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On The Vine

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APRIL-JUNE 2006



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YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

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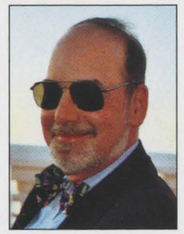
FOUNDER
Susan Lyons

Hot off the wine press . . .

Let the festivities commence

Wine festivals (see story, page 8) have become a win-win-win situation.

Participating wineries and vineyards get a broad mass audience of potential buyers; festival sponsors have an opportunity to earn a profit through ticket and booth sales; and the publicity generated fuels both the areas' and the state's travel and tourism efforts.


Rebel Good

For the smaller wine operations, in particular, the festivals are not only desirable, but necessary. For many it is the only opportunity to sell their wines outside of their own tasting rooms. And on the other side of the equation, for the festival-goers it's an efficient way to check out a variety of offerings in one convenient venue.

There are already six established festivals that attract more than a dozen winesellers each — Elkin, Tanglewood, Cary, Greensboro, Charlotte and Yadkinville — and new festivals are joining the mix this year in Blowing Rock and downtown Winston-Salem. Add to that a host of smaller regional events and dedicated oenophiles could probably find a festival of some sort on most weekends throughout the warmer months.

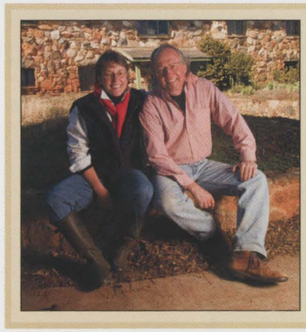
Experience has shown that the best festivals aren't necessarily the largest. And surprisingly, they don't always have the best weather (ask any winery how easy it is to sell wine when people have nowhere else to go to escape the rain than under their tent).

The secret seems to be having enough people to achieve "critical mass." At that level the vineyards can take enough time to discuss their wines with their potential customers, but those in line don't wait so long they get antsy.

All the festivals aren't created equal. At this stage in the development of our viticulture industry the sole goal of a wine festival ought to be the promotion of wine. Anything that detracts from the sales effort should be reduced or eliminated. That doesn't mean a wine festival should offer nothing but a bunch of tents for the wineries. Good music — not too loud — and an assortment of vendors help create the ambiance needed to keep people there when they're not tasting wines.

Check out the schedule of festivals inside and take in a festival or two this year.

Rebel Good
Publisher



On The Cover...

Marsha Cassedy and Lee Griffin at Rockhouse Vineyards.

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

A Hobby that got out of Hand

• Rockhouse Vineyards finds its Tryon home yields fine wines

By Ed Williams

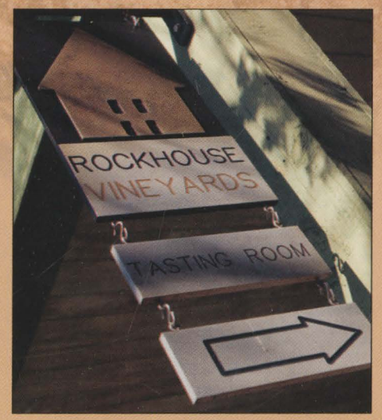
Marsha Cassedy remembers when the wine bug really bit.

It was the early 1980s and she and her husband, Lee Griffin, decided to sublet their New York apartment and tour South America for a year, fueled by their interest in the archeology and history of that region.

In an old Land Cruiser, they explored the continent and found, among the many surprises there, quality wines from Chile and Argentina. Augmented by their wine experiences in Europe, the idea of planting a small vineyard emerged.

"It's like a disease. It just grows on you," recalls Lee.

After moving from New York to Charlotte, the couple investigated real estate in the area, hoping to find something near Lee's family business in which to farm. But around Mecklenburg County, land was pricey. The search eventually led them 90 minutes down the road, to Tryon in the southwest corner of North Carolina.



Today, near the beautiful rolling foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Lee and Marsha can gaze out over 10 acres of vineyards at what Lee calls "a hobby that got out of hand." Rockhouse Vineyards has come a long way since the first 48 vines were sunk with a post-hole digger in 1991.

The winery expects to produce 1,100 cases from the 2005 growing season, wines that include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Chardonnay and Viognier. The winery also produces a Meritage blend from red grapes.

Even at that production level, Rockhouse Vineyards is a tiny enterprise compared to most wineries in the U.S. Though nestled in a secluded, end-of-the-road hideaway, wine lovers nonetheless manage to find it, lured by its ambiance and reputation for quality.

In the early years, Marsha remembers all the commuting between Charlotte and Tryon after they bought the 200-acre farm. She also remembers Lee's many nights away from home. He was overseeing his family textile machinery business in Charlotte while at the same time tending grapes in Tryon.

"There were times I wanted to kill him," Marsha laughs, quickly adding, "But if we hadn't started when we did, we wouldn't be where we are today. It's been a true balancing act for many years, a saga."

Lee remembers most his trial-and-error experimentation, both in growing the grapes and then crafting them into wine.

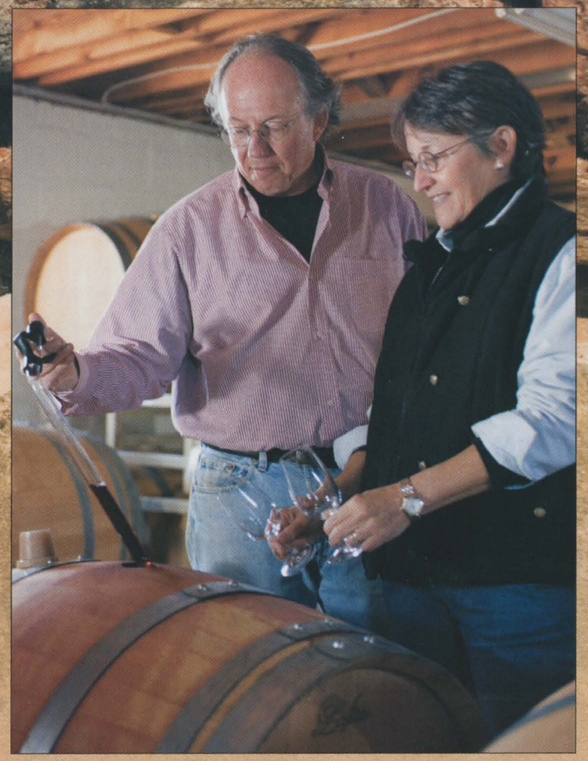
"We made some good salad dressing in those early years," he deadpans.

Neither Lee nor Marsha came from an agricultural background. "I raked some leaves when I was growing up. That was about it," Marsha says.

Lee has been rewarded for his passion and experimentation. Rockhouse wines have won awards in competitions in San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, New York and Atlanta.

The old cotton and corn farm that Lee and Marsha bought in 1989 and first planted with grapes in 1991 is situated in an isothermal belt that moderates temperature extremes — key to top quality wine grapes.

In addition to that "protective bowl," Lee



Lee Griffin and Marsha Cassedy sample wine.

says the rolling hills provide good aeration, fighting frost and humidity. Lee spares no expense in placing protective netting over his vines to guard against birds and deer.

"Because we're so small, Lee and I can devote a tremendous amount of attention to our wines," says Jay Adams, who joined Rockhouse in 2001 and is assistant winemaker and tasting room guide.

The Tryon area, within easy access to wine enthusiasts in Charlotte and the Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville market — has a rich grape-growing tradition dating back to the 1890s.

At that time, many farmers grew Niagara and Delaware as table grapes and the area boasted more than a dozen commercial vineyards. Clientele for the grapes were train-passenger tourists escaping the heat of the "Low Country" of South Carolina and heading to the cooler North Carolina mountains.

Actual winemaking around the area began in the 1930s, but fizzled by the late 1940s.

Today, nearly a dozen vineyards are again planted here and a second winery, Green Creek, recently opened down the road from Rockhouse.

In addition to the wine, visitors at Rockhouse can marvel at what is — quite literally — a "rock house," one that Lee and Marsha consider their home-away-from-home.

A German couple built the home in the 1950s, embedding the exterior with rocks they collected from various states. They also included fossils, bits of glass, sea shells, and even a horn button from a DeSoto automobile.

"When visitors come in, if they look too youthful, I tell them about that horn button. If they don't know what a DeSoto is, I card them," laughs Jay.

Adds Lee: "We have people come from everywhere. How they find us, I don't know. We're off the beaten path. We're not a large winery with organized tours. But I think people like a lay-back-against-the-barrels

Continued on next page

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ROCKHOUSE

Continued from previous page

kind of atmosphere."

What's the secret to Rockhouse Vineyards wines?

Marsha remembers her husband's patience during the early years: "It was kind of fun that we didn't know what we were doing. We truly learned it from the ground up."

She recalls early experiments, each building upon the other. At no point, she says, did Lee rush anything into a bottle for commercial sale.

Jay points to Lee's insistence upon the extended hang time of the grapes — courtesy of a small enough vineyard to watch the skies and gamble with Mother Nature.

Lee points to other factors. Extreme care is taken in choosing oak barrels and then mixing barrel fermentation and aging. More important, Rockhouse aggressively prunes the vines, cutting away and dropping significant fruit on the ground so the remaining grapes can concentrate flavors.

Looking back, what would Lee Griffin and Marsha Cassedy do differently?

Both think back to those first 48 vines in the ground.

Lee says he wouldn't have spread himself so thin by planting six or seven different grape varieties among so few vines. "I didn't have enough of any one grape to do much with."

Adds Marsha: "And we wouldn't have done it with a post-hole digger."

And what's surprised them most about the grape growing and winemaking experience?

"That we're still married," says Marsha, remembering those early years dividing time between Charlotte and Tryon.

❦❦❦

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



Rockhouse vintages win medals.

ROCKHOUSE VINEYARDS AT A GLANCE...

Rockhouse has 3 acres of Viognier, 3 acres of Chardonnay, 3 acres of Cabernet Franc and one acre of both Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

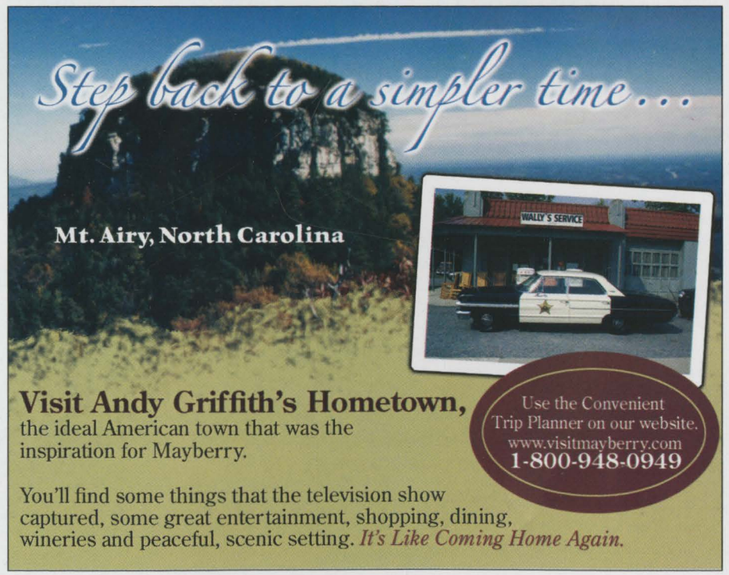
Plans are under way to plant Petit Verdot — famous as a blending grape in Bordeaux, France — this spring.

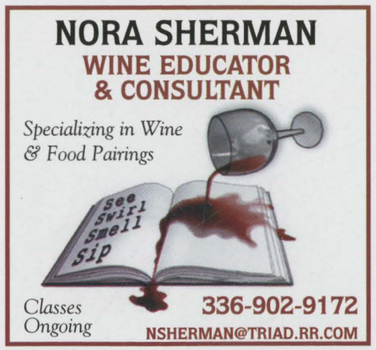
Total case production from the 2005 harvest is expected to reach 1,100 cases. Rockhouse expects maximum annual production at 3,000 cases.

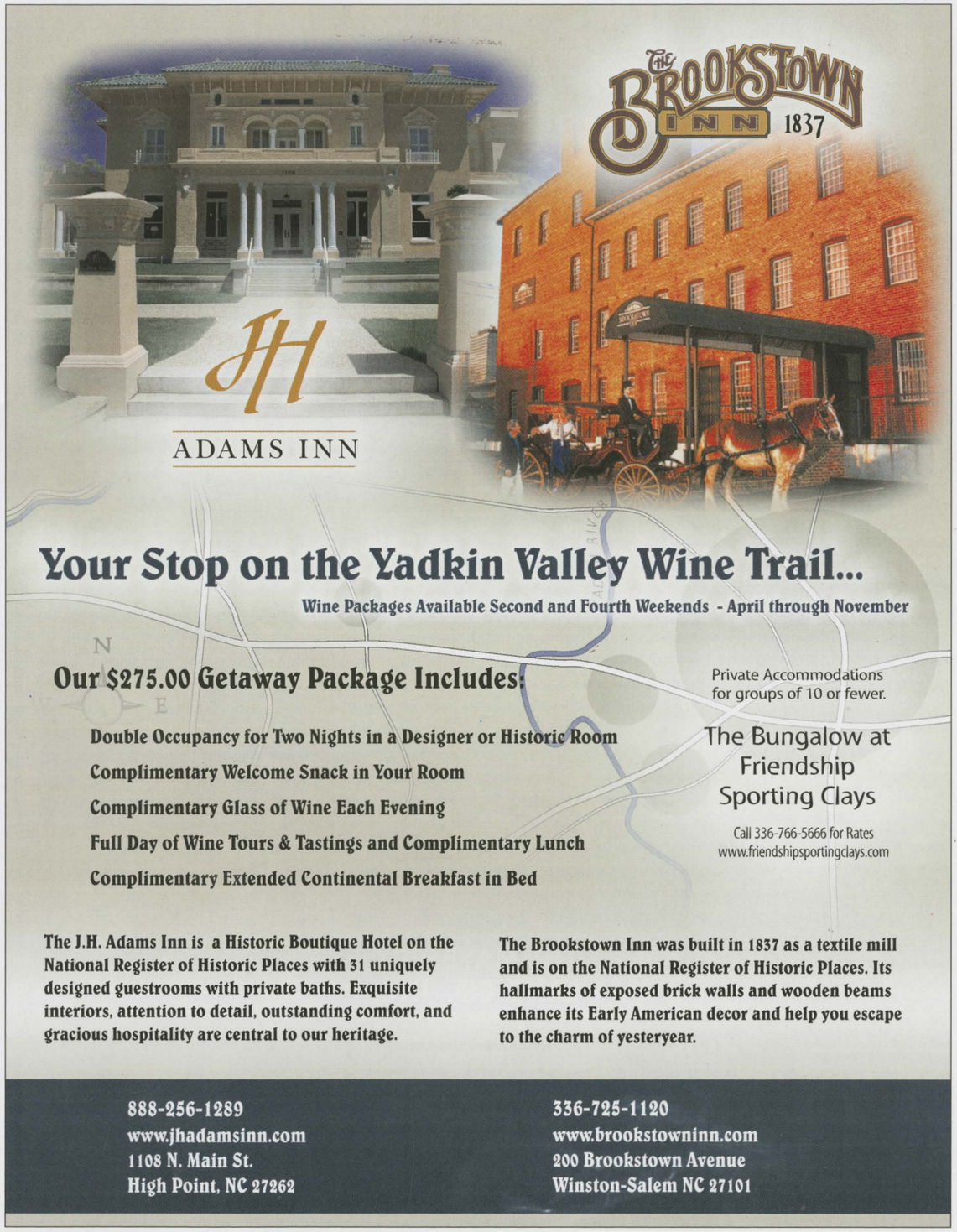
Rockhouse assistant winemaker Jay Adams is a geneticist and retired research scientist from the National Institutes of Health. In 1999, this beer hobbyist was named North Carolina Brewer of the Year.

To learn more about Rockhouse Vineyards wines, visit www.rockhousevineyards.com









Wine festivals spreading throughout the state

By Brook R. Corwin

For four years, Jon Oparowski and Lindsay Butler heard about the wine industry taking root in their adopted homestate of North Carolina. They just needed a taste.

As students at Wake Forest University with hometowns hundreds of miles away from the N.C. border, the pair was just beyond the reach of the wine samples being poured all over the Piedmont.

That all changed once they discovered the Yadkin Valley Grape Festival.

"We always wanted to see some of the wineries," Oparowski said. "We figured this way we could see them all."

This spring, they can see most of those wineries all in one place again . . . and again . . . and again some more.

The Yadkin Valley Grape Festival, which held its second outing last October, is just one of about a dozen wine festivals old and new, large and small, that have emerged to offer everyone from the wine enthusiast to the just-curious a chance to taste the fruits of North Carolina's vineyards.

"There are a lot of people entering into wine drinking for the first time," said Lenna Hobson, co-owner of RagApple Lassie Vineyards in Boonville. "In the past, to learn about wine you'd have to go out to California or buy many bottles at the grocery store with very little knowledge."

North Carolina's wine festivals make it easy for wine lovers. Each typically features 15-22 different wineries whose products can all be sampled for the price of one ticket. Complementing the wine are live music acts, arts and crafts vendors, wine seminars and food.

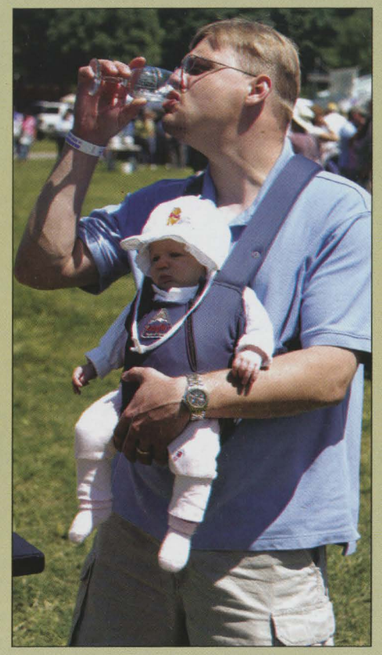
"It gives people the opportunity to find out what kind of wine that they like," says Sid Proctor, owner of Weathervane Winery in Winston-Salem. "At a tasting room, you often only have four or five wines to try. To find out what you like sometimes you have to try eight or nine."

Or more.

With the weather warming up, the bulk of the state's wine festivals are on tap in the next few months. Kicking off the schedule is a brand new event, the Blue Ridge Wine Festival in Blowing Rock, on April 6-8.

Though the state's two oldest wine festivals, the North Carolina Wine Festival in Clemmons and the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival in Elkin, are a half-decade old and typically bring in more than 10,000 attendees, many of the festivals are recent additions to the area just building an audience.

The Great Grapes Wine Festivals in Cary and Charlotte are both preparing for their third installments. The Taste Carolina Wine Festival in Greensboro is also in its third year and is preparing to add a fall festival to go with its spring edition.



Good times for all ages at festivals.

Like the Yadkin Valley Grape Festival in Yadkinville, Shine to Wine/Wilkes Grape Escape 2006 in North Wilkesboro is in its second year. Both emerged as a way to highlight the steady stream of new wineries popping up in the Yadkin Valley Appellation, the first federally designated winemaking region in North Carolina.

"In time, I think we'll probably see a few more (festivals)," said Melissa Smithey, organizer of Shine to Wine. "It seems there are more new vineyards popping up every day. The more vineyards that open, the more festivals you'll see."

Many wineries rely on festivals to generate both direct and word-of-mouth business long after the tasting tents have been folded up. Included in that group is Silver Coast Winery at Ocean Isle, which sends a half-dozen employees on a 10-hour round trip to the Piedmont each year to offer up their wines at festivals.

"It's really a way to introduce ourselves to a lot of customers who don't know what we're about," said Maryann Azzato, Silver Coast's co-owner. "It is a big effort, but I consider it job security."

Silver Coast is one of several wineries across the state that also takes the business of festivals into their own hands, planning on-site special events that feature food, music and local artisans. Some wineries conduct the festivals on their own. Others, such as the Vineyards of Swan Creek and the five vineyards on the Haw River Wine Trail, band together to host special events on the same day at their nearby tasting rooms.

Whether small or large in scope, festival organizers say offering up the "extras" such as good music, family entertainment or food and wine seminars is needed to make the event stand-out and build its audience. Care should be taken, however, to only bring in musical acts and commercial vendors that compliment the wineries and keep the festival's focus on the wine itself.

"We really try to have businesses and arts and crafts that cater to the wine industry," said Carla McGlynn, organizer of the Taste Carolina festivals. "We're choosy in our vendors."

Both Taste Carolina and Great Grapes saw sizable increases in attendance last year, their organizers say, because of positive reputations built from their debut years.

"It's a word-of-mouth kind of thing," said Greg Nivens, promoter of the Great Grapes festivals in North Carolina and also in Maryland and New Jersey. "If (the festival) is good, people will know it's there."

To keep from over-saturating the local wine market, many festivals choose a theme to stand out. The Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, for instance, only features wines from the Yadkin Valley Appellation.

As a result, Proctor said, each of the festivals Weathervane Vineyards attends has its own distinct flavor and style.

"Great Grapes has a jazzy feel. The festival in Yadkinville is more laid back. [The North Carolina Wine Festival] has a younger crowd. Each has their own atmosphere and their own characteristics," he said,

Azzato suggested that new festivals could emerge by functioning as charity fundraisers, donating proceeds to non-profit organizations.

Such an approach has been employed by the Charlotte Wine & Food Weekend and The Beaufort Wine & Food Weekend, events that have raised millions for local charities through tastings and special dinners that feature wines from around the world.

Anyone planting the seeds of a new festival may need to adopt some of the long-term vision of North Carolina grape growers whose vines took root years before interest in local wine caught on. Just like the wineries they feature, festival organizers face the uncertainties of weather and a changing market to recoup what can be a sizable up-front investment.

"It's definitely something you have to do with a lot of passion for wine, because it's a lot of work," Nivens said of organizing festivals. "The risk is the killer. It's like a good vintage. You never know what you're going to get."

Despite the risk, Hobson said the tourism revenues a festival can generate make them attractive endeavors, meaning more wine-tasting opportunities could be on the way.

"It has been absolutely proven in spades that wine is the carrot bringing people to this area," said Hobson, whose winery is in Yadkin County. "As long as that is happening, every organization is thinking about that. So festivals are popping up like mushrooms."

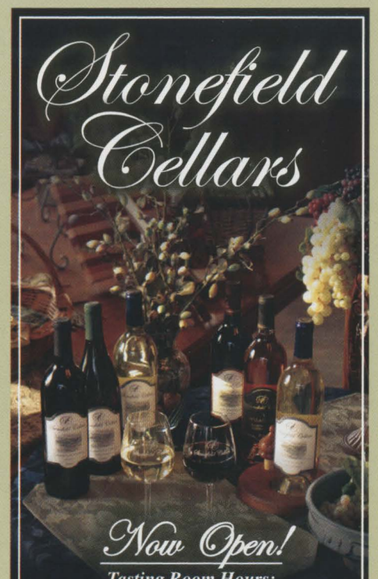
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Brook Corwin is a reporter for The Tribune, *Elkin-Jonesville, N.C.*



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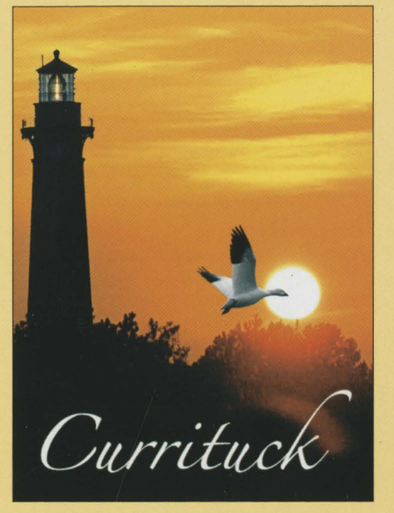
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Outer Banks area is latest to seek appellation status

By Brook Seaford



The Currituck region, located in the northeastern section of the state along the Outer Banks, is the latest in North Carolina's growing wine-making industry to apply for appellation status from the federal government.

The Yadkin Valley became an American Viticultural Area several years ago, and Swan Creek filed an application last year that should be approved within the next year.

The coastal appellation is slated to be simply "Currituck," and encompassing all of Currituck County. Sanctuary Vineyards, Martin Vineyards, Moonrise Bay, and the Palmer Inn are the vineyards currently operating in the region.

What's behind the push for the new appellation? According to David Martin, owner and operator of Martin Vineyards, "we hope to gain recognition for our unique style and flavors of wines made here." John Wright, of Sanctuary Vineyards, sees that it will help "the consumer know that what they are purchasing in a bottle of Currituck wine is 100 percent Currituck grapes. So if the distinctive taste of Currituck wines is what appeals to you, then you know it will represent that flavor."

So what exactly makes Currituck different? To find the answer, you have to delve into the history books, analyze geographical maps, or . . . ask a Currituck vintner.

Martin, a longtime resident of the area, explains that 30,000 years ago the Outer Banks and the Currituck region were completely submerged. When the waters receded, what was left behind were uniquely dry soil sets composed of fine sand and minerals. The Currituck vineyards are planted on ancient sand dunes, known as "paleo ridges." They run just short of a mile and are no more than 100 feet wide in some areas.

This soil composition helps to quickly remove excess precipitation from the roots before it can adversely affect the harvest. Furthermore, it lessens the vigor of the plants, meaning they don't grow as rapidly as in other soil formations.

For instance, when you plant grape vines in clay or rich soil, the vines grow explosively, yielding tons of fruit. That's OK, preferred even, in "normal" farming, but not in viticulture where heavy yields often result in watery, tasteless fruit not suited for creating complex wines.

Currituck's soils' tendency to reduce vigor, in Wright's opinion, enhances quality and provides a more balanced flavor.

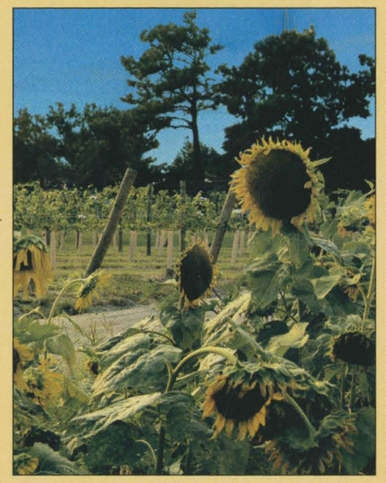
And says Martin: "Mild tannins enable fruit-forward flavors to shine in the glass. It makes the wines accessible earlier on in the life of the wine, but they age well also."

The existing vineyards are already producing a variety of French style wines, in addition to native muscadines.

However, it's not simply the Currituck flavor that's distinctive, but the experience as well.

Because of its proximity to the Outer Banks, most people visit the Currituck area because they're on vacation. Having an appellation will communicate to potential tourists that there is more to the area than just the beach — there is distinctive, high-quality wine.

Advantages of the appellation designation are considerable. Not only will it enhance tourism through branding the region, it should also motivate the existing Currituck vineyards to improve their wine-making. It could also recruit more prospective vintners to start operations there.

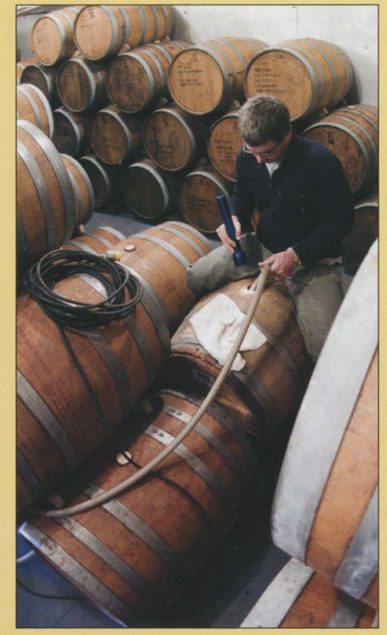


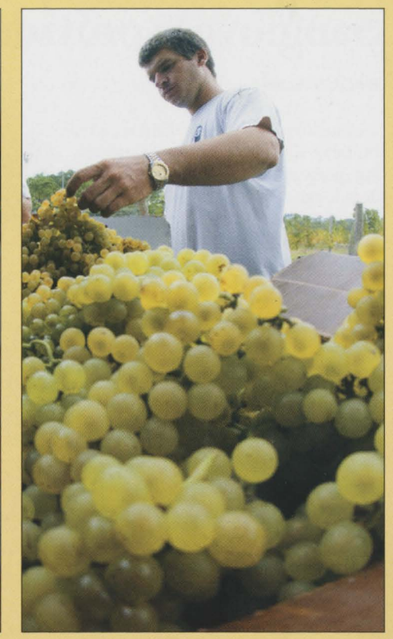
Vineyards on the dune.

But, according to John Wright, they'd better move quickly. Surprisingly, buying a vineyard is about the same cost whether you are in Napa Valley or Currituck, but for different reasons. In Napa Valley or Sonoma, real estate is expensive because it is a proven wine region. In Currituck, the property comes dear because it could be the site of the next million-dollar golf course or vacation community.

While Shakespeare questioned the merits of a distinctive name, the Currituck region is poised to embrace the promise and opportunity that could come with their federal sanction. The process will involve several steps, including a period for public comment. If there are no hitches, Currituck will add its name to the list of about 150 AVAs across the country in about two years.

Brook Seaford is a freelance writer and North Carolina native who currently lives with his wife and son in Charlotte, N.C.





John Wright tends to the wines and vines at Sanctuary Vineyards.



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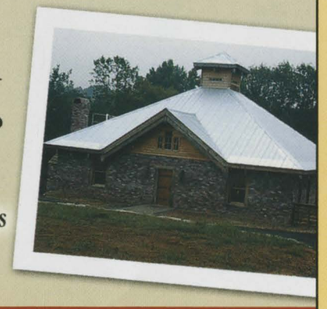
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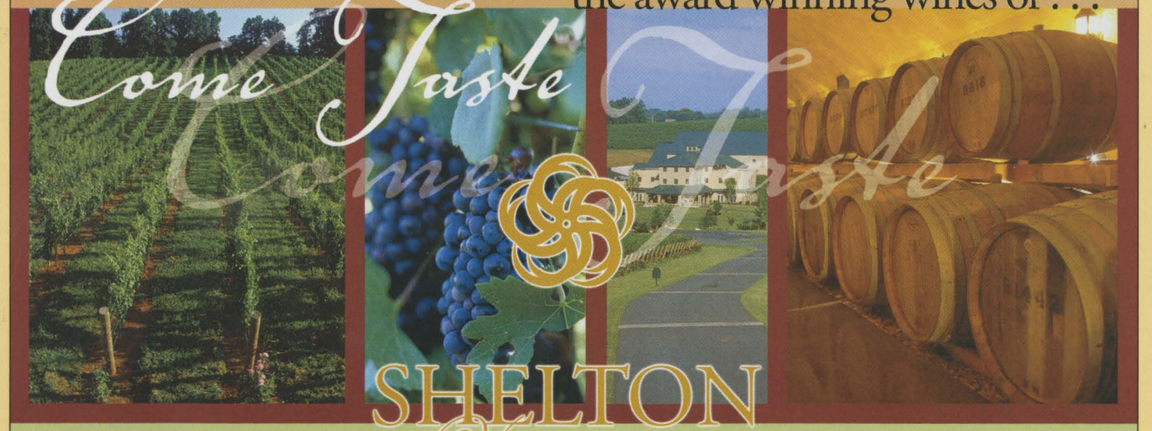
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Sangiovese provides a challenge to Tarheel winemakers

By Ed Williams



Sangiovese — the heralded red grape in Italy's Chianti region — began making noise in California more than a decade ago and soon enough found itself migrating east.

In North Carolina and Virginia, a few bold winemakers are experimenting with a grape that offers up challenge and grief for every ounce of romance it conjures in telling a Tuscan tale at tasting.

At Villa Appalaccia Winery near Meadows of Dan in Virginia, owner Stephen Haskill of Chapel Hill specializes in Italian-style wines but he generally advises growers not to plant the grape because of ripening issues.

Stephen Lyons, general manager of Swan Creek's Raffaldini Vineyards, is also trying to carve out a regional reputation for Italian-style winemaking. His take on the grape: "It's labor-intensive. It's too early to assess Sangiovese's potential but I am leaning towards not recommending it if the new grower cannot give it all the attention it needs. Is this North Carolina's (signature) red grape? No."

Nonetheless, Lyons has staked six acres to the grape, experimenting with a half dozen different clones to assess variation.

To be sure, this grape has issues. Consider:

•It is thin-skinned and prone to rot;

•It is prolific and can abrade — and then rot — when clusters scrape in the wind;

•It ripens late in the season, making it susceptible to hurricane and tropical rain storms;

•It can ripen unevenly;

•It is susceptible to sunburn;

•It has mutated and reinvented itself with such wild abandon since the 1800s that it can be difficult to ascertain clones from superior stock.

•It has a PR problem. Many in the Baby Boomer generation associate the grape with cheap, tarty, plonk poured from squatty, straw-flasked bottles.

"I think it is still too early to make a call on Sangiovese," says John Wright, owner of Sanctuary Vineyards, who has planted 1.5 acres of the grape on Currituck coast. "I think North Carolina's grape is still out there but it may be different for different areas.

"North Carolina is similar to Italy in that it transitions from an Alpine climate to a Mediterranean climate. Italy doesn't have one red grape; it has about 8 or 10 really prominent varieties. I think there is a really good place for Sangiovese somewhere in North Carolina. It took Italy centuries to find theirs."

Make no mistake, there is an upside to the grape. Sangiovese – when grown and vinified well — is the quintessential "foodie" wine. At meal, this wine is most commonly associated with tomato-based dishes.

"This is a medium-bodied red wine with high acidity and because of this, it can stand up to foods with higher fat content, such as prosciutto, cured meats or salty-aged cheese," says Susan Lyons, Raffaldini's marketing director.

Adds Jim Vascick, owner of Valhalla Vineyards near Roanoke, "Unlike many wines that can overpower food, Sangiovese seems to meld with food flavors individually; that is, Sangiovese tastes differently with burgers than it does with fish. We believe Sangiovese is the red wine for seafood. Try it with a filet of salmon and be prepared to be blown away."

The On The Vine tasting panel assessed nine Sangiovese-based wines in February from North Carolina and Virginia, across multiple vintages. The wines were bagged and tasted blind.

On the whole, the panel encountered wildly erratic results. Some were pleasantly fruity but a few were even remotely reminiscent of an Italian-styled Sangiovese.

Sangiovese's emergence as North Carolina's signature red grapes seems, based on this limited tasting, a long-shot at best. One panel member, on faculty in Surry Community College's viticulture program, declared it "damned disappointing."

So how will North Carolina's soil and climate stamp this grape in future years? That's what early adopters hope to answer with the small acreage currently devoted to Sangiovese.

In fairness, North Carolina's experience with the grape is limited.

"Our vines are young and I don't expect them to provide super intense wines at this stage, nor will they be as heavily extracted as some," says Stephen Rigby, winemaker at Raffaldini. "I think our wines will generally reflect a more Italian style …but because of our location, we're not looking to precisely emulate anyone."

Mark Friszolowski, winemaker at Childress Vineyards, adds: "It is too early to say anything definitive about Sangiovese and its potential for long-term viability. We like the variety because it can produce an elegant, lighter-bodied red wine."

What struck many of the On The Vine tasters was how many of the sample wines sported off-putting odors and lacked the bracing acidity commonly associated with the grape. Most, however, managed to hit a lighter bodied style, approximating Chianti in that one respect.

The two top wines to emerge from the blind tasting, garnering almost unanimous approval, were the non-vintage Biltmore Estate Sangiovese and the 2004 Childress Vineyards Sangiovese.

This presented a conundrum for the panel in a blind tasting.The Biltmore Estate rendering from Asheville was crafted entirely from California grapes grown in both the central coast region and in the Mendocino appellation. That it showcased abundant fruit and dark colors was little surprise, given its West Coast lineage.

Biltmore winemakers Bernard Delille and Sharon Fenchak say the California Sangiovese is a relatively new product released in North Carolina, containing a fraction of Syrah to enhance mouth-feel and fruit.

"We consider all plantings (of Sangiovese in North Carolina) to be still in the experimental stage. We are almost sure that we will never plant Sangiovese on our Biltmore Estate vineyard (because of climate)," said Fenchak.

The 2004 Childress was crafted from grapes grown on Greg Johns' estate in Summerfield, and it better approximates North Carolina's expression of the grape.

Johns, Richard Childress' business partner, maintains Sangiovese vines from his "Gianni" vineyard in Guilford County. While the color was lighter than the Biltmore Estate rendering, the Childress sample showed sufficient acidity, an agreeable nose and bright strawberry and cherry flavors. It finished a touch hot at the end, perhaps reflecting its 13 percent alcohol level.

Friszolowski added 10 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 5 percent Merlot. "The wine exhibits a ripe cherry aroma and finishes peppery. The acid balance is neither high nor low," he said.

The second tier to emerge (in no order) was the 2004 Round Peak Sangiovese and the 2004 Raffaldini Sangiovese. Both garnered majority approval from the panel, but for different reasons.

The Raffaldini sample seemed to more closely approximate an Italian style with a higher acidity. The Round Peak offered a lush, silky mouthfeel, almost Beaujolais-like. Both showed good cherry, strawberry and raspberry flavors and aromas.

"Ours is a genuine expression of the Sangiovese grape grown 100 percent in Yadkin Valley soil," says Round Peak owner George Little.

He cautions against comparisons and over-generalization about the grape, given varied soils and microclimates in North Carolina. And comparing young North Carolina vines to more mature vines and fruit from California, Little says, is simply unfair.

Raffaldini's Rigby acknowledges a lighter style as well. "This is not an 'in your face' wine We seem to be getting some traditional Sangiovese character in the sense of cherry, black cherry, a little earthiness without being 'dirty.' And maybe even a little of the rose pedal character that Sangiovese sometimes shows. The acid is evident enough to keep the fruit lively and the palate refreshed."

Five wine samples fell into a third tier (in no order): 2002 Shelton Vineyards; 2001 Valhalla; 2005 Grove Vineyards; 2004 Sanctuary Vineyards; and non-vintage Villa Appalaccia Mercurio.

Ed Williams, Brand Marketing Manager for The News & Record *in Greensboro, has written about the wine industry since 1990. His column "On Wine" 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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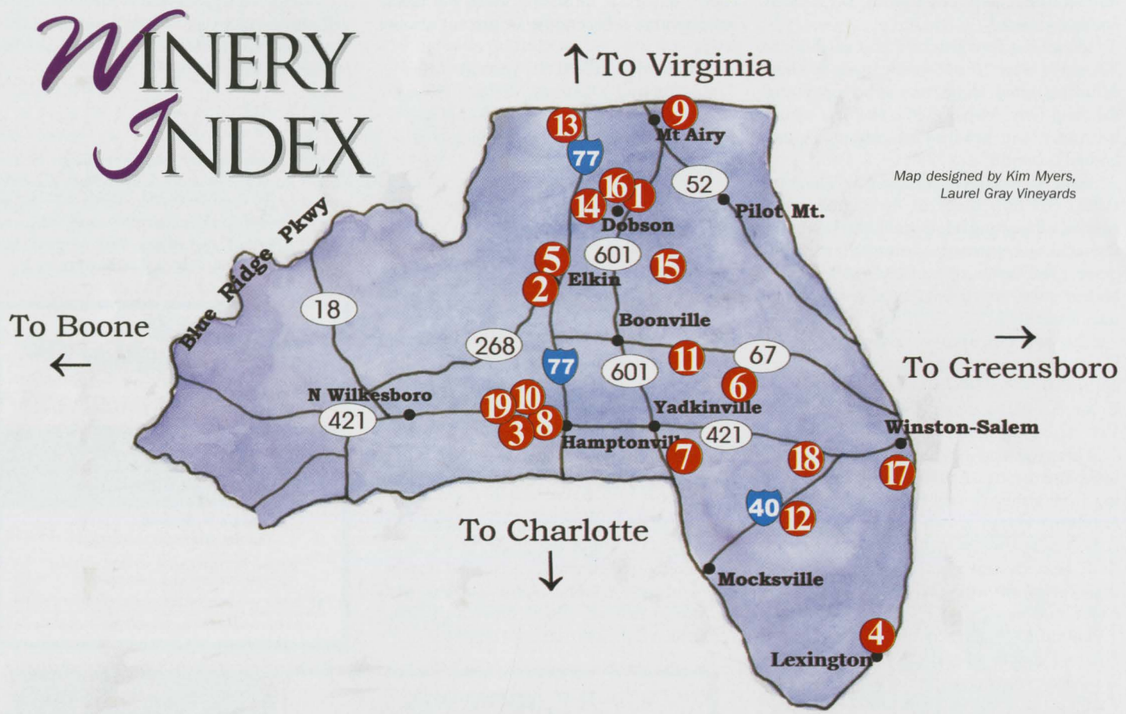
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Yadkin Valley

APPELLATION

WINERY INDEX



Map designed by Kim Myers, Laurel Gray Vineyards

1 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.

2 Brushy Mountain Winery 336-835-1313
125 W. Main St., Elkin, NC 28621
Owners: Matthew and Ann Mayberry and family
Winemaker: Sean McRitchie
Hours: Wed.-Sat., 10 a.m.- 6 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.
Location: Surry County — Downtown Elkin, 1/2 block west of Bridge Street.
Wine List: French varietals, Blackberry.

3 Buck Shoals Vineyards 336-468-9274
6137 Vintner Way, Hamptonville, NC 27020
Owners: Terry and Joanne Crater
Consulting Winemaker: Stephen Rigby
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.

4 Childress Vineyards 336-236-9463
1000 Childress Vineyards Road, Lexington, NC 27295
Owners: Richard Childress and Greg Johns
Winemaker: Mark Friszowlowski
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: Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Meritage, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, red, white and blush blends.

5 Elkin Creek Vineyard 336-526-5119
318 Elkin Creek Mill Road, Elkin NC 28621
Owner and Winemaker: Mark Greene
Website: www.elkincreekvineyard.com
Hours: Fri.-Sun, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Location: Wilkes County — West off I-77 at Exit 85 2 mi. to N. Bridge St., then right 3/4 mi. Left on Carter Mill Road for 1.5 mi., then left on Elkin Mill Road.
Wine list: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Barbera, Il Rossa and an off-dry red blend.

6 Flint Hill Vineyards 336-699-4455
2133 Flint Hill Road, East Bend, NC 27018
Owners: Brenda and Tim Doub
Winemaker: Old North State Winery
Website: www.flinthillvineyards.com
Hours: Fri., 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat., 11 a.m.-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, Viognier, Olde Yattken sweet white.

7 Hanover Park Vineyard 336-463-2875
1927 Courtney-Huntsville Rd., Yadkinville, NC 27055
Owners: Michael and Amy Helton
Winemaker: Michael Helton
Website: www.hanoverparkwines.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.

8 Laurel Gray Vineyards 336-GOT WINE
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.

9 Old North State Winery 336-789-9463
308 North Main Street, Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Members of the Old North State Winegrowers Co-op Assn.
Website: www.oldnorthstatewinery.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 10-6; 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: Chardonnay, Spring House White, Starlight White, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Prelude, Autumn Leaf Red, Autumn Leaf Rosé, Autumn Leaf Gold.

10 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: Dolcetto, Bella Misto, Rosso, Sangiovese, Rosato, Chiara, Vermentino, Pinot Grigio, Fiori.

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

12 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 801 S, right on 158 West; winery is 4 mi. on right.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Viognier, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz, Carolinius, Category 5 Cabernet Blend.

13 Round Peak Vineyards 336-352-5595
765 Round Peak Church Rd., Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Susan & George Little, Janet & Lee Martin
Manager: Mark Golding
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 approx, 1.4 mi. Vineyard is on left.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Merlot, Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Rosé, Sweet Rosé and Sweet Niagara

14 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.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.; winter hours may vary
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, red and white blends.

15 Stony Knoll Vineyards 336-374-5752
1143 Stony Knoll Road, Dobson, NC 27017
Owners: Van and Kathy Coe
Winemaker: Lynn Crouse
Website: stonyknollvineyards.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.

16 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.

17 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: Chardonnay Semillion, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Pinot Grigio, Evening Breeze (Riesling), Merlot, Sunset Red (Cabernet Merlot), Grand Vieux Chateau du Roi, Temperature Rising (Chianti), Sweet Mountain Bliss, Rooster Black (Blackberry Merlot), Rooster Red (Chianti with Cranberries).

18 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.

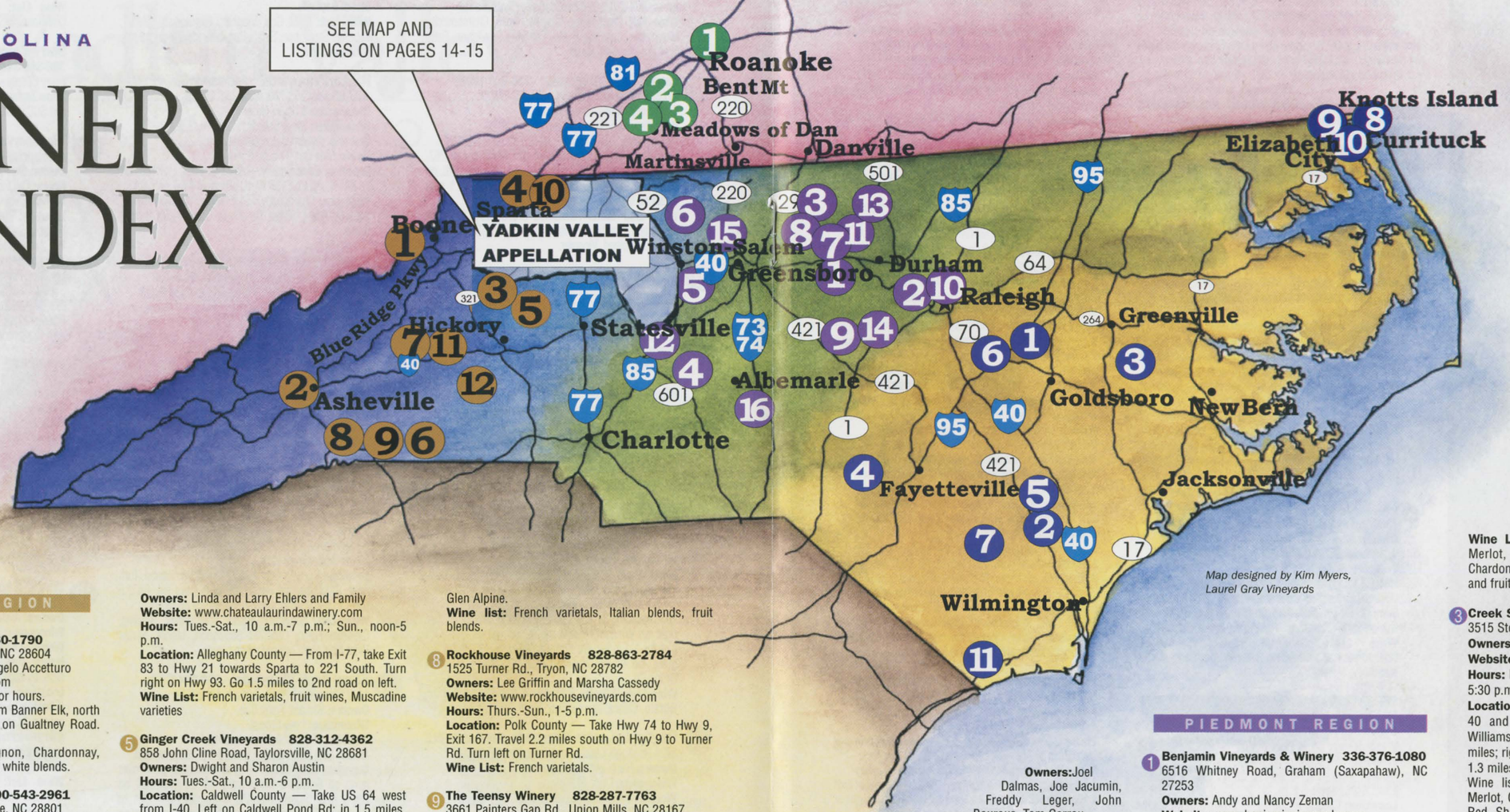
19 Windy Gap Vineyards 336-984-3926
656 Pardue Farm Rd., Ronda, NC 28670
Owners: Allen and Sandra Hincher
Winemaker: Allen Hincher
Website: www.windygapwine.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun, noon-5 p.m.; Mon. by appt.
Location: Wilkes County — From US 421, Exit 272 (Clingman Road). Go north 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, SweetFat Basset, Blueberry, Blackberry.





NORTH CAROLINA

WINERY INDEX



Map designed by Kim Myers, Laurel Gray Vineyards

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: Opening mid-May. Call for hours.
Location: Avery County — from Banner Elk, north on N.C. 194 1.5 mi. Then left on Gualtney Road. Winery is 1/2 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
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: Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
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.
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: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

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 **Rockhouse Vineyards 828-863-2784**
1525 Turner Rd., Tryon, NC 28782
Owners: Lee Griffin and Marsha Cassedy
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.

9 **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.

10 **Thistle Meadow 800-233-1505**
102 Thistle Meadow, Laurel Springs, NC 28644
Thomas R. Burgiss
Website: www.thistlemeadowwinery.com
Hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat., noon-4 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.

11 **Waldensian Heritage Wines 828-879-3202**
4940 Villar Lane NE, Valdese, NC 28690
Owners: Joel Dalmas, 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.

12 **WoodMill Winery 704-736-7733**
1350 WoodMill Winery Lane, Vale, NC 28168
Owners: Beverly and Larry Cagle and family
Website: www.woodmillwinery.com
Hours: Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sun., 1-6 p.m.; during week by appt.
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-6 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, Chardonel, 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: Tues.-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 Noir, Riesling, Chardonnay, Viognier, Sweet Carolina Red, 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-5:30 p.m.; Sun., 1-5:30 p.m., or by appt.
Location: Alamance County — Take Exit 140 off I-40 and follow signs to Elon University. Take Williamson Ave. to Hwy. 87, then north about 6 miles; right on Stoney Creek Church Road; winery is 1.3 miles on left.
Wine list: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Stoney Creek Red, Deep Creek Red, Shallow Creek Rosé, Creek Side Sunset, 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.



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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
Winemaker: 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
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, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Prestige Reserve, Late Harvest Vidall, Carolina Comfort.

10 **Innovative Winery 919-469-3500**
10235 Chapel Hill Road #400, Morrisville, NC 27560
Owners: David and Barbara McDermott
Website: www.innovativewinery.com
Hours: Tues.-Fri., 12-7 p.m.; Sat., 12-5 p.m.
Location: Wake County — From I-40 take Exit 285 south on Aviation Parkway to NC 54 (2 miles), then right on NC 54 1/2 mile. Winery on left in Morrisville Station.
Wine List: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, White Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir, Pinotage, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Icewine, Ruby Port, Green Apple Riesling, and fruit-flavored wines.

11 **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.

12 **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.

13 **Rock of Ages Winery & Vineyard 336-364-7625**
1890 Charlie Long Road, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541
Owners: Kevin and Kimberly Moore
Hours: Opening late June. Call in advance.
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.

14 **SilkHope Winery 919-742-4601**
701 Duncan Farm Road, Siler City, NC 27344
Owner: Wally Butler
Hours: By appointment
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.

15 **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.

16 **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.

SANDHILL/COASTAL REGION

1 **A Secret Garden Winery 919-734-0260**
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. Right on Airport Road. Winery is 2 miles on right.
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, Marilyn (semi-dry white table wine).

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,-Sun., noon-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 **Hinnant Family Vineyard 919-965-3350**
826 Pine Level Micro Rd., Pine Level, NC 27568
Owners: Willard and Bob Hinnant
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.

7 **Lu Mil Vineyard 800-545-2293**
474 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, Alcohol-free wines and ciders.

8 **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.

9 **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

10 **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, Moonrise Bay wines.

11 **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.

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 Blue Ridge Parkway)
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: French Varietals, Blends

3 **Valhalla Vineyards 540-725-9463**
6500 Mt. Chestnut Road, Roanoke, VA 24018
Website: www.valhallawines.com
Hours: 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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Pioneering Tarheel winegrower Kroustalis dies

By Brook R. Corwin

Before North Carolina vineyards reached the hundreds, before their wines got national acclaim and before the industry became a tourism draw across the state, there was Jack Kroustalis and some land the so-called "experts" said could never grow grapes.

Throwing caution and the advice of state agricultural agents to the winds, Kroustalis planted the roots of what is now a thriving industry statewide when he began growing grapes in 1972 on his property in Lewisville.

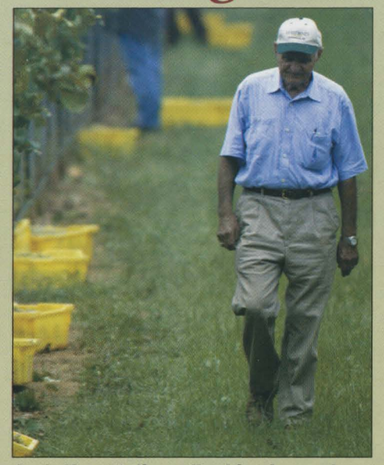
In 16 years, Kroustalis began bottling the wine made from those grapes under the name Westbend Vineyards. In 25 years, those wines would get praise from renowned publications The Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator. In thirty years, dozens of new wineries in the Yadkin Valley would seek to duplicate Kroustalis' success, enough to form their own appellation.

But at the time Westbend's vines were planted, all of that just seemed like a stainless-steel pipe dream.

"At that time it was just a vision," Mark Terry, Westbend's current winemaker, said. "He took that next plunge."

Kroustalis, 74, died in March, leaving behind a legacy as a pioneer of North Carolina wine.

Kroustalis' own roots in wine grew out of his love of traveling. A U.S. Army medic who served in the Korean War, Kroustalis nurtured his navigational instincts through multiple trips to Europe. There, he visited the continent's many vineyards and hatched the idea of growing his own vines outside of Winston-Salem.



Jack Kroustalis walks his vineyard.

At that time, wine production in North Carolina was pretty much limited to Duplin Winery, which bottles the native muscadine grape. Fragile European varietals were considered impossible to grow in North Carolina's wet climate.

"So many people told him it couldn't be done," said Terry, who described Kroustalis as a very driven personality. "If he had listened to them, all this couldn't have happened. But it just made him more determined."

Although his venture had to grow through trial and error, Kroustalis quickly proved the nay-saying theories wrong. For many years he sold his Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, Merlot, and Sauvignon Blanc grapes to Chateau Morrisette in Virginia. But as state agriculture agents began to take note of his work, he decided he should go into the wine business for himself, bottling wines under the Westbend name starting in 1988.

Kroustalis then had to face a new hurdle in breaking down old wine stereotypes. He had to convince retailers and restaurants to carry his brand despite the preconceived notion that only sweet wine could be made from North Carolina grapes.

As the owner of Foodcraft Equipment Co., a restaurant supply company, Kroustalis already knew many of the people who would soon be pouring his wines to customers, but many still scoffed at the notion that North Carolina could make quality European-style wines.

Going from location to location, Kroustalis offered up his product in a series of blind taste tests that included his wine and a well-regarded California equivalent, both served in brown paper bags.

Wine drinkers also discovered the fruit of Westbend's labor at the winery's original tasting room converted from an old garage. Many would return to their friends saying, "Guess

Continued on Page 28

Great Grapes!
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Brent's Blog



Brent Kleinheksel is one of a number of newcomers to the Yadkin Valley and Carolina wine country, people with vision, spirit and a desire to learn and be a part of our wine culture. Each issue he's going to keep us up to date on his journey from oenological neophyte to . . . well, that's what we're going to find out.

Vineyards work well to mark the passage of time. Like a young child waiting for Christmas, a new grower struggles with the notion of waiting three years before the first harvest. There is always the impulse to plant as much as possible, as quickly as possible — a time when your enthusiasm overrides common sense.

I feel for the grower with no experience, an unlimited supply of land and a large and endless source of cash. That grower will view every acre as a plantable acre, every obstacle as an obstacle to overcome and every dollar spent as one that will surely be recouped. Thankfully I had neither land nor cash during my first planting. Raising grapes is far more difficult than I had first imagined. Time passes so quickly. It is much, much wiser to take baby steps, learning the ropes little by little.

My spraying notes from last year say that bud break for the Cabernet Franc occurred right around April 17 and the Cabernet Sauvignon followed on the 28th. About three-quarters of the initial Cabernet Franc buds were killed during a light early morning frost on the 18th. They ended up recovering just fine, but the initial kill was very discouraging and I'd like not to repeat that this year.

I'm writing this column in early March and the next seven days are forecast to be in the low 70s. If that continues, it only stands to reason that bud break will be earlier this year and that is not good for those grapes that I planted in areas that are prone to frost. Spring pruning is about 65% complete. I'm pruning last year's plants back to two buds as they did not grow well enough to train up the stake. The rest of the grapes are being spur pruned to 10-12 buds per cordon. I have heard that cane pruning is a better choice for eastern growers because spur buds near the trunk typically don't receive the necessary heat and light required to be fruitful. However, in practice, I see more growers spur pruning than cane pruning.

I've read that pruning is quite traumatic on a grapevine and can serve to delay bud break a couple weeks if pruned during bud swell or even during the initial stages of bud break. A good book to read for new growers is From Vines to Wines by Jeff Cox. He does an excellent job of describing all of the necessary steps to establishing a small vineyard.

One of my focuses this year will be on how to grow grapes using fewer chemicals and more of the stuff found in nature. In previous years, my approach was very fear-driven. I didn't want my grapes to die before my wedding and while I was writing this column. Failure via vine death was just not an option. What I've learned is that it is actually pretty tough to kill a grapevine.

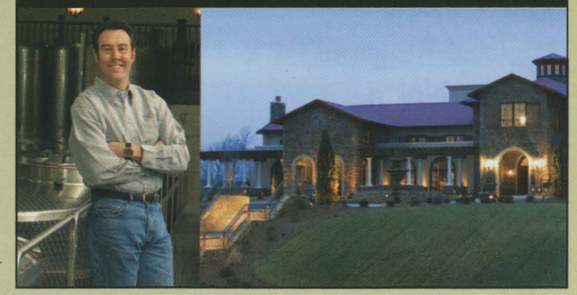
This year my focus will not be on fungicide sprays. I will spray pretty much the same as last year, using the same chemicals. That is unfortunate, but I have to choose my battles. Maybe next year I will tackle alternatives to fungicides. However, my focus will be on weed prevention (herbicide reduction), cover crops and Japanese beetles (insecticide reduction or elimination).

Studies show that by reducing your overall harvest tonnage to 1-2 tons per acre, while keeping the vine in balance, gives the vine additional fortitude to fight disease on its own. That makes sense to me. Less energy is spent by the grapevine in ripening the grapes and more energy is exerted fighting disease. Sign me up.

Continued on Page 29



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Differences with European vineyards are subtle

By Norm Oches



The author (left) harvests Sylvaner grapes in a French Alsatian vineyard.

After spending the first two weeks in October harvesting grapes in the Alsace region of France and the Pfalz region of Germany and visiting vineyards throughout Austria and Hungary, I've come away with the following impression: Although there are some clear differences between how we in North Carolina and our European brethren grow grapes and make wine, the differences are not all that earthshaking.

In how we view wine and its place in society, however, the gulf is as big as the ocean that separates us. In this article I'm going to explore some of the basic differences between how we and our European cousins grow grapes, make wine and, more importantly, view wine in the greater scheme of things.

The Alsace region of France and the Pfalz region of Germany are known for their cool weather white grape varieties such as Sylvaner, Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Muscat d'Alsace and Pinot Blanc. But there is a trend in Europe today, similar to the one we see here in North Carolina, to plant red varieties instead of whites to take advantage of the health buzz surrounding red wine.

The primary red grape in the region is Pinot Noir (known as Spät Burgunder in Germany) that in the past has produced some unremarkable yet very drinkable red table wines. Change, however, is on the horizon. Vineyard managers in the area are learning how to select and manage new clones of Pinot Noir and other reds, such as Dornfelder, that can produce bigger and more complex red wines.

And Mother Nature is doing her part as well. Over the last decade summer temperatures have been steadily rising and the growing season lengthening, a change that favors red grapes that benefit from longer hang times and warmer temps.

The 2003 season was a perfect example. A long, dry and unusually hot summer produced grapes with Napa Valley-like sugar levels of 14% or more, almost unheard of in Europe prior to this vintage.

The vineyard managers in the areas where I worked were all very concerned about the well-being of the ecosystem in and around the vineyard. It's easy to see why. Many of the vineyards surround and back right up to the houses in the villages. Whatever happens in the vineyard is felt by everyone in the village, literally.

Although they spray fungicides with the same frequency we do, most vineyard owners rely on more environmentally friendly sprays like sulfur and Bordeaux Mixture (copper sulfate and lime) to deal with mildew problems. They also use less fertilizer, the application rate of which is regulated by law in many areas, and rely on growing nutrient-rich cover crops between the rows and then plowing them under in the fall to augment soil nutrients (rather than growing a permanent cover crop of fescue between rows, which is common in North Carolina vineyards).

In all the regions I visited, planting densities were much higher than ours in North Carolina, in most cases double the plants per acre. Row widths ranged from four and a half to five feet in the Alsace and Pfalz, rather than the nine to ten feet common in North Carolina vineyards. They justify this extra planting and labor expense by pointing out that their production levels are almost double ours, with no corresponding loss of quality.

Why the need to produce so much fruit in so little space? First, in North Carolina land owners can pretty well plant vines anywhere they'll grow. But Germany and France have too much production capacity at the moment. In these highly regulated markets, the only way to expand vineyard holdings today is to buy someone else's vineyard.

And second is the issue of production efficiencies. Walk down the aisle of any Edeka, Penny Markt, or even a large food retailer like Metro in Germany. The vast majority of the wines on the shelves are priced between $4 and $8. Europe also has specialty wine shops that sell high-end (and pricier) wines. But the difference between the prices in specialty wine stores and those in supermarkets is not as great as it is here.

My German friends say they seldom pay more than 6 Euros ($7.20), and this for a good quality bottle of wine that would normally sell for twice or three times that in the U.S. The same goes for wine sold directly to customers visiting the winery. To get the production efficiencies they need to survive, vineyards have to make every square meter count.

What about the wineries? Working in the North Carolina wine industry, which is new by anyone's standard, I'm used to gleaming stainless steel tanks and winery floors so clean you could eat off them. Although I did visit wineries whose cleanliness-is-next-to-Godliness mantra mirrors our own, for the most part their wineries are a tad more rustic than our own.

The reason is clear. Many of the wineries I visited are housed in buildings that were built prior to the First World War. I visited wineries still using cement tanks built before the Second World War and enormous wooden barrels used by their grandfathers to store wine. Given the highly competitive nature of the market, there is little capital out there to radically upgrade wineries.

And guess what? They don't seem to need to. The winemakers know their "terroir" and over the years have learned to work their

Continued on Page 29

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APRIL

April 6-7. 7 p.m. Raffaldini Vineyards Winemaker Dinners at Hound Ears Club, Boone, NC. Join winemaker Stephen Rigby, and Stephen and Susan Lyons of Raffaldini for a delicious 6-course gourmet meal exclusively prepared to complement Raffaldini Wines. Location: Hound Ears Club, Boone. Info and reservations: ww.blueridgewinefestival.com

April 6-8. Blue Ridge Wine Festival at Chetola Resort, Blowing Rock, NC. Features winemakers dinners on Thursday and Friday, wine and cooking seminars on Friday and wine tastings along with live music and a children's area on Saturday. Tickets are $30 at the door and $20 in advance. For more information, visit www.blueridgewinefestival.com.

April 8. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. Bud break blessings in the vineyard at 2 p.m. Free lessons on how to make grapevine wreaths from noon to 6 p.m.

April 8. Bud Break Party at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. Featuring food, music and the release of dessert wine "Lilly B." Tickets are $10 per person.

April 8. Music By series at Horizon Cellars, Siler City, NC. From 3 to 5 p.m. Free event features easy listening music.

April 15. Fourth annual Bluegrass and BBQ festival at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring bluegrass music, hog calling and a corn eating contest.

April 20-22. Charlotte Wine and Food Weekend. Bi-annual event features a variety of vintner dinners and enthusiast and connoisseur tastings at Charlotte resorts and restaurants. Event spotlights wines from around the world and raises money for local charities. For more information, visit www.charlottewineandfood.com.

April 22. Third annual Great Grapes Wine, Arts and Food Festival at Regency Park, Cary, NC. From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Features live music, gourmet cooking demonstrations and artistic goods for sale. Tickets are $20 per person at the door and $17 in advance. For more information, visit www.uncorkthefun.com.

April 22. Barrel Room Dinner series at Horizon Cellars, Siler City, NC. From 6 to 8 p.m. Gourmet dining in wine-aging barrel room. Cost of $48 per person includes food and wine. Call 919-742-1404 to make a reservation.

April 22-23. Grand opening of new winery and tasting room at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, VA. From noon to 5 p.m. Event will also mark AmRhein's sixth annual Spring Barrel Tasting, with barrel samples of just-released wines. Cost is $10 per person.

April 22-23. Spring Open House at Chateau Morrisette, Floyd, VA. From noon to 4 p.m. Features complimentary winery tours, wine tasting, hors d' oeuvres, wine and gift discounts.

April 27. Wine tasting class on dessert wines at Creek Side Winery, Elon, NC. From 7:30 to 9 p.m. Call 336-584-4117 to reserve a spot.

April 29. Third annual Taste Carolina Wine Festival at Piedmont Triad Farmers Market, Colfax, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring live music and crafts from local artisans. Tasting tickets are $20 per person at the gate, $15 in advance. For more information visit www.tastecarolina.com.

April 29. Local Art By series at Horizon Cellars, Siler City, NC. From 1 to 5 p.m. Features art on display by a local artist.

April 29. First Wine Release, Elkin Creek Vineyard, Elkin, NC. Call 336-526-5119 for more information.

April 29-30. Spring Open House at Chateau Morrisette, Floyd, VA. From noon to 4 p.m. Features complimentary winery tours, wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, wine and gift discounts.

MAY

May 6. Shine to Wine/Wikes Grape Escape 2006, North Wilkesboro, NC. From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tasting tickets are $15 per person at the gate, $10 in advance. For more information, visit www.downtownnorthwilkesboro.com/grape-escape.

May 6. Old Fashioned Farm Day at Iron Gate Vineyards, Mebane, NC. Free event.

May 6. Spring Fling at Cypress Bend Vineyards, Wagram, NC. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tickets are $5 and include wine tastings. For more information, call 910-369-0411.

May 6. Art and Wine Festival at Moonrise Bay Vineyards, Knotts Island, NC. From noon to 5 p.m. Featuring entertainment by Julie Clark and artists from local NC counties and from Norfolk's d'Art Center. Tickets are $20 per person.

May 6-7. Spring Wine Release Celebration at the Vineyards of Swan Creek, Hamptonville, NC. From noon to 5 p.m. Featuring live music and theater. All festivities at Raffaldini Vineyards, Buck Shoals Vineyards, Windy Gap Vineyards and Laurel Gray Vineyards are free. For details, go to www.swancreekvineyards.com.

May 6-7. Spring wine tasting at A Secret Garden Vineyards, Burgaw, NC. Featuring food, live music and local artisans.

May 13. Beach Music Bash at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring live beach music and a shag dancing contest.

May 13. Third annual Spring Fling Pig Thing at Dennis Vineyards, Albemarle, NC. From 5 to 8 p.m. Featuring wine, pork BBQ and live beach music. Call 1-800-230-1743 for more information.

May 13. Oasis Shriners' Grape Escape Benefit at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. From 6-9 p.m. Food available from the Elkin-Jonesville Shrine Club for $15 per person.

May 13-14. Mother's Day Weekend at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, NC. From noon to 5 p.m. Free event features



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May 20. Spring Fling at RayLen Vineyards, Mocksville, NC. From 1 to 5 p.m. Featuring BBQ and live R&B by the Charles Greene Band. Tickets are $10 and include parking, music and wine tasting.

May 20. Fifth annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, Elkin, NC. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Featuring live music by the Jamie Carroll Band and The Band of Oz. Tickets are $20 at the door and $16 in advance. For more information, visit www.yvwf.com.

May 20. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC. From 4 to 8 p.m. Featuring The Mixed Emotions and The Catalinas. Tickets are $25, with a $5 discount for advance purchases and an additional $5 discount for wine club members.

May 20-21. Art on the Vine hosted by the wineries of the Haw River Wine Trail. Features artists at wineries in Alamance and Guilford counties displaying and selling their fine arts and crafts.

May 27. Vintage at the Vineyards at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free event combines vintage BMW motorcars with vintage wines. Featuring live German music and German food.

May 27-28. Summer Holiday Weekends at Biltmore Estate Winery, Asheville, NC. Featuring live music, cooking demonstrations, wine tastings and wine seminars.

May 28. Winemakers Dinner at Chateau Morrisette, Floyd, VA. Starts at 7 p.m. Features a five-course dinner of Caribbean-flavored food partnered with Chateau Morrisette wines. Cost is $75 per person, with reservations required. To make a reservation, call 540-593-2865

May 28-30. Memorial Day Weekend Celebration at Raffaldini Vineyards, Hamptonville, NC. Call 336-835-9463 for more details.

JUNE

June 3. Black Dog Beach Concert at Chateau Morrisette, Floyd, VA. From noon to 5 p.m. Event features live music by the Rickey Godfrey band.

June 4, "A Day of Wine and Roses," 1 p.m. at Raffaldini Vineyards, Ronda, NC. Stroll through beautiful rose gardens with our rose expert and learn all about caring for these beauties while sipping a glass of Raffaldini vino. $5. Info: www.raffaldini.com

June 7. June Tunes at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. Featuring live music from 5 to 8 p.m.

June 10. Sixth annual North Carolina Wine Festival at Tanglewood Park, Winston-Salem, NC. From noon to 6 p.m. Featuring North Carolina wineries from mountains to coast along with food and music. For more information, visit www.ncwinefestival.com.

June 10. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. Beach music concert featuring the Raleigh Rewind Band. From 6 to 9 p.m. Food available for purchase. Cost is $15 per person plus 24 oz. jar of peanut butter for Second Harvest Food Bank.

June 16. Live beach music by The Big Time Partytime Band at Iron Gate Vineyards, Mebane, NC. From 7 to 11 p.m. Ticket price to be determined.

June 17. Grand opening for Rock of Ages Winery & Vineyard, Hurdle Mills, NC. Ribbon-cutting celebration will feature food, music, wine tastings and a traditional grape stomp.

June 17. Shelton at Sunset summer concert series at Shelton Vineyards, Dobson, NC. From 6 to 9 p.m. Featuring The Craig Woolard Band. Tickets are $25, with a $5 discount for advance purchases and an additional $5 discount for wine club members.

June 17-18. Father's Day Weekend at AmRhein Wine Cellars, Bent Mountain, NC. Noon to 5 p.m. Free event features live entertainment, complimentary wine tastings of just released 2005 vintages and special wine prices for Dads.

June 21. June Tunes at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. Featuring live music from 5 to 8 p.m.

June 24. Summer concert series at Cypress Bend Vineyards, Wagram, NC. From 2 to 6 p.m. Tickets are $5 and include wine tastings. For more information, call 910-369-0411.

June 24. Celebrate Summer at Moonrise Bay Vineyards, Knotts Island, NC. From 7 to 10 p.m. Featuring music, food and wine tastings. Tickets are $20 per person.

June 24. Second annual Shellfish and Chardonnay at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. From 1 to 5 p.m. Shellfish provided by Jimmy's Seafood. Cost is $15 per person.

June 24. Downtown Winston-Salem Wine Festival (tentative). 336-354-1500 for details.

JULY

July 1-3. Summer Holiday Weekends at Biltmore Estate Winery, Asheville, NC. Featuring live music, cooking demonstrations, wine tastings and wine seminars.

July 8. Black Dog Jazz Concert at Chateau Morrisette, Floyd, VA. Noon-5 p.m. Live music by The Lenny Marcus Jazz Group.

July 5. July Jams at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. Featuring live music from 5 to 8 p.m.

July 8. Saturday Shindig Series at RagApple Lassie Vineyards, Boonville, NC. Beach music concert featuring The Catalinas. From 6 to 9 p.m. $15.

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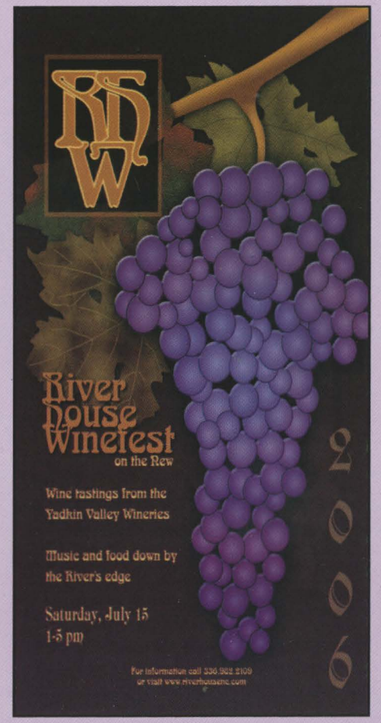


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THE GRAPEVINE

Rock of Ages Winery set for June opening

North Carolina's latest wine entrepreneurs are putting the finishing touches on a 25,000-square-foot winery, the first in Person County.

The grand opening for Rock of Ages Winery & Vineyard in Hurdle Mills has been tentatively scheduled for June 17. The new winery, owned by Kevin and Kimberly Moore, will feature a main tasting room, adjacent patio areas, terrace, private tasting room, barrel room and an amphitheater available to rent for special functions.

The winery, which broke ground in September, will have a capacity of about 10,000 cases annually. The Moores already have more than two dozen acres in vine, including both vinifera and native American grapes. To run their new winery, they have hired Ralph Shaw, a 34-year veteran in radio and television broadcasting.

Stonefield Cellars marks February debut

A new winery has just opened its doors in Northwest Guilford County.

Stonefield Cellars in Stokesdale completed construction on its new building in February and soon after began offering tastings of its wines on site.

Co-owners Robert and Natalie Wurz then held a grand opening celebration in March. Winemaker Robert Wurz's experience with the craft goes back to making wine in his parents basement at age 14 in his native California. He has worked with North Carolina grapes since 1999.

Initial offerings include 2005 vintages of Viognier, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay Doux and Niagara and a 2004 Merlot.

Joyce Rigby named Black Wolf winemaker

Black Wolf Vineyards in Dobson has hired Joyce Rigby as its new winemaker. Joyce has been involved in eastern viticulture since the 1980s when she and her husband, Stephen, began a vineyard and winemaking consulting firm in Virginia. Since moving to North Carolina in 2000, Joyce has continued to consult, install and manage vineyards.

Coupling her winemaking knowledge with her Industrial Engineering degree and experience, she has developed the design for several wineries in North Carolina and Virginia, including Black Wolf, Childress Vineyards, and the Buck Shoals/Raffaldini alternating-production facility.

She is looking forward to applying her hands-on, working knowledge of winemaking, accrued through the years of working with her husband, who is the winemaker at Raffaldini Vineyards.

Brushy Mountain gets ready

Downtown Elkin's first winery is expected to open about the time of the May 20 Yadkin Valley Wine Festival.

Brushy Mountain Winery is owned by Matthew and Ann Mayberry and their family and has Sean McRitchie as its winemaker.

The winery will purchase grapes locally and also produce blackberry wine.

Childress nabs 17 golds

Childress Vineyard's 2004 vintage, the first for its winery, has captured 17 gold medals in competitions across the country.

The most honored of the bunch, the dry-white Viognier, won gold medals at the Colorado State Fair, the Atlantic Seaboard Vinifera Wine Competition and the American Wine Society's annual competition. Another one of 2004's top winners, the Sangiovese, was just released to the public March 1.

The wines were all made by Mark Friszolowski, Childress' winemaker and the president of the North Carolina Winegrower's Association. The grapes were grown at a variety of local vineyards.

Silver Coast scores bronzes

Silver Coast Winery in Ocean Isle Beach was among the few East Coast wine producers to win a medal at the 2006 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition in January.

The competition had 3,318 wines evaluated by 55 judges, including many of the West Coast's most prestigious and best-selling labels.

Silver Coast co-owners John and Maryann Azzato walked away with bronze medals for their 2004 Premium Oak Chardonnay and Touriga.

Banner Elk Winery sets opening in May

A blueberry farm is the site of Avery County's first winery. Banner Elk Winery is expected to open to the public in mid-May.

Owned by Dr. Dick Wolfe, a faculty member at Appalachian State University, and Angelo Accetturo, a Banner Elk restaurateur, the winery will offer Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Seyval Blanc, blueberry wine and red and white blends.

In starting Banner Elk Winery, Wolfe is moving his Wolf Creek Winery from Abingdon, Va.

The new site has 20 acres planted in blueberries and an acre in Seyval Blanc and Marechal Foch. The winery is also planning to buy grapes from about 20 local vineyards, most of which are former burley tobacco operations that have converted.

In conjunction with the winery, Wolfe also operates The Villa at the Blueberry Farm, an 8-bedroom getaway.

Elkin Creek on Rezoned

Home and Garden Television filmed a segment of its *Rezoned* show in January at Elkin Creek Vineyard, showcasing the property's historic mill. The cable network's camera crews also stopped by Elkin Creek's winery and tasting room, which recently opened. The program, which will air later this year, focuses on historic and unusual places where people live.

Elkin Creek recently won its first medal, a silver for its Pinot Grigio at the Hilton Head International Wine Competition.

Camel City Café themes tastings

Camel City Café, a Winston-Salem restaurant, has started a series of monthly themed wine tastings that feature wines from various regions of the world along with a Yadkin Valley winery.

The April 19 tasting will feature French wines, while on May 17 wines from the Pacific Northwest will be poured. The restaurant is at the Stevens Center downtown. Tastings begin at 6:30 p.m.

Haw River wineries host two-day art event

A two-day event combining art and wine will be held May 20-21 along the Haw River Wine Trail. Art

Continued on next page

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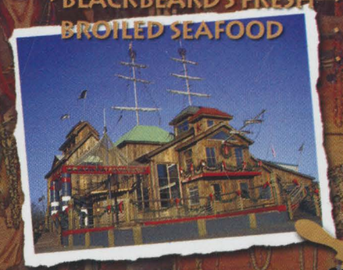
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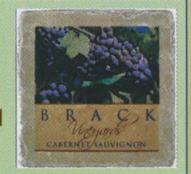
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KROUSTALIS

Continued from Page 20

what I found? A North Carolina Chardonnay. And it's good," Lillian Kroustalis, Jack's wife, told *On The Vine* in 2004. "That was the best marketing of all."

Eventually the "experts" came round. Critic Robert Parker of The Wine Advocate visited Westbend in the mid-1990's and praised it as one of the "South's best-kept wine secrets." "As fine as these wines are," Parker wrote, "I'm surprised they are not better known outside of North Carolina."

Around the same time, Kroustalis submitted his 1994 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay to Wine Spectator, a publication whose ratings can make or break a vintage. The Chardonnay garnered a respectable 85 out of 100 rating, with higher ratings to come, and Westbend no longer faced an uphill credibility battle.

In 2000, Westbend winemaker Steve Shepherd relocated to RayLen Vineyards to help jump-start a new wine venture in Mocksville. RayLen would be among the first of many who would soon seek to emulate Westbend's success. Since 2000 the number of wine producers in the state has jumped from 21 to almost 60, with 20 in the Yadkin Valley Appellation alone.

Lenna Hobson, who opened one of those new wineries, RagApple Lassie Vineyards, said fledging wineries across the Yadkin Valley turned to Kroustalis for reassurance.

"He did this and took the risk when no one else would," Hobson said. "He truly was a pioneer in showing that grapes could grow in North Carolina vineyards."

All the new wine ventures can fall back on the time-tested performance of North Carolina grapes, a track record that took Kroustalis to get rolling.

"Someone had to take that initial drive into doing this," Terry said. "(Without Kroustalis) the wine industry would have eventually happened here, but who knows how long it would have been."



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

GRAPEVINE

Continued from previous page

on The Vine: A Fine Wine and Fine Craft Tour, is a joint venture of Alamance Artisans and five wineries of Alamance and Guilford counties — Benjamin, Creek Side, Grove, Glen Marie and Iron Gate.

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BRENT'S BLOG

Continued from Page 21

My efforts this year will be concentrated on reducing the number of Japanese beetles. Last year, starting in mid-June to early August, I would spray constantly for beetles, killing thousands with each spray. I just can't stand seeing my plants covered with a plague of beetles.

I thought about trying milky spore, but the evidence just wasn't there that it would work. However, I did read of several successful attempts by individuals who controlled the beetle population entirely by creating an unfriendly environment. Turns out there are a ton of birds that feed on beetle grubs and adult beetles. Cardinals, robins, bluejays, grackles, woodpeckers and purple martins all enjoy feasting on both beetle grubs and adult beetles. Ants and spiders also consume copious amounts of beetle eggs in the soil even before they hatch. The gal at Tractor Supply told me to "get me some guinea hens." I don't know about that one, but I logged it for future reference.

I've erected some very large bird feeders and bird houses throughout my property. Just like in the movie Field of Dreams, the whole notion of "if you build it they will come" has never rung more true. The birds are arriving like a small army, from all parts of Surry County and the world, ready to battle, to defeat the ever-menacing Japanese beetle invasion. Plans for low-income housing for woodpeckers are under way, the purple martins just got their mortgage approved on two very large, trilevels and pollinating flowers and plants are going in everywhere to attract the right insects that will feed on the beetle eggs.

Will it make a difference? I don't know. But at least I am trying something different. I don't want to grow grapes if I have to dump all sorts of chemicals on them every year.That can't be good for the environment and can't be good for wine quality. I would prefer to raise fewer grapes, with far fewer chemicals and have those grapes truly reflect the soil, climate and terroir of the Yadkin Valley.

EUROPEAN DIFFERENCES

Continued from Page 23

magic with grapes under conditions we might consider less than optimal – and still turn out bright, clean and well-balanced wines for a very discerning market.

Now let's talk about "wine" people in Europe. A lot of the wine you see in home cellars in Europe is sold directly to the consumer through visits to the winery — but to a completely different kind of consumer than we are used to here.

In North Carolina, there are people, and there is wine. Some people like wine and drink it, some don't, and some haven't tried it yet. In Europe there is no such distinction. Wine and people are cut from the same cloth. In Europe the enjoyment of wine has been passed down from parents to children for the last 2,000 years. People visit wineries in Europe and sample wines because they want to purchase a case or two of the same for their own well-stocked cellars. We're talking everyday folks here, not just bankers, lawyers or corporate executives.

And how important is the wine industry to the local economy? I worked in four vineyards over a two-week period. At each vineyard I was part of a team of 5-18 villagers. And in each team, I was the only outsider. Everyone else was an aunt, cousin, grandmother, or close family friend of the vineyard owner; many of them having taken off work each fall and picked for that particular vineyard for decades.

I've worked with some very hardworking Hispanic crews here in North Carolina, and they would have had a hard time keeping up with these villagers. Each villager felt the success of that winery was riding on their shoulders. Why? Because they were working for more than just a wage. They were there because Willi, Paul, Gilles or Henri depended upon them to bring in the harvest on time and at a reasonable cost to the vineyard owner. In turn, the whole village reaped the benefit of reasonably priced wines sold to a broader market.

What can we learn from our European cousins? A few nuggets about growing more ecologically-friendly wines, that's clear. And everything about wine's place in society. Wine consumption in the U.S. is up, and that's a good thing for our industry. I'm inclined to believe that Americans are slowly coming to realize that wine is a social matchmaker, the perfect counterpart to good food, lively conversation and friends.

To support that new view of wine in North Carolina, let's hope that wine "communities" begin to grow up around our own state's vineyards like they have in Europe, communities made up of people who not only want to drink North Carolina wine, but want to help the wine industry in this state become a key component of the state's overall economic vitality. Who knows? Someday Raleigh may have to change the state drink from milk to wine. Sacre bleu!



Norm Oches is Board Secretary and Education Chair for the North Carolina Winegrower's Association.

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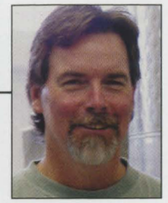


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Ask The Winemaker



By Stephen Rigby, winemaker, Raffaldini Vineyards

What exactly does 'estate bottled' mean?

All wine comes from somewhere. Now isn't thats a profound statement? But just how did the last wine you enjoyed get there? The term "estate bottled" is generally put there to indicate that the wine in that bottle was grown and vinified under the ownership and direction of the winery on the label. They made all the decisions affecting the vineyard management and the winemaking.

According to the Alcohol and Tobacco TTB, wine behind an "estate bottled" label must be grown in an approved viticultural area, and the wine must come from grapes grown on lands owned or leased by the vineyard. They must also be located in the same geographical area as the winery.

A term such as "estate bottled" is often used to enhance the perception of quality, but more importantly it is a term indicating trueness to being from a particular place. In reality, wines labeled "estate bottled" can, like any other wine, run the gamut from outstandingly good to mediocre to just plain bad.

Why does this matter? Much of the romance and allure of wines are that they are a reflection of the place they were grown and of the methods by which the fruit was then handled and vinified . . . the distinction of being a real manifestation of the land and of the people that work that land. Gerard Bentryn of Bainbridge Island Vineyards in Washington. wrote in Wines & Vines magazine recently that "the romance of wine comes from the idea that it is a time and place in a bottle." That time is the season designated by the vintage date, and that place is the vineyard.

With the advent of reliable transportation systems, refrigeration, and improved quality control measures, it's not uncommon these days for wines to be produced in one place and shipped to another for bottling. That's all well and good for providing quality wines to different regions, and good business sense when a young vineyard and winery is getting established and needs wines to sell to help get on its feet. Also a winery may desire to increase its inventories to support its fortunately increasing sales. But a wine grown and produced, for example, in Washington and finished and bottled under a Pennsylvania label doesn't show that "sense of place" that could only be found in a wine grown in Pennsylvania.

Nicolas Belfrage, from his book Brunello to Zibibbo; the Wines of Tuscany, Central and Southern Italy, refers to this concept of "a sense of place" in wines as "an amalgam of considerations linking soil, climate and microclimate, grape variety and customary practices. It is the role of the human, at least in the area of fine wines, to ensure that all of these come together to create a liquid which is unique … whilst introducing such improvements as do not radically alter the nature of the product. This is the special gift of wine – its ability to transport the consumer to a small patch of the earth's surface which is alone able to bring forth such and such a combination of smells, tastes and sensations."

That, in essence, is what I think is so exciting and interesting about North Carolina wines, or for that matter wines from any given region. When they are a product grown and produced on the farm (and, yes, winegrowing IS farming) and are a reflection of the vineyard and the people who grow and develop the wine, I can't help but feel that it just doesn't get purer than that.

I'm like anyone else and have my preferences. I may not like every wine I taste, but, having sort of "been there, done that," I do have a deep appreciation for the efforts of those involved in this process and who are building this wonderful industry. And that appreciation includes those who are joining this journey by exploring, tasting and enjoying the local and regional fruits of this labor.

It should continue to be an exciting and perpetual journey for those of us, both consumer and producer, who continue the pursuit of the evolving wines from all these "places."

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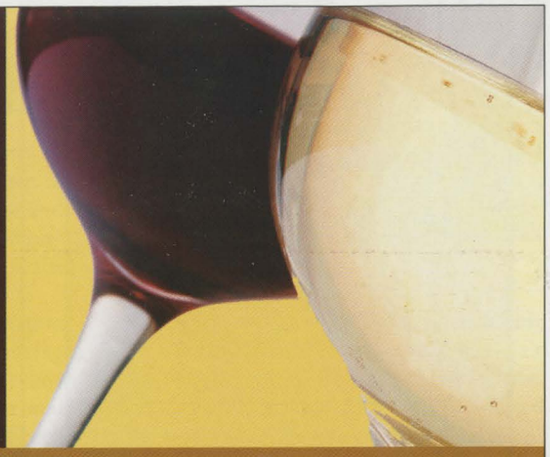
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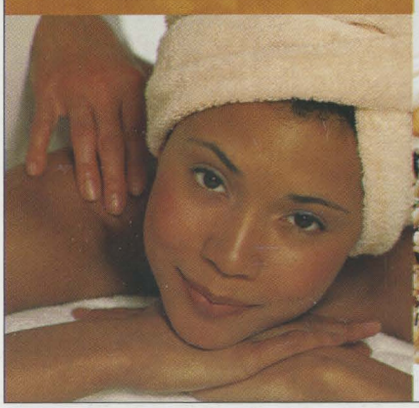
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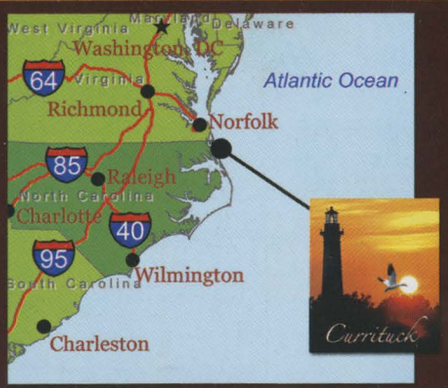
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