

April-July 2004

On The Vine

YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

Chianti in Carolina

See Page 4



See Page 7

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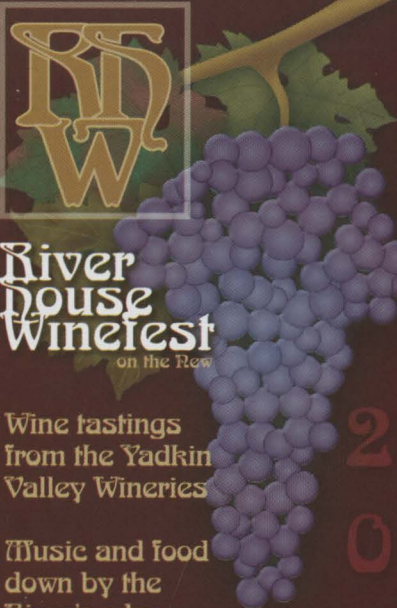
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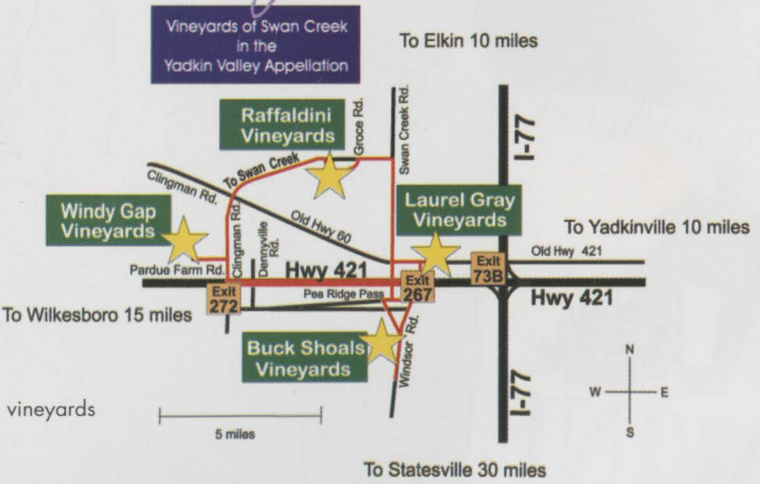
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Pick up our trail map when you visit and a listing of places we recommend in the Yadkin Valley.



On The Vine

YADKIN VALLEY & CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

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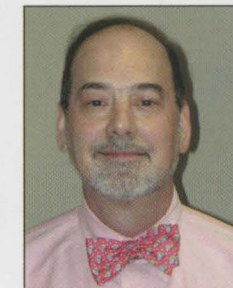
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Susan Lyons



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

Hot off the wine press . . .

With this issue *On The Vine* embarks on the next stage of its development as the premier magazine covering North Carolina's rapidly developing vineyard and winery industry. Late last year Susan Lyons, founder and publisher of *On The Vine*, approached us and suggested that there might be synergies between her publication and our company, which publishes newspapers out of Elkin, the heart of the Yadkin Valley.



Rebel Good



Jeanette Driscoll

With the upcoming opening of Raffaldini Vineyards, where Susan will head up the marketing effort and the tasting room and her husband Stephen is general manager (see story, Page 4), Susan felt she might no longer be able to devote the time necessary to keep up with *On The Vine*'s growth, and so she has entrusted us with her baby.

We owe Susan a deep debt of gratitude for the great start she has given *On The Vine* over the past three years, and we pledge to build upon the firm foundation she has provided.

The biggest change for our readers is that we will be doubling our frequency, coming out four times a year instead of two. The exponential growth of vineyards and wineries in North Carolina and the Yadkin Valley, and in the attendant travel and tourism industry, gives us so much more to cover.

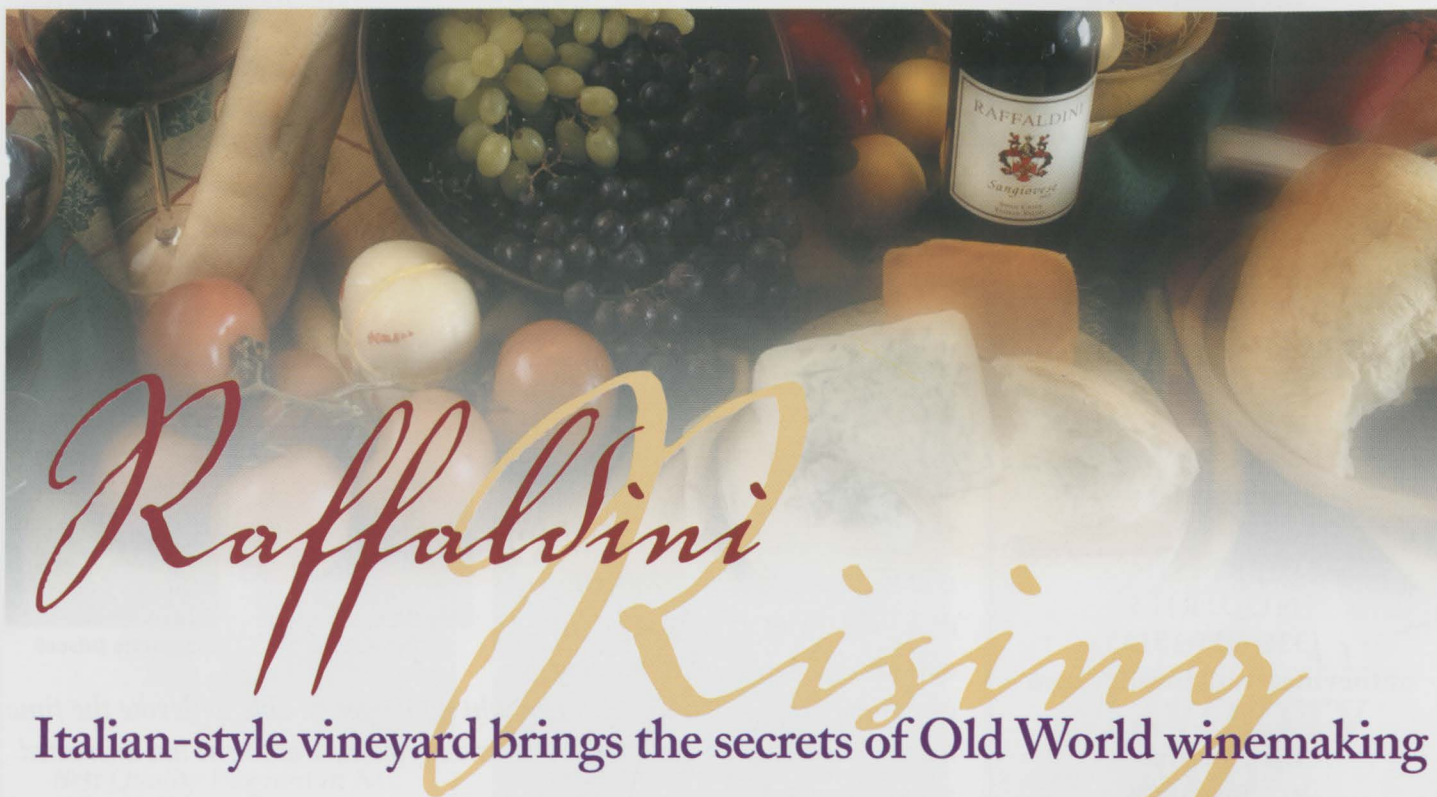
Additionally, with the advent of the Yadkin Valley as the state's first — and so far only — American Viticultural Area, we will give it additional emphasis, while continuing to cover all of North Carolina's wine news. As other appellations are approved, we will add emphasis to their coverage, too.

As the new stewards of *On The Vine* we want to continue to improve the publication so that it meets the needs of the industry and consumers alike. We are always open to suggestions about topics for coverage. You can email us your ideas at onthevine@yadkinvalley.com.

We have big hopes and dreams for *On The Vine* and especially for the Yadkin Valley. *Wine Enthusiast* magazine has said that we may be the "next big wine region in the U.S." Will we be the next Napa Valley? You bet! We are already the country's best-kept secrets in wines!

Rebel Good
Publisher

Jeanette Driscoll
Editor



Italian-style vineyard brings the secrets of Old World winemaking

By Jeanette Driscoll
Editor

It was a good year, a very good year. The year 1348, that is.

It was then, in Mantua in the northern Italian province of Lombardy, that perhaps one of the finest secrets in wine was born, one seasoned through the ages and now springing forth for the first time in the Yadkin Valley.

Welcome to Raffaldini Vineyards, a scene right out of sunny Italy, where wine crafted with Old World methods is about to be poured for the first time from grapes grown on local soil. The combination of soil and the breezy climate provide a strikingly similar environment to grapes grown in central and southern Italy. Once-hilly pasture and woodland has been transformed into rolling vineyards — with a 180-degree panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains — and the picturesque little Italian tasting room offers a true taste of Italy inside.

Splendor awaits you in every corner of the fields, with meditative fish ponds and gardens perfumed by central and southern Italian grapes, aromatic herbs — such as rosemary and lavender — and rhododendron and rose dells line the path from the parking lot to the tasting room. Drive or bicycle to Raffaldini, winding through beautiful backcountry roads, connecting four Yadkin Valley wineries (The Vineyards of Swan Creek Wine Trail — the first wine trail in our state).

The beauty lies not only in the landscape, but also inside the tasting room, which displays a gallery of paintings and sculpture collected by the Raffaldini family through the ages.

Stephen Lyons, the general manager and vice president of Raffaldini Vineyards, worked extensively in the industry before it came to “fruition” locally. In addition to being a partner in Raffaldini, his résumé includes working at Ravenswood of Sonoma Valley and also installing vineyards on George Lucas’ Skywalker Ranch in northern California.

Susan, Raffaldini’s director of marketing and tasting room manager, founded this magazine, *On The Vine*, passing on the legacy as her growing responsibilities with Raffaldini became “all-consuming.”

“It’s been very exciting to be involved in

projects in the wine industry and now be able to work together on our own project which expresses our love for the location, fine wines and for the Raffaldini Family,” Susan says,

Winemaker Stephen Rigby is “very much looking forward to working with this worthy team. Stephen and Susan bring many years of combined experience in this business to the effort and the Raffaldinis not only bring a sense of tradition, but also a vision and insight. I hope to be a positive component to the team, and working with grape varieties that, though they are traditional in some areas of the world (particularly in Italy), are totally unique and new to our part of the winemaking world. Also included in the vineyard are some of the more ‘traditional’ international varieties that many of us have worked on for years that will allow the perennial challenge of

FAST FACTS

• First planting, 2002

• First harvest, 2003

• Total acreage in vines, 36

• First wine release, May 15

• Owners, the Raffaldini family

• Winemaker, Stephen Rigby

• General Manager, Stephen Lyons

• Wines include Sangiovese,

Montepulciano, Malvasia Bianca,

Fiano, Aglianico, Bella Misto

developing these into better wines.”

The Raffaldinis are well acquainted with the process that goes hand in hand with crafting increasingly superior wines able to stand the test of time. The family had made the decision to share their centuries-old winemaking legacy after a painstaking search for the location that would reflect their heritage and hold the promise of making true Italian wines. Most of these wines are entirely new to the region, as well as the East Coast, and some are even new to the United States. The venture in itself is redolent of the family motto: “Audentes Fortuna Iuvat,” meaning “Fortune Favors the Daring.”

On their website you’ll learn how Raffaldini Vineyard’s founding principles are “deeply rooted” in Virgil, the great Italian poet and philosopher whose home has been the Raffaldini’s Mantua farm for 700 years. It was Virgil’s belief that vineyards would only produce grapes of exceptional quality if one worked with the land, with a deep respect for the land, understanding its essence and sense of place, rather than seeking to change it. This “sense of place” was exactly what the family was searching for and found within the Yadkin Valley.

An Old Italian proverb rings true: “The land that the farmer rejects is the land that the vineyard accepts.” This “rejected” land holds the key to fine wine, with grape vines that struggle for survival and thrive on minerals unique to their vineyard.

The vineyard, meticulously sculpted by Stephen Lyons, possesses an “indescribable sense of totality and energy that only comes from a complete union of spirituality, energy, and historical legacy,” the tale continues.

Stephen and Susan smile like proud parents when they boast: “We are creating a destination through the beauty of this landscape. A lot of heart has been poured into the bottles, and our baby is about to be born! Our gift is good wine, good food and good family!”

There are plenty of nooks within the vineyard to retreat with a glass of wine, some crusty Italian bread and cheese and condiments, and just simply breathe in all the surrounding nature. You just might be tempted to pick a grape or two off a vine and taste a little Italy. What’s growing ahead are graceful Italian native plantings, striking Tuscan-style murals, Italian imported delights and, a few years down the road, an Italian villa style tast-



Photos by Will & Deni McIntyre

Stephen Lyons, general manager, and his wife Susan, director of marketing, welcome you to Raffaldini’s newly decorated tasting room.

ing room and restaurant overlooking the vineyard.

New releases about to burst forth are Chardonnay, Dolcetto, Bianco, Bella Misto, Rosato, and of course, the backbone wine of Chianti, Sangiovese.

Raffaldini is sharing wine production facilities, equipment, and winemaker Stephen Rigby with neighboring vineyard Buck Shoals utilizing an alternating winery permit, but each will create its own brand of wines. This distinctive arrangement has resulted in a perfect blend, giving the Swan Creek area of the Yadkin Valley two remarkable gifts in wine.

The first pouring of Raffaldini wines will take place at the 3rd Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival in Elkin, North Carolina, on Saturday, May 15. The vineyard and tasting room will open to the public the next day.

For more information about Raffaldini Vineyards, visit www.raffaldini.com.

Raffaldini Vineyards 450 Groce Road Ronda, NC 28670 ph: 336-835-9463 Email info@raffaldini.com

Hours: Thurs. 12-5; Fri. 12-6; Sat. 12-5; Sun. 1-5 and by appointment.

RAFFALDINI



NC Winegrower's Association Outgrows Its Website

GREENSBORO — The explosion of new vineyards and wineries weren't the only thing bursting on the scene, when the NCWA Annual Meeting was held at the Greensboro-High Point Marriott Hotel at Piedmont Triad International Airport on Feb. 14-15.

Larry Kehoe, president of the NCWA, unveiled the organization's new website, in hopes of improving communication and accommodating the growth of its many new members. "Our organization has grown so rapidly and we have such a diverse group that it has been difficult to maintain communication and our new website is intended to transmit information back and forth instantaneously," Kehoe said.

Kim Myers, of Laurel Gray Vineyards, did the official unveiling. Since 1994 membership in the association has grown from 20 to over 350. In the next year, 18 new wineries will open, with an additional six new wine producers. Another 17 wineries or wine producers are in the pipeline.

The meeting also attracted attendees who were there simply out of curiosity and those who are seriously thinking about joining "the crowd." At the rate the association is growing, they could easily outgrow the Marriott facilities by next year.



NC State Fair's Best in Show goes to Westbend Vineyards

RALEIGH — Westbend Vineyards took the Winegrower's Cup at the most recent North Carolina State Fair after its Muscat Canelli 2002 dessert wine was judged Best in Show. Shelton Vineyards' Merlot 2000 was named Best Red Wine and Hinnant Family Vineyards' Muscadine Blush was judged Best Muscadine Wine.

Five other wines achieved the coveted Double



NCWA Past President Scott Lawrence tries local wine out for size.

Gold status: Biltmore Estate's Chateau Reserve and Chardonnay; RagApple Lassie's Chardonnay 2002; and RayLen's Cabernet Franc 2002 and Merlot 2002.

Another 10 Gold Medals were earned by entries from Biltmore, Chatham Hill, Dennis, Hinnant, Martin, RayLen and Shelton vineyards.

In all 66 medals were awarded out of 100 wines entered from 14 wineries, seven Double Gold, 10 Gold, 22 Silver and 27 Bronze.



Old North State Foundation Names First Executive Director

MOUNT AIRY — The Old North State Winegrower's Foundation, Inc., Mount Airy, NC, announces that Susan F. Harris has joined the organization, as its first executive director. Ms. Harris has a broad

background of fundraising, economic development, tourism, and the arts in the Piedmont Triad and north-west North Carolina.

The foundation, formed in association with the Old North State Winegrower's Cooperative, has a mission to support educational and wine industry programs that will enhance the position of wine grape growers in North Carolina.

"We are pleased to have someone of Ms. Harris' experience to help lead the efforts of the Old North State Winegrower's Foundation," said state Foundation Chairman Hal Brownfield. "The work of the foundation is an important component of the efforts to preserve the family farm, and promote an alternative cash crop in North Carolina."

The Old North State Winery is the only operating winery in North Carolina owned by an agricultural cooperative. Its 38 charter members include family farms that go back as far as five generations.



4th Annual NC Wine Festival Returns To Tanglewood Park

CLEMMONS — The Piedmont is looking forward to what has become a summertime local tradition. The fourth annual NC Wine festival is to be held at Tanglewood Park in Clemmons on Saturday, June 12. The festival is again produced by the Triad's CBS Infinity-Owned radio station group WSJS and WMFR.

Continued on Page 13

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Grape expectations for 3rd Yadkin Valley festival

By Rebel Good
Publisher

Organizers are looking for more than just corks popping at the third annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival on Saturday, May 15, at Elkin Municipal Park.

The first two festivals were strong successes despite uncooperative weather, and the Elkin Jonesville Chamber of Commerce, the festival's sponsor, is expecting a dramatic increase in attendance.

"When you couple the fine reputation we have built at the first two festivals with a near-doubling of the participating vineyards and wineries, we could really see attendance 'pop,'" says Derrill Rice, the festival's chairman.

Rice expects at least 12 wineries and vineyards to be sampling and selling their vintages, compared to eight at the first two festivals. Newcomers are Laurel Gray, Raffaldini, Round Peak and Carolina Harvest. They join Shelton, RayLen, Westbend, RagApple Lassie, Windy Gap, Hanover Park, Black Wolf and Chatham Hill.

All but the last are located within the new Yadkin Valley Appellation. Festival rules stipulate that all wines poured must be made from at least 75 percent grapes grown within the appellation.

The added vineyards have necessitated a complete revamping of the festival site. "We started planning for this year's festival as soon as we finished last year's," Rice said. "We had an engineer draw up various site plans so we could study the dynamics of crowd flow depending upon where we located vendors, wineries and food outlets."

The shift will allow a greater area for music lovers partaking of the tunes of Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs and Mixed Emotions, this year's acts.

The vendor area will be between rows of vineyard tents. Vendors will include an eclectic and upscale mix offering such items as gourmet cheeses, specialty silverwork and imported glassware.

There will be two entrances to the festival to ease any bottlenecks. While a good deal of parking will be available adjacent to the festival, plenty is available in downtown Elkin with a shuttle bus ferrying attendees.

Entrance to the festival is free, but there is a \$15 admission (\$10 in advance) for the winetasting. Tasters will be issued a com-

memorative glass, identifying wristband and site map. The festival opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m. Tickets may be ordered in advance at www.yvwf.com or by calling the Chamber office at 336-526-1111.

The festival is one of several activities in the community for the weekend. On Friday evening, May 14, the Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital Foundation will host its second annual Yadkin Valley Wine Auction. Among the items that will be knocked down are a California wine country cruise and bottles of the best wines from Yadkin Valley vintners.

Details are available from Jeannette Hendrick, the foundation's executive director, at 336-527-7000.

The morning of the festival the Surry County Red Cross will sponsor a bicycle ride that will wind itself through the Yadkin Valley wine country, passing several vineyards. The ride will finish at the festival.

Cyclists wishing to participate should contact Hattie Brintle at 336-786-4413.

Following the festival the Foothills Arts Council will sponsor its second Wine Down party at the council's headquarters on Church Street near the festival site. Details available at 336-835-2025.

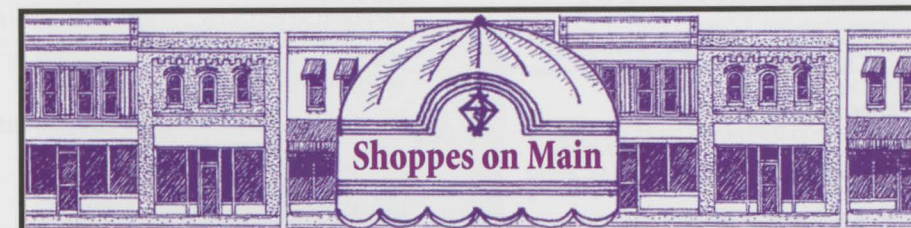
"We are looking to turn the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival into a multi-day event," Rice says. "In future years we envision Elkin and the Yadkin Valley becoming a tourist destina-



Bacchus and the Princess of the Grapes will welcome you to the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival.

tion where wine lovers can take vineyard tours, stay at local hotels and bed-and-breakfasts and enjoy a fantastic festival."

The festival site is located close to downtown Elkin. Take Exit 82 off of I-77 and follow the signs.



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WINERY INDEX

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MOUNTAIN REGION

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

PIEDMONT REGION

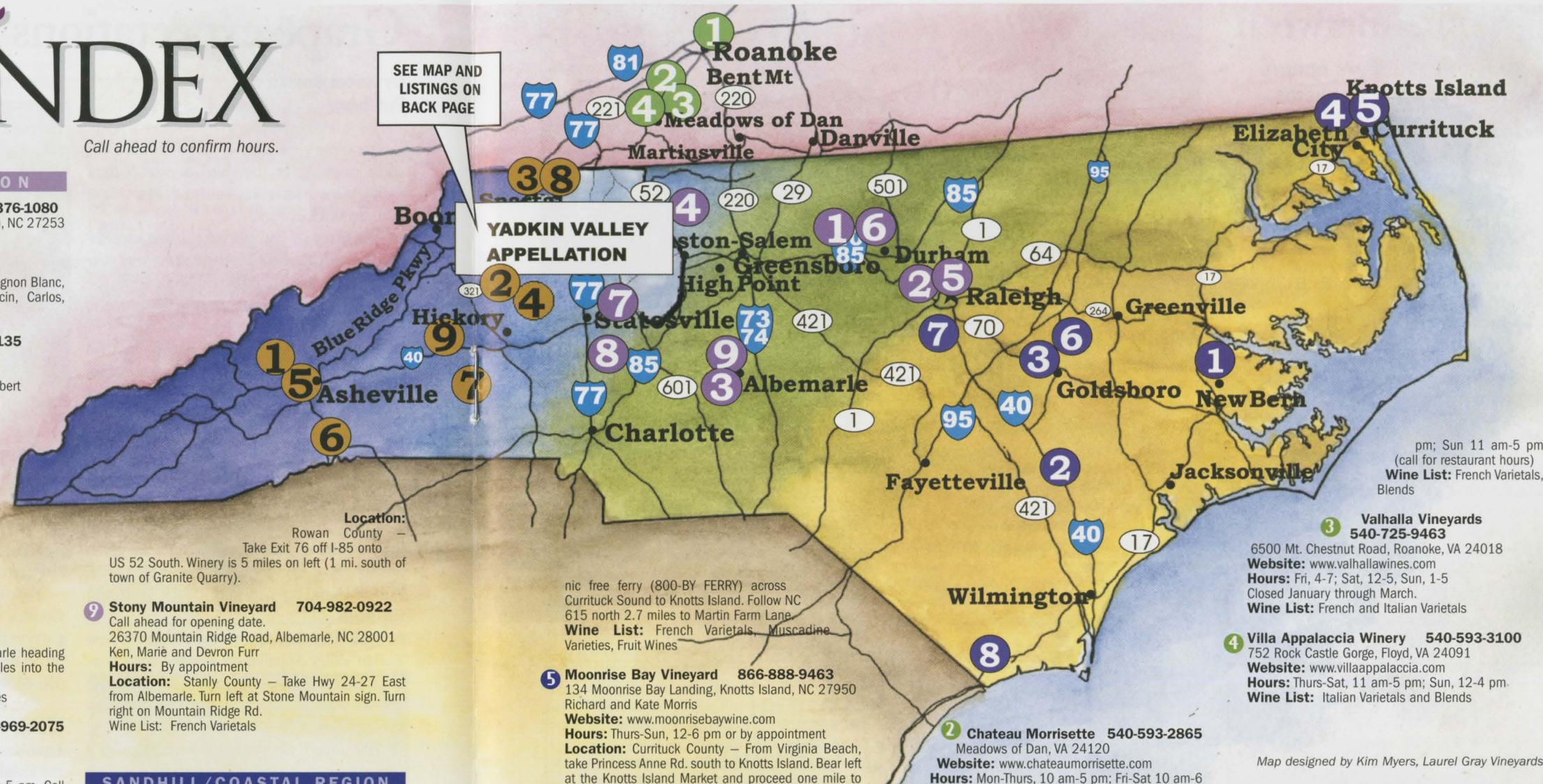
- 1 Benjamin Vineyards & Winery 336-376-1080**
6516 Whitney Road, Graham (Saxapahaw), NC 27253
Andy and Nancy Zeman
Website: benjaminvineyards.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sun., 1-6 (opening June 1)
Wine List: Chardonnay, Chardonel, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chambourcin, Carlos, Magnolia, fruity muscadine blends.
- 2 Chatham Hill Winery 919-380-7135**
3500 Gateway Centre Blvd. #200
Morrisville, NC 27560
Marek Wojciechowski, Paul Henkens & Robert Henkens
Website: www.chathamhillwine.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11-6; Sun, 1-5, or by appointment
Location: Wake County — Take I-40 Exit 285 towards Morrisville on Aviation Parkway. Take first right at Gateway Centre Boulevard. Right onto Northgate Ct. at 3500 sign.
Wine List: French Varietals, French-American Hybrids, Blends
- 3 Dennis Vineyards 800-230-1743**
24043 Endy Rd., Albemarle, NC 28001
Pritchard & Sando Dennis
Website: www.dennisvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 9 am-6 pm
Location: Stanly County — From Albemarle heading toward Charlotte on Hwy 24-27, go 5 miles into the Endy community. Turn on Endy Rd.
Wine List: Muscadine Blends, Fruit Wines
- 4 Germanton Vineyard & Winery 336-969-2075**
3530 Hwy 8-65, Germanton, NC 27019
Judy & David Simpson
Website: www.germantongallery.com
Hours: Tues-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat, 9 am-5 pm. Call Sun. hours.
Location: Stokes County — In Germanton. Gallery is on corner of Hwy 8 and Friendship Rd. (8 miles north of W-S.)
Wine List: French Hybrids, American Varietals
- 5 Iron Gate Vineyards and Winery 336-269-0918**
2540 Lynch Store Road, Mebane, NC 27302
Gene and Debbie Stikeleather
Website: irongatevineyards.com
Hours: Mon.-Sat., 1-7; Sun., 1-5
Wine List: Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Chambourcin, Packhouse Red, Brightleaf White, Flue Fire sweet wine.
- 6 Innovative Winery 919-469-3500**
10235 Chapel Hill Road, Morrisville, NC 27560
David and Barbara McDermott
Hours: Tues.-Fri., 12-7; Sat., 12-5.
- 7 Garden Gate Vineyards 336-751-3794**
261 Scenic Drive, Mocksville, NC 27028
Bob and Sonya Whitaker
Website: www.gardengatevineyards.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat. 12-5; or by appointment
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
- 8 Old Stone Vineyard and Winery 704-279-0930**
6245 Hwy. 52, Salisbury, NC 28146
Owner: Mark Brown
Website: www.oswinery.com
Hours: Tues.-Sat., 11-5; Sun., 1-5

SANDHILL/COASTAL REGION

- 1 Bennett Vineyards 877-762-9463**
6832 Bennett Vineyards Rd., Edward, NC 27821
Buddy Harrell & Robert Thornton
Website: www.ncwines.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 2-5 pm. Please call ahead.
Location: Beaufort County — 35 miles south of Greenville, off Hwy 33. Follow signs.
Wine List: American Blends
- 2 Duplin Winery 800-774-9634**
P.O. Box 756, Rose Hill, NC 28458
David Fussell & Family
Website: www.duplinwinery.com
Hours: Mon-Thurs., 9-5 pm; Fri., 9-10 pm; Sat., 9-6 pm
Location: Duplin County — Take I-40 exit 380. Right on Hwy 117.
Wine List: Muscadine Blends
- 3 Hinnant Farms 919-965-3350**
826 Pine Level Micro Rd., Pine Level, NC 27568
Willard and Bob Hinnant
Hours: Tu-Sat, 10 am-5 pm
Location: Johnston County — From Raleigh take I-70 east. Travel 30 miles to I-70A. Go 2 miles to Pine Level; left at light.
Wine List: Muscadine Varieties
- 4 Martin Vineyards 252-429-3542**
P.O. Box 186, Knotts Island, NC 27950
David & Jeanie Martin
Website: www.martinvineyards.com
Hours: Daily 12-5 pm.
Location: Currituck County — From Rt. 168, take sce-

SEE MAP AND LISTINGS ON BACK PAGE

YADKIN VALLEY APPELLATION



pm; Sun 11 am-5 pm
(call for restaurant hours)
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

3 Valhalla Vineyards 540-725-9463

6500 Mt. Chestnut Road, Roanoke, VA 24018
Website: www.valhallawines.com
Hours: Fri, 4-7; Sat, 12-5, Sun, 1-5
Closed January through March.
Wine List: French and Italian Varietals

4 Villa Appalaccia Winery 540-593-3100

752 Rock Castle Gorge, Floyd, VA 24091
Website: www.villaappalaccia.com
Hours: Thurs-Sat, 11 am-5 pm; Sun, 12-4 pm.
Wine List: Italian Varietals and Blends

2 Chateau Morrisette 540-593-2865

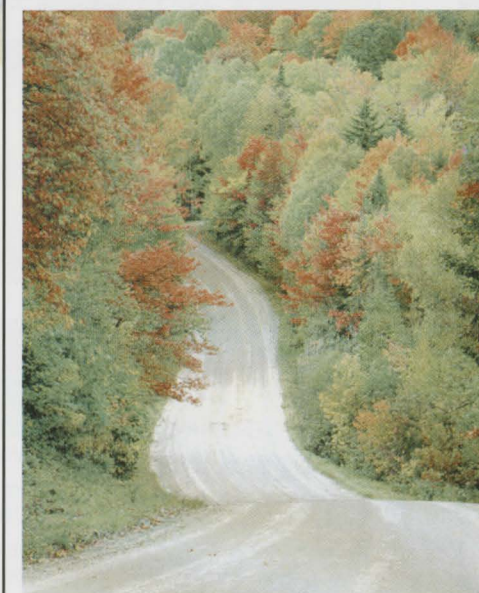
Meadows of Dan, VA 24120
Website: www.chateaumorrisette.com
Hours: Mon-Thurs, 10 am-5 pm; Fri-Sat 10 am-6

Map designed by Kim Myers, Laurel Gray Vineyards

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The Inn-Between

Rockford Inn offers charm, access to local vineyards

By Jeanette Driscoll
Editor

The Yadkin Valley can be strangely romantic. One particularly surreal location is tucked away between cow fields and the Yadkin River in southern Surry County. Down on Rockford Road, just over the Rockford Bridge from Yadkin County, lays a picturesque hideaway village with quaint churches and historic homes nestled together, a reflection of this close-knit community.

As you approach, the landscape transforms right before your eyes, as if you have gone back in time. You're in Old Rockford — but don't blink, you just might miss it. This is what country folk call a "poke and plum spot": poke your head out the window as you drive by and you're plum out of town."

This is an idyllic stopping point for a romantic wine country getaway, particularly for those toying with the notion of having your own vineyard, or the thought of running your own bed and breakfast.

Doug and Hannah Holyfield of The Rockford Inn have the best of both worlds. When you meet them, along with daughters Ashley and Alana, they immediately strike you as a wholesome family living the American dream. When they say, "stop in anytime" — they mean it.



The Rockford Inn is a restful haven in the Yadkin Valley wine country.

And don't even think about leaving before breakfast. Although restored mainly to keep its historic and sentimental integrity, this B&B is très "rustic chic" in style, with hand-planed ceilings, heart pine floors and cozy country charm. Hannah boasts that they were restoring not just a house that has been in the family for over a century, but also a family legacy. For the Holyfields it has been a real labor of love.

This is the ideal pit stop for those seeking solitude and a place to take in a glass of wine accompanied by a few of life's simpler pleasures. Pleasures

such as basking in the sun on their outside porch while breathing in fresh air and the aroma of the vines growing "at the crest of 10 rolling acres." Or spend the day perusing the stories of past visitors in the guest book of the Vineyard Suite — just one of the three gorgeous retreats within the Rockford Inn.

During a leisurely stroll along the path to the Rockford General Store you can learn the story of this little village, or you might try the porchside checker tournaments. A must-see before leaving Rockford is the fresco "Come Unto Me" that adorns the Rockford Methodist Church.

Tour De Yadkin Carolina Wine Country Tours

By Jeanette Driscoll
Editor

What wines go well with Spandex bike suits and limousines? As always, it's a matter of personal taste.

Two Piedmont companies offer vastly different wine tours of the Yadkin Valley.

If you are the rugged outdoorsy type who likes to work for your wine (or work it off), then a Carolina Tailwind's bicycle tour may be right up your alley. Greg and Anne Fleming added the bike tours to their array of trails three years ago after realizing there was a "gaping hole in North Carolina tourism."

They regard the Yadkin Valley as one of the best-kept bicycling secrets in a state already filled with "miles of rolling hills seemingly made just for cyclists." This pairs well with another best-kept secret, our rapidly-developing wine industry. The tour packs a lot into a two-day getaway, combining rural scenery, wine tasting, historic accommodations, fine dining and, of course, much-needed exercise after holiday season winds down to a halt.

But is there romance to be found on a bike tour? Just ask Greg and Anne, who started the tours as friends and wound up biking partners for life. This also answers the question: which came first, the wine or the wedding? They started the tours in March and were married by June. Maybe it was the beautiful scenery, their common love for bicycling and the outdoors, or maybe the wine simply made them lose their inhibitions. Either way, they are good company — and we are glad they gave birth to a brilliant idea!

Carolina Tailwinds offers North Carolina wine country tours through fall, as well as a Virginia rail tour, Ocracoke tour and Blue Ridge Parkway tour. Wine country tour rates range from \$225-325. For more information, check out their website at www.carolinatailwinds.com, or call 888-251-3206.

For those of you who like your wine handed to you on a silver platter, how about a posh "celebrity-style" wine tour, available by limousine, luxury tour van or bus.

Carla McGlynn of ePlanet Travel, which specializes in corporate and leisure group travel, originated the tours when she noticed how few people outside our area actually knew about North Carolina wines.

Planning these tours is far from easy street for Carla, who puts her heart and soul into each tour she coordinates. Pack your silver spoon — her tours include gourmet lunches, wine tastings, crackers and cheese, grapes, jazz music and a commemorative tote goodie bag. She can pack in a day or two just about any size tour, tailoring for romantic couples tours, girls nights out on the town and even tours for spouses left behind during a business trip to the Piedmont.

Earlier this month she hosted a tour of the North Carolina mountain vineyards which also included overnight accommodations in downtown Asheville as well as a tour of the Biltmore Estate and Winery during the Festival of Flowers. Carla is also working with Belva Moore on the Strawberry and Wine Festival at

the Muirwood Office Park in Greensboro, the brain-storm of their side business, "Two-Can Plan It," to be held on May 1 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

EPlanet Travel Wine country tours start at \$90 and overnight tours start at \$259. For more information, call 336-676-1962 or check out their website at www.eplanettravel.com.

A bike tour can pack a lot into two days.



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North Carolina All-American Pottery Show
Saturday August 7, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. and Sunday August 9 2004, 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Celebrate America Festival Saturday August 21, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Sunday August 22 2004, 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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ASK THE WINEMAKER

By Stephen Rigby, winemaker, Raffaldini Vineyards



Around the winery it is often said that the most important piece of equipment is the wine glass. I may have to agree. Regular use of the glass helps keep one informed of the state of the wine; whether it needs attention, if it's time to work (play?) with it, or to just let it ride for now.

Regardless of the reason for tasting a wine, whether monitoring a fermentation, evaluating wines at a formal tasting, or just enjoying wine with friends, the basic approach is still the same: most simply stated as swirl, sniff, and sip. In some of the more formal or clinical tastings another step is added ... spit. This is necessary to try to keep the palate sharp and to stay attentive to the nuances of the wines being tasted.

For me one of the more interesting, educational, and even enjoyable tasks around the winery is the necessity of regularly "touring" the cellar and tasting the wines as they're being made. This tasting program actually begins in the vineyard before the grapes are picked. At this point the emphasis is on trying to determine optimal ripeness for winemaking.

Tasting the grapes at the vine, and also juice samples squeezed from the berries in the lab, helps one to make the best decision possible for starting new wine on a good path.

Once the juice is pressed from the fruit (for whites) or crushed into fermentors with the skins (for reds), it's time for another taste. Is the juice fresh and clean with good aromas and flavors emanating from the fruit? Is it balanced in terms of

acids and sugars? Are there any off flavors or aromas that need attention?

When the juice is fermenting, rapid changes occur and this is a necessary as well as an interesting time to taste. What you have is a cloudy, yeasty, gassy concoction of bubbling, young wine that can actually be quite tasty and enjoyable. At this point sugars are declining, alcohol is increasing, and the beginnings of all sorts of aromas and flavors are being generated. For reds, we're looking for good color and tannin extraction from the skins. Hopefully everything is still looking, smelling and tasting good at this point and we can leave the new wine alone.

After fermentation the wine begins to settle, clear and start the maturation process. It's probably not necessary to taste the wine as constantly as when we were fermenting (though it is a pleasure to), but it is necessary to still taste on a regular basis. Now is when we are more concerned with the development of character and complexity in the wine.

Also, consideration goes to checking for any potential problems that may creep up. We want to monitor if the way we are "raising" the wine is providing the incremental advances we are striving for: is the oak complementing or overwhelming the wine ... if keeping the wine on the lees (yeast sediment) is it developing the body and flavor we want ... do we need to stir those lees more into the wine? Things like that.

Eventually it's time to blend wines and prepare for bottling. Samples of wines that are candidates for

becoming part of a blend will be taken into the lab and mixed in various ratios to see what particular blend might produce the "most complete picture" in terms of structure, balance, aroma and bouquet, flavor, intensity and length. There is a lot of hard work, long hours and myriad decisions that go into the making of a wine. After all that, the blending trials are (hopefully) one of the most interesting and pleasant "must-be-done" chores.

When it's bottling time we taste one last time to see if the wine is right, because once it's heading into the bottle that's it. There's nothing more to be done ... hope we've made the right decisions ... hope you like it!

But maybe we're still not quite finished. Once the wine is bottled and on the market, it is time to occasionally taste it critically to see if it's developing well, if flavors and aromas are opening up nicely, and if it's a good product that shows off, literally, the full fruit of our labors from our little parcel of the world. Then we take what we learn from this ongoing tasting and use the experience to make better wine.

Tasting regularly throughout the life of a wine is imperative for the winemaker. We have the pleasure of experiencing the wine from fruit to bottle and beyond. I'm sure one would be hard pressed to find a winemaker who takes that wonderful opportunity lightly or for granted. Here's to the wine glass ... the indispensable tool!

Grapevine

Continued From Page 6

As the Carolina wine industry continues to grow and wines become increasingly recognized across the state and country, so does the festival, which promises to be a jovial summertime event.

Festivities will include an opportunity to meet the winemakers and vineyard owners from more than 20 participating wineries. There will be ample opportunity for tasting and sampling the fine local wines; complimentary commemorative wine glasses will be provided to the first 7,000 adults planning to sample. North Carolina wines will be available also for purchase by the glass, bottle and of course, by the case.

Displays, always a huge ingredient of the wine festival, will include "everything from lawn care to women's dresses; fine jewelry to home mortgage information," as well as over 40 craft vendors and artisans planning to participate.

On location will be a variety of food provided by some of the Triad's finest restaurants, and Rain Jacket will be performing hits of the 50's, 60's and 70's for the second year, joined by other area musicians.

Advance tickets available soon only at Lowes Foods for \$14, \$6 less than the cost at the gate in June. This event is not-to-be-missed by any serious wine lover.



New building at Valhalla

ROANOKE, Va. — Valhalla Vineyards has opened its

new tasting/special events building with an incredible view of the Roanoke Valley. Valhalla has released its new wines: 2000 Valkyrie (Bordeaux blend), 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon, 2001 Sangiovese, 2002 Row Ten white blend, 2002 Dry Rosé and 2001 Gotterdammerung (Cabernet Franc/Merlot). At an October reception at the Icelandic Embassy in Washington for piano virtuoso Vladimir Azhkenazy, Valhalla wines were the only ones served.



New releases at Old North State

MOUNTAIN — Old North State Winery has released two new wines, Spring Hope White, a semi-sweet white blend, and Starlight White, made from muscadine. Chris Johnson is the new winemaker and Jennifer Britton is tasting room and sales manager. Johnson, a graduate of Cal-Davis, has experience in both California and Finger Lakes (NY) vineyards.



New releases at Chateau Morrisette

ROCKY KNOB, Va. — Chateau Morrisette is proud to announce the release of a new varietal wine and to reintroduce a favorite of ours, missing from our cellar for a few years:

2002 Viognier — Our first release of this elegant Rhone varietal. The delicate balance of the sweetness of the fruit and crisp acidity complements the inviting aromas of peach and apricot and hints of spice and vanilla. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels. Recklessly fruity, you and your guests will appreciate this alternative to Chardonnay.

2002 Chambourcin — Our first release of this wine since 1995, the 2002 vintage has wonderful aromas of

ripe fruit leading into rich earthy flavors of blackberry and plum entwined with spice and a hint of oak. This lush wine typifies the beautiful characteristics of Virginia terroir.



New label for Biltmore

ASHEVILLE — Biltmore Estate has redesigned its wine label "to better reflect key characteristics consumers associate with Biltmore Estate, George W. Vanderbilt's historic property in the mountains." It features a historic depiction of Biltmore House based on archival photographs and incorporates the Vanderbilt monogram.

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APRIL

April 16-18 NC Wine Sanderling Celebration of Food and Wine. Join us as our talented and award winning Chefs & Food Beverage Managers with guest wine presenters for memorable, educational weekend Packages start at \$240/person & include two nights lodging, welcome seminar, two seminars per person, dinner, brunch & all gratuities. Ala carte packages available. Duck, NC. 800-701-4111. www.thesanderling.com

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

April 17 Bacchus Bash. 11am-5pm Come for gods, goddesses, Greek foods, & mystic mayhem 4-8 pm. Admission \$5. Wear a toga and get in free! Silver Coast Winery Ocean Isle Beach, NC 910-287-2800 www.silvercoastwinery.com

April 17-18 The Great Grapes!™ Wine Music Festival is held in Regency Park in Cary, NC. To purchase advance tickets call 800-830-3976 ext 103 or visit www.greatgrapesfest.com

April 22-24 Charlotte Wine & Food Weekend. At South Park Mall, Restaurants, & Ballantyne Resort. Biennial celebration benefiting Hospitality House of Charlotte & Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. Includes live auction & gala, vintner tastings & dinners, cooking schools, Big Bottles & Blues, champagne brunch & fashion show. Charlotte, NC. 704-338-WINE or for more information www.charlottewineandfood.com

April 24, Bud Break Party, Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Celebrate Spring with hayrides through the vineyard, tours, wine tastings, music by The King Bees. Call ahead to reserve a box lunch. \$10 at the gate. 336-945-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

MAY

May 1 Strawberry & Wine Festival Taste Carolina! Muirwood Office Park, Greensboro, NC. Contact Two-Can Plan it at 336-676-1962

May 1 Wine Club at Dennis Vineyards, Albemarle, NC, 4-8 p.m. Prospective members welcome. Includes food, glass of wine, souvenir wine glass, & music. 800-230-1743. www.dennisvineyards.com

May 1, Old Fashioned Plow Day at Iron Gate Vineyards, Mebane, NC. NC Draft Horse Association; plowing demonstrations, music, arts and crafts. 336-269-0918.

May 8 Rag Apple Lassic Second Saturday Shindigs. Boonville, NC, Beach music concert 5-8 pm Coastline Band performing; hot air balloon rides. 866-RAGAPPLE. www.ragapplelassie.com

May 8 BMW Exhibit at Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. Includes a tour of four vineyards. 877-901-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

May 14 Second Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Auction, Jonesville, NC, benefiting Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital Foundation, \$50 per person; 336-527-7457.

May 15 Third Annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, Elkin (NC) Municipal Park. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tastings from all Yadkin Valley Appellation wineries and vineyards. Maurice Williams & The Zodiacs. Tasting tickets \$10 in advance, \$15 at the gate. 336-526-1111. www.yvfw.com

May 15 Second Annual Wine Down after the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival, 6 p.m. at Foothills Arts Council, Elkin, NC. 336-835-2025 for tickets and information.

May 15 Amateur Winemakers Competition at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. For application or more information, call 910-287-2800, or email info@silvercoastwinery.com

May 16 Raffaldini Vineyards opens to the public, Ronda, NC. 336-835-9163. www.raffaldini.com

JUNE

June 4, 11, 18 and 25 June Tunes every Friday evening at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. Rain or shine. 4-7 p.m. No admission. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

June 12 RagApple Lassic's Second Saturday Shindig, Boonville, NC, 5-8 p.m. Breeze Band. Hot air balloon rides. 866-RAGAPPLE. www.ragapplelassie.com

June 19 Shelton at Sunset Concert. Lee Greenwood performing. 336-366-4724 www.sheltonvineyards.com

June 19 Music in the Vineyard. 1-5 p.m. Westbend Vineyards, Lewisville, NC. Martha and the Moodswingers performing. \$15 at the gate. 877-901-5032. www.westbendvineyards.com

JULY

July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 July Jams every Friday evening at Silver Coast Winery, Ocean Isle Beach, NC. Rain or shine. 4-7 p.m. No admission. 910-287-2800. www.silvercoastwinery.com

July 10 Shelton at Sunset Concert. General Johnson and Chairman of the Board performing. 336-366-4724 www.sheltonvineyards.com

July 10 RagApple Lassic's Second Saturday Shindig, Boonville, NC, 5-8 p.m. The Catalinas. 866-RAGAPPLE.

July 14-16 American Society for Enology and Viticulture meets at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA. www.asev.org for details.

July 17 River House Winefest Grassy Creek, NC. 1-6 p.m. Wine tastings, music and food by the New River. 336-982-2109, or www.riverhouse.com

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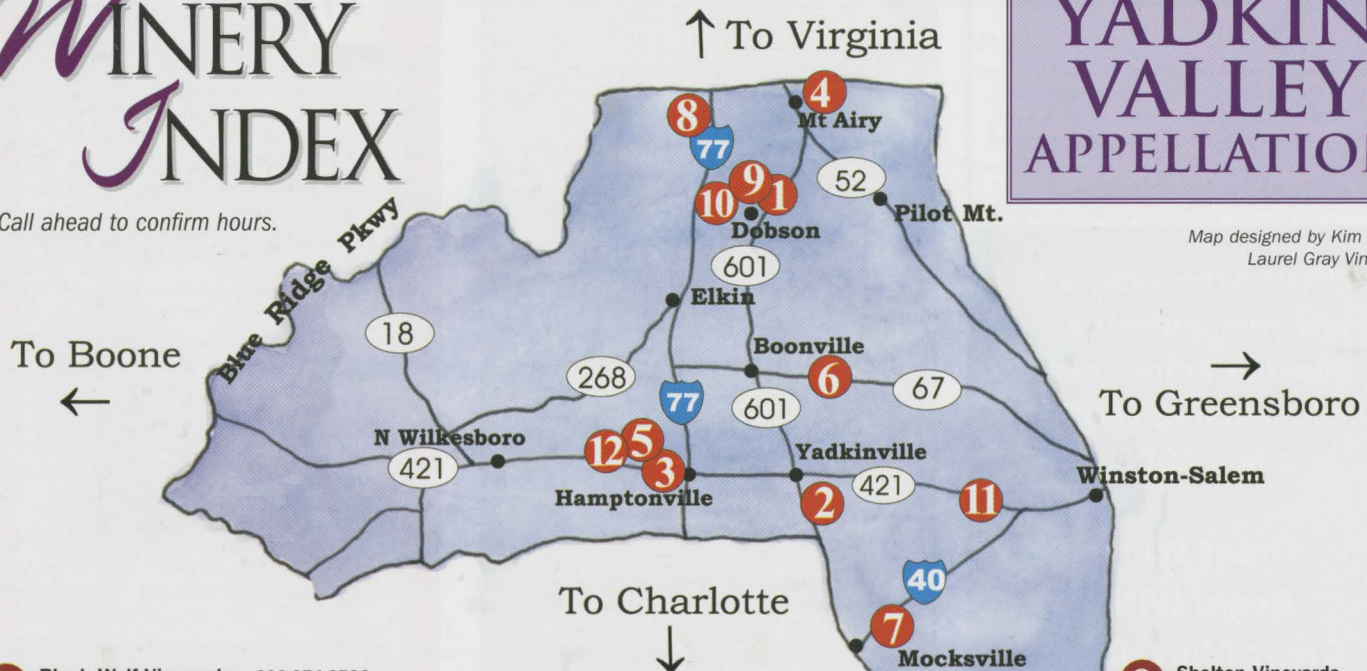


WINERY INDEX

Call ahead to confirm hours.

YADKIN VALLEY APPELLATION

Map designed by Kim Myers,
Laurel Gray Vineyards



1 Black Wolf Vineyards 336-374-2532

Tasting Room and Restaurant
283 Vineyard Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Dana Theis
Website: www.blackwolfvineyards.com
Hours: M-Sat, 11 am-2:30 pm; Sun 12-4 pm
Restaurant hours: Lunch, M-Sat., 11-2:30; Dinner, Thurs.-Sat., 5-10; Sun., 12-8.
Location: Surry County — Off Hwy 601 at Vineyard Lane.
Wine List: French Varietals, French Hybrids, Blends

2 Hanover Park Vineyard 336-463-2875

1927 Courtney-Huntsville Rd.,
Yadkinville, NC 27055
Michael & Amy Helton
Website: www.hanoverparkwines.com
Hours: Thurs -Sat, 12-6 pm; Sun, 1-5 pm
Location: Yadkin County — Take Hwy 421 to Hwy 601. Go south 4 miles on Hwy 601. Left on Courtney-Huntsville Rd.
Wine list: French Varietals, Blends

3 Laurel Gray Vineyards 336-468-8463

Tasting Room and Gift Shop
5726 Old Hwy 421, Hamptonville, NC 27020
Kim and Benny Myers, Owners
Website: www.laurelgray.com
Hours: Wed, 1-5; Thurs, 10-5; Fri, 10-6; Sat, 10-5, Sun, 1-5
Location: Yadkin County — Hwy 421 North to Windsor Road, 1.5 mi. North of I-77. Exit right. Vineyard .1 mi. on left.
Wine List: French Viniferas

4 Old North State Winery 336-789-WINE (9463)

308 North Main Street, Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Owners: Members of the ONS Winegrowers Co-op Assn.
Website: www.carolinaharvestwines.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, Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Prelude, Autumn Leaf Red.

5 Raffaldini Vineyards 336-835-9163

450 Groce Road, Ronda, NC 28670
Owners: The Raffaldini Family
Stephen Rigby, winemaker
Stephen Lyons, general manager
Website: www.raffaldini.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat. 12-6; Sun. 1-5 and by appointment.
Location: Wilkes County — Take Exit 272 off U.S. 421. Turn right on Clingman Road. Proceed 4 miles (name changes to Swan Creek at stop sign in 2 miles). Turn right onto Groce Road. Vineyard is 2 miles ahead on right.
Wine List: Chardonnay, Dolcetto, Bianco, Bella Misto, Rosato, Sangiovese.

6 RagApple Lassie Vineyards 866-RAG-APPLE

3724 Rockford Road, Boonville, NC 27011
Frank and Lenna Hobson, Owners
Linda M. King, Winemaker
Website: www.ragapplelassie.com
Hours: Wed-Sun, 12-6 pm
Location: Yadkin County — From Hwy 67, 3 miles east of Boonville, go south on Rockford Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

7 RayLen Vineyards 336-998-3100

3577 US Hwy 158, Mocksville, NC 27028
Joe & Joyce Neely, Owners
Steve Shepard, Winemaker
Website: www.raylenvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 11 am-6 pm
Location: Davie County — Via I-40 West, left on 801 South, right on 158 West; winery is 4 miles on right.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

8 Round Peak Vineyards 336-352-5595

765 Round Peak Church Rd., Mt. Airy, NC 27030
Susan & George Little, Janet & Lee Martin, Owners
Mark Golding, Manager
Website: www.roundpeak.com
Hours: Thurs.-Sat. 11-5; Sun. 12-5, 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; 2004 Releases: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Nebbiolo, Rosé and Sweet Rosé.

9 Shelton Vineyards 336-366-4724

286 Cabernet Lane,
Dobson, NC 27017
Charles M. Shelton and R. Edwin Shelton, Owners
Matt Dyar, Winemaker
Website: www.sheltonvineyards.com
Hours: Mon-Sat, 10 am-5 pm; Sun, 1-5 pm
Location: Surry County — I-77 to Exit 93 Dobson. Turn right, then take first right onto Twin Oaks Rd. Go 2.5 miles to the Shelton Vineyards entrance on the right.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

10 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.

11 Westbend Vineyards 877-901-5032

5394 Williams Rd., Lewisville, NC 27023
Jack & Lillian Kroustalis, Owners
David Morrison, Winemaker
Website: www.westbendvineyards.com
Hours: Tues-Sat, 11-6 pm; Sun, 1-6 pm
Location: Forsyth County — Go 15 miles west of Winston-Salem on Highway 421. Take Shallowford Rd., Exit 246, and turn left. Go 2 mi., turn left onto Williams Rd.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends

12 Windy Gap Vineyards 336-984-3926

837 Pardue Farm Rd., Ronda, NC 28670
Allen and Sandra Hinchey
Website: www.windygapwines.com
Hours: Thurs, Fri. 1-5 pm; Sat, 10-5 pm; Sun, 12-5 pm; or by appointment
Location: Wilkes County — I-77 to Exit 73B Wilkesboro-Boone. Take Hwy 421 North 6 mi. to Exit 272 Clingman Rd. Turn right on Clingman Rd. After approx. 1 mile turn left onto Pardue Farm Rd. Go 1/4 mile and turn left again on Pardue Farm Rd. Go 1/2 mile and turn right onto paved driveway. Winery is at end of driveway with parking in rear.
Wine List: French Varietals, Blends