

SUMMER 2025

ON THE VINE

CAROLINA WINE COUNTRY NEWS

**WINE FEST SEASON
SOTRIO VINEYARDS OPENS IN RONDA
LOCAL AUTHOR VISITS SANDERS RIDGE
SEE MORE INSIDE**

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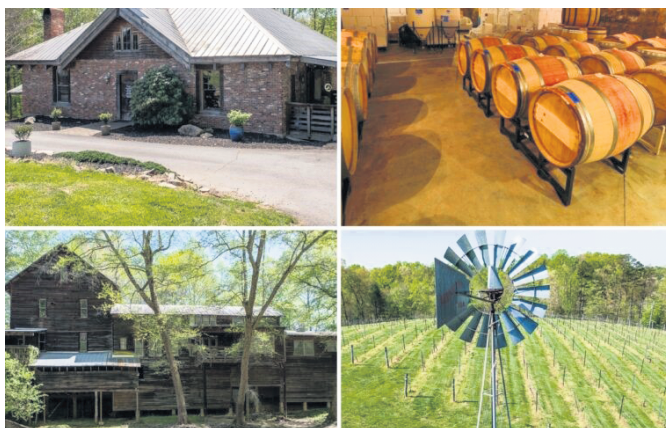
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ON THE COVER:

PHOTO BY KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Christian Ercolani of Christian Paul Vineyards pours sparkling wine for the 2025 Hugh Chatham Health Wine Gala held at Coley Hall in downtown Elkin.

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SUMMER IS HERE!



**KITSEY
BURNS
HARRISON**

The rain has been falling and the grapes have been growing in the Yadkin Valley. Wine festivals and other special events here this summer have given folks plenty of ways to enjoy the wines and beauty of the region.

In May both Elkin and

Mount Airy hosted their respective annual wine festivals, to great reception for the crowds, despite some rainy weather. In Elkin, wine fest weekend also means a gala fundraiser that benefits the local hospital Hugh Chatham Health. This event is much-beloved tradition for locals who get a chance to dress up and enjoy a lovely evening all for a great cause.

In June the region celebrates the many trails and other outdoor activities

with the annual N.C. Trail Days Festival. This festival is growing each year and provides a weekend full of things that will appeal to the outdoor lover and nature enthusiasts with guided hikes, special guest speakers and much more.

In this summer edition of *On The Vine*, you'll also read about a local business owner who offers unique travel experiences on sailing yachts in the Caribbean. Captain Glen Martin has more than

30-years experience and is a U.S. Coast Guard certified captain. His small group sailing charters explore small out-of-the-way spots in the Caribbean where guests can enjoy cocktails at local beach bars and fresh seafood meals cooked and served aboard the boat.

Here's wishing you all a wonderful summer of fun, wine and adventure!

Cheers!

Kitsey Burns Harrison,
Editor



**Crater Park NOW has (8) Outdoor pickleball courts.
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Rain can't stop BUDBREAK FESTIVAL FUN

PHOTOS BY RYAN KELLY

With entry to Budbreak, attendees were given a small commemorative glass which they took with them to the various stalls to sample different products.

Undeterred by rain, crowds enjoy annual Budbreak Festival

BY RYAN KELLY | ryan.kelly@mtairynews.com

MOUNT AIRY — The annual Budbreak Wine and Craft Beer Festival is a chance for area breweries and the many wineries of the area to share some of their offerings. Throw in some live music, food trucks, and a few craft vendors and it made for a pleasing way for folks to spend a Saturday afternoon all while raising money to aid the Rotary Club of Mount Airy in their community efforts. Rain showers that moved in and out during this year's festival, held on May 3, did little to deter the throng of visitors who came to mix and mingle while sampling Yadkin Valley wines and brews.

From Oak Street down to Independence Boulevard, the event was lively throughout most of the day. Even when the rain came down, it did not seem to bring anyone's spirits down. A few amateur meteorologists were offering an opinion as to what the weather was going to do, based on their reading of a weather app of choice, beneath the awning of H&R Block as one heavier rain band moved through.

With their sampling glasses in hand, and wristbands firmly in place, festival goers took a walk through the event to see which vendors were offering what. For some of them that meant an array of traditional wines in various varietals. Other booths sampled beer, ale, mead, and a few booths were offering some sort of frozen drinks as well.

If someone tasted something they enjoyed, the hope for those doing the selling is that they would then buy a bottle or perhaps even a case of their preferred wine. For those who did not make a purchase, the goal was to familiarize a potential new customer to a brand or variety they may not have considered.

The parking lot between Brannock & Hiatt and The Angry Troll was a focal point of much of the activity for this festival. A large tent with several long tables and chairs underneath it became a welcome dry landing spot for those who came out for the earlier part of the event.

Some of those under-tent folks opted to hold on to their prized and valued dry real estate throughout the day and would hold court with whomever stopped by. B-Dazzle Productions oversaw the DJ responsibilities during the first segment of the event and helped set an upbeat tone even under dark skies.

Later in the afternoon, Tim Elliott took the stage and put



Patrons are seen enjoying the 2025 Budbreak Craft Beer and Wine Festival in downtown Mount Airy on Saturday after the rain had stopped.



As a period of heavier rain hit Budbreak on Saturday, folks soldiered on and continued to enjoy themselves.



Two festival goers share one umbrella as they sample wines from Surry Cellars during Budbreak.



Surry Cellars wines seen on display Saturday during Budbreak were produced at Surry Community College through their Viticulture and Enology Program.

on show that had folks throwing hands in the air and dancing around the parking lot up well past the time that many of the vendors had stopped giving samples and were closing up their booths.

The two time winner of the Male Country Artist of the Year by the Carolina Music Awards showed he knew how to work a stage in a small town. The longer the band played and the nearer to the end of the festival, more people got up by themselves or in small groups to hit the dance floor.

The Rotarians, which hosts the festival, said Budbreak is their primary external fundraising event and through it they have been able to help local organizations with more than \$150,000 in support.

“The success of this event allows the club to support nonprofit organizations and projects in our community and around the world,” organizers said.

Proceeds from the annual event support the Rotary Club’s

efforts in aiding local school literacy programs, non-profit organizations, youth leadership programs, and more.



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From space to SOTRIO



ADOBE STOCK

Sotrio Vineyards opened its tasting room in Ronda last spring but the story begins almost 30 years ago in the backyard of a Florida home. Vineyard owners Bill and Teresa Piastuch met at the Kennedy Space Center; both work for NASA.

In 1996, Teresa surprised Bill for his birthday by clearing a quarter acre plot behind their Florida home to plant their first grape vineyard. Grapes and wine have been an integral part of their life ever since. Together they have followed this passion for the past 25 years, culminating in the Sotrio Vineyard land purchase in 2015, in the Swan Creek and Yadkin Valley AVAs of the Piedmont area of western North Carolina. In 2019 they were able to build the future winery and office spaces to operate the business. In May of 2024, Sotrio officially opened its doors for tastings and even added a craft microbrewery inside, run by their daughter and brewer, Jamie.

Sotrio offers a selection of Italian-style wines along with eight rotating craft beers from its micro-brewery on premise to offer something for every palette. The relaxed and unhurried atmosphere encourages guests to unwind and enjoy meaningful conversations, ensuring that each visit is special.

“We truly value the relationships we’ve built with our customers who have played a vital role in helping us achieve our dream,” said the couple.

At the winery, the couple said they hope to continue producing



COURTESY PHOTO

Sotrio Vineyards owners Bill and Teresa Piastuch.

wines with 10 vinifera varietals representing both Italian and French origins, and have plans to expand their offerings to include food events and more.

Sotrio Vineyards is located at 211 Groce Road, Ronda. For more info visit sotriovineyards.com or call 336-571-1002.



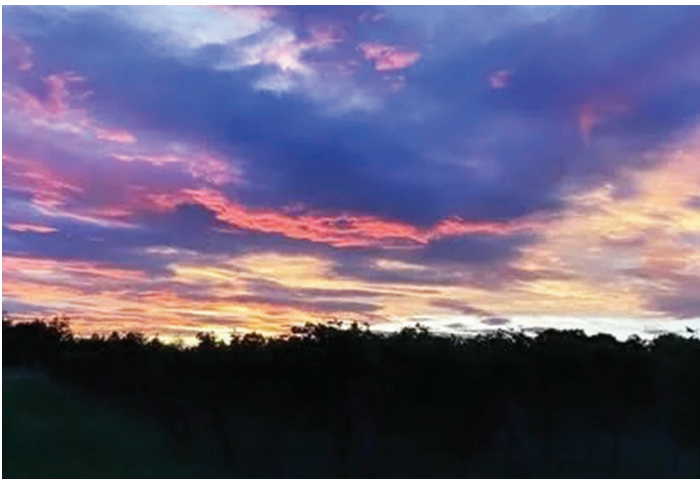
Sotrio Vineyards.

COURTESY PHOTO



Sotrio Vineyards features its own brewery.

COURTESY PHOTO



Sunset view at Sotrio.

COURTESY PHOTO



Harvest season at Sotrio Vineyards.

COURTESY PHOTO

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ON THE VINE

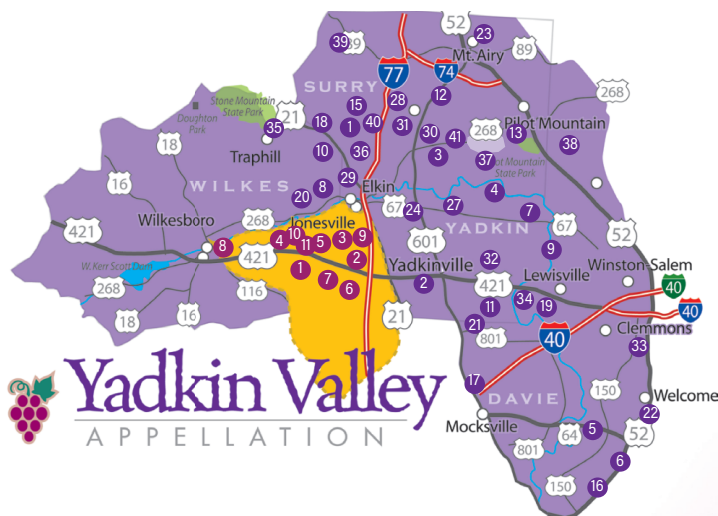
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TNNC261926-1



WIN



1 Adagio Vineyards

2 Brandon Hills Vineyard

336-463-WINE
1927 Brandon Hills Road,
Yadkinville, NC 27055
Website: www.brandonthillvineyard.com
Owners: Larry & Elizabeth Muller
Hours: Friday 1pm - 5pm,
Saturday 12pm - 6pm, Sunday 1pm - 5pm
(Closed January, Open Sat & Sun 1pm - 5pm in February)

3 Carolina Heritage Vineyard & Winery

4 Cellar 4201

5 Childress Vineyards

6 Curran Alexander Vineyards

7 Divine Llama Vineyards, LLC

336-699-2525
4126 Divine Llama Lane, East Bend, NC 27018
Owners: Michael and Patricia West,
Paul Baumbach and Leslie Messick
Winemaker: Dana Aker
Tasting Room Hours: Friday, Saturday, Sunday
12-6 year round
Website: www.divinellamavineyards.com
Location: From NC Hwy 67, turn onto Macedonia Road in
East Bend. Vineyard is .6 mi on left.

8 Elkin Creek Vineyard

336-526-5119
318 Elkin Creek Mill Road, Elkin, NC
28621
Tasting Room Hrs: Thursday - Sunday 11am - 5pm. Wine
Tasting & Light Foods Daily, Brick-Oven Pizzas Every
Sunday. Available for Weddings & Special Events - Private
Luxury Rental Cabins
Website: www.elkincreekvineyard.com

9 Flint Hill Vineyards & Century Kitchen

40 Golden Road Vineyards

336-466-7264
542 Golden Road, State Road, NC 28676
Website: www.grvwines.com
Owners: Crista and Chad Guebert
Hours: Friday 2pm-7pm; Saturday & Sunday
12pm-6pm

10 Grassy Creek Vineyard

336-835-2458
235 Cottage Circle,
State Road, NC 28676
Owners: Derrill and Lori Rice, Jim and Cynthia Douthit
Winemaker: Jim Douthit
Website: www.grassycreekvineyard.com
Location: Surry/Wilkes Counties — West off I-77 at Exit
85 to US 21-Bypass North. Left after first traffic light onto
Klondike Road. Left into vineyard after about 1/2 miles.

11 Hanover Park Vineyard

37 Haze Gray Vineyards

12 Herrera Vineyards

41 Hidden Vineyard

13 JOLO Winery & Vineyards

336-614-0030, 1-855-JOLOWINE
219 JOLO Winery Lane
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041
Website: www.jolovineyards.com

Owners: JW & Kristen Ray
Location: Take exit 134 (NC 268) toward Pilot Mountain/
Elkin. After exiting 134, head west on Highway 268 and
go around the roundabouts, Continuing heading west
on Hwy 268. Travel approximately two miles and veer to
the left onto Pilot Power Dam Road, a slight fork in the
road. JOLO Winery & Vineyards will be your first left.

15 Jones von Drehle Vineyards & Winery

16 Junius Lindsay Vineyard

17 Lazy Elm Vineyard and Winery

336-909-4914
523 Danner Road, Mocksville, NC 27028
www.lazyelm.com
See Website For Hours

18 McRitchie Winery & Ciderworks

19 Medaloni Cellars

20 MenaRick Vineyard & Winery

21 Misty Creek Vineyards

22 Native Vines Winery

23 Old North State Winery & Brewery

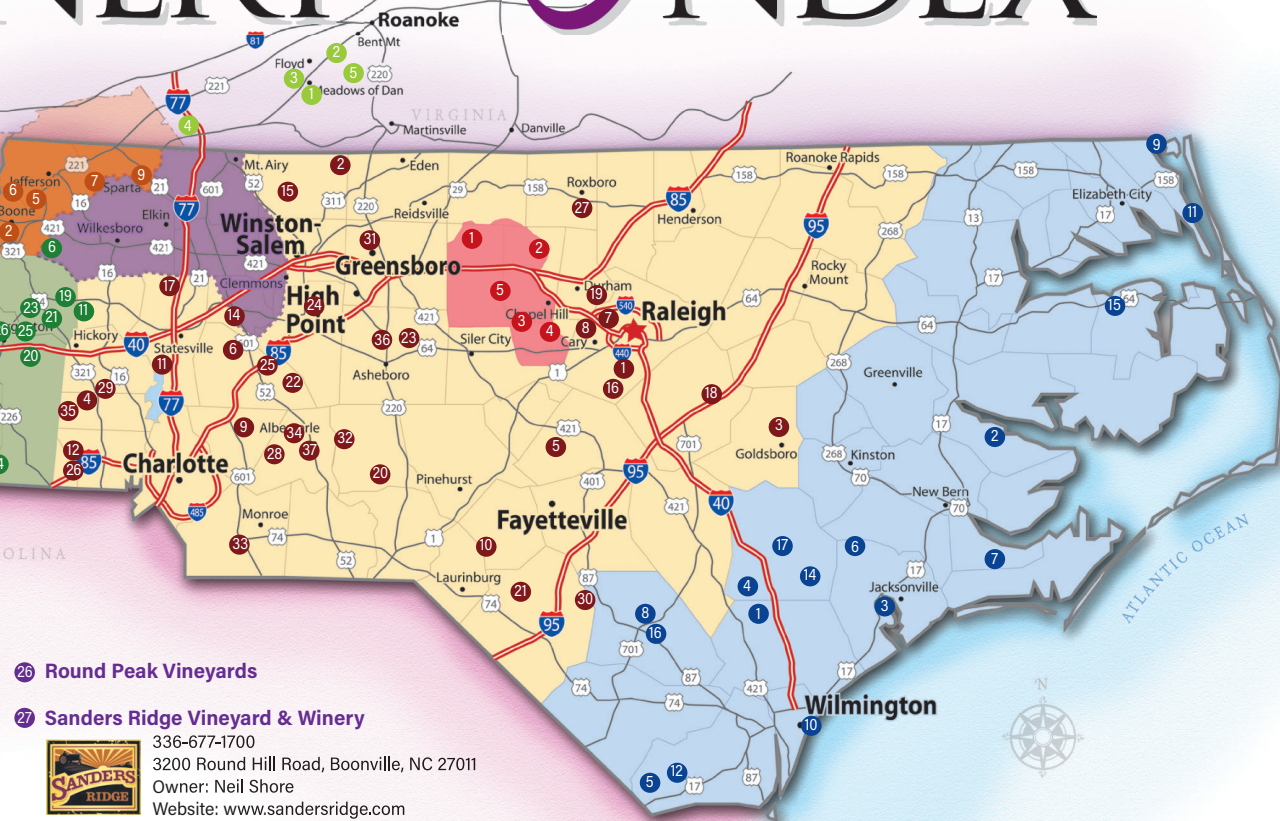
38 Pilot Mountain Vineyards & Winery

24 RagApple Lassie Vineyards

35 Roaring River Vineyards

336-957-2332
493 Brewer Mill Road, Traphill, NC 28685
Owners: Josephine & Tom Silvey
Wine Tasting Room & Restaurant Luxury
Lodgings, Business Meetings, Weddings, Rehearsal
Dinners, and Private Events.
Website: www.roaringrivervineyards.com

VINERY INDEX



26 Round Peak Vineyards

27 Sanders Ridge Vineyard & Winery



336-677-1700
3200 Round Hill Road, Boonville, NC 27017
Owner: Neil Shore
Website: www.sandersridge.com
Hours: Thur-Sun 12pm-5pm

39 Serre Vineyards

28 Shelton Vineyards



336-366-4724
286 Cabernet Lane, Dobson, NC 27017
Owner: R. Edwin Shelton
Winemaker: Gill Giese

Website: www.sheltonvineyards.com
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.

36 Skull Camp Wines

29 Slightly Askew Winery



336-835-2700
913 N. Bridge Street, Elkin, NC 28621
Owners: Tim Gentry and Karen Defreitas
Website: www.slightlyaskewwines.com
Location: Surry County — Take Exit 85

from I-77. West on 268 bypass (CC Camp Rd) .9 miles turn left on S-21 (N Bridge St.) go .8 miles, winery on right (yellow house).

Wine List: Large selection of wines. 20+ wines from semi-dry to Dry Whites and Reds, and large selection of Fruit/Sweet wines

30 Stony Knoll Vineyards

31 Surry Community College Winery

32 Sweet Home Carolina Vineyard & Winery

33 Weathervane Winery

34 Westbend Winery & Brewery

SWAN CREEK AVA

1 Dobbins Creek Vineyards

2 Laurel Gray Vineyards

3 Midnight Magdalena Vineyards

4 Piccione Vineyards



336-571-1024
2364 Cedar Forest Rd., Ronda, NC 28670
Email: info@piccionewine.com

Tasting Room Hours: Every day 12:00 to 6:00pm. Last call at 5:30pm

Live Music Almost Every Weekend. Check our events at piccionevineyards.com or visit us at



5 Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery, LLC



336-835-9463
450 Groce Road, Ronda, NC 28670

Website: www.raffaldini.com

Email: info@raffaldini.com

Hours: Sunday 12pm-5pm

Monday 11pm-5pm

Wednesday - Saturday 11am-5pm

6 Shadow Springs Vineyard

7 Windsor Run Winery & Distillery

8 Stardust Cellars



336-466-4454
1202 Curtis Bridge Road,
Wilkesboro, NC 28697
Website: www.stardustcellars.com
Owner: Nick von Cosmos

Hours: Thursday 4pm-9pm, Friday 4pm-10pm, Saturday 2pm-10pm, Sunday 2pm-8pm

9 Dynamis Estate Wines



336-468-6702
1004 Highland Road
Jonesville, NC 28642
Winemakers: Matheson Worrell & Katy Kidd
Website: www.dynamisestatewines.com

Hours: Wed - Sat 11am - 5pm, Sun Noon - 5pm

10 Castello Barone

11 Sotrio Vineyards and Winery

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336-835-1513

PIEDMONT REGION

- 1 Adams Vineyards and Winery
- 2 Autumn Creek Vineyard
- 3 A Secret Garden Winery
- 4 Baker Buffalo Creek Vineyard & Winery
- 5 Black Rock Vineyards
- 6 Cauble Creek Vineyard
- 7 Chatham Hill Winery
- 8 Cloer Family Vineyards
- 9 Cougar Run Winery
- 10 Cypress Bend Vineyards

11  **Daveste Vineyards**
704-528-3882 info@daveste.com
155 Lytton Farm Rd., Troutman, NC 28166
Website: www.davestevineyards.com
Tasting Room & Art Gallery
Vineyard, Winery, Brewery and Event Venue. Offering dry to semi-sweet wines in both red and white varieties of grape.

- 12 Fiddler's Vineyard
- 14 Garden Gate Vineyards
- 15 Germanton Vineyard & Winery
- 16 Gregory Vineyards
- 17 Grietje's Garden Vineyard & Small Event Venue
- 18 Hinnant Family Vineyard
- 19 Honeygirl Meadery
- 20 Little River Wines
- 21 Locklear Vineyards & Winery
- 22 Morgan Ridge Vineyards & Brewhouse
- 23 Native Son Vineyard and Farm
- 24 Old Homeplace Vineyard
- 25 Old Stone Winery
- 26 Owl's Eye Vineyard & Winery LLC
- 27 Rock of Ages Winery
- 28 Rocky River Vineyards
- 29 Southern Charm Winery
- 30 Stephens Vineyard & Winery
- 31 Stonefield Cellars

32  **Stony Mountain Vineyards**
704-982-0922
26370 Mountain Ridge Road,
Albemarle, NC 28001
Website: www.stonymountainvineyards.com
Owners: Ken, Marie and Devron Furr
Location: Stanly County – Take Hwy 24-27 East from Albemarle.
Turn left at Stone Mountain sign. Turn right on Mountain Ridge Rd.

PIEDMONT REGION

- 33 Treehouse Vineyards
- 34 Uwharrie Vineyards
- 35 Woodmill Winery
- 36 Zimmerman Vineyards
- 37 Dennis Vineyards

COASTAL REGION

- 1 Bannerman Vineyard And Winery
- 2 Bennett Vineyards
- 3 Botticelli Vineyards
- 4 Duplin Winery
- 5 Grapefull Sisters Vineyard
- 6 Huffman Vineyards Winery & Mirey Creek Gifts
- 7 Lake Road Winery

8  **Lu Mil Vineyard**
910-866-5819
438 Suggs-Taylor Road,
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
Website: www.lumilvineyard.com
Owner: Ron Taylor
Tasting Room Hours: Monday - Saturday (10am - 6pm) &
Sunday (1pm - 6pm)
Wine List: Old Cumberland, Taylor Divine, Bladen Blush, Harmony Hall, Cape Owen Red, Merry Christmas, Sir Walter Raleigh, Red Sangria and White Sangria

- 9 Martin Vineyards
- 10 Noni Bacca Winery
- 11 Sanctuary Vineyards
- 12

 **Silver Coast Winery**
910-287-2800
6680 Barbeque Rd.,
Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469
Southport Tasting Room
910-777-5151
105 S. Howe St., Southport NC 28461
Owners: John and Maryann Azzato
Website: www.silvercoastwinery.com
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.

14 The Tippy Bee
15 Vineyards on the Scuppernong, LLC
16  **Cape Fear Vineyard & Winery**
Winery Address: 195 Vineyard Drive
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
Phone (844) VINE-FUN
Monday - Sunday Lunch 11:30 am - 4 pm
Wednesday - Saturday Dinner 5:00 pm - 9 pm
Website: www.CapeFearWinery.com

- 17 The Country Squire Restaurant,
Inn & Winery

HAW RIVER AVA

- 1 Grove Winery
- 2 Iron Gate Vineyards & Winery
- 3 Silk Hope Winery
- 4 Starrlight Mead
- 5 Wolfe Wines

MOUNTAIN REGION

- 1 Addison Farms Vineyard
- 3 Biltmore Estate Winery
- 4 Burntshirt Vineyards
- 5 Calaboose Cellars
- 6 Cerminaro Vineyard
- 7 Cherokee Cellars Winery
- 8 Eagle Fork Vineyards
- 9 Elk Mountain Winery
- 10 FernCrest Winery
- 11 Ginger Creek Vineyards
- 12 Green Creek Winery
- 14 Mountain Brook Vineyards
- 15 Nottely River Valley Vineyards
- 16 Overmountain Vineyards
- 17 Parker-Binns Vineyard
- 18 Saint Paul Mountain Vineyards
- 19 Shadow Line Vineyard
- 20 Silver Fork Vineyard & Winery
- 21 Six Waterpots Vineyard & Winery
- 22 South Creek Vineyards
- 23 Twisted Vine Winery
- 24 Valley River Vineyards
- 25 Waldensian Heritage Wines
- 26 Lake James Cellars

APPALACHIAN HIGH COUNTRY AVA

- 1 Banner Elk Winery and Villa
- 2 Grandfather Vineyard & Winery
- 3 Linville Falls Winery
- 4 Plumtree Valley Vineyards
- 5 Raven Rock Vineyards
- 6 Spencer Mountain Vineyards
- 7 Thistle Meadow Winery
- 8 Watauga Lake Winery and Vineyards
423-768-0345 or 423-768-3633
6952 Big Dry Run Road, Butler, TN 37640
Website: www.WataugaLakeWinery.com
- 9  **Williamson Mead and Brewing**
661-827-7290
3047 Shawtown Rd, Glade Valley, NC 28627
Wed - Fri 12pm-6pm Sat 11am - 7pm; Sun 11am - 6pm
Website: www.williamsonbrewing.com

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA REGION

- 2 Chateau Morrisette
- 3 Foggy Ridge Cider
- 4 Mt. Vale Vineyards
- 5 Villa Appalachia

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YADKIN VALLEY WINE FEST

celebrates 22 years

BY KITSEY BURNS HARRISON | kburns@yadkinripple.com

Now in its 22nd year, Elkin's annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival remains one of the region's most popular summer events, drawing crowds from near and far. This year's event, held May 17, was no exception.

Though not officially part of the Wine Festival, the weekend traditionally kicks off for many locals with a formal gala hosted on Friday night to benefit the Hugh Chatham Health Foundation. The gala is a chance for folks to support the hospital and dress up for a formal affair. This year's gala theme was black and white and the guests showed up and showed out with the men in black tie and women dressed in beautiful gowns and sparkles. Guests at the gala enjoyed Yadkin Valley wines, hors d'oeuvres and a violin duo performance as they browsed silent auction items and took part in a live fundraising auction as well. Over the years the fundraising efforts for the hospital foundation have supported more than \$100,000 in scholarships for area students and hospital staff members, a sleep study department at the hospital, renovations for the emergency room waiting area and more.



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON
Christian Ercolani, of Christian Paul Vineyards, pours sparkling wine for the annual Hugh Chatham Health Wine Gala.

Eat, Drink, Shop, Play & Stay in the Yadkin Valley

1 Yadkin Cultural Arts Center

Yadkin Cultural Arts Center
226 East Main Street
Yadkinville, NC 27055
Website: YadkinArts.org
Phone: 336-679-2941
Located in Downtown Yadkinville

2 Barn Star

3 Jonesville Tourism Development

4 Underdown Ball Real Estate

5 Lewis Furniture



The Wisdom Table
101 East Main Street
Elkin, NC 28621

Phone: 336-258-8077
Website: WisdomTable.com
Email Info@WisdomTable.com
Dining starts at 5:30pm.
Weekly menus can be found at WisdomTable.com
Wed - Fri 5:30pm - 9:00pm
Sat 2:00pm-9:00pm

7 Yadkin Valley Hemp

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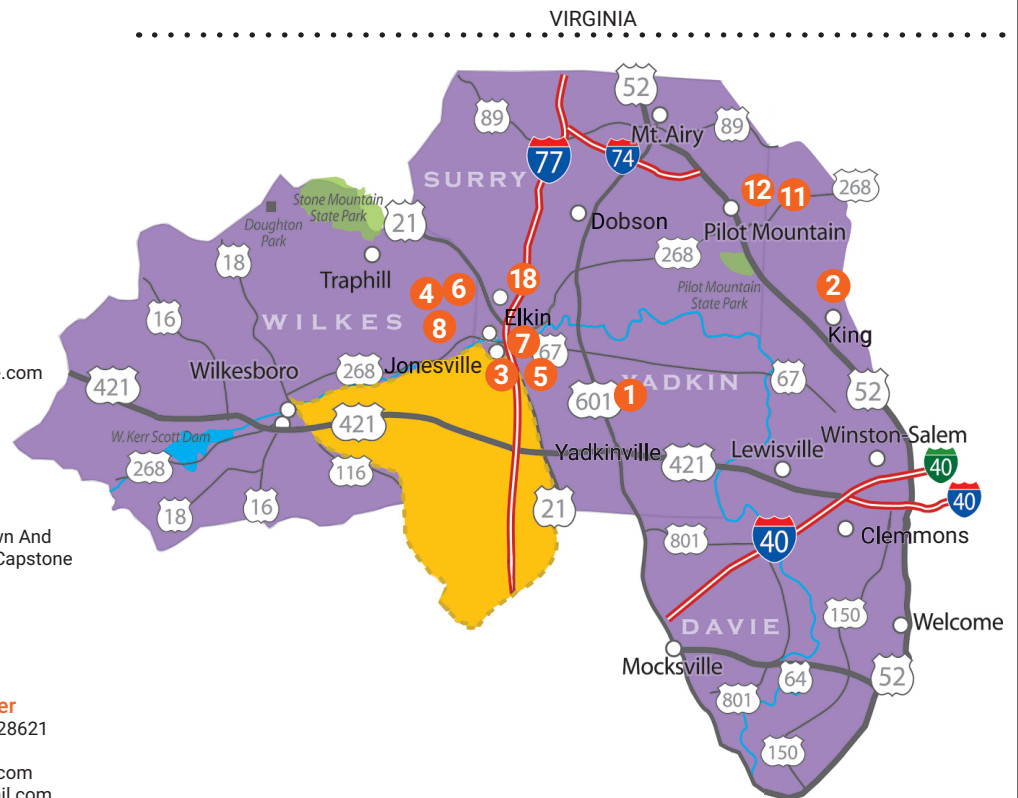
8 Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce

11 Mount Pilot Antique Mall

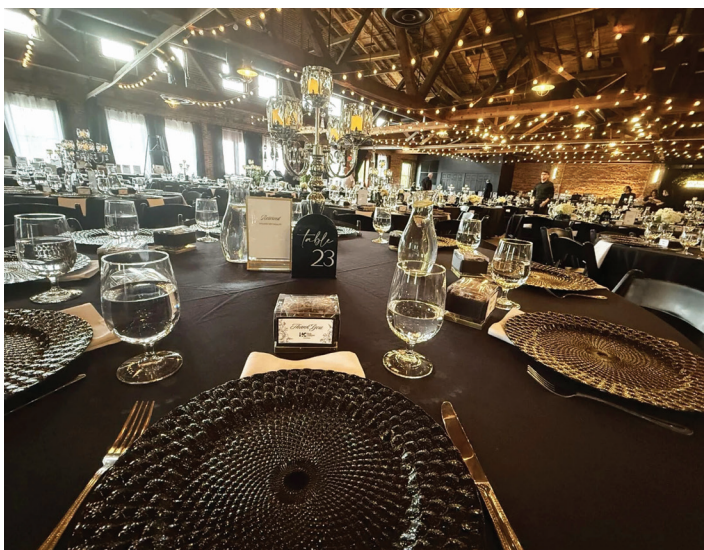
12 Econo Lodge Inn & Suites

18 Cypress Trails Event Center

157 Interstate Way, Elkin, NC 28621
Phone: 910-574-5396
Website: cypresstrailsevents.com
Email: cypresstrailstara@gmail.com



TNNC261920-1



PHOTOS BY KITSEY BURNS HARRISON
Elegant place settings laid for the annual Hugh Chatham Health Wine Gala.



Attendees of the Hugh Chatham Health fundraising gala browse the selection of silent auction items up for bid.



An ice sculpture adorns the hors d'oeuvres table at the 2025 Hugh Chatham Health fundraising gala held Friday at Coley Hall.



A selection of Yadkin Valley wines await guests at the 2025 Hugh Chatham Health Gala.

Saturday morning started out with heavy rains but the skies cleared just in time for the start of the festival at Elkin Municipal Park.

Elkin local Michael Brooks put it simply, "This is a great festival."

Brooks, along with his sister Kristi Sprinkle, were just getting started with tasting some of the wines but Brooks said he was eager to sample the dry reds, while Sprinkle was in search of the sparkling wines.

"A wine that I really really like is Petit Verdot, the grapes grow really well here," said Brooks.

The festival features around 18 wineries from the Yadkin Valley region, giving people the opportunity to sample some favorites and maybe find a new vintage to love.



A violin duo performs at Coley Hall in The Liberty for the 2025 Hugh Chatham Health Gala.



Guests arrive for the 2025 Hugh Chatham Health Gala. This year's event had a black and white theme.



A couple dances in the sunshine at the 2025 Yadkin Valley Wine Festival.



Wines from Surry Cellars of Surry Community College chilling and ready for tasters at the annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival at Elkin Municipal Park.

Bridget Matthews, not normally a rosé drinker, said she found one she loved at the Surry Community College winery booth. She said she enjoyed the festival and how convenient it is to get to experience multiple area vineyards all in one spot.

"I just love to try all the different wines from around the Yadkin Valley without having to drive all over," she said.

Guests at this year's festival were having a great time whether sampling the wines, grabbing lunch from the numerous food vendors or kicking up their heels to the live music. Golden Road

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We would appreciate your referrals to friends, family or anyone you know planning to visit Western North Carolina.



PHOTOS BY KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

Folks find a shady spot to watch the music at the 2025 Yadkin Valley Wine Festival held at Elkin Municipal Park.

Vineyards owner Crista Guebert said she was thrilled with the turnout and response from guests.

“It is the perfect day to be at a wine festival, the breeze, the people have been fantastic and everyone has been very pro-North Carolina wine,” she said. Guebert said their sparkling wine Emergency Blow as well as their rosé were big hits with customers at the festival.

Yadkin Valley Chamber President David Steelman said the 2025 festival was a “great success.” He especially praised the work of the 30 volunteers who helped run the event this year. Steelman said that every hotel, campground and Bed and Breakfast in the region was full and noted the huge economic impact the festival has on the area.

“We are looking forward to May 16, 2026 for the 23rd annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival,” he said.



Guests browse a local pottery booth at the annual Yadkin Valley Wine Festival.



After a stormy morning the sun came out for a picture perfect day for the 2025 Yadkin Valley Wine Fest.



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER LOMAX

North Carolina author Dale Neal speaks to an audience at Sanders Ridge Winery in Boonville about his book titled "The Woman with the Stone Knife."

NC AUTHOR DALE NEAL speaks at Sanders Ridge Winery

BY CHRISTOPHER LOMAX | Special to On The Vine

In April Dale Neal visited Boonville to give a speech at Sanders Ridge Winery about his books and his career as an author and journalist. He talked about the book he wrote titled "The Woman with the Stone Knife." He also gave tips to the audience about the things that made his career a success. Neal's visit was part of the Northwest Regional Library's annual Writers Road Show event which brought several North Carolina authors to events in the region during the month of April.

"Reality is so much stranger than any fiction," said Neal. He explained that fiction has an ending, while reality is never-ending. When it comes to journalism and nonfiction, the drama is told instantly to let the audience know what is exactly happening. Fiction likes to keep the readers hooked for a while until a certain climax is reached.

He also explained to the librarians, writers, and aspiring writers in the audience that writing a book is a sign of optimism. Neal said he has read very sad books, and he believes the emotionally sad authors were optimistic despite their tough circumstances.

"If you are that depressed, you would be curled in a ball somewhere. You would not be writing a book," said Neal.

Neal's advice to those having a hard time creating ideas was to write, do not just stare at a blank paper. Just get started and put some words down, he advised. Many people want to know where writings originate, like where the poems they read came from, it had to get started sometime, he said.

"There is no writer's block," said Neal. You have to keep writing even if you do not believe you have anything to write or simply want to go back and correct mistakes in your writing, he suggested.

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Explore the natural beauty of the YADKIN VALLEY DURING NC TRAIL DAYS

While there are plenty of summer events focused on local wines, the natural beauty of the Yadkin Valley is also showcased each summer at the annual NC Trail Days Festival held the first weekend in June.

North Carolina Trail Days in Elkin celebrates the many outdoor recreation opportunities found in small towns throughout the Blue Ridge Mountain foothills.

At the junction of three state trails, Elkin is a true trails town. NC Trail Days has grown to a four-day event, aligning with National Trails Day on the first Saturday of June and including neighboring Jonesville, just across the Yadkin River.

Organized and self-guided hikes take place throughout the weekend on area trails with attention to local features and themes, such as waterfalls and birdwatching, moonshine still discoveries and plein air painting.

Other activities include rock climbing at Pilot Mountain State Park, exploring stretches of the Yadkin River while cleaning it up, and trout fishing and cycling specifically for kids. Community leaders give educational talks, and a host of regional gear and arts



KITSEY BURNS HARRISON

The Elkin Valley Trails Association at the vendor fair during the 2024 NC Trail Days Festival.

vendors showcase their wares. Live music, as well as local wine, beer and food, round out the festivities.

Accommodation options include hotels, vacation rentals and bed-and-breakfasts, as well as a variety of camping opportunities.

For a full schedule and additional details visit NCTrailDays.com.

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