



## Winston-Salem: A Place to Create, Learn, and Be Inspired

**OVERVIEW: Art and Culture:** *When it comes to art, Winston-Salem is indeed a city of cultural firsts — from the first pieces of Moravian pottery crafted here in the mid-1700s to the launch of the nation’s first local arts council to the opening of the first state-supported school for the arts.*

From its beginnings as a creative, resourceful Moravian community to its evolution into the City of Arts and Innovation, Winston-Salem has painted itself as an inspiring home for creative talent. In 1963, Winston-Salem was chosen as the home of the **North Carolina School of the Arts**, a unique high school conservatory program. It was the first state-supported school of its kind in the country. In the early 1970s, the school became part of the 16-member University of North Carolina, and in 2008, its name changed to **UNC School of the Arts**. Throughout its evolution, the school’s mission remained the same: to train talented young people for professional careers in dance, drama, music, filmmaking, and more. In addition to the students on campus, UNCSA also features a cast of talented professors and administrators, many of whom are award-winning and internationally known. These days the school puts on 300+ public performances a year, ranging from symphonies to film screenings to school-wide productions. This includes the school’s beloved annual rendition of "**The Nutcracker**."

Another crown jewel of the city’s art family is the **Reynolda House Museum of American Art**. The historic 1917 estate of Katharine Smith Reynolds and her husband, Richard Joshua Reynolds, founder of the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, houses one of the finest collections of American art in the Southeast. Reynolda House invites visitors to explore the historic estate through their newly designed mobile app, "Reynolda Revealed," which offers a variety of self-guided tour options through the entire estate, including the adjacent gardens and village. The museum’s permanent collection includes works from Albert Bierstadt, Mary Cassatt, Frederic Church, John Singleton Copley, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Grant Wood (among others).

Just across the street along the “Reynolda Mile,” the home of textile industrialist James G. Hanes has transformed into the **Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA)**. The museum explores the best in modern and contemporary art with thought-provoking exhibits that often challenge and inspire the viewer.

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In the heart of Winston-Salem's downtown is the **Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts**, which houses the historic Sawtooth School for Visual Art, Associated Artists of Winston-Salem, Facilities for the Arts on Spruce, and Coffee Park Downtown. **Hanesbrands Theatre** was constructed adjacent to the Milton Rhodes Center and features state-of-the-art lighting, audio, and projection systems and is a performance venue for local theater, dance, film, and music.

### **EXPLORE WINSTON-SALEM'S ARTS AND CULTURAL DESTINATIONS**

***A Celebration of Art Unique to Winston-Salem: PIEDMONT CRAFTSMEN'S FAIR*** is an exquisite gathering and crafts show presenting works by premier fine craft artists of the Southeast and numerous workshops and presentations. For more than 50 years, more than 120 artists have gathered in Winston-Salem's downtown Benton Convention Center each November to showcase their edgier handcrafted pieces covering a variety of mediums, including home goods, jewelry, pottery, and furniture. The annual Piedmont Craftsmen's Fair is, to many, the unofficial kickoff to holidays in Winston-Salem.

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#### **Visual art in Winston-Salem:**

Fun on Friday: **The Downtown Art District Association (DADA) hosts a First Friday Gallery Hop** on the first Friday of every month. Each hop has a different theme and is an exciting way to discover a plethora of public art installations, historic murals, and an expanding arts district that includes breweries, a distillery, an urban art park and various nightlife venues. *dadaws.net*

- ❖ **Diggs Gallery at Winston-Salem State University** offers a world-class collection of public art by artists such as John Biggers, Mel Edwards, Beverly Buchanan, and Tyrone Mitchell. The gallery has been identified as one of the top 10 African American galleries in the nation and was recognized by the Smithsonian as one of the nation's best regional facilities for exploring contemporary African Diaspora art.
- ❖ **Art-o-mat** machines epitomize art linked to innovation. Winston-Salem-based artists and entrepreneur Clark Whittington decided to convert retired cigarette vending machines into art-vending machines. More than 200 machines are now found throughout the U.S., including dozens in Winston-Salem. Pull the knob and walk away with an original artwork.

- ❖ Visit galleries that showcase multiple artists: **Artworks Gallery**, an artist-run co-op gallery; **Associated Artists of Winston-Salem**; or the **Delta Fine Arts Center**, a gallery focusing on the contributions of African-American artists.
- ❖ **The Sawtooth School for Visual Art** has been teaching and inspiring young and old alike for more than 70 years. Classes are open to the public and available in all types of mediums. Sawtooth also offers summer camp packages for children.

### Artisan Craft Traditions

- ❖ **Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA)** in Old Salem invites you to travel through history, using pottery, furniture, and other handmade decorative objects as your guide. It's one of the country's most comprehensive repositories of such work, and what we refer to as "the Smithsonian of the South." Experience a wide range of early Southern artistry and stories found in the world-class collection of decorative arts from the early American South, 1660 – 1860. While at Old Salem, see the shop for pottery and period pieces made by their craftspeople.
- ❖ **Piedmont Craftsman Gallery** showcases 350 fine craft artists from across the southeast. At any given time, you can find work by about 200 of their exhibiting members in the shop and gallery, located in the heart of Winston-Salem's downtown arts district.

### Music and Dance

- ❖ **Piedmont Opera** raised the curtain on its first production, Verdi's Rigoletto, in September 1978. Now in its 43<sup>rd</sup> year of continuous operation, Piedmont Opera strives to remain a nationally recognized opera company and a leader in the classical arts community.
- ❖ **Winston-Salem Symphony** recently celebrated its 75th anniversary, having launched in 1946. It's since grown into a nationally recognized regional orchestra employing 75 professional musicians and performs more than three dozen concerts annually
- ❖ Numerous choral groups and music societies, from the **Fiddle & Bow Society** to **Piedmont Blues Preservation Society** and more.
- ❖ **Carolina Music Ways (CMW)** is a Winston-Salem-based nonprofit dedicated to educating and inspiring local youth about our diverse musical roots of where they live. The musical heritage of this area, a mix of three musical cultures (Appalachian, African American, and Moravian), is one of the most unique and influential in the nation.
- ❖ **Winston-Salem Festival Ballet** is a professional dance company known for dazzling shows.



## Fine Art Performance Venues

- ❖ **The Stevens Center** was originally a 1929 silent movie theatre. Today, the magnificently restored neoclassical theatre is located downtown. It is the primary performance space for UNC School of the Arts as well as the Winston-Salem Symphony, Piedmont Opera Theatre, and several other local and state arts organizations.
- ❖ **Hanesbrands Theatre** at Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts is a 300-seat black-box theatre, affording a variety of stage and seating configurations for dance, theatre, music, and film productions. The theatre's dramatic lobby features a mirrored cymatic paint exploration by noted international painter Jimmy O'Neal of Madison County, NC.

## Theatre and Film

- ❖ **The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem** is the longest-running performing arts organization in town, having presented professional-quality theatre for more than 80 years.
- ❖ **RiverRun International Film Festival** (May 6-16, 2021), an Academy Award-qualifying film festival, is one of the fastest-growing regional film festivals in the U.S. RiverRun features a variety of full-length and short films from all genres. Entering its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the festival features a Master of Cinema tribute to an outstanding actor or filmmaker. Previous recipients include Peter Bogdanovich, Andie MacDowell, and Pam Grier.
- ❖ **The National Black Theatre Festival** is a biennial event attracting over 65,000 attendees who come to see more than 70 world-class celebrities performing in 100+ productions. The 2022 festival marked the 32nd anniversary of the festival, held every other August.
- ❖ Unique film offerings are available at **Hanesbrands Theatre** and **a/perture cinema** an independent, locally-owned theatre screening a mix of independent, foreign, documentary, local, and festival films in three 80-seat theaters. In addition to popcorn and soft drinks, they also offer craft beers, Yadkin Valley wines, and healthy snacks from local bakeries such as Camino Bakery.

## Winston-Salem: Where Eating and Drinking Well Is Yet Another Form of Art

**CULINARY OVERVIEW:** Moravian traditions, farm-fresh ingredients, and Southern hospitality have helped shape Winston-Salem’s current culinary scene. Today you’ll find a mix of bold, creative chefs in every corner of the city, offering fresh spins on Southern classics. Thanks to them, Winston-Salem has been called the region’s best-kept culinary secret. But the word is starting to get out. Foodies are now flocking to the city armed with big appetites and open minds, leaving happily content. *(And how could they not?)* Winston-Salem has everything culinary travelers dream about, and spicy stories you won’t find anywhere else in the country.

- ❖ **Our culinary roots date back to 1753 with the arrival of the Moravians, hard-working** followers of a mainstream protestant religion who settled here 250 years ago. They contributed significantly to the area’s rich culture. This denomination originated in the Czech Republic around 1415 from the followers of Jan Hus. These missionaries made their way from Germany to Pennsylvania and then settled in Winston-Salem on 10,000 acres known as the Wachovia Tract. They brought what has become the city’s most iconic tastes: Moravian Sugar Cakes, the thinly sliced ginger-spiked Moravian cookies (now available in many flavors); Love Feast Buns, Moravian Chicken Pies, and assorted pickles and German-style foods.
  
- ❖ **Food ENTREPRENEURS Stop Here:**
  - Winston-Salem cultivates culinary invention. After all, we’re the birthplace of **Krispy Kreme Doughnuts** and **Texas Pete** products.
  
  - Because Winston-Salem is one of the few places in the country with strong Moravian ties, we celebrate the destination’s deep Moravian food roots with our **Moravian Culinary Trail**. A trio of virtual trails (which means you can start, stay or stop wherever you please!) with each serving up a healthy portion of our history, delectable, tried-and-true recipes, and our favorite places to stop, sample, and savor these distinct (and delicious) Moravian dishes and delights. The trails journey through the history of the “world’s thinnest cookie,” the Moravian cookie, Moravian sugar cake, traditionally served during Easter Sunrise

- Three food companies headquartered here specialize in Moravian baked goods: **Winkler Bakery**, a centuries-old bakery and the inspiration for an entire line of Old Salem-branded baked goods; **Dewey's Bakery**, makers of our favorite Christmas-morning treat, Moravian Sugar Cake; and **Mrs. Hanes' Moravian Cookies**, a family-owned operation that still hand-rolls, hand-cuts, and hand-packs each of their deliciously thin Moravian cookies (*named Oprah's "favorite things" during the holidays*).
  
- ❖ **Lively independent restaurants** dominate the city's restaurant scene. Downtown Winston-Salem bustles with pedestrian traffic every night as theatre lovers mix with the downtown evening crowd for a locally-inspired evening meal and drinks at more than 100 restaurants. During the warmer months, outdoor dining is in high demand, and many restaurants make a point of providing popular spaces with excellent views. The personalities of our restaurants are as distinct as their chefs and owners.
  
- ❖ An abundance of **local farmers' markets** cater to both chefs and residents. Downtown markets, including the Cobblestone Farmers Market and Winston Junction Market, offer plenty of choices. The Farmers Market at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds, established in 1974, is Forsyth County's longest-running source of local produce.
  
- ❖ **More than 45 wineries** wait for you in the Yadkin Valley. Winston-Salem is the perfect base for a weekend or multi-day wine country excursions. Meet and taste with the winemakers at our smaller wineries and tour operations both large and small. Within a 30-minute drive, you can spread your blanket at an outdoor vineyard concert, enjoy a picnic after a tasting and tour, trek with llamas, zipline through the winery, or ride high in a hot air balloon over the vineyards!
  
- ❖ Craft beer beckons at **Foothills Brewing**, both in their original downtown brewpub and in their expansive Tasting Room off Stratford Road. Sign up for **Beer School** held every first Saturday or simply drop by for a brew or two. One of the leaders in North Carolina's craft brewing revolution, Foothills relies on brewmaster Jamie Bartholomaeus and Chef Shane Moore to keep the crowds returning. Are you a beer geek? Then you've probably heard of the brewery's famed winter seasonal, "Sexual Chocolate," a cocoa-infused Imperial Stout that has received national attention and earned top honors at the World Beer Cup. Popular year-round brews include Torch Pilsner, Jade IPA and Hoppyum IPA.

- ❖ While Foothills stands as the city’s best-known craft brewery, it’s far from the only one. Winston-Salem’s beer scene has surged recently and now includes ten breweries, nearly all of which are downtown, making it easy to enjoy a DIY “**Craft Draft Crawl.**” Indulge in pints from local standbys such as Wise Man Brewing, Fiddlin’ Fish Beer Co., Incendiary Brewing, and Hoots Roller Bar — all of which offer up specialty brews and unique backstories. Also, be sure to check out the newest craft brewery on the block, **Lesser Known Beer Co.**, which opened in July 2022 just south of downtown. The name “Lesser-Known” reflects their goal to champion under-represented styles, processes, and ingredients, as many of their brews are inspired by Czech and German beer traditions.
- ❖ Winston-Salem’s greater downtown area is also home to two award-winning distilleries, **Sutler’s Spirit Co.** (makers of gin and aging rum), in the West End Mill Works complex, and **Broad Branch Distillery** (white whiskey and aging rum), located on Trade Street in the Downtown Arts District. Tours are offered at each, and you’ll find several Winston-Salem bartenders have these on hand as their spirit of choice for locally-themed cocktails.
- ❖ A lively bar scene keeps us up at night. Leading the charge is **Tate’s Craft Cocktails**, named by IMBIBE Magazine as one of the "top 100 places to drink in the South." Their five-page craft cocktail menu changes seasonally, while their street-side patio offers excellent people-watching year-round. Tate’s mixologists are sticklers for high-quality spirits, knowing what should be shaken and what should be stirred.
- ❖ Tate’s helped pave the way for several new craft cocktail spots to open in recent years. Popular haunts include **Fair Witness**, a lively lounge adjacent to Bailey Park known for its "fancy drinks" and neighborly vibes; **Joyner’s Bar**, an easy-on-the-eyes joint in West End with a vintage, speakeasy vibe; and **Bar Piña**, a colorful rooftop bar in the Arts District offering creative cocktails, tropical-themed drinks, and unbeatable skyline views.
- ❖ Another can’t-miss nighttime destination is **ROAR**, a first-of-its-kind dining, entertainment, and event complex encompassing four floors and 42,000 square feet. The first floor is home to Ford’s Food Hall, while the top floor features a swanky rooftop lounge, The Mayfair Club. Other on-site amenities include duckpin bowling, golf simulators, a pour-your-own beer wall, weekly live music, and two upscale restaurants.

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## Winston-Salem's Hyphenated History: An Overview of Our Past, Present, and Future

**W**inston-Salem. Rarely a day goes by that we are not asked how our famous "hyphen" came to be. The short version is that we are the result of our forward-thinking and highly enterprising forefathers. And to many, it's pretty surprising that we've only enjoyed our "Twin City" status since 1913.

The slightly longer story behind "the dash" began with Moravian settlers some 260-plus years ago. In 1753, the Moravians — a devoutly religious group originally from Eastern Europe — were attracted to the central portion of North Carolina due to its fertile soil, abundant water, and temperate climate. They settled on more than 100,000 pristine acres in the heart of our current city and called their new home the Wachovia Tract. It was on a portion of this expansive tract in 1766 that the Moravians established **Salem**.

Soon thereafter, the Moravians' handiwork established what would become another hallmark of our city — a reputation for arts, culture, and innovation. Their pioneering work as fine craftsmen and artisans of pottery, tannery, iron works, cloth, and furniture making established the city of Salem as a thriving, sought-after trade center. Salem's manufacturing prowess also played a pivotal and prominent role as a supplier during the American Revolution and the Civil War.



At the same time, a similar Southern industrial center was being formed just to the north of Salem. **Winston**, a more secular city, was officially established in 1851 in honor of a prominent Revolutionary war hero and legislator, Major Joseph Winston.

But it was not until after the Civil War that the city of Winston was catapulted to national prominence as a bustling industrial center. Thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of business tycoons such as R. J. Reynolds and the Hanes family, Winston continued to grow in popularity, industrial and financial importance, emerging as a national leader in tobacco and textile manufacturing.

So, what became of these two thriving cities, both living side by side? Although each town played key pioneering roles, by 1913 it was clear there was more to be gained from uniting the region than from remaining apart. And just as they did with the factories that fueled them, the cities merged, enabling them to efficiently pool resources and streamline bureaucracy. This united spirit remains today in the emerging finance, medicine and technology economies.





Over the years, Winston-Salem has remained true to its independent roots. Nicknamed the **City of Arts and Innovation**, Winston-Salem is synonymous with a zeal for exploration, innovation, and an entrepreneurial spirit in business and culture. Our ability to strike a balance between commerce and the arts makes us so attractive to businesses and cultural icons alike.

Our early success as an industrial center brought wealth to the community that fueled the start-up of other successful businesses, including Piedmont Airlines (now US Airways), Krispy Kreme Doughnut Corporation, and *T.W. Garner Food Company* (makers of Texas Pete hot sauce) and *Goody's* headache powders. The perfect storm, indeed.

And our strong connection to creativity in all its forms bears fruit in our history of artistic "firsts." As **home to the first Arts Council in the country**, Winston-Salem paved the way for public-private support of the arts and created the model for Arts Councils nationwide. Our city is also the site of the nation's **first state-supported arts conservatory**, the internationally renowned UNC School of the Arts, which opened in 1963. Another significant artistic "first" came centuries before that in the 1780s when the **nation's first piece of classical music** written by an American was composed in Salem. Those artistic roots planted in the city's past continue to blossom, evidenced by the myriad art galleries, craft shops, performing arts groups, theaters, collectives, and collections that fill our cultural conscience today.

With a population that hovers around 255,000, Winston-Salem is the fifth-largest city in the state and the 85<sup>th</sup>-largest in the country. It's home to six colleges and universities, including **Salem College**, the oldest continuously-operating women's college in the U.S.; **Winston-Salem State University**, an award-winning HBCU that is consistently recognized as one of America's best educational values; and **Wake Forest University**, routinely ranked as one of the country's best-overall institutes (and recently named "the prettiest fall campus in America" by BestCollegeValues.com).

Winston-Salem continues to build a diverse business base — including leading in nanotechnology research, finance, and modern manufacturing — while reaffirming its time-honored tradition of forging boldly ahead. Throughout the city's history, a central duality has defined this place and its people — Winston's enterprising spirit and Salem's creative conscience. Those dual forces continue to distinguish Winston-Salem today, a place that's both inspiring and unassuming, daring yet diligent, industrialized yet resourceful — *artistic and innovative*.

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## Winston-Salem: Here, “Haute Cuisine” is Just a Fancy Way to Say “Supper”

**OVERVIEW:** Lively independent restaurants dominate Winston-Salem’s dining scene. Downtown Winston-Salem bustles with pedestrian traffic every night as travelers and the theatre, university, and business crowds gather for an evening meal and drinks. Whether you’re nestled in the charming historic West End neighborhood, in the heart of downtown, or in the burgeoning Innovation Quarter, excellent choices abound at every corner. (Even the suburbs offer some surprisingly excellent e options.) Here’s a sample of our favorite spots:

- ❖ At **Mozelle’s Fresh Southern Bistro**, pull up a chair beneath their signature yellow street-side umbrellas and try their seasonal Southern-inspired menu cooked up by a dedicated and creative culinary team. Order the Southern Spring Rolls stuffed with pulled pork barbecue, shiitake mushrooms, Napa cabbage, collards, and sesame ginger. Or try the daily special. Ask for the Spicy Collards.
- ❖ Across the street from Mozelle’s, **Bernardin’s Restaurant at the Zevely House** is one of the city’s top fine dining destinations. Selections such as Pan-Seared North Carolina Ostrich with a Cumin-Fennel Crust, Braised Cabbage and Wild Corn Cake with Cranberry Madeira Sauce set the stage for an evening of five-star selections. You’ll find hints of Asia and sweet notes of curry on this menu, expertly paired with a hard-working house wine list. Whether dining al fresco or in the signature home, Bernardin’s is one of Winston-Salem’s favorite special-occasion restaurants.
- ❖ North Carolina is the number one sweet potato producer in the country. Chef and cookbook author Stephanie Tyson, and partner Vivian Joiner seized on this Southern tuber as the namesake for their soulful, upbeat **Sweet Potatoes – A Restaurant** featuring Southern fare with Gullah and Caribbean accents. Enjoy sweet potato fries, “build your own” baked sweet potatoes, and mouthwatering Sweet Potato Pie as well as Fried Green Tomato and Okra Baskets, or Drunken Pork Chops--twin center cut pork chops with sweet potato cornbread dressing and apple brandy gravy served with the vegetable of the day.
- ❖ The duo opened a sister restaurant, **Miss Ora’s Kitchen**, next door to a renovated Sweet Potatoes. The restaurant honors Chef Stephanie’s grandmother and great aunts and brings heritage recipes for fried chicken and more to Trade Street.

- ❖ **Meridian Restaurant** wins rave reviews as a fine dining restaurant. Inspired by the bright flavors of the Mediterranean as well as the area’s local, organic fare, the restaurant makes everything in-house, including sausage, mozzarella, and hand-rolled pasta. Not ready for a full meal? Try their noteworthy bar and tapas menu.
- ❖ Located in another historic area of downtown is a place that’s been making great strides in the culinary world. While the **Spring House Restaurant, Kitchen & Bar** is one of Winston-Salem’s newest and most popular restaurants, it’s housed in the last remaining grand home on what was Winston-Salem’s *Millionaire Row*, the historic neighborhood of R.J. and Katharine Reynolds and various members of the Hanes (hosiery/textile) family. Chef Tim Grandinetti’s menus are created “in cadence with Mother Nature” and feature honest and responsible New American cooking inspired by seasonal ingredients, fresh from the farm and market. The onsite **Library Bar** is a favorite gathering place for visitors and locals alike, focusing on fresh artisanal cocktails, an extensive wine list, and American craft-brewed beers. Chef Tim recently launched his debut cookbook, “Soulful Harvest.”
- ❖ Just a block away from Spring House, Chef Tim and co-partner Lynette Matthews Murphy opened **Quanto Basta: Italian Eatery & Winery**. The restaurant pays homage to Chef’s Italian heritage. It serves fresh, small-plate, Italian fare that you’re welcome to savor in its beautifully decorated dining room or order to-go while enjoying a glass of local Raffaldini Vineyards Italian wine while seated at Quanto Basta’s bar.
- ❖ In the ‘burbs, you’ll find **Milner’s American Southern Cuisine & Cocktails**. Operated by two brothers, CIA-trained chefs John and Buddy Milner, the restaurant has a uniquely local soul. Buttermilk Fried Chicken is served with Carolina Gold Rice, collard greens, and tomato gravy. Salmon is encrusted with crushed Moravian ginger cookies and served with sweet potato flapjacks, spinach, a vanilla bean beurre blanc, and fennel slaw. Their “Camel City” (a nickname from Winston-Salem’s tobacco heritage) Frogmore Stew features shrimp, mussels, whitefish, and scallops with sausage, hominy, aromatics, and grilled bread. They regularly receive a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence for their wine list and impressive cellar.

Hungry yet? Just ask us for more.

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## Winston-Salem: The Gateway to the Yadkin Valley and NC Wine Country

**OVERVIEW:** The Yadkin Valley, the first American Viticultural Area (AVA) in North Carolina, was established in 2003. It's the most densely populated wine region in the state. The Tarheel State is now ninth in the country in wine production with more than 100 wineries — and more than 45 of those vineyards are located in the Yadkin Valley.

The AVA is shaped like a boomerang, bordering Virginia with Mt. Airy as its northernmost city and extending south past Lexington and west to North Wilkesboro. Winston-Salem sits in the “heart” of the AVA and the center of the boomerang. A thriving, artsy city of 250,000-plus people with independent restaurants and a Moravian food tradition dating back to 1753, Winston-Salem is the perfect destination base from which to explore the Yadkin Valley.

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**What to expect on a tasting vacation:** Within a 30-minute drive, you'll see vineyards only after you veer off Interstate 77 or Interstate 85. North of Winston-Salem, enjoy the birds-eye view of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Pilot Mountain, known as “Mount Pilot” in the Andy Griffith Show. Head southwest to see the Brushy Mountains dominate the view in the Swan Creek AVA (the state's second, established in 2008). Part of Swan Creek is in the Yadkin Valley, and a portion of it rests outside the Yadkin Valley. Unlike Napa, our **winery tasting rooms** are sometimes 15 to 45 minutes apart from each other, depending on your route. Our visitors tell us that exploring the countryside and enjoying the scenery is a welcome surprise. You'll find the tasting rooms as unique as the wineries.

- At **RagApple Lassie Vineyards**, you'll walk onto an industrial style catwalk above huge steel tanks and then past their labs before entering their tasting room flanked by walls of their signature black and white “cow print” wine cases.
- At **Shelton Vineyards**, the largest estate winery in N.C., the elegant tasting room and gift shop can handle a hundred guests at a time, and you can tour the winemaking facilities.
- A visit to **Raffaldini Vineyards** transports you into the Tuscany countryside. The popular Italian winery is home to a stunning Tuscan-style tasting room where patrons sip, swirl and savor bold Montepulciano and crisp Pinot Grigio. Most of the wineries give tours, and at our smaller, family-operated wineries, the winemaker or owner guides you.



**From tobacco to grapes:** Several of our vineyards sit on land once used for tobacco production. The wine industry has offered an alternative, profitable way for families to save their farms and spare their farmland from developers. Travelers new to this area wonder why there are so many barns with seemingly loose, open construction. These are actually old tobacco barns, designed to allow air inside the barns to dry the tobacco. The “shabby” construction was quite intentional at the time the barns were built.

Today, during our growing season, visitors see commercial tobacco, soybeans, and corn growing in this area...as well lots of family vegetable gardens. This is a place where home canning, gardening, home cooking and living off the land never went out of style.

**What you’ll taste:** The Yadkin Valley grows European-vinifera varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Viognier, Merlot, and Syrah. You’ll find Traminette at a few wineries, and at Raffaldini Vineyards in Ronda, you’ll find Italian varietals such as Vermentino, Pinot Grigio, Sangiovese, Montepulciano, Malbec, Petit Verdot and others. The sweet, native muscadine grape with its thick skin and intense fruity aroma also grows naturally here. A few vintners in the Yadkin Valley market this grape, but the region is best-known for its European-vinifera stock.

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