The Vine

YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

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FOUNDER

Susan Lyons

Hot off the wine press...

Flexing some economic muscle

The North Carolina wine industry's motto for the coming year ought to be "Bust A Billion." There may need to be a dollar sign or exclamation point in there somewhere, but I'll leave that to the public relations specialists. The point is simply this: with a little prodding, our viticulture industry could very well have a billion-dollar impact on the state's economy this year, enough to make even the strongest skeptics sit up and take notice.

Heck, we're almost there already. The first-ever comprehensive study of the industry as a whole put its total economic impact at \$813.3 million. And that was using 2005 data. Since then, there's been about a 20 percent growth in wine producers in the state.

The study by the California-based firm of MKF Research, commissioned by the N.C. Wine and Grape Council, amply illustrates the leveraging effect the wine industry brings to the state's economy. Actual winery, grape and distributor sales were just 7 percent of the total dollars. The rest is from such ancillary revenues as travel and tourism dollars generated.

The state, in just a few short years, has climbed to 10th in the country in both grape production and wine sales, strong growth to say the least, but leaving plenty of room for improvement when you consider that the national economic impact is estimated by the same marketing firm at \$162 billion.

Ultimately, the deciding factor will be quality — of our grapes, of our wines and of the travel and tourism infrastructure so necessary to sustain and encourage the economic growth that we need to Bust A Billion.



Rebel Good

Rebel Good,
Publisher



On The Cover...

Black Wolf owner Dana Theis and winemaker Joyce Rigby share a glass at the Wolf's Lair.

COVER PHOTO

Will & Deni McIntyre, Winston-Salem, NC
www.macfoto.com

Pioneer's

• The plans keep changing at Black Wolf

By Ed Williams

DOBSON — The way Dana Theis tells it, there have been some howling good times of late at Black Wolf Vineyards, a 55-acre estate perched atop a small plateau at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

On weekends, there are bonfires and bands, candlelight dinners, the occasional wedding, and the frequent marriage proposal — “sometimes more than one engagement a night,” Theis says. “We’re trying to project here mystery and romance.”

With morning mists rolling through its formal garden, “Wolfsbane,” Black Wolf is earmarked as a backdrop in shooting an independent horror film, “Crimson Call.”

As part of a marketing effort to draw more visitors, Theis has summoned a psychic to read tarot cards and crystal ball. He’s conjured up a magician. He’s scheduled dramatic readings, such as Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart.” That was a horror all right, Theis says. It bombed with the crowd. “These people just wanted to party,” Theis laughs.



There is, Theis says, a meteorite he’s embedded in a wall at the winery — kind of a conversation starter. Theis says he ran across it at a Connecticut jewelry store years ago. Some visitors claim the meteorite vibrates upon touch.

“Of course, it could be the wine,” says Theis.

Every September, Theis hosts his Grape Jam Wine Festival there, with plenty of food, wine and music, even camping down by Fisher River. Word-of-mouth has drawn hundreds each year since 2001. But this September, Theis was stunned when 1,300 guests showed up.

That’s a far cry from the early days.

“No one knew I was out here — and no one really cared,” says Theis, who proudly reminds guests, “We’re the first commercial vineyard in Surry County.”

Theis, a retail consultant who came to North Carolina from Connecticut in the early 1980s, bought the estate in 1991 as a place to retire. On it was already planted a small vineyard, much of it Seyval Blanc and Chardonnay — courtesy of its former owner, a dentist who enjoyed homemade wines.

“Since the vines were here, I figured, ‘Why plow them under? This will give me something to do,’” Theis remembers.

His plan? Expand the grape growing and sell to wineries in Virginia and North Carolina.

He set about replacing a poorly-performing grape with Riesling. He added Cabernet Sauvignon and then put in more Chardonnay. Next came Pinot Noir, Chambourcin and Merlot.

Theis named his estate — which today has 18 acres in vine — Black Wolf Vineyards. He once bred wolf hybrids in Randolph County as a business called A Breed Apart and sold them through “Soldier of Fortune” magazine.

Theis visited area wineries, soaking up all he could about grape growing. He bought old tobacco farming equipment and later hired

former tobacco hands to work the vineyard.

“I was kind of winging it,” Theis admits. “It was more or less a hobby. I’d come up on the weekends. I had a little camper and I’d stay overnight. Later, I built a small cabin.”

By then, it was the mid-1990s and Theis didn’t fully appreciate all he was getting himself into.

He was selling his fruit to Chateau Morrisette, Biltmore, Waldensian, Westbend and Chatham Hill wineries, but he was disappointed in his return-on-investment.

“There’s no money in selling grapes. It’s a big money pit. I found it very disheartening,” Theis says.

In 1999, he struck a deal with Chatham Hill Winery. He’d provide the grapes if half of it was returned to him in finished wine. Theis planned to get into the wine retail business.

But that plan fell through — at least initially. At that time, because he wasn’t a winery — only a grape supplier — state regulators notified him that he couldn’t sell the wine.

Undaunted, he figured another way to get his grapes and wine to market: He’d build a restaurant. And he would sell the wine from there.

The Wolf’s Lair Restaurant opened in May 2001, and it quickly became a popular stop for foodies and wine enthusiasts.

Theis’ wines were crushed at first at Chatham Hill, and then at Buck Shoals Vineyard where Raffadini winemaker Stephen Rigby crafted the wines.

With the help of Joyce Rigby — an engineer and the wife of Stephen Rigby — an on-site winery was designed, completed in August 2005.

Today, Joyce Rigby is the winemaker at Black Wolf, after serving stints as design consultant to Childress Vineyards, RagApple Lassic, Buck Shoals and Silver Coast wineries. “This (winemaker) was a natural progression for me. It’s my next step,” says Rigby, who has experience in vineyard management as well.

A half-dozen varietal and hybrid wines are produced at Black Wolf: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Seyval Blanc and Chambourcin. In addition, there are sweeter blends with such playful monikers as Wolfsbane Rosé, Wolf’s Lair Red, and Blue Moon White.

Black Wolf’s 2005 Chambourcin has been getting a favorable reception, thanks to gold and silver medals in the American Wine Society and Wines of the South competitions, respectively.

About 90 percent of all Black Wolf wines are sold through the restaurant and tasting room, says Theis. Total Wine & More is the primary retailer for Black Wolf, in particular selling the off-dry and sweeter line of wines.

Production has hovered at about 1,700 cases per year. But an extensive vineyard main-



Winemaker Joyce Rigby assesses one of her vintages.

tenance project in 2006 significantly cut into yields and will limit bottling from the 2006 harvest.

Theis is regarded as something of a pioneer in the Yadkin Valley appellation. After all, he started out well before the much larger Shelton Vineyards opened up about five miles down the road.

Still, the Shelton influence is not lost on Theis. “When the Shelton boys moved into town, things really started to turn around in this area. Things have taken off like a rocket,” he says.

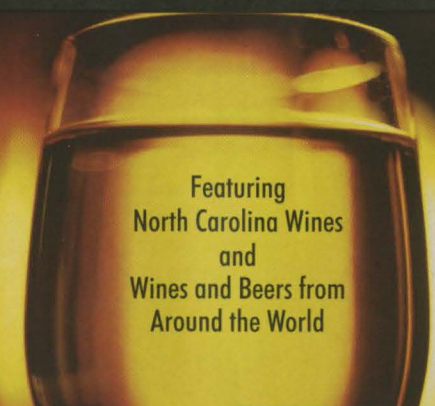
With Black Wolf, Shelton and Stony Knoll vineyards all clustered together, more and more visitors are knocking at Theis’ door. “Every weekend, it’s like a big house party,” he says.



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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Festivals spreading across the state

By Brook R. Corwin

With his winery still half a year away from opening, Matthew Mayberry set up his first booth at a wine festival.

The bottles he had on hand contained no wine, just water.

But H₂O was more than enough to make Mayberry's set-up at the 2006 Yadkin Valley Wine Festival worthwhile. Thousands of wine drinkers from across the country got a look at promotional materials for his forthcoming Brushy Mountain Winery in Elkin. When the winery opened its doors in October, a mailing list with about 1,800 names of festival attendees was put to use to get sales rolling from the start.

The water of Mayberry's business dream turned into the wine of a bonafide operation, and he credits much of that early success to his preemptive presence at one of the many vino-themed festivals taking root across the state.

"It's an opportunity you can't afford to miss if you're a winery," Mayberry said of attending the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival last May.

With established wine festivals growing in attendance each year and new ones cropping up, such events have become a prime way for small winery and vineyard operations like Mayberry's to grow a clientele. The festivals also offer a new venue for promoters to raise money for charity and/or boost a region's tourist appeal, making their appearance on events calendars more and more frequent.

More festivals means more options for winery owners, thus upping the premium that organizers place on their sales and satisfaction. It all translates into a better experience for attendees wanting to learn more about what it is they're tasting.

"The wineries pick and choose which festivals they want to attend. So for me it's very good business to make a name for your festival and do a good job supporting the wineries," said Carla McGlynn, who organizes the Taste Carolina Wine Festival at The Piedmont Triad Farmers Market just west of Greensboro. "They can't attend them all, so they're going to start seeing which ones have the most serious wine drinkers. Those are the ones where they'll sell the most wine."

McGlynn will host the fifth Taste Carolina festival in April, a span in which attendance has grown each year, reaching 6,500 last time out. Like other established wine events such as the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival in Elkin and the Great Grapes festivals in Charlotte and Cary, Taste Carolina brings in attendees from well beyond a 50-mile radius. Out-of-state visitors from up and down the East Coast are common, most of them with a serious passion for wine and an intense curiosity to get a sample of



The Yadkin Valley Wine Festival is heading into its sixth year.

what North Carolina fruit has to offer.

"There are some true wine drinkers in our backyard, but it's nice to see the surrounding states appreciate what we're doing here, the quality of the wine and how we're going about it," said Tim Doub, a director of the North Carolina Winegrower's Association. "We have to reach out farther and broaden that market."

Doub co-owns Flint Hill Vineyards in Yadkin County with his wife, Brenda. After opening its doors in the fall of 2005, Flint Hill immediately hit the wine festival circuit, attending one in the fall and several more in early 2006. Doub said he plans to set up at five or six festivals in 2007.

"It's tons of work. It's probably one of the hardest things you'll do outside of the vineyard," he said. "But it makes it all worthwhile, it really does, when you get there and meet new people who are enjoying your wine."

He and his wife will have no shortage of choices this year.

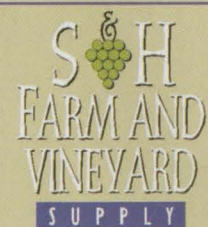
A crop of new festivals are just now reaching fruition. Festivals in Yadkinville, North Wilkesboro, Rose Hill and Kenansville are preparing for their third installments. Blowing Rock, Greenville and downtown Winston-Salem have festivals entering their second year. The state's wines are also making their presence felt at international wine and food weekends in places such as Raleigh and Pinehurst.

For many of the new festivals, North Carolina wine works as the perfect medium to promote the area and boost the local economy.

"Our festival promotes downtown living, retail locations, and restaurants," said Tucker Tharpe, events director for the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership, which founded

the Salute! Wine Celebration last year. "It brings people who may not have ordinarily come into the city to visit and see how much it's changed. It entices them to come back."

Tharpe knows well the challenge of getting



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Tarheel Festival Calendar

March 3	Greenville Wine Festival	Greenville
April 12-15	Blue Ridge Wine Festival	Blowing Rock
April 21	Great Grapes Wine and Arts Festival	Cary
April 25-28	Beaufort Wine and Food Weekend	Beaufort
April 28	Taste Carolina Wine Festival	Greensboro
May 5	Shine to Wine Festival	North Wilkesboro
May 12	Salute! Wine Celebration	Winston-Salem
May 19	Yadkin Valley Wine Festival	Elkin
June 2	Festival of the Vino	Chapel Hill
June 9	Wine Festival at Tanglewood Park	Clemmons
July 14	Riverhouse Winefest on the New	Grassy Creek
Aug. 31-Sept 4	Vino Extravaganza	Pinehurst
Sept. 29	N.C. Muscadine Festival	Kenansville
Sept. 29	Tar River Wine Festival	Rocky Mount
Oct. 6	Great Grapes Wine and Arts Festival	Charlotte
Oct. 20	Yadkin Valley Grape Festival	Yadkinville
Oct. 27-28	Carolina Balloon Festival	Statesville

a new festival off the ground amidst growing competition. The state's largest and oldest such event, The Wine Festival at Tanglewood Park (formerly the North Carolina Wine Festival) takes place each June in nearby Clemmons.

Tharpe and other organizers say the key is creating a recognizable atmosphere that makes your festival stand-out. In Salute's case, that means an urban setting with a sophisticated feel and upscale vendors. McGlynn said she markets Taste Carolina to serious wine drinkers looking for an event where quality wine — rather than crowds or loud music — is the unquestioned focus.

Many times the right atmosphere comes down to what works best for the wineries themselves, as their experience determines whether the festival will have as much quality product to showcase next year.

"A good festival for us often comes down to how easy (organizers) are making it for us to be there," Doub said. "We're the reason folks are coming, and they need to attract a gate . . . the best festivals are where the focus is on the wine. Everything else is secondary."

Everything from the location of vendors to the support of festival volunteers to the type of music on stage can make a difference in keeping wineries happy. Satisfied wineries, in turn, are able to give more attention to festival attendees and enliven the experience for those purchasing the tickets. Both wine connoisseurs wanting to know all the details of a vintage and casual drinkers curious as to what separates different varieties gain when a winery's staff can offer undivided attention.

Those attendees, both the serious and the casual, get the added value of sampling a myriad of wines for a set price usually between \$10 to \$20. Thus wine festivals are a treasure trove for consumers, the kind folks such as Mayberry can't wait to look straight in the eye.

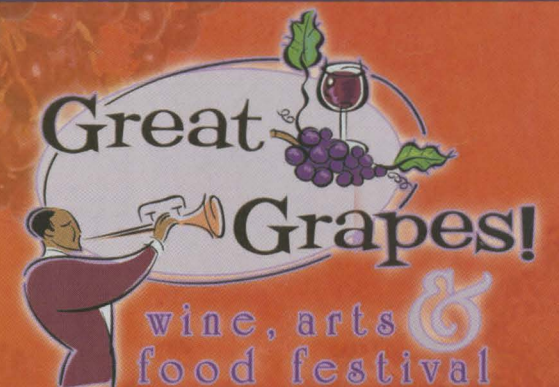
Just a week had passed after Brushy Mountain Winery's grand opening when Mayberry was back manning a festival booth, this time with much more than water to pour.

"That's the way you get your product out to the public," he said. "People at the festivals come from all over to taste your wines."



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

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King Cabernet Sauvignon has tough reign here

By Ed Williams

If it's the vineyard that truly makes the wine, then the king of red grapes — Cabernet Sauvignon — rules over a North Carolina realm where headache and heartache may serve as its most loyal subjects.

Kim Myers, co-owner at Laurel Gray Vineyards, calls Cabernet Sauvignon "our teenage boys. We can have disciplinary sessions with them, but as soon as we turn our backs, they do whatever they want. I would not recommend Cabernet Sauvignon to the novice vintner."

In established wine regions like California or Australia, Cabernet Sauvignon is indeed a king, but along our eastern seaboard, the grape challenges growers and winemakers because Cabernet struggles to ripen fully. In regions where sunshine is sustained, temperatures are consistent and the season is long, Cabernet Sauvignon develops into a blockbuster wine.

But North Carolina's experience with the grape, says Childress Vineyards winemaker Mark Friszolowski, is very different. Cabernet here as king? "We are not there yet," he says.

The world over, few would challenge Cabernet Sauvignon's right to the throne. It's just that embedded into the psyche of serious wine enthusiasts, enjoying a reputation as the most flavorful, most complex, and longest-lived wine. For many, Cabernet Sauvignon is the gold standard against which all red wines are judged.

And for that reason, North Carolina wineries will continue boxing with a grape they know confers instant prestige and marketing muscle, even as it counter-punches in a state where its ripening window is often limited, sometimes erratic.

"I think it's important to have a Cab in a winery's portfolio because it tends to establish one as a real winery," says Richard "Oakie" Morris, owner of Moonrise Bay Vineyards at Knotts Island.

Guy Loeffler, owner of Horizon Cellars in

Siler City, agrees: "I think it is important from a pure marketing standpoint." But, Loeffler cautions, "Keep in mind though that it is difficult — and expensive — to chase California and Bordeaux with varieties that don't do as well here as they do in other areas of the world."

In North Carolina, "Cabernet is a tough cookie," says Chatham Hill winemaker Marek Wojciechowski. "Everyone likes to say that 100 percent of wine is made in the vineyard. And that's true in a lot of places. But in our area, it's the winery that does this grape any good or not because we just don't have enough time to bring it up to full ripeness."

Cabernet's genetic roadmap is either a god-send or bedevilment, depending upon a winemaker's perspective and geography:

•Cabernet's hammer heft in places like California and France seems a bit odd given its parentage — a cross between Sauvignon Blanc, a crisp white grape, and Cabernet Franc, considered a lighter, second-fiddle red blending grape. Think Meryl Streep and Alan Alda conceiving Sylvester Stallone.

•The grape's thick skin protects it from rot — a real plus. But it needs a longer time hanging on the vine. So the grape ripens late and is

the last to leave the field — right when fall storms loom large in North Carolina.

•Cabernet Sauvignon is a relatively small, bluish grape with a higher ratio of seed and skin to fruit pulp. The seeds and skin left in contact with the pulp can deliver high tannin (astringency), a deep color, and a broodingly complex mix of dark red fruit flavors. So tannic can Cabernet be in its youth that it begs for softer, fruitier grape companions (Merlot, Cabernet Franc) in the initial blend.

•Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the world's most widely planted "noble" grapes. But in the U.S. consumer market, it ranks 4th behind white Zinfandel, Merlot, and Chardonnay.

•Cabernet Sauvignon enjoys spectacular market share. And probably nowhere is there such a price gap between mass-produced medium-bodied styles and the cult collectables that fetch \$500 to \$1,000 a bottle.

•Cabernet Sauvignon is instantly recognizable among consumers today and very often ordered with meals. Yet Cabernet is not as menu flexible as most other red wines because of its full body and high tannins.

"All the challenges (on the east coast) are in the vineyard," says Friszolowski. "It has a late bud break, which is good for potential spring

frosts. But it is a late ripener, which is a problem with fall frosts."

Lee Martin, co-owner at Round Peak Vineyards, calls Cabernet "the most difficult variety we grow because it is so late to ripen. We must be willing to not have a Cab in years like 2003, when it did not ripen adequately."

While 2005 was widely regarded as an excellent vintage, the weather wasn't equal for all North Carolina wineries, as Round Peak experienced with its Cabernet.

"Everything else had been picked, but our Cab was not quite ripe. With another rain event coming in early October, we decided to roll the dice and try to survive it," Martin said. "We lost. We crushed and vinified what we picked, but it was not good. We poured it down the drain."

Mark Terry, winemaker at Westbend Vineyards, echoes the Vegas odds of growing Cabernet down South: "Maybe one out of very five years you get a nice Cab here. King of red wine? In California, they have a reason to say that . . . but we're just not getting the jamminess and character you usually look for in a Cabernet Sauvignon."

To get Flint Hill's Cabernet fully ripened in 2006 — considered a decent growing season — "we picked three days before the vineyard experienced the first frost of the season," says its co-owner, Brenda Doub.

Further north, in the Roanoke area of Virginia, Valhalla Vineyards generally waits until early to mid-November to harvest its four acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, says Debra Vascik, Valhalla winemaker.

Adds Friszolowski, "The issue is getting Cabernet Sauvignon past the first frost. We can have excellent ripening weather after a frost —

if the fruit can hold on that long!"

From extended cold soaking, to choice of blending grapes, to balancing neutral oak barrels against new, to manipulating pH levels, North Carolina winemakers expend considerable effort to corral Cabernet Sauvignon and coax out its best.

Which is not to say that North Carolina isn't capable of producing some tasty, often times elegant Cabernet. The *On The Vine* tasting panel evaluated 27 samples that were bagged and tasted blind. The panel asked: Would I buy this for myself or recommend it to a friend? This was one of the largest submissions ever to *On The Vine* — and one of the largest tasting panels assembled.

Seventeen samples submitted, the panel noted, were true to the grape and could be recommended. However, about one of three samples were not representative, could not be recommended and are not listed here.

The panel's recommendations fell into three tiers, based on complexity and finish.

First tier (in no order)

2004 Childress
2004 Laurel Gray
2004 Childress Reserve
2002 Silver Coast (Georgia grapes)

These showed the most complexity, packing gobs of currant, blackberry, blueberry, black cherry, coffee, chocolate and vanilla flavors and scents.

Second tier (in no order)

2002 Valhalla (Virginia)

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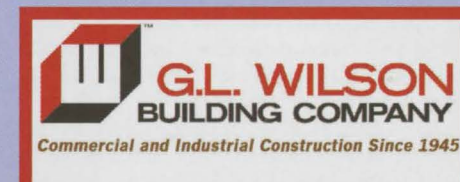


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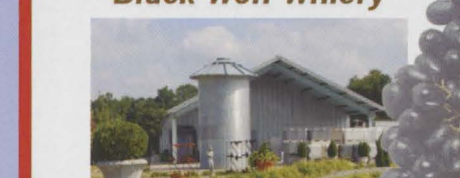


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THE GRAPEVINE

Haw River group plans two-day wine, art tour

The Haw River Wine Trail and Burlington/Alamance Convention & Visitors Bureau, are presenting a two-day art and wine tour, combining winery tasting and tours with fine art sales and demonstrations, on Saturday and Sunday, May 5 and 6. The event, called Art on the Haw River Wine Trail, is a unique approach to the traditional artist studio tours where the venues are the five artisan wineries — Benjamin Vineyards & Winery, Creek Side Winery, Glen Marie Winery, Grove Winery and Iron Gate Winery — along the river in Alamance and Guilford counties.

Each site will host artists who will be showcasing and selling a selection of the area's more creative works. In addition to wine tastings and winery tours, there will be music and opportunities for visitors to view art and craft demonstrations. Tour goers can travel the 50-mile long scenic drive through the heart of rural Piedmont North Carolina to find hand-made, uniquely designed furniture, hand-blown glass, pottery, metal sculptures, paintings, photography, quilting, fiber arts and much more at the five vineyard venues.



Community college honors Duplin for leadership

Duplin Wine Cellars was named the 2007 recipient of the President's Award for leadership in business and education partnerships by James Sprunt Community College, located in Kenansville in Duplin County.

The winery, which is the state's oldest and the largest muscadine facility in the world, has been a partner in the planning and development of JSCC's new degree program in Viticulture and Enology Technology, or grape growing and wine making. The new program started in the fall semester. The award honors Duplin for its demonstration of the vision, creativity and innovation in economic development that promises continued growth for Duplin County and its belief in education and quality of life as important elements of economic development.

"We are very grateful to James Sprunt Community College for this terrific honor," said David Fussell Sr., founder of Duplin Wine Cellars. "Young people are the future. We want to provide them with the skills, experience and education to ensure that they succeed."



Winegrower's association taps new officers

Kim Myers, co-owner of Laurel Gray Vineyards and Yadkin Winery Co. in Hamptonville was elected president of the North Carolina Winegrower's Association at the annual meeting Feb. 2-3 in Greensboro. Joining Myers as officers with two-year terms are vineyard designer Norm Oches, Mooresville, vice president; Horizon Cellars owner

Guy Loeffler, Siler City, secretary; and vineyard and winemaking educator Scott Lawrence, Stokesdale, treasurer.

Directors at large are Tim Doub, Flint Hill Vineyards; Amy Helton, Hanover Park Vineyards; Mark Terry, Westbend Vineyards; and Debbie Stikeleather, The Winery at Iron Gate Farm.



Three state wineries show wares in London

Childress Vineyards, Duplin Winery and Shelton Vineyards were among 10 wineries from southern states who participated in a first-ever tasting held in London in late January.

The tastings was organized by the Southern US Trade Association and, in addition to North Carolina, featured wineries from Texas and Tennessee.

"Wines from the southern states are gaining ground in the U.S. so we felt the time was right to try the export market," said Jeff Joyce, an international trade specialist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture. "The U.K. is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important export markets and we

Continued on Next Page

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Cabernet

Continued from Page 9

2002 Chatham Hill
2004 Flint Hill
2004 Westbend Les Soeurs
2004 Round Peak
2004 Biltmore North Coast (California grapes)
2004 Shelton Vineyards

Third tier (in no order)

2003 Chatham Hill
2004 Stonefield Cellars (Georgia grapes)
2004 Horizon Cellars (Virginia grapes)
2005 Horizon Cellars (Virginia grapes)
2004 RagApple Lassic
2003 Moonrise Bay

Frizolowski at Childress is pragmatic in how North Carolina Cabernet is evaluated. "Knowledgeable wine drinkers always verbally compare our Cabs to California Cabs. The tasting will go something like this: 'The Chard was nice, I loved it, excellent oak balance, not too woody; the Merlot was rich and lots of cherry; the Syrah was deep and complex; the Cabernet Sauvignon was clean — but a little light.'"

Robert Wurz, who grew up making wine in California and now does at Stonefield Cellars near Greensboro, sees Cabernet as a double-edged sword in any marketing portfolio. "It's good to have one, but it needs to meet expectations," he says. "Having a poor Cabernet is worse than having no Cabernet at all."



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.

Grapevine

Continued from Page 10

felt this was the right place to start."

First reports from the tastings indicated that the Tarheel wines were received quite favorably.



Duplin Winery took home 11 awards at the Wines of the South Regional Competition in Knoxville, Tenn. Its Hatteras Red and Scuppernon Blush both won Concordance Gold; Magnolia, Midnight Magnolia and Scuppernon took Gold; Silver medals went to Beaufort Bay, Carolina Red, Pink Mag-



nolia and Sunset Red; while Burgundy and Carlos received Bronze... Five North Carolina vineyards walked away with numerous medals at the recent American Wine Society Competition. RayLen led the pack with

nine, including Silver for its 2005 Shiraz and 2004 Chardonnay, and Bronze for its 2004 Viognier, 2005 Chardonnay South Mountain, 2005 Riesling, 2004 Eagle Select, 2005 Category 5, 2005 Cabernet Franc and 2004 Barrel Chardonnay. Shelton Vineyards' 2005 Riesling won Silver and it received Bronze for its 2005 Bin 17 Chardonnay, 2004 Yadkin Valley Port, 2004 Estate Merlot and Salem Fork Blush. RagApple Lassic and Horizon Cellars both received four medals. RagApple's Rockford Red won Silver while its 2004 Merlot, 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2004 Syrah all received Bronze. Horizon's 2005 Late Harvest Viognier took Silver while bronze was earned by 2004 Chambourcin, 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon and 2003 Prestige. Laurel Gray Vineyards won a Silver for both its 2005 Scarlet Mountain and 2005 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, and Bronze for its 2005 Viognier.

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From I-77, Exit 93 • 286 Cabernet Lane, Dobson NC 27017 • www.sheltonvineyards.com

WINERY INDEX

Map designed by Kim Myers,
Laurel Gray Vineyards

SEE MAP AND
LISTINGS ON PAGES 16-17

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-5 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
Owner: Bernard DeLille, VP/Winemaker
Website: www.biltmorewine.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.
- 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.
Wine maker: 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 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 Rutherfordton exit. Take Hwy 221 south to Thermal City. Turn west on SR 1321 then right on SR 1328 (Painters Gap Rd.).
Wine List: French varietals.

- 11 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.

- 12 Waldensian Heritage Wines 828-879-3202**
4940 Villar Lane NE, Valdese, NC 28690
Owners: Joel Dalmás, Joe Jacumin, Freddy Leger,

Wilmington

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.

- 13 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, scuppernong.

PIEDMONT REGION

- 1 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.

- 2 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.

- 3 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.

- 4 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.

- 5 Garden Gate Vineyards 336-751-3794**
261 Scenic Drive, Mocksville, NC 27028
Owners: Bob and Sonya Whitaker
Website: www.gardengatevineyards.com
Hours: Wed.-Sat. 12-5 p.m.; Call for Sun. hours 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.

- 6 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.

- 7 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.

- 8 Grove Winery 336-584-4060**
7360 Brooks Bridge Rd, Gibsonville, NC 27249
Owner: Max Lloyd
Wine maker: Bob Moncsko
Website: www.grovewinery.com
Hours: Fri.-Sat., noon- 5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Guilford County — From 29, take Brown 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.

- 9 Horizon Cellars 919-742-1404**
466 Vineyard Ridge, Siler City, NC
Owner: Guy Loeffler
Wine maker: 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

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Robin 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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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, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Prestige Reserve, Late Harvest Vidal, Carolina Comfort.

- 10 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.

- 11 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.

- 12 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.

- 13 SilkHope 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 Viognier, Sparkling White Chambourcin, Grand Vista, Red Roots, Chambourcin.

- 14 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 varietals, French/American hybrids and blends.

- 15 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 varietals.

- 16 Uwahrie Vineyards 704-982-9463**
28014 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.uwahrievineyards.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.

SANDHILL/COASTAL 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.asecretgardenwinery.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 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.

- 3 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.

- 4 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.

- 5 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.

- 6 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.

- 7 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 Peedim Ave. Vineyard 2 mi. on right.
Wine List: Muscadine varieties, Norton and fruit wines.

- 8 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.

- 9 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 varietals, Muscadine varieties, Fruit wines.

- 10 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 varietals, French hybrids, Fruit wines, American varietals

- 11 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.

- 12 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.

- 13 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.

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

- 1 AmRhein Wine Cellars 540-929-4632**
9243 Patterson Drive, Bent Mountain, VA 24059
Website: www.amrheinwinecellars.com
Hours: Fri.-Sun., noon-5 p.m. or by appointment
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

- 2 Chateau Morrisette 540-593-2865**
Floyd, VA 24091 (Milepost 171.5 on BR Parkway)
Owners: Morrisette family.
Website: www.thedogs.com
Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; (call for restaurant hours)

Wine List: European and proprietary blends. The Black Dog, Our Dog Blue, Angel Chardonnay.

- 3 Valhalla Vineyards 540-725-9463**
6500 Mt. Chestnut Road, Roanoke, VA 24018
Website: www.valhallawines.com
Hours: Reopening March 31. Fri., 4-7 p.m.; Sat., noon-5 p.m.; Sun. 1-5 p.m.
Wine List: Fine French and Italian Varietals.

- 4 Villa Appalaccia Winery 540-593-3100**
752 Rock Castle Gorge, Floyd, VA 24091
Website: www.villaappalaccia.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 12-4 p.m.
Wine List: Italian Varietals and Blends.



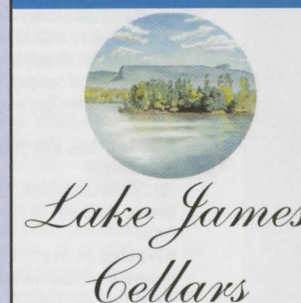
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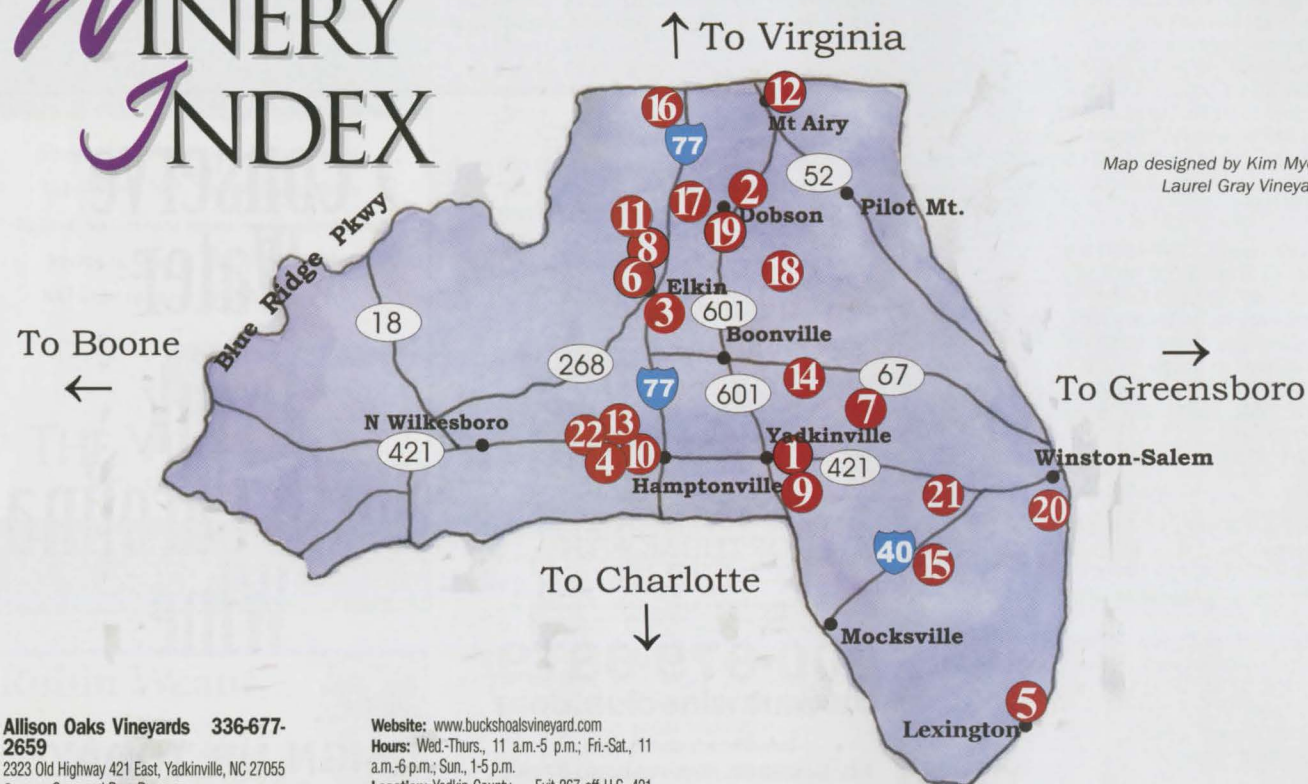


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Yadkin Valley

APPELLATION

WINERY INDEX



Map designed by Kim Myers,
Laurel Gray Vineyards

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. or by appt.
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 Buck Shoals Vineyards 336-468-9274

6121 Vintner Way, Hamptonville, NC 27020
Owners: Terry and Joanne Crater
Winemaker: Dana Acker
Consulting Winemaker: Bob McRitchie

Website: www.buckshoalsvineyard.com
Hours: Wed.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Yadkin County — Exit 267 off U.S. 421 and follow the signs 2.6 miles on Windsor Road; vineyard and winery on right.
Wine List: Rocco Red, Bryan's Legacy, Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Vito's Pride, Shoals Creek Red, Viognier.

5 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, Viognier, Pinot Gris, Pinnacle, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Sangiovese, Merlot, Classic Red, White and Blush, Serendipity White and Red (muscadine), Port and Sweet Last Harvest Dessert wines, Reserve and Signature Reserves, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Sparkling Wine.

6 Elkin Creek Vineyard 336-526-5119

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 a.m.-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.

7 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

8 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.

9 Hanover Park Vineyard 336-463-2875

1927 Courtney-Huntsville Rd., Yadkinville, NC 27055

Owners: Michael and Amy Helton
Winemaker: Michael Helton
Website: www.hanoverparkwinery.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat., 12-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Yadkin County — Take U.S. 421 to U.S. 601. Go south 4 miles. Left on Courtney-Huntsville Rd.
Wine list: Chardonnay, Viognier, Rosé, Chambourcin, Mourvedre, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Early Twilight, Michael's Blend.

10 Laurel Gray Vineyards 336-607-7020

5726 Old Hwy 421, Hamptonville, NC 27020
Owners: Kim and Benny Myers
Website: www.laurelgray.com
Hours: Wed, 1-6; Thurs.-Fri., 10-6; Sat, 10-5; Sun, 1-5
Location: Yadkin County, Hwy 421 North to Exit 267, (1.5 miles north of I-77) Exit right onto Windsor Rd., go .1 mile to Old Hwy 421 turn right, Vineyard is .1 mile ahead on left.
Wine List: Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Scarlet Mountain (off-dry red), Syrah, 1773 sweet pink blend, Viognier.

11 McRitchie Wine Company 336-874-3003

315 Thurmond PO Road, Thurmond, NC 28683
Owners: Sean and Patricia McRitchie
Winemaker: Sean McRitchie
Website: www.mcritchiewine.com
Hours: By appt. Call ahead.
Location: Wilkes County — From I-77, Take Exit 83 or Exit 85 to US 21 north toward Sparta. After 8

miles, turn right on Thurmond PO Road (not Thurmond Road). Vineyard 1/8 mi. on left.
Wine List: French varietals and blends.

12 Old North State Winery 336-789-9463

308 North Main Street, Mount Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Mike Thomas, Ben Webb, Tom Webb
Website: www.oldnorthstatewinery.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sun, 1-6
Location: Surry County — From I-77, take I-74 East to US 601 into Mt. Airy. Follow signs for Visitor Center. Winery is on left past the Visitor Center on Main Street.
Wine List: Cabernet Franc Reserve, Chardonnay, Spring House White, Starlight White, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Prelude, Autumn Leaf Red, Autumn Leaf Rosé, Autumn Leaf Gold, Sandy Cross Muscadine, Afternoon Delight Red Muscadine, Restless Souls Red Blend.

13 Raffaldini Vineyards 336-835-9463

450 Groce Road, Ronda, NC 28670
Owners: The Raffaldini Family
Partner and General Manager: Stephen Lyons
Winemaker: Stephen Rigby
Website: www.raffaldini.com
Hours: Wed.-Sat, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Wilkes County — Take I-40 West through Winston-Salem. Bear right on US Hwy. 421 North towards Yadkinville. Proceed on Hwy. 421 N for approximately 31 miles to Exit 267, Windsor Rd. Turn right on Windsor. Follow signs. Go left on Old Hwy. 421 for 1.4 miles. Go right on Swan Creek Rd. for 2.6 miles. Go left on Clingman Rd. for 1 mile. Go left on Groce Rd.
Wine List: Whites: Pinot Grigio, Vermentino, Fiori; Reds: Montepulciano, Sangiovese Riserva, Bella Misto, Rosso, Chiara Rosé.

14 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
Hours: daily, noon-6 p.m.
Location: Yadkin County — 3 miles east of Boonville off NC 67.
Wine List: Pinot Gris, Viognier, Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Red Zinfandel, Rockford Red, Boonville Blanc.

15 RayLen Vineyards 336-998-3100

3577 US Hwy 158, Mocksville, NC 27028
Owners: Joe & Joyce Neely
Winemaker: Steve Shepard
Website: www.raylenvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Davie County — Via I-40 West, Exit 180, left on NC 801 S, right on 158 West; winery is 4 mi. on right.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Viognier, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz, Carolinus, Category 5 Cabernet Blend.

16 Round Peak Vineyards 336-352-5595

765 Round Peak Church Rd., Mount Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Susan & George Little, Janet & Lee Martin
Vineyard Manager: Josh McKeown
Winemaker: Sean McRitchie
Website: www.roundpeak.com
Hours: Mon., Thurs.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m. or by appt.
Location: Surry County — I-77 to Exit 100. Left on NC89 toward Low Gap. Right on Round Peak Church Rd. for 1.4 mi. Vineyard is on left.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Merlot, Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Fiddler's Red and Sweet Niagara

17 Shelton Vineyards 336-366-4724

286 Cabernet Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Owners: Charles M. Shelton and R. Edwin Shelton

Winemaker: Murphy Moore
Website: www.sheltonvineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Surry County — I-77 to Exit 93 Dobson. Turn right, then take first right onto Twin Oaks Rd. Go 2.5 miles to the Shelton Vineyards entrance on the right.
Wine List: Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Pinot Noir, Port, Madison Lee Red and White, Salem Fork Blush.

18 Stony Knoll Vineyards 336-374-5752

1143 Stony Knoll Road, Dobson, NC 27017
Owners: Van and Kathy Coe
Winemaker: Lynn Crouse
Website: stonynollvineyards.com
Hours: Sat., noon-6 p.m.; Sun., 2-6 p.m.; or by appt.
Location: Surry County — From the south, go 7 miles north on Rockford Road from NC 67, then left on Stony Knoll Road; from the north, take U.S. 601 to Rockford Road, go south 7 miles and turn right on Stony Knoll Road.
Wine List: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Syrah.

19 Surry Community College Winery 336-386-3408

Surry County — I-77 to Exit 93 (Dobson); Turn right and follow Zephyr Road into Dobson. Turn right at courthouse and SCC is 1/2 mile on right. Tours by appointment.

20 Weathervane Winery 336-775-9717

484 Hartman Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27127
Owner: Sid Proctor
Hours: Call for appt.
Website: www.weathervanewinery.com
Location: Davidson County — From U.S. 52 south of Winston-Salem, west on Hickory Tree Rd. for .2 mi., then left .2 mi. on Hartman Rd.
Wine List: Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Pinot Grigio, Merlot, Stratosphere, Grand Vieux Chateau du Roi, Temperature Rising, Rooster Red, Rooster Black, Sweet Mountain Bliss, Strawberry Breeze, Tropical Wave.

21 Westbend Vineyards 336-945-5032

5394 Williams Rd., Lewisville, NC 27023
Owner: Lillian Kroustalis
Winemaker: Mark Terry
Website: www.westbendvineyards.com
Hours: Tues-Sat, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun, noon-5 p.m.
Location: Forsyth County — Go 15 miles west of Winston-Salem on Highway 421. Take Shallowford Rd., Exit 246, and turn left. Go 2 mi., turn left onto Williams Rd.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Riesling, Viognier, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Chambourcin, Yadkin Fumé, Vintner's Signature Carolina Series blends, Pioneer Series blends.

22 Windy Gap Vineyards 336-984-3926

656 Pardue Farm Rd., Ronda, NC 28670
Owners: Allen and Sandra Hinchey
Winemaker: Allen Hinchey
Website: www.windygapvine.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sun, noon-5 p.m.; Mon, by appt.
Location: Wilkes County — From US 421, Exit 272 (Clingman Road). Go north on Clingman Rd. After approx. 1/2 mile, turn left onto Pardue Farm Rd. Go 1/4 mile and turn left again on Pardue Farm Rd. Go .3 mile and turn right onto paved driveway. Winery is at end of driveway.
Wine List: Viognier, Chardonnay, Chambourcin, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tory Red, Three Dawg Nite, Frog Level Fling Blush, Sweet Fat Basset, Blueberry, Blackberry.

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Round Peak Vineyards '05 Fiddler's Red

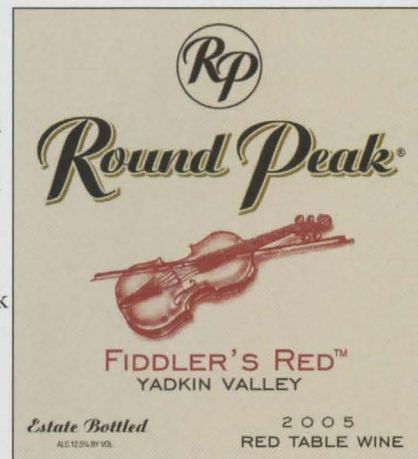
Each year Round Peak Vineyards partners with the Surry Arts Council in the Tommy Jarrell Festival in Mount Airy, named for the famed fiddler from the Round Peak community.

Round Peak Vineyards, west of Mount Airy, wanted a little Harmony to go with the music-making that enlivens the crowds at winery events.

Unfortunately, that name was taken and the search continued for what to call winemaker Sean McRitchie's red blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. He came up with the idea of naming it for the musical instrument used in so much of the mountain music played at Round Peak.

The design of the label was a collaborative effort of co-owners Janet Martin and Susan Little.

The estate-bottled Fiddler's Red was released in November.



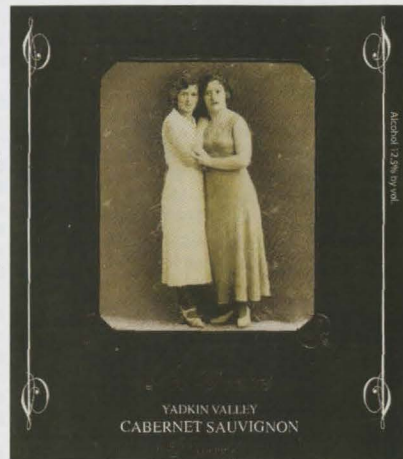
Westbend Vineyards '04 Cabernet Sauvignon

Westbend Vineyards' classiest wines, its reserves, will now have their bottles graced with the image of two classy ladies, the mother and aunt of owner Lillian Kroustalis.

Irene Boudoures (Lillian's mother) and her sister Athena were young women attending a family celebration in their native central Greece when the photo was taken. They helped their father there with the family orange grove.

The Les Soeurs label's first use is on a 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon released last November. Only 188 cases were produced and Westbend promises that the label will be used "only when the vintage year meets the high quality standards of our vintner."

The label was primarily designed by Lillian Kroustalis and winemaker Mark Terry.

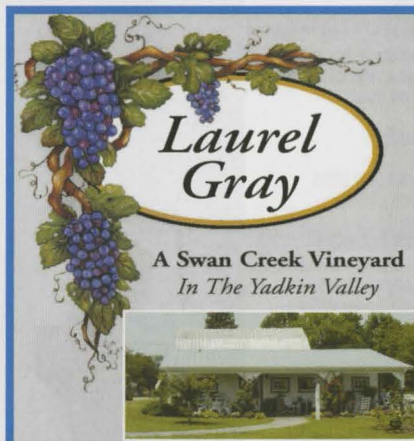


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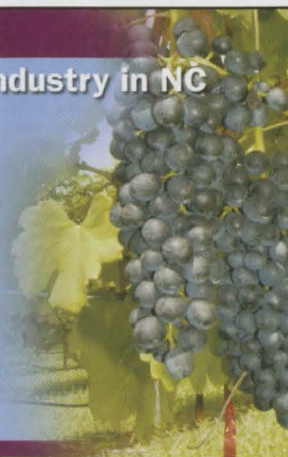
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Green Creek's Red Chardonnay could be a first

By Suzette Rodriguez

A two-year-old winery in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains is piquing the wine world's interest with its pending release of a red chardonnay.

Yes, a red chardonnay.

Some of the visitors to Green Creek Winery in Polk County have already paid \$22 a bottle for "futures" for the wine, called Chardonnay Rosso, even though it's still aging in the barrel.

Alvin Pack, who dreamed up the idea, thinks the red chardonnay might be the first-ever produced for sale anywhere in the world. He is one of five partners in the winery, which includes a tasting room surrounded by a nine-acre vineyard.

Pack says he did it for fun, and to offer wine enthusiasts a different choice. "It's not a rosé; it's not a red; it's not a white," he says. Plus, the wine industry could use a little pick-me-up — the news lately has been a little dull if not depressing, he adds.

Back in November, Pack started the buzz when he called Samara Genee, the assistant editor of "Wine Enthusiast Magazine," to tell her about Green Creek's new product. And while it's not the publication's policy to taste wines before they're ready, she was curious enough to ask for a barrel sample, he said.

Pack shipped it. And within a few days, she e-mailed back. The story goes that no one in the blind tasting, which was done at the magazine's New York headquarters, could identify the grapes.

And while Genee didn't comment on the sample, she did ask for another bottle. "So she's still interested," he said.

In March, the magazine plans to feature the red chardonnay in a section called "Uncorking," he said. In the meantime, word is spreading. In January, newspapers in Tryon, Asheville, Hendersonville and Spartanburg, S.C., wrote about the wine. A local TV station aired a story, too.

Thus far, the feedback has been positive, he adds. He's gotten calls and e-mails from all over the world. A writer from London for "Wine Spectator" magazine has also called, as well as a wine publication in New Zealand, he said.

So how's the wine made?

To get the red color, the winemaker added chardonnay juice to the crushed skins of the Chambourcin grape. He lowered the temperature to 34 degrees and held it for two weeks until he got the color he wanted. Then he raised the temperature for fermenting and added the yeast. Every day as the skins rose to the surface, the winemaker scooped them off, Pack said.

The wine is now fermenting in new Hungarian oak barrels. He expects to produce about 150 cases of the wine, which will be released in April.

"It's good already," he said of the wine. "It's mellowing, getting better."

Yet the taste is hard to describe, he adds. "It's dry, fruity, a little crusty."

Pack said he drew his inspiration from the Zinfandel grape, which, until 1972, was always a full-bodied red wine. That year, Sutter Home,

a large California winery, made the first white zinfandel by removing the red skins before they could color the juice.

Pack's wife and business partner, Loretta, grew up in San Francisco. They lived in and near the Sonoma Valley for 25 years. And while there, he frequently visited the wineries, and became intrigued by the zinfandel story.

Pack remembers tasting white zin for the first time during a pairing at Lake Tahoe. "People laughed at it," he added. "Then it became the wine of choice for several decades."

He is hopeful that publicity about the red chardonnay will help revive the winemaking heritage once well known in Polk County. Back in the 1820s there were 22 vineyards in the county, he said. But the industry died out because of the Civil War and competition from vineyards in New York.

The winery, which sits on 21 acres of an old apple orchard, produced 1,000 cases last year and had \$84,000 in sales. The vineyard includes Chardonnay, Chambourcin, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.



Suzette Rodriguez lives in the McGee's Crossroads community in western Johnston County. She is a reporter for the Smithfield Herald.

Photo by Bartol Photography, Tryon, N.C.

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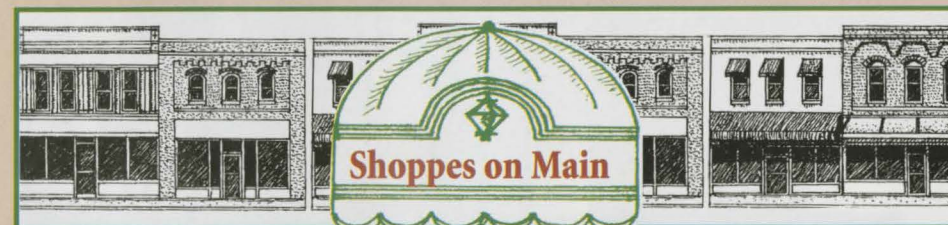


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OTV'S Q&A...

Corks going the way of the paper bag?

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: With the increasing popularity of wine — and a finite supply of cork — what is the chance we'll be seeing screw caps on North Carolina wines in the future?

— S.E., Davidson, N.C.

The Story Behind the Story: Cork is a semi-porous material and has a special affinity for filling almost any space it is pressed into, in this case the imperfect surface on the inside of a wine bottle. Left in contact with the wine, cork absorbs a small amount of wine, which makes the seal even tighter over long periods of time.

So what's the problem? Enter TCA or 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole. It's a by-product of a naturally occurring chemical found in cork and the leading cause of cork taint. Wines infected with TCA start to lose their character and fruitiness right after bottling and at some point begin to turn brown and taste like wet cardboard. Bottles with this problem are often referred to as "corked."

Depending on whose numbers you believe, as much as 12 percent of all the world's wines are

corked to some degree. In the past, cork producers claimed the buying public would just have to live with this problem as it is part of a natural process, and anyway, they claimed they couldn't test every cork for TCA.

In an effort to get around the cork taint problem, a French company came up with a metal screw cap back in the '70s to replace the standard cork. Called the Stelvin closure, it used a metal capsule and PVC seal to keep oxygen from getting into the bottle. In 1976 Yalumba Winery in Australia was the first to use these closures, but they soon fell out of favor with high-end wineries for not being "romantic" enough.

How Things Stand: Back in the '70s, wine lovers were still laying down a lot of traditionally made wines (particularly reds) to be opened at some point in the distant future, when the wines had acquired a certain level of complexity and sophistication. Today most people can't wait that long. Ninety percent of today's wines are made for drinking in a year or two. Wineries now have a number of options for sealing these younger drinking wines. They include natural cork, synthetic cork, glass and rubber seal stoppers, crown caps (a.k.a. the bottle cap), and of course, the new and improved screw cap.

Now marketed as the Roll-on Pilfer-proof cap (ROPP), today's screw caps are actually not screwed on. Downward pressure is applied to a smooth sided aluminum capsule with a seal molded into the top of the capsule. Blades in a



By Norm Oches, Vineyard Specialist

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Q&A

Continued from Page 20

special die circle the bottle threads and press the metal into the screw threads as it moves down the cap, providing an airtight seal. Then it's crimped under a glass lip to make it pilfer proof.

The problem with the screw cap is that it's not a cork. No romantic pulling of a cork at a quiet table in a chic French restaurant. No soft pop. No ritualistic sniffing of the screw cap to learn heaven knows what. The downside for winemakers is that screw cap bottles have been redesigned with shorter necks and higher shoulders because they no longer need a neck long enough to hold a cork. This means wineries need to stock different bottles for screw caps than for bottles using a cork, and need to equip their bottling machines with special (and expensive) die heads to apply the screw caps.

On the positive side, with screw caps you can store bottles of wine standing up (not good for natural corks, which can dry out), you don't need a cork puller, the cap can be easily spun back on the bottle for storage in the fridge, and in theory, screw caps can provide a TCA-proof seal for a decade or more. Australia and New Zealand have accepted screw caps in a big way (80-90% of all New Zealand wines now come with screw caps). Although the natural cork industry has cleaned up its act quite a bit in the last few years, screw caps are starting to make inroads. According to A.C. Nielsen, 2006 screw cap wine sales in the U.S.

grew 25 percent and now account for 4 percent standard bottle sales. In a recent closure report by Wine Business Monthly, 25 percent of respondents said they use screw caps on at least some of their offerings.

Several of North Carolina's larger wineries are now experimenting with screw caps. Steve Shepard at RayLen Vineyards produced a 2003 vintage wine using the ROPP cap and added two more wines for the 2004 vintage and 2005 vintage respectively, and plans to add more in the future. Shepard says that even though there is a slight cost savings over natural cork, what really sold him on using ROPP caps is the assurance that the wine in the bottle will be of the same quality on the day it's opened as it was the day it was bottled. Mark Friszolowski, the winemaker at Childress Vineyards, is also using screw caps on two wines and expects to offer more in the future.

On the other hand, Bernard Delille at Biltmore Estate Winery says he's not ready to go the screw cap route just yet. Although he believes in the technology, "It's a marketing decision," says Delille. "Customers still want the romance of a cork." But he also believes that someday there will not be enough natural cork to go around and he will have to use screw caps for some of his more value-priced wines (he favors screw caps over synthetic corks).

The Next Step: For smaller wineries in North Carolina, the future is not as clear. Kim Myers, an owner of Laurel Gray Vineyards, says

the smaller North Carolina wineries are not ready to go to screw caps just yet. "Technically," says Myers, "screw caps are fine, but smaller wineries can't take the chance that screw caps might lower the image of their wines in the eyes of the consumer, at least this early in the game. Some of the larger national brands, like Mondavi or Kendall-Jackson, will have to lead the way before smaller wineries like ours will feel comfortable making the change."

Even though there is still some major marketing work to do before screw caps are readily accepted by consumers, don't be surprised if you see more of your favorite brands showing up on grocery store shelves with screw caps. In fact, Ed Cook, marketing manager for beer and wine at Harris-Teeter, encourages wineries to use more screw caps. For Cook it's a quality control issue as well as an ease of use issue. In fact, he feels screw caps have so much going for them that although premier priced labels will probably stick to the natural cork for some time, an increasing number of wineries will offer wines under screw caps.

So, is the cork going the way of the paper bag in North Carolina? Are retail outlets, consumers and wineries ready to make the switch to screw caps? The answer is still in the bottle.



Norm Oches designs and builds vineyards in North Carolina.

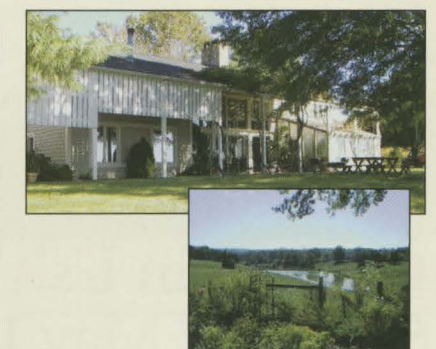
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PLACES TO GO, PEOPLE TO SEE

MARCH

- March 1. French wine tasting class at Creek Side Winery, Elon. From 7:30 to 9 p.m. Featuring six or seven wines with accompanying foods followed by descriptions and discussion. Cost is \$30, with reservations recommended. Call 336-584-4117. Proceeds from the class will be donated to Elon's Catholic Campus Ministry.
- March 2. Reception and square dance at Round Peak Vineyards, Mount Airy. Part of the Surry County Arts Council's Tommy Jarrell Festival weekend in Mount Airy.
- March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Friday Night Flights at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. Beginning at 6 p.m. Wine tasting, cheese or fruit accompaniment and some wine 101. \$10 with reservations required. 540-593-2865.
- March 3. Second Annual Greenville Wine Festival in Greenville. From 2 to 5 p.m. Featuring wine tastings, ice carving and cooking demonstrations. Call 252-329-4200 for more details.
- March 9. Jazzy Fridays at Cypress Bend Vineyards, Wagram. From 7 to 10 p.m. Featuring live jazz music, dancing and hors d'oeuvres. Admission is \$5. For more information, call 910-369-0411.
- March 10. Saturday Shindig at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville. From 7 to 9 p.m. Featuring sentimental and humorous Celtic music by the band "Nancy Whiskey." Tickets are \$10 per person with reservations recommended. Call 866-Rag-Apple.
- March 15. Italian wine tasting class at Creek Side Winery, Elon. 7:30-9 p.m. Featuring six or seven wines with accompanying foods followed by descriptions and discussion. \$30, reservations recommended, 336-584-4117. Proceeds to Elon's Catholic Campus Ministry.
- March 17. Second annual Irish Festival at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring authentic Irish music and food, river dancers, arts and crafts vendors and an Irish Soda Bread baking contest.
- March 17. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. St. Patrick's Day Celebration featuring dinner, wine, music and comedy. Tickets are \$50 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.
- March 23. Jazzy Fridays at Cypress Bend Vineyards, Wagram. From 7 to 10 p.m. Featuring live jazz music, dancing and hors d'oeuvres. Admission is \$5. For more information, call 910-369-0411.
- March 24. RayLen Oyster Roast, Mocksville., 1-5 p.m. \$10.

336-998-3100.

March 24. Sangiovese Riserva Release Party at Raffaldini Vineyards, Ronda. Free event from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. to celebrate the release of the barrel-aged Sangiovese Riserva.

March 30. The Tams in concert-dinner show at Lu Mil Vineyard, Dublin. From 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. Reservations required. Call (910) 866-5819.

March 31. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Featuring dinner theater and wine. \$41 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.

APRIL

April 6. Pig Cook Off at Lu Mil Vineyard, Dublin. Competition with cash prizes. Cooking begins at 7 p.m. Entry fee is \$50. Call (910) 866-5819.

April 7. Spring & Growing Festival at Lu Mil Vineyard, Dublin. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. No admission fee. Features vendors and displays of spring plants for the yard or garden.

April 7. "A Living History Event" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Evening features two of America's greatest Statesmen: Jefferson and Adams. Tickets are \$25 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.

April 7. Easter Fun at Château Morrisette Winery, Floyd, Va. Begins at 3 p.m. With an Easter Egg hunt for the young at heart, with prizes ranging from chocolate candy to Château Morrisette wine. Tickets are \$15 for each adult. Please RSVP to 540.593.2865.

April 8. Easter Brunch at Château Morrisette Winery and Restaurant, Floyd Va. The Winery will be open from 11 am - 5 pm; the Restaurant will be serving brunch from 11 am - 5 pm. Reservations requested.

April 12. South African wine tasting class at Creek Side Winery, Elon. From 7:30 to 9 p.m. Featuring six or seven wines with accompanying foods followed by descriptions and discussion. Cost is \$30, with reservations recommended. Call 336-584-4117. Proceeds from the class will be donated to Elon's Catholic Campus Ministry.

April 12-15. Blue Ridge Wine Festival, Blowing Rock. Featuring wine tastings, winemaker's dinners, winemaking competition, wine seminars & classes and children's activities. Call 877-295-7965 or 828-295-7851 for advance tickets.

April 14. Upper Haw River Paddle Trip and Wine Dinner at Grove Winery, Gibsonville. Call 336-584-4060.

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April 21. Great Grapes Wine, Arts & Food Festival at Regency Park, Cary. From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Featuring local wineries, food, live music and an assortment of local arts and crafts. Tickets are \$20 at the door and \$18 in advance. Call 410-769-8223.

April 21. Country Music Festival at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring Conway Twitty's son Michael Twitty with the band Classic Country. Also features food, arts and crafts vendors.

April 21. Bud Break Celebration at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville. From 1 to 5 p.m. Featuring food, music and wine. Admission is \$10 per person.

April 21. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Featuring dinner theater and wine. Tickets are \$41 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.

April 21. British Car Show at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson. From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 336-366-4724 for more information.

April 21. Springtime Wine Festival at Cypress Bend Vineyards, Wagram. From noon to 6 p.m. Featuring live music and vendors. Free admission. For more information, call 910-369-0411.

April 21. Local Yocal Sip Off at Hinnant Vineyards, Pine Level. Featuring live music and food. Tickets are \$10 and include commemorative wine glass.

April 28. "Showtime at the Winery" at Duplin Winery, Rose Hill. Featuring dinner theater and wine. Tickets are \$41 per person. Make reservations by calling 800-774-9634.

April 28. Taste Carolina Wine Festival at the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market, Colfax, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring wine tastings, live music and food. Visit www.tastecarolina.com.

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. Lowe's Foods Day at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville.

Free admission. Call 336-945-5032 for more details.

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 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 19. 6th Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, Elkin Municipal Park. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. More than 20 Yadkin Valley wine producers. The Catalinas. Tickets \$20 (\$16 in advance) at yadkinvalley.org or 336-526-1111.

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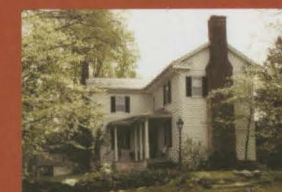


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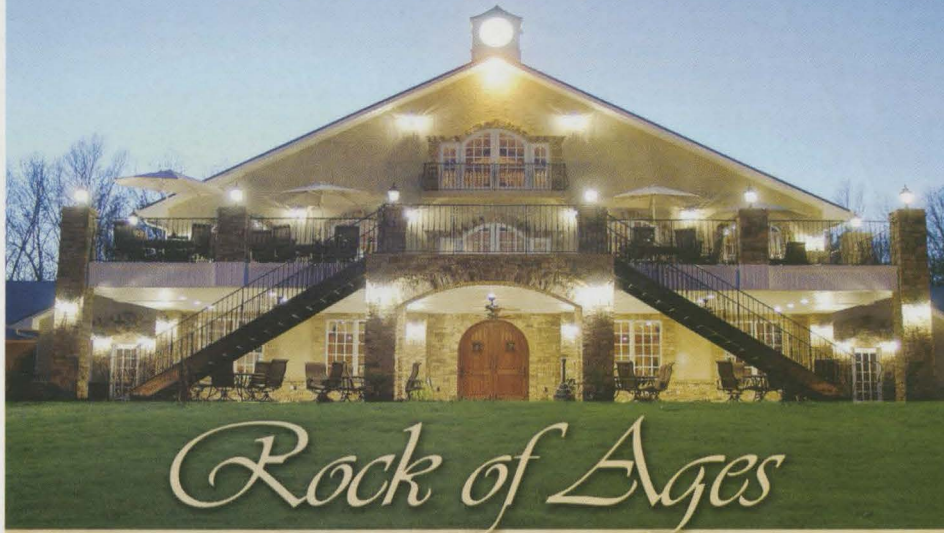
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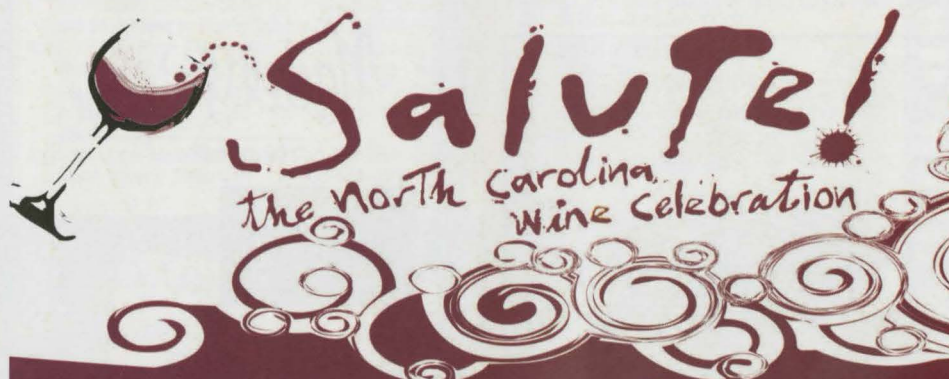
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