

## All Trails Lead to NC Wine Country



## **Official Visitors Guide**



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- Unique Stays



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## Intro & Getting Here



## Serenity and Adventure Await in Surry County, NC

Welcome to a memorable getaway in Surry County, a top destination in the heart of North Carolina's Yadkin Valley wine country.

The towns of Mount Airy, Dobson, Elkin and Pilot Mountain provide authentic experiences for people seeking smaller, less-stressful places where they're never bullied by time.

This region is known for beautiful topography flowing from the Blue Ridge Mountains into the rolling Carolina piedmont.

A visit to the vineyards on the Surry County Wine Trail (18 at last count) reveals tasty wines, beautiful views and the likelihood the person who pours your wine is also the one who made it, or at least grew the grapes.

The natural, mostly undisturbed countryside

## Within a Half Day's Drive for 50% of the Population

Yadkin Valley's location, where the Southeast meets the Mid-Atlantic, puts it within a half-day's drive of 50 percent of the U.S. population.

Interstate 77 runs north-south through Surry County, making the county easily accessible for travelers heading south from the Virginias, Ohio Valley and northeastern states.

Alternately, southeastern travelers New York City can conveniently reach the area via I-77 in a northward direction.

Commercial air travelers have two options — Piedmont Triad International airport in Greensboro is just over an hour away, while Charlotte Douglas International airport is about 90 minutes away.

9 hours Orlando 9 hours Indianapolis 8 hours Cleveland 7 hours Jacksonville 7 hours Nashville 6 hours 5 hours Atlanta Charleston, SC 4.5 hours 4 hours Richmond 4 hours Augusta Knoxville 3.5 hours Charleston, WV 3 hours

is perfect for outdoor pursuits. Hikers. kayakers, paddlers, mountain bikers, road cyclists and trail walkers all find refuge here.

Paddle enthusiasts are surprised to learn that Surry County is a statewide leader in building and maintaining river access points. We'll even mail you a Surry Four Rivers Map for free.

When the dinner bell rings, vineyard chefs craft menus from farm-to-table ingredients, while in-town restaurants earn high marks too. And what better way to cap a perfect day than with a restful night in a countryside cabin.

Yadkin Valley, NC

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@ Find Your Trail in Surry County That Next Great Adventure Awaits in NC's Yadkin Valley

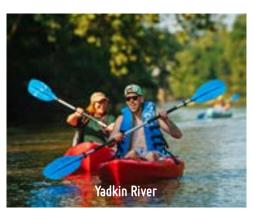
ilot Mountain's quartzite dome is the most recognizable Yadkin Valley landmark. It has served as a beacon for centuries, beckoning people to visit these relaxing foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Here in Surry County, we enjoy the great outdoors and take pride in an undisturbed landscape of rolling hills, free-flowing rivers and old-growth forests, all framed by mountain peaks.

The area's history is rich in pathways, which we embrace with a collection of trails. Hikers, paddlers, mountain bikers, road cyclists and anglers enjoy hundreds of miles of trails in the heart of NC wine country.

Hiking options range from easy walking





blueway trail waters.

Photo Acknowledgements

The Tourism Partnership of Surry County extends gratitude to the following photographers and organizations for their contributions

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## On the Cover

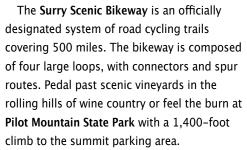
Tranquility of the vines at Round Peak Vineyards in the Mount Airy countryside, with a backdrop of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Photo credit to Sam Dean Photography.

This visitors guide is published by the Tourism Partnership of Surry County. The guide, along with its companion website YadkinValleyNC.com, serves as a planning tool for visits to North Carolina Wine Country. Check the website for changes and the latest updates. The TPSC is a collaboration of the following tourism development authorities: Mount Airy, Elkin, Dobson, Pilot Mountain and Surry County.

**Pilot Mountain State Park** 

paths at Dobson's Fisher River Park and Mount Airy's horseshoe-shaped Granite City Greenway to strenuous uphill climbs at Pilot Mountain State Park and along the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail near Elkin.

Elkin is known as the "best little trails town in North Carolina" thanks to miles of trails built by the Elkin Valley Trails Association. The Elkin & Alleghany Railroad Trail turned a former railway bed along Big Elkin Creek into a pathway accessible to those of all abilities. Paddlers are now discovering Surry thanks to a countywide effort to construct a series of access points along the Ararat River, Fisher River, Mitchell River and Yadkin River. These four rivers provide 100 miles of navigable



The same rivers that attract kayakers and canoers also contain a bounty of trout fishing opportunities.

There are 36 miles of state-designated trout waters stocked twice a year with brown. rainbow and brook trout. These cold-water streams have headwaters in the high elevation peaks along the Blue Ridge Parkway, another "trail" in our area.



# SURRY COUNTY WINE TRAIL

The best of North Carolina wine country awaits in Surry County where thriving vineyards add tapestry and flavor to the Yadkin Valley foothills.

The Surry County Wine Trail connects 18 wineries across the birthplace of the Yadkin Valley American Viticultural Area, North Carolina's largest AVA.

In 2003, brothers Charlie and Ed Shelton of Shelton Vineyards led the effort to make the Yadkin Valley a federally designated wine appellation, highlighting a terroir that provides ideal conditions for growing European vinifera and French-American hybrid grapes.

That designation puts Yadkin Valley on par with other noted wine regions like Sonoma, Napa Valley and the Finger Lakes. Vineyards have become a transformative agricultural venture for farms that once depended on tobacco crops.

Considering the Yadkin Valley sits within a half-day's drive of almost 50 percent of the U.S. population, wine aficionados no longer need to buy West Coast airline tickets or update passports for a European trip.

"The temperature and humidity averages are almost exactly like Bordeaux, France," says Louis Jeroslow,

winemaker at Elkin Creek Vineyard. "These vines don't know they're in North Carolina. Their feet are in Italy, and they're growing in France, as far as they know."

Popular grape varietals include: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chambourcin, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Riesling, Sangiovese, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier.

Many wineries capitalize on the valley's natural beauty with tasting rooms and patios that feature sweeping views of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains. Situated near the towns of Dobson, Elkin, Mount Airy and Pilot



Mountain, the vineyards give life to the countryside in a way that was hardly imaginable at the dawn of the new millennium.

The Surry County Wine Trail was created in 2018 to make it easy for visitors to navigate their way to these award-winning tasting experiences in the heart of North Carolina wine country.

We invite you to come see for yourself. Turn the page to start planning your journey.

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Surry County Wine Trail

Wonderful Yadkin Valley Tasting Experiences

#### Adagio Vineyards 🛣 Elkin, North Carolina

*Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits* **Fun fact**: Named for musical term that means to perform slowly with passion AdagioVineyards.com

Carolina Heritage Vineyard & Winery 📽 Elkin, North Carolina *Outdoor seating, live music, on-site lodging* Fun fact: North Carolina's first certified organic vineyard CarolinaHerítageVineyards.com

Elkin Creek Vineyard 🛣 Elkin, North Carolina Outdoor seating, restaurant, on-site lodging Fun fact: Produces a wine from the German arape Dornfelder ElkinCreekVineyard.com

#### Golden Road Vineyards 🛣 State Road, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, food trucks **Fun fact**: Veteran-owned certified Homegrown by Heroes vineyard GRVwines.com

Grassy Creek Vineyard & Winery 📽 State Road, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, food trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Multiple trails on-site, including a forest bathing trail GrassyCreekVineyard.com

#### Haze Gray Vineyards 🛣

Dobson, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, food trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Winemaker Deane Muhlenberg is a former Navy "Top Gun" pilot HazeGrayVineyards.com

#### Hidden Vineyard 🛣

Dobson, North Carolina *Outdoor seating, live music, food* trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Vineyard trail features great views of the peak of Pilot Mountain Hidden-Vineyard.com

#### JOLO Winery & Vineyards Pilot Mountain, North Carolina *Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits,* restaurant, on-site lodging Fun fact: Named among Top 100 brunch locations in America JOLOVineyards.com

Jones von Drehle Vineyards & Winery 📽 Thurmond, North Carolina *Outdoor seating, live music, food trucks* Fun fact: Premier music venue with outdoor stage and amphitheater Jonesvondrehle.com

#### McRitchie Winery & Ciderworks 📽 Thurmond, North Carolina Outdoor seating, fire pits **Fun fact**: Ring of Fire red wine is one of NC's all-time favorites McRitchieWine.com

Old North State Winery Mount Airy, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, restaurant & bar **Fun fact**: The winery has its own line of casual Southern apparel named Fish Hippie OldNorthStateWinery.com

#### Pilot Mountain Vineyards & Winery Pinnacle. North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, monthly food events, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Large windows in tasting room offer great views of Pilot Mountain PilotMtnVineyards.com

Round Peak Vineyards 📽 Mount Airy, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, food trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Has its own line of craft beer, plus an 18-hole disc golf course RoundPeak.com

Serre Vineyards 🛣 Mount Airy, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, food trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: View stunning mountain sunsets from the tasting room terrace SerreVineyards.com

#### Shelton Vineyards 📽 Dobson, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, amphitheater, restaurant **Fun fact**: North Carolina's largest family-owned estate winery

SheltonVineyards.com Slightly Askew Winery 🛣 Elkin, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Sweet wine lovers enjoy the large selection of fruit wines SlightlyAskewWines.com

#### Stony Knoll Vineyards 🛣 Dobson, North Carolina Outdoor seating, live music, fire pits, food trucks, on-site lodging **Fun fact**: Viognier named the state's best wine at 2023 NC Fine Wines Competition StonyKnollVineyards.com

#### Surry Cellars

Dobson, North Carolina Located at Surry Community College, visits by appointment only **Fun fact**: Wines available at Little Italy in Dobson & The Wisdom Table in Elkin Surry.edu

denotes pet-friendly locations

### Winery Treasure Map

Wine country getaways begin with the Surry County Wine Trail map.

It combines winery locations, lodging *details and key info.* Also included are four breweries and a distillery.



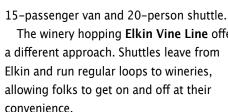
## Y Vineyard Excursions

## Chauffeured Tours: an Easy Way to Explore Wine Country

ine tours provide a fun, relaxing way to sip your way through the Yadkin Valley, with multiple tour options available for individuals. couples and large groups.

Variety and personalization are specialties of Yadkin Valley Wine Tours. Small groups cruise in a Chevy Suburban, while larger shuttles handle groups up to 55. Yadkin Valley Wine Tours also hosts themed tours, which are open to the public and have a pre-selected schedule.

Parkway Wine Tours has shuttled people from one tasting room to the next since 2009. Options include a sedan-style vehicle for couples, SUV for four people,



Elkin Vine Line operates six lines, each Want to be the talk of the vineyards? Arrive who stay at Heart & Soul Bed and Breakfast in Mount Airy.

connecting to four vineyards. Visitors may hop off at as many or few wineries as they desire. Vans arrive at each winery approximately every hour. While at tasting rooms, visitors can track vans via a phone app. in style in a vintage 1939 Cadillac Fleetwood Imperial stretch limo via Heart & Soul Wine **Tours**. The classy ride is available for quests



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The winery hopping **Elkin Vine Line** offers

Another interesting mode of transport is a 14-seater trolley. Slide into a bench and admire the rolling hills through wraparound windows as Good Time Trolley Tours chauffeurs your group. A custom-built bar lets riders enjoy



beverages between stops.

Frog Holler Wine Tours hosts groups as small as two or as large as 14. Select four wineries to visit via minibus and choose between a picnic or sit-down lunch.

Frog Holler is one of four services that picks up guests at their hotel or rental. The others are Parkway, Yadkin Valley and the Good Time Trollev.

### Fine Wine Tours

Savor the best of the Yadkin Valley and leave the driving to the pros. Our tour

companies are happy to customize an ideal itinerary. *They plan the trip;* all you do is sip.



# Take Your Pick of Countryside Cabins

If a relaxing stay in wine country sounds good, you're in luck. YadkinValleyNC.com offers an extensive listing of rentals. Browse everything from cozy cottages and bungalows to upscale cabins and spacious vacation homes.

#### Elk's Hidden Passage

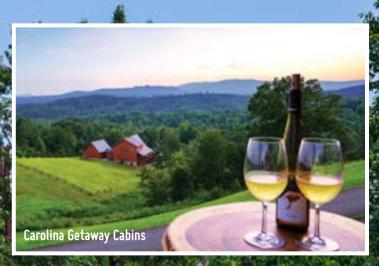
## Explore Options Galore

We offer an abundance of vacation rentals in the tranquil countryside as well as in our friendly small towns. Scan the code to find the one that's right for you.



#### WINE COUNTRY









## Vinter Wine & Beer Passport

## Experience a Season Full of Tastings in the Yadkin Valley

hase away the winter blues with an array of reds, whites and ambers. The Yadkin Valley Winter Wine & Beer Passport provides a fun and economical way to experience North Carolina wine country during the colder months.

Each passport serves as a ticket to tastings at award-winning wineries and craft breweries throughout Surry County in the heart of the Yadkin Valley.

The passport program has expanded over the years to more than a dozen tasting experiences. Wineries make up the bulk of the tastings, along with a few craft breweries and often a distillery.

The passports go on sale in September.



There's an individual passport, which provides one tasting per location, and a two-person passport that provides two tastings per location.

All passport holders also receive discounts at accommodations, restaurants and retail locations. The lodging discounts include several cabins and cottages in the vineyards.

Ample time is provided to allow folks to take full advantage of the perks of passport ownership. The program begins the day after Thanksgiving and runs through late March, a period of roughly four months.

"People love the passports. Many come back year after year or give them as holiday gifts to family and friends," says Becky

> Muhlenberg of Haze Gray Vineyards. "It's really just the idea of having something fun to do for a long winter weekend, or spreading it across several weekends."

This annual program is possible thanks to a collaboration between the Surry Wineries Group, the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce



and the Tourism Partnership of Surry County.

"It's a great time of year to visit because things slow down and you often get to meet the winemakers and brewmasters," says Jessica Roberts, director of the Tourism Partnership of Surry County.

### Winter Wonderland

To learn more about the Winter Wine & Beer Passport, see a list of participating locations and purchase a passport online, scan the code. Passports are also on sale each

winter at many of the wineries and breweries.



## The Yadkin Valley is Ideal for Destination Weddings

ream weddings come true at vineyards and rustic barn venues in the Yadkin Valley. Couples love the relaxing, natural feel, especially the mountain backdrops that are perfect for ceremonies, receptions and photos.

Several wineries along the Surry County Wine Trail specialize in weddings. That list includes Elkin Creek Vineyard and Serre Vineyards.

It's hard to pick a favorite among the wedding barns. Each offers a different experience with distinctive amenities. Here are four to consider.

The **Barn at Heritage Farm** in Dobson showcases mountain views with a wall of windows that brides often use as the ceremony focal point. This custom-built barn, across the road from Shelton Vineyards, accommodates 400-plus guests in a climatecontrolled space.

The **Barn at Blueberry Hill** in Elkin offers convenience at every turn. The 1940s dairy barn has been converted from its original use to cater to today's brides. The rustic interior combines vintage furnishings with modern amenities.



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At **Absolutely Country Wedding Barn** near Pilot Mountain, the venue accommodates 150 guests, while the covered arena seats even more. The weathered wood barn, accented with wagon wheels and string lights, is an ideal setting and requires very little decorating. The newly constructed barn at **Valley Brook Farm** in Mount Airy has a cabin feel with stainedwood interiors. The climatecontrolled space seats up to 150 people, and the property has long-range views of Pilot and Sauratown mountains.



\* JURIED ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW \* \* LIVE BLUEGRASS & OLD-TIME STRINGBAND MUSIC \* \* WORLD-FAMOUS GROUND STEAK SANDWICHES & FOOD FOR THE SOUL \* \* CHILDREN'S AREA & ACTIVITIES \*

## (f)/DISCOVER DOBSON

OUTDOORS



From the Blue Ridge Parkway in the north to the Yadkin River in the south, from Pilot Mountain State Park in the east to Stone Mountain State Park in the west, all trails lead to Surry County in North Carolina's Yadkin Valley. Situated where majestic Blue Ridge Mountains give way to rolling foothills, this scenic destination is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. It's a place for hiking, biking, kayaking and rock climbing. You'll find gentler pursuits, too, like walking graded trails, cycling urban greenways and strolling among

verdant vineyards.

This year, blaze a path to tranquility and immerse yourself in nature. It all starts by turning the page to learn about a great outdoor destination.

Fox Hunters Paradise Overlook on Blue Ridge Parkway



## Hiking Trails, Biking Trails

### By Boot or Pedal, These Routes Get the Adrenaline Flowing

For hiking and mountain biking, some places naturally offer better terrain.

Such is the case with Surry County. Its location in the transition zone from the mountains to foothills provides significant elevation changes and geographical features. On the county's western side, higher elevations produce challenging trails.

Once the topography flows into the central and eastern side of the county, visitors find rolling hills punctuated by rivers. The exception to that is Pilot Mountain on the county's eastern edge. It rises 2,200 feet from



flatter lands like a perfect mountain playground. Hikers love the challenging trails at **Pilot** Mountain State Park. There are 16 trails

totaling just over 40 miles. Several are rated strenuous, including the 3.5-mile uphill Grindstone Trail beginning at the visitors center and climbing through the woods to the summit.

Branching off the Grindstone is the very challenging one-mile Ledge Spring Trail. Hikers navigate roots, rocks, boulders and rock steps as the path connects to **Pilot** Knob Trail, where there's a likelihood of

> encountering climbers. The park's rock-climbing area is along the Ledge Spring Trail.

Since mountain biking is not allowed at Pilot Mountain, a good biking spot is nearby at Westwood **Park** in Mount Airy. Westwood has five miles of intermediate bike trails and 1.5 miles of walking trails, all centered around the Tumbling Rock Reservoir. Mountain biking is a big part of the offerings at Dobson's Fisher River Park

Bikers frequent a 6.3-mile multi-use trail. It's a secluded, moderate route with hardwood forests, pine groves, rock outcroppings and ravines.

Hikers and bikers find trails galore in Elkin, thanks to the efforts of the Elkin Valley Trails Association. For hikers, a challenging route is the Wells Knob Trail, a five-mile roundtrip on rocky terrain with an 800-foot ascension to Wells Knob.

The two-mile Elkin Creek Mountain Bike Trail is a moderate route that travels the hills and hollers of Big Elkin Creek and circles Elkin's water reservoir.

### Outdoor Adventure

A trip to wine country reveals an unending supply of outdoor pursuits. Hiking, mountain biking and rock climbing are among the many options. Learn more about

getting outdoors in the Yadkin Valley by scanning the code.



### Follow These Six Paths for Less Strenuous Adventures

Outdoor adventure can be rewarding without being strenuous. Here's the scoop on a half dozen must-see Yadkin Valley locations where the walking is easy.

The Elkin & Alleghany Railroad Trail begins in Elkin Municipal Park and fol-Lows an old railroad route along Big Elkin Creek. It's a wide, level trail of crushed gravel The route is two miles long (four miles round trip) and crosses seven bridges, including a 75-foot wooden bridge. For added adventure, take the steps down to the rocky area below the spillway dam. The trail includes a rest shelter, benches and historical markers. Restrooms are located at Elkin Municipal Park.



Also in Elkin is the Carolina Heritage Vineyard Trail. This is an easy/ **moderate half-mile spur that's part** of the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Park at the Burch Station kayak launch beside Hwy. 268 and cross the road to the trailhead. The short trail goes to Carolina Heritage Vineyard, where tastings are available.

The mostly shaded **Loop Trail at Fisher** River Park in Dobson is a 1.5-mile greenway, with an additional 0.75 mile of connectors. Enjoy a relaxing, scenic walk on a level crushed-rock pathway. Half a mile hugs the river, with the remainder meandering among the park's activities.



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eghany Railroad Trail

OUTDOORS

Located down a one-lane country road is the Pilot Creek Meadow Walk, part of Pilot Mountain State Park. Walkers often see birds, butterflies and dragonflies while following the mowed trail through grassy meadows above Pilot Creek. The path is a registered part of the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail and was established to benefit native pollinators and grassland birds. There's a small farm pond along the way where folks may fish for bass, catfish and sunfish with a valid North Carolina Fishing License.

The 6.6-mile Granite City Greenway forms a horseshoe around Mount Airy. The east trailhead begins at Riverside Park and follows the Ararat River until curving westward along Lovills Creek. The wide, paved greenway is ideal for walking, jogging, cycling and trout fishing.

At the Cumberland Knob overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Cumberland Knob Trail provides an easy half-mile walk through a picnic area and along a meadow to the overlook shelter. At the shelter are photo-worthy views of the 2,885-foot Cumberland Knob peak.



## @ Four Rivers Run Through It

### Paddle to Your Heart's Content on Uncrowded Waterways

hile most people know Yadkin Valley's name comes from the Yadkin River, they're often surprised to learn three other rivers flow through Surry County in North Carolina wine country.

It's not just vineyards that bring people to the region. Many kayakers and canoers visit to take advantage of 100 miles of uncrowded paddling waters. Joining the Yadkin River in offering paddle opportunities are the Ararat River, Fisher River and Mitchell River.

Surry is a leader among NC counties for



building and maintaining river accesses. There are 11 developed access points and six undeveloped access points countywide, and all are listed on the Surry County Four Rivers Map. along with distances between access points.

The most paddled river is the Yadkin River. It is a wide, gently flowing waterway with only occasional Class I and Class II rapids. Two outfitters - Rocky Forest River Run and Hometown River Co. - offer kayak, canoe and tubing trips along the Yadkin, which is great for casual paddlers, novices and those wishing to rent equipment instead of bringing it along.

Avid paddlers often gravitate toward the other streams.

The Ararat River is a smaller waterway that flows south from Virginia into Mount Airy, where it runs alongside the Granite City Greenway. From there, it continues southward near Pilot Mountain, offering some of the best technical waters outside of the Carolina mountains, before joining the Yadkin.

Headwaters for the Fisher River begin near Cumberland Knob in the high-elevation northwest corner of Surry County at the Blue Ridge Parkway. Most people bypass the upper Fisher and put in at the developed access point in Fisher River Park near Dobson. From there, it's 17.5 miles downstream to the Yadkin River, with multiple access points along the way.

The Mitchell River also originates high in the Blue Ridge in the county's westernmost reaches. People typically put in below Kapp's Mill Dam and enjoy 13.7 serene miles to the Burch Station access point on the Yadkin. There are fewer access points on this river.

## Four Rivers Map

The Surry County Four Rivers Map is available for free online or via mail. It showcases all access points, denotes which are developed and lists exact mileages between

points. Scan the code to begin your paddle adventure.



### Cyclists Explore More Than 500 Miles Along Dedicated Routes

he Surry Scenic Bikeway attracts cyclists looking to get out in the countryside and enjoy the Yadkin Valley's rolling terrain.

Here among vineyards and farmland are more than 500 miles of designated routes. The bikeway consists of four loops tied to a series of connectors. The connectors also provide options for shorter, alternate routes.

The four loops are the Dobson-Elkin Loop, Lowgap-Mount Airy Loop, Mount Airy-Pilot Mountain Loop and Mount Airy-Westfield Loop. The bikeway includes the statedesignated North Carolina Bike Route 4, which runs east-west through Surry County.



For those seeking a serious challenge, a 3.6-mile uphill spur ascends 1,400 feet to the summit parking area of Pilot Mountain State Park, or cycling the entire 55-mile Lowgap-Mount Airy Loop involves a total elevation gain of 4,421 feet.

As its name suggests, the bikeway provides cyclists with a lot of beautiful scenery. Pilot Mountain's quartzite peak is visible from multiple vantage points. Several vineyards pop up along the way, including Carolina Heritage,

shady setting. The park includes the footprint Golden Road, Hidden Vineyard and Shelton remains of the 1796 Grant-Burrus Hotel, Vinevards. which hosted U.S. Presidents Andrew Jackson (Insider tip: Veer off at the front gate and James Polk, as well as Vice President of Shelton Vineyards to enjoy a paved ride Aaron Burr. through the vines.) While the routes are All About the Ride mostly rural, they do take riders through friendly small Everything to plan a ride on the Surry towns. Main Street in Pilot Scenic Bikeway is on the bikeway's Mountain, Renfro Street website. Study route maps, calculate in Mount Airy, North Main mileages, download GPS files, review Street in Dobson and Market elevation profiles, Street in Elkin are all part of get parking info the bikeway. and chart points of The 12.5-mile Rockford interest. Scan the Connector traverses the code to begin.

southernmost portion of the county near the Yadkin

OUTDOORS

Elkin-Dobson Loop

## @ Pedal the Surry Scenic Bikeway

River. Here, riders pass through the Historic

where a number of historical buildings can

be observed. Those structures include the

1848 Rockford Inn, 1830 Mark York Tavern

building, 1890 Rockford General Store and

Rockford Park in the village is a great picnic

location. Grab a sandwich or burger from the

general store across the street and enjoy the

1914 Rockford Methodist Church.

Village of Rockford, founded in 1790,



A Taste of Yadkin Valley

The flavors of the Yadkin Valley go far beyond wine. In towns and at vineyards, culinary artists craft palate-pleasing menus that change seasonally. Farm-to-table freshness is a priority in this agricultural region. Of course, so is Southern comfort food like barbecue, burgers and biscuits. Down-home cooking is a staple at numerous diners and drive-ins. But then you turn a corner and are surprised to find a top-notch sushi bar or Mexican grill with authentic recipes. We're also proud to be home of two culinary trails that showcase one-of-a-kind heritage foods found nowhere else.

Outdoor Dining at JOLO Winery and Vineyards, Pilot Mountain

Savor the Flavors

Check out restaurant listings at YadkinValleyNC.com. Listings can be sorted by town or by categories, such as outdoor, casual and fine dining, sandwich shops, and coffee shops.









#### CULINARY







Unmistakably Delicious

Aunt Bea's BBQ. **Pilot Mountain** 

## Food Trail Serves Up Mouthwatering Ground Steak

From meager beginnings in the Great Depression, the ground steak sandwich not only survived, it thrived. So popular is this melt-in-your-mouth cousin to the hamburger that nearly a century later it has received its own food trail.

The Surry Ground Steak Trail shines the spotlight on 11 mom-and-pop restaurants that serve this uniquely Surry County creation.

The sandwich is believed to have originated in the 1930s at the old Canteen Restaurant in Mount Airy before spreading to diners in nearby Pilot Mountain, Elkin and Dobson. Cooks with limited resources got more out of ground beef by boiling or browning the meat, adding flour and water (or milk), and seasoning with salt and pepper. They placed the tender, loose-meat patty on a bun and topped it with mayonnaise, slaw and tomato.

"When the lunch whistle blew at textile factories in Mount Airy, workers would walk to Main Street for sandwiches, and one of those was ground steak," says Travis Frye, coordinator of the Surry Co. Tourism Development Authority. "It was an affordable sandwich for blue-collar workers. It quickly spread, and people around the county started enjoying ground steak."

Frye came up with the trail idea a year ago, only weeks into

his new job as tourism coordinator. One of his first assignments was organizing the dedication ceremony for a Hungry for History roadside marker to honor sonker, a local heritage dessert with its own trail.

"It piqued my interest because I saw there were stories to tell," he says. "There's a history to expand upon and something we have that differentiates us from any other county in North Carolina. We can claim two different dishes - one being sonker and one being ground steak."

Folks can savor a ground steak sandwich at any - or all - of the 11 trail locations. Mount Airy has five: Aunt Bea's BBQ, Dairy Center, Martha Sue's, Snappy Lunch and Speedy Chef. Three Pilot Mountain eateries are on the trail: All Sauced Up BBQ, Aunt Bea's BBQ and Cousin Gary's. In Dobson, ground steak is on the menu at Central Café and Rockford General Store. Elkin's Speedy Chef rounds out the list.

Freddy Hiatt purchased the Dairy Center in Mount Airy in the 1990s and learned ground steak's history from previous owner, Gene Fleming, who opened the eatery in 1954.

"It's a soft, tender type of meat, and it does kind of melt in your mouth," Hiatt says. "You can eat it without a lot of heavy 🔶



chewing. Some people use ground chuck. We use the ground beef with higher fat to get a better flavor, a better taste. That's what we've done all the years I've been here, and Gene did the same. I've always said if it works, there's no reason to change it."

The recipe at Cousin Gary's in Pilot Mountain hasn't changed since Gary Collins founded the diner in 1988. Collins was one of 18 children. They grew up on ground steak, and he made sure to get his mom's beloved "secret" recipe when he opened.

The recipe stayed a family secret when Collins' sister, Debbie Butner, bought the eatery and remains so today as ownership has passed to Debbie's daughter, Gina Erickson.

"It's not like a hamburger that is tough, and



you have to chew it up," Erickson says. "When you take a bite, you're eating it with the slaw and tomato, and it all just kind of comes together in your mouth. It's really good." While the basics of making ground steak are similar, recipes vary per restaurant, as does the presentation. Some serve it on a plate (minus the bun) accompanied by sides. Others put ground steak on a biscuit. "We serve it all day long, and I have a large customer base for breakfast who eat it with eggs, either as an egg-and-ground-steak sandwich or a ground steak omelet," says Hiatt of the Dairy Center. "We fix it any way

people request it."

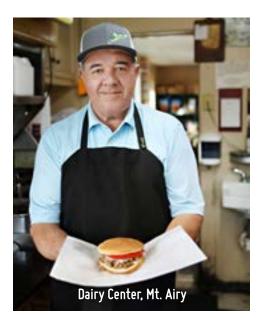
Ground steak, like sonker, is part of the generational fabric of the area. Locals love



it, and the creator of the Surry Ground Steak Trail believes visitors will. too.

"It's an institution - there's history, there are memories, there's an identity," says Frye, who remembers his great-grandmother making ground steak in a cast-iron skillet.

"The roots are the selling point," he adds. "Let us tell you a little about our history while giving you a current experience."



CULINARY

Hungry for History?

Get Your Just Desserts on the Sonker Trail



found in Surry County, NC

1 Anchored Bakery 139 Moore Ave., Mount Airy, NC 27030 (336) 705-3449 www.AnchoredBakeryMtAiry.com

- 2 Prudence McCabe Confections 192 N. Main St., Suite 400, Mount Airy, NC 27030 (336) 648-8160 www.EatMoreChocolates.com
- 3 Miss Angel's Heavenly Pies 153 N. Main St., Mount Airy, NC 27030 (336) 786-1537 www.MissAngelsHeavenlyPiesInc.com
- The Tilted Ladder 105–A W. Main St., Pilot Mountain, NC 27041 (336) 444-4194 www.TheTiltedLadder.com
- 6 Rockford General Store 5174 Rockford Rd., Dobson, NC 27017 (336) 374-5317 www.RockfordGeneralStore
- 6 Southern on Main 02 E. Main St., Elkin, NC 28621 (336) 258-2144 www.SouthernOnMain.c
- 7 Skull Camp Social House 2000 N. Bridge St., Elkin, NC 28621 (336) 258-8124 www.SkullCampBrewing.com/greatfood
- 8 Harvest Grill at Shelton Vineyard 230 Cabernet Ln., Dobson, NC 27017 (336) 366-3590 www.SheltonVineyards.com

www.SonkerTrail.org (800) 948-0949

## Different Flavors & Varieties Await on the Trail

Surry's signature dessert is big on personalization. Every stop along the Sonker Trail presents different styles, along with crust and flavor variations.

At Prudence McCabe Confections, Sue Heckman drew inspiration from her grandmother for her pastry-topped sonkers, baked in individual tins. Just before they're done, she grates butter over the top, sprinkles on sugar, and places them under the broiler to create a golden-brown crust.

Across the street at Miss Angel's Heavenly Pies, Angela Shur bakes with fresh fruit from her orchard and uses a crumb-based crust, drizzled with moonshine dip. "I don't call it a sonker," Miss Angel says. "I call it a 'zonker' because when you eat ours with moonshine,



Harvest Grill

you go zonkers." at Anchored Sweet Treats & Savory Eats. offers a hearty crust over a juicy filling.

The Surry Sonker Trail is a confectionary journey that showcases a heritage dessert passed down from generation to generation.

The trail leads visitors to eight places that serve sonker, which begs the question: What exactly is this uniquely named delicacy?

The confection is best described as a hybrid between a cobbler and deep-dish pie. It comes about by blending fruit and unshaped dough that is sweetened with sugar, molasses and the occasional secret ingredient. Many folks serve it drizzled with a cream-based dip, not to be called a glaze!

Sonker is similar to snowflakes in that no two are exactly alike. Recipes, handed down over the years, evolved as cooks tweaked them to suit their tastes and seasonally available ingredients.

Flavors commonly enjoyed are apple, blackberry, cherry, peach, raspberry, strawberry rhubarb and sweet potato, but don't be surprised to come across a savory sonker or wine-infused sonker. It's unclear exactly how the dish got its unusual name, although it can be attributed to the Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigrants who settled the Yadkin Valley in the 1700s.

**Rockford General Store** 

The word sonker comes from the Scottish dialect. It originally referred to a small, grassy knoll that could have been used as a seat. The meaning evolved over time to describe a seat or saddle made of straw. Many suspect the dough covering the bumpy filling reminded cooks of a knoll or saddle, hence the term sonker.

Others say the name comes from the word "sunk" because a sonker's crust sinks into the fruit filling. Over the years in rural Carolina dialect, perhaps "sunker" became "sonker."

However the name came about, one thing is clear: This tasty Surry treat is a must-have on your next visit.

And if your next visit happens to be the first Saturday in October, check out the Sonker Festival at the historic Edwards-Franklin House west of Mount Airy. The event has celebrated sonker annually since 1980.



(800) 948–0949 www.SonkerTrail.org



Two blocks away, third-generation sonker chef Samantha Coleman serves traditional style Baked in old-school rectangle pans, her sonker When sonker is served at **The Tilted Ladder**,

it unexpectedly arrives in a large, stemmed

cocktail glass alongside a thin milk dip, reminiscent of snow cream, for drizzling,

Small cast-iron skillets hold individual sonkers at Shelton Vineyards' Harvest Grill. After baking, the crust is topped with fresh fruit, often wine-infused, and a scoop of ice cream.

Ice cream is also part of the recipe at Southern on Main. Owner Marla Stern bakes sonker with a lot of crust and serves it warm with vanilla ice cream.

Folks enjoy rocking on the porch of Rockford General Store and eating freshly baked sonker, washed down with an RC Cola. Cherry and sweet potato are favorites, and the staff posts Facebook videos of piping-hot sonker leaving the oven.



CULINARY

**Elkin Creek Vineyard** 

## 1 Six Tasty Discoveries

### Follow the Locals to Find These Culinary Treasures

Travel is about discovery. When it comes to food, the best memories are often created by unexpected experiences that locals know best. Here are six to consider on your next visit

The fried pork chop sandwich at Snappy Lunch is legendary. It's a messy mouthful, fully loaded with chili, tomato ketchup, mustard and onions. There's often a line to enter the eatery, located on Mount Airy's Main Street. Snappy Lunch opened in 1923 and is the oldest restaurant in town. It was a favorite spot for a young Andy Griffith, who reportedly was fond of the hot dogs. Griffith later mentioned Snappy Lunch on his classic TV show, the only real-life Mount Airy business to have that distinction.



Some say homemade biscuits are a dying art, but at Sue's Kitchen in the town of Dobson, fluffy biscuits topped with melted butter are tasty proof that the extra effort for scratch-made bread is worth every step. Biscuits and other breakfast items are available all day long. Guests can opt for biscuit sandwiches stuffed with pork tenderloin or country ham, or indulge in a plate of biscuits and homestyle gravy.



Shopping for antiques and vintage items in Pilot Mountain requires fuel. Main Street Coffee fulfills the need for caffeine with creative concoctions. The ice cream sundaes and banana splits are darn good, too. Be sure to place a pin on the U.S. map to show your hometown.

Harry's Place in Elkin is the quintessential "place where the locals go" for meat-and-three specials and friendly service. Thursdays are particularly popular thanks to legendary fried chicken served golden-brown.

Every Sunday, Elkin Creek Vineyard offers gourmet brick-oven pizzas. Demand is great, so you must call in advance to reserve a ball of dough. Bacon brie is the top seller and pairs perfectly with Elkin Creek's bold red wines.

A true Southern delicacy is the fried bologna sandwich at Rockford General Store. Extra-thick and deep-fried, the bologna is topped with hoop cheese and placed on potato bread or homemade bun. Topping choices are mustard, mayo, ketchup, pickles, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, slaw and chili.



## Where Mayberry Blends with Merlot



Shelton Vineyards, Dobson

Main Street, Elkin

rowns

If small towns with authentic experiences appeal to you, make plans to visit **Dobson, Mount Airy, Elkin** and **Pilot Mountain** in the Yadkin Valley. Market Street, Mount Airy

Tilted Ladder, Pilot Mountain



Three Trails Hotel, Elkin

Part of the joy of travel is staying in interesting places. Here are four options to consider when planning your next visit to the towns of Surry County.





Uniquely 4 You

Chateau at JOLO Vineyards, Pilot Mtn.

Andy Griffith's Homeplace, Mount Airy





### Enjoy Mayberry & Merlot in America's Hometown

teeped in nostalgia and friendly charm, Mount Airy is the quintessential Southern small town. Known by many as Mayberry, it's the birthplace of Andy Griffith and inspired the fictional town depicted in "The Andy Griffith Show."

Fans reminisce about their favorite scenes as they stroll Main Street to visit Floyd's City Barber Shop, stop by Opie's Candy Store and eat a famous pork chop sandwich at **Snappy Lunch**, which was mentioned on the first season of the famed sitcom. Another eatery, The Loaded Goat, is named for one of the show's funniest episodes.

A bucket-list activity involves a ride in the back of a patrol car.

Mayberry Squad Car Tours depart daily from Wally's Service Station, ferrying passengers in vintage Ford squad cars to Mayberry landmarks and other points of interest.

Don't miss taking a picture at Sheriff Taylor's desk in the replica courthouse beside Wally's or posing behind bars in Otis Campbell's jail cell.

Spending time downtown reveals Mount Airy's pride for its famous son. The bronze TV Land Statue of Andy and Opie walking to the fishing hole stands outside the Andy Griffith Museum, where more than 1,000 pieces of memorabilia detail Griffith's life and career.



Adjacent to the museum is the Andy Griffith Plavhouse.

Each September, the town celebrates its television heritage with the weeklong Mayberry Days festival. From watermelonseed-spitting contests to bluegrass music, appearances by famous folks connected to the show, and the annual parade, the event promises down-home family fun.

Mount Airy's rich music tradition lives on today with live performances at the **Historic** Earle Theatre and preserved memories in the Old-Time Music Heritage Hall. The area's signature old-time sound involves instrumental numbers led by the fiddle and

> banjo. Old-time music paved the way for bluegrass.

Every Saturday morning, WPAQ (740 AM) broadcasts its live radio show, called "Merry-Go-Round," from the Earle Theatre stage. Merry-Go-Round started on Groundhog Day in 1948 and is the secondlongest-running live radio show in the nation, trailing only the "Grand Ole Opry."

Like any good Southern town, Mount Airy restaurants dish out plenty of comfort food, from classic

meat-and-threes to smoked pork barbecue. Great burgers, too!

Three eateries serve the county's signature dessert, a cobbler-pie hybrid known as sonker, as part of the Surry Sonker Trail. One in particular, Miss Angel's Heavenly Pies, adds moonshine to the recipe, but don't tell deputy Barney Fife.

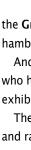
Surry County's newest culinary trail,



Miss Angel's Heavenly Pies

ry Days Festiva

ld-Time Music Heritage Hal





the Ground Steak Trail, celebrates a melt-in-your-mouth cousin to the hamburger. This loose-meat sandwich is served at five locations in Mount Airy. Andy Griffith is not the town's only famous person. Singer Donna Fargo, who had a string of Top 10 hits in the 1970s, was born and raised here. See an exhibit dedicated to Fargo at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History. The original Siamese Twins - Eng and Chang Bunker - settled in Mount Airy and raised their families on a farm outside of town. A museum honoring their legacy is set to open in late 2023.

On weekends from May through October, the Market Street Arts and Entertainment District comes to life. The street closes to vehicles and welcomes makers, food trucks and musicians.

Grab a craft beer at one of two breweries on the street, **Thirsty Souls** Brewing and White Elephant Beer Co., and browse the eclectic offerings. Public art and outdoor seating add to the festive atmosphere. The town's third craft beer maker, **Midsummer Brewing**, is a couple of miles away on the Andy Griffith Parkway.

The town's location in the heart of the Yadkin Valley wine region makes it easy to explore beautiful vinevards.

Enjoy a glass of wine with dinner at Old North State Winery downtown. Or head into the countryside for vino accompanied by views of the Blue Ridge Mountains at Round Peak Vineyards and Serre Vineyards. Several other wineries are nearby in Dobson and Pilot Mountain.

A local distillery, Mayberry Spirits, produces small-batch whiskey, the first legal moonshine in Mayberry since Prohibition.

More information about Mount Airy can be found at VisitMayberry.com.





## The Earle Theatre: Mount Airy's Center for the Arts

Imost anytime of the year, visitors can find something to do at the Earle Theatre on Main Street in Mount Airy. Movies, concerts, live radio broadcasts, and instrument and dance classes are regularly scheduled at the historic downtown venue.

And even when there's not an event, people can learn about the area's nationally renowned string music history via self-guided tours of the Old-Time Music Heritage Hall inside the Earle.

Top-notch bluegrass artists like Rhonda Vincent, Balsam Range and Sam Bush make a point to schedule shows at this hallowed hall.

The theater, which opened in 1937, was spared from the wrecking ball in 1990 by the Surry Arts Council, which continues to own and operate the facility.

By 2015, the theater was no longer able to get reel-to-reel films from suppliers, so a \$90,000 digital projector was installed to keep movies alive on the silver screen.

Mount Airy Events



#### **FEBRUARY**

**Tommy Jarrell Festival** Honoring the life & music of a world-renowned fiddler

#### MAY

Budbreak Wine & Craft Beer Festival Wine, beer, food & music on Main Street

#### MAY

Mayberry Farm Fest Celebrate agriculture with food, crafts, music, displays & tractor parade on Main



#### JUNE

Mount Airy Fiddlers Convention Old-time and bluegrass music at Veterans Park

#### JUNE

Peach Festival at Miss Angel's Farm Pick your own peaches, blackberries & sunflowers

SEPTEMBER

**Oktoberfest at the Orchard** German beer, brats, music & more



SEPTEMBER Mayberry Days Celebrate all things Mayberry in Andy Griffith's hometown

#### OCTOBER

Autumn Leaves Festival Dozens of craft vendors, plus music, food & fall foliage

#### NOVEMBER

Mayberry 5K, 10K & Half Marathon Flat, fast courses through Mt. Airy

## A Mountain Vibe All Year



YadkinValleyNC.com • 800-948-0949

## www.pilotmountainnc.org



### The Best Little Trails Town in North Carolina

ucked in the Blue Ridge foothills beside the Yadkin River, Elkin is known as the "best little trails town in North Carolina." It has evolved from a textile manufacturing hub to a haven for hiking, paddling and biking, as well as winery hopping through the vineyards of Yadkin Valley. Downtown sits at the convergence of three major trails: the **Overmountain Victory** National Historic Trail, the Yadkin River State Blueway Trail, and the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail, which runs right down Main Street.

This collection of trails, along with other trails created by the Elkin Valley Trails Association, provides many miles of pathways.

Hikers are rewarded with beautiful landmarks along the trails, such as Carter Falls located on a one-mile hiking trail off of Pleasant Ridge Road, as well as the spillway dam on the Elkin & Alleghany Rail Trail. Each year during the first weekend in June, people arrive from all over with boots, bikes and kayaks for the NC Trail Days Festival.

The Yadkin River provides myriad

opportunities for tubing, kayaking, canoeing and fishing. Local outfitters are **Rocky** Forest River Run and Hometown River **Company**. Stop by the **Yadkin Valley** Heritage and Trails Visitor Center for outfitter details, maps, brochures and all



kinds of trail info, as well as showers for hikers and charging stations for electric vehicles.

The heritage center is also the pickup/ drop-off point for the **Elkin Vine Line** winery hopper service.

The renovated **Reeves Theater** anchors Main Street with its bright Art Deco facade. A farm-to-table cafe operates in the lobby, and the state-of-the-art venue welcomes acts of all genres, with a focus on regional sounds.

Twice a month, "The Martha Bassett Show" takes place at the Reeves. The folksy, musical variety show is Elkin's answer to

> "A Prairie Home Companion" and includes three guest acts, mixing in local, regional and national artists.

Elsewhere along Main Street, several murals adorn buildings, telling stories of Elkin's history and the surrounding foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A variety of shops and boutiques dot the street, including the popular Wisdom Table tasting room, which specializes in local and regional wine, plus North Carolina craft

beer, and also offers a dinner menu.

An excellent culinary option is Southern on Main, serving a variety of entrées and Southern comfort food in the laid-back atmosphere of a two-story former bank building.

Elkin's small-town setting creates an ideal backdrop for events throughout the year, such as classic car cruise-ins, the +









Each May, the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival celebrates local wine with tastings from area vineyards, live music, food trucks and the Tour de Vino bike ride. Cyclists choose from rides of 30 miles, 31 miles, 52 miles, 71 miles or 100 miles along scenic byways. Upon returning to Elkin, riders are welcomed with showers, a meal and free entry to the Yadkin Valley Wine Festival. Slightly Askew Winery operates an in-t.own tasting room. Boutique-style

Adagio Vineyards is close to town, yet has space for a wraparound porch and fire pit. Just down the road, **Elkin Creek Vineyard** is a pioneering winery, established in 2001. Located along its namesake creek beside a rustic mill, the winery is known for bold, red vintages that pair well with gourmet pizzas served on Sundays. The nearby rural community of State Road is home to Grassy Creek and



Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival and the Reevestock music festival held at Hidden Amphitheater.

The Foothills Arts Center works with artists of all genres to bring cultural experiences — art exhibitions, plays, concerts and festivals — to the community. The Foothills Arts Center is part of Surry County's Blue Ridge Craft Trail. Its central location in Yadkin Valley wine country makes Elkin an ideal base to explore vineyards and sample some of the finest vintages in the Southeast. More than 20 wineries are located within 20 miles of downtown. Many specialize in wines made from European vinifera varietals.

Golden Road vineyards. Farther out in the countryside is Carolina Heritage, North Carolina's first certified organic vineyard.

Beer lovers can find ale along the wine trail. Skull Camp Social House specializes in creative craft beers. The brewery's lineup of co-fermented brews ties craft beer into the winery scene; combinations have included Belgian blonde with Sangiovese and porter with Cabernet Sauvignon. Back downtown, enjoy a pint and excellent pub fare at Angry Troll Brewing on Main Street.

Angry Troll is located in The Liberty, a renovated brick building from the early 1900s that includes a spacious events hall on the second floor. "Main Street's popular spot for spirits is Fruition, a tiny, speakeasy-type bar known for expertly made cocktails.

More information about Elkin can be found at ExploreElkin.com.

## Organic Vineyard in Elkin Sets Sights on Full Sustainability

TOWNS

arolina Heritage Vineyard and Winery, the only certified organic vineyard in North Carolina, aims to become the state's first fully sustainable winery.

Patrick and Wendy McNabb purchased the property in August 2022 and believe in improving the environment by tending the vines in a natural way. They also believe in operating the tasting room in a 100% recyclable, eco-friendly manner.

Their first big step toward sustainability involves switching to paper wine bottles that consist of 94% recycled material. The paper bottles also use 82% less water to produce than glass with a much lower carbon footprint.

The cutting-edge bottles feature paper exteriors with recyclable plastic bladder inserts. For every bottle sold, the winery donates \$1 to organizations supporting military veterans, environmental causes and local community development.

"It was important when taking on this new venture that we give back to the community, but also look for environmentally sustainable solutions in farming and winemaking," Wendy McNabb said.

Carolina Heritage adheres to USDA organic standards to grow its



Chambourcin and Cynthiana grapes, as well as muscadine varietals Noble, Magnolia and Carlos. The vineyard also produces blueberries and elderberries.



**FEBRUARY Elkin Brrfest** Beer fest & soup-off

**APRIL-OCTOBER Food Truck Fridays** 2nd Friday: food trucks, music & beer downtown at farmers market

#### MAY

Yadkin Valley Wine Festival A day in the park with wineries & music



JUNE NC Trail Days Three-day celebration of all things trails

JUNE **Elkin Roots Music Fest** Regional string bands

IULY FreedomFest Celebrate the Fourth with music, food & fireworks



AUGUST **Reevestock Music Fest** Keeping Yadkin Valley's music alive and kickin'

#### **SEPTEMBER**

Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival Great Pumpkin weigh-off; activities, food & vendors

#### DECEMBER

Light Up Elkin Christmas kickoff with a host of activities



## Reach New Heights with a Visit to Pilot Mountain

vic leaders in Pilot Mountain have elevated their tourism messaging by embracing the highly visible pinnacle on the edge of town. The easily recognizable knobby peak is

central to the experience at Pilot Mountain State Park not only for what it is,

but also for what it represents - an outdoor playground of more than 3,000 undisturbed acres. There's no need to travel to the state's high country when the perfect blend of mountains, trails, streams and forests exists in the rolling foothills of the Yadkin Valley, just 30 minutes from Winston-Salem.

Pilot Mountain State Park falls into two sections - the mountain section and the river section.

The mountain section includes the namesake mountain, hiking trails, campsites and a state-of-the-art visitors center. The mountain's rocky cliffs create challenging terrain for rock climbing and rappelling. A viewing platform in the upper parking area provides wonderful panoramic views to people of all abilities.

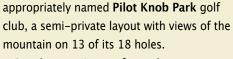
The river section, 20 minutes south of the main park along the Yadkin River, offers hik-

ing trails, paddle-in campsites, a picnic area and a canoe/kayak launch. This area of the park has a more rugged, undiscovered quality that outdoor adventurers particularly enjoy. Adjacent to the park is Horne Creek Farm. This living historical site demonstrates what



is a great time to tour the farm's 850-tree about heirloom apples.

More adventure awaits just east of Pilot Mountain, where Carolina Ziplines takes visitors on a cruise through the treetops. Golfers love the park-like feel of the



People sometimes refer to the town as "Mount Pilot," thanks to references on "The Andy Griffith Show" of the nearby big city of

rural life was like in the early 20th century and holds events and tours year-round. Fall Southern Heritage Apple Orchard and learn

Mount Pilot. The real Pilot Mountain is a smaller town with antiques shops, restaurants and bakeries along Main Street.

Sip a cup of joe at Main Street Coffee; enjoy a sandwich with friendly service or search for treasures at the Mount Pilot Country Store; and dig into a dish of sonker, the county's heritage dessert, at The Tilted Ladder. a favorite restaurant and bar among locals.

Three stops on the Surry Ground Steak Trail are right in town - All

Sauced Up, Aunt Bea's BBQ and Cousin Gary's. Ground steak is a tender, juicy loosemeat variation of the hamburger.

Follow the aromas to sweet treats at Liv For Sweets, a small-batch bakery known for deliciously decadent cakes, cupcakes, brownies and cookie sandwiches.

Main Street hosts noteworthy events throughout the year, including the beloved





#### -Continued from page 38

Hot Nights, Hot Cars monthly cruise-ins that take place from June through October, pairing classic cars with beach music bands.

Twice a year, once in the spring and again in the fall, **Pilot View Vintage** Market fills the town with more than 100 vendors selling antiques and vintage merchandise - it's a true pickers' paradise!

In the countryside, two Yadkin Valley wineries are known for great wines and fabulous mountain vistas.

JOLO Winery & Vineyards, an upscale winery, pours award-winning reds, whites and rosés made from European varietals inside an elegant tasting room. JOLO's wine regularly earn top awards at national and international wine competitions.

The winery's on-site restaurant, End Posts, serves a tapas-style menu that pairs well with each glass. Dining on the patio, guests enjoy a frame-worthy view of Pilot Mountain's peak.

For another peak perspective, stop by **Pilot Mountain Vineyards**, offering an equally stunning view of its namesake knob from the opposite side. With 31 acres of vines and a window-walled tasting room, the winery is a wonderful place to while away an afternoon sipping dry, European-style wines and listening to live music.

After a few days of adventure and indulgence, a visit to the Art of Massage might be just the ticket. The studio offers massages, energy-healing and sound therapies in a relaxing studio on Main Street.



he impressive array of outdoor activities in Pilot Mountain includes two bridle trails.

Horse owners saddle up for rides on the Corridor Trail at Pilot Mountain State Park, or the Sauratown Trail that connects Pilot Mountain State Park with Hanging Rock State Park.

The shorter of the two is the Corridor Trail, a 6.6-mile hiking and bridle trail through hardwood and pine forests of Pilot Mountain State Park's two sections. The trail runs between the park's mountain section, what most consider to be the park's main area, and the river section, located to the south along the Yadkin River islands.

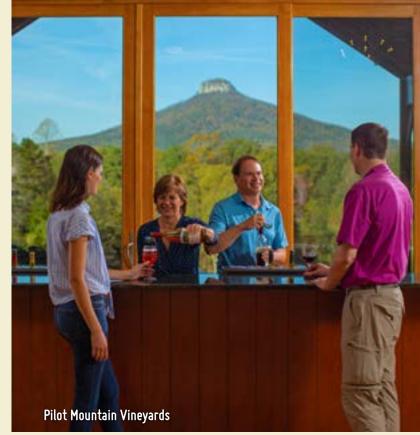
It is important that equestrian activities remain on the marked bridle trail. Horses may be loaded and unloaded only in the lots located at each end of the trail.

The Sauratown Trail is a longer, 25-mile bridle and hiking trail from Pilot Mountain State Park eastward to Hanging Rock State Park in Stokes County. It is maintained by the Sauratown Trails Association and provides excellent views of Pilot Mountain from open meadows.

Horseback riders and hikers may use the Sauratown Trail most of the year, except during deer hunting season from mid-November to mid-December.









APRIL **Outdoor Adventure** Festival & Expo Three days of outdoor events, gear expo, cycle race & more

APRIL Spring Pilot View Vintage Market Vintage vendor booths fill up Main Street

#### MAY Mavfest Three-day festival with rides, games, music, etc.

JUNE Pilot Mtn. Pig Out Food truck festival & beer garden event. Music, too

JUNE-OCTOBER Hot Nights, Hot Cars Monthly cruise-in on Main

with regional beach bands

SEPTEMBER Foothills Dinner on Main

Seated fine dining event at table stretching for blocks



Pilot Mountain Events





**OCTOBER** Let's Glow Crazy Downtown glow party with DJ & laser show

**NOVEMBER** Fall Pilot View Vintage Market Vintage vendor booths fill up Main Street

NOVEMBER Deck the Halls Holiday shopping with activities & Santa Claus

40



## Birthplace of North Carolina's Premier Wine Region

obson is the birthplace of the Yadkin Valley American Viticultural Area, North Carolina's first federally recognized wine-growing region. Brothers and Surry County natives Charlie and Ed Shelton led the way to establish the AVA

in 2003, which now includes about 45 wineries, including 18 along the Surry County Wine Trail.

The Sheltons' pioneering legacy remains strong at their namesake winery, Shelton Vineyards in Dobson. It is the largest familyowned estate winery in North Carolina. In addition to the winery, the property is home to **Harvest** Grill, a farm-to-table restaurant, and the nearby Hampton Inn & Suites Shelton Vineyards, the only Hampton Inn in the nation with a wine bar.

Dobson has attracted several wineries since the Sheltons put down roots. Haze Gray Vineyards and Hidden Vineyard are boutique wineries that offer rental cabins on-site. Stony Knoll Vineyards is an N.C. Century Farm that carries on its agricultural legacy through grape growing and winemaking. These three wineries are in close proximity

to one another, lined up along a four-mile stretch of Stony Knoll Road.

> Surry Community College in Dobson offers one of the nation's top viticulture and enology schools. The school includes a fiveacre teaching vineyard and state-of-the-art



bonded winery known as Surry Cellars. The Fisher River makes Dobson a destination for paddling. Hop in a canoe or kayak and spend a relaxing afternoon drifting downstream. Fisher River Park has a dedicated kayak launch. The park is also popular for trout fishing. A 1.5-mile walking or jogging trail runs along the river, and mountain bikers enjoy a wooded 6.3-mile

mountain-biking trail.

Mitchell River is stocked with brook, rainbow and brown trout for delayed-harvest trout fishing; an access point is located near Kapps Mill along River Road. In downtown, **Dobson Square Park** charms visitors with

> a popular splash pad, as well as a playground, picnic shelters and a seasonal farmers market. In late December and early

January, a synthetic ice rink transforms the park into a skating wonderland.

As the Surry County seat, Dobson balances its governmental responsibilities with a downhome atmosphere and scenic surroundings.

In April 2022, the national Hungry for History program recognized

Surry County's signature dessert, the cobbler-like sonker, with a roadside marker in downtown Dobson. Try it for yourself along the Surry Sonker Trail, which includes eight restaurants that serve the dessert daily, including the **Harvest Grill** at Shelton Vineyards.

Another Surry County delicacy, the meltin-your-mouth ground steak sandwich,









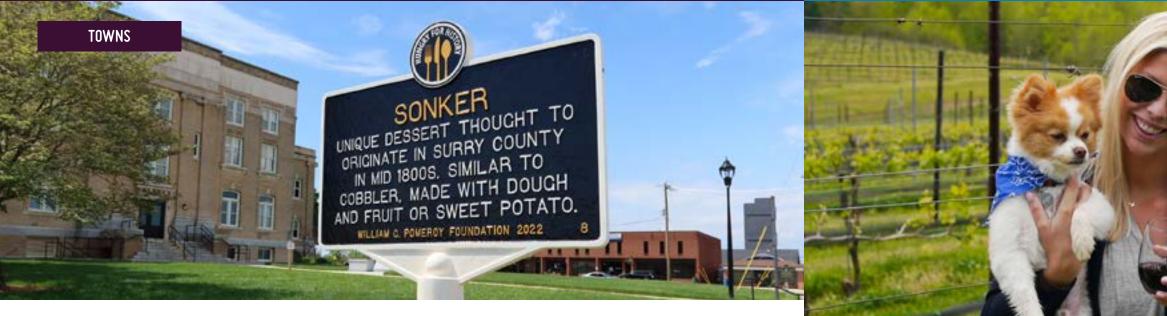
has its own trail and festival. The North Carolina Ground Steak Festival takes place in June on the square of the historic courthouse in Dobson, while Central Café on North Main Street is one of 11 stops on the Surry Ground Steak Trail. South of town, the historic Village of Rockford reflects what life was like in Surry County in the early 1800s. Historic properties include a Methodist church, tavern, post office, store and Masonic lodge. Rockford General Store has been part of the village since the late 1800s, and it remains in operation. Visitors enjoy old-fashioned candy, glass-bottled drinks, burgers, hot dogs and fried bologna sandwiches from the grill. The store also serves sonker.



#### TOWNS







## #Sonker Sign: Snap a Photo at Dobson's Newest Landmark

n 2022, the national Hungry for History highway marker program raised its fork of recognition to sonker by placing a sign on the historic courthouse square in Dobson.

Surry County's signature dessert became the first heritage food in North Carolina to receive a Hungry for History marker from the Pomerov Foundation.

The program shines a light on foods across the nation that unite and help to define communities.

"This juicy deep-dish pie, or cobbler, was an original farm-to-

table food for the rural population since they had access to all the ingredients on their own land," said Dr. Annette Ayers of the Surry County Historical Society.

Not only can visitors to Dobson drive by the sign on West Kapp Street, but they also can park downtown and walk over to the square to snap a picture for posting on social media.

The sign is centrally located to many eateries on the Surry Sonker Trail. From restaurants to bakeries, general stores and wineries, each location serves an original take on the heritage dessert.

Dobson Events



MARCH/APRIL Vineyard Stomp 5K Scenic run thru the vines at Hidden Vineyard

APRIL **Dobson Spring Folly** Food, games & fun in **Dobson Square Park** 

#### APRIL

**British Car Show** Gathering of British cars on the estate of Shelton Vineyards



MAY Running the Vines 5K/10K Races at Shelton Vineyards followed by food, music, wine

#### **MAY-SEPTEMBER**

Movies in the Park One family movie monthly at Dobson Square Park

JUNE NC Ground Steak Festival Come hungry for the area's unique ground steak sandwich



AUGUST Mercedes-Benz Car Show Vintage & modern Mercedes at Shelton Vineyards

DECEMBER Shelton Vineyards New Year's Eve Fine dining & dance party

**DECEMBER-IANUARY** Skating in the Square Holiday skating at Dobson Square Park

# \* Tail-Wagging Good Times

f your vacation involves a furry family member, you'll be pleased to find Surry County is pet-friendly. Stroll downtown sidewalks, hike state parks and trail networks, and enjoy a wine tasting or pint of beer with your pet.

Everyone loves a walk with a reward at the end, so if you're in Elkin, grab the leash and hit the Grassy Creek Trail. The mile-anda-half trail meanders through pine forests



Meanwhile. the NC Mountains-to-Sea Another hiking destination is **Pilot** No pet will want to miss a visit to The After a spa treatment at the resort, visit

before ending at Grassy Creek Vineyard & Winery. Humans enjoy wine tastings in the tasting room as pups relax by the fireplace. Another pet-friendly winery near Elkin is Jones von Drehle Vineyards & Winery. beer lovers can detour to the pet-friendly tasting room at Angry Troll Brewing. Another downtown stop is **The Barkery**, a pet bakery featuring locally made natural treats. Mountain State Park. Take the Pilot Knob Trail for a moderate hike that circles the park's namesake knob. There are other trails, too, plus a dog-friendly campground. Grand Pup Resort Hotel & Spa in Mount Airy. Drop off your dog or cat for an afternoon of pampering or for an overnight stay. This fourlegged-only hotel pleases even the pickiest K-9s and felines, from specialty grooming services to large suites for pets and green space out back for fresh air and exercise.

Trail runs down Elkin's Main Street, where

#### THINGS TO DO

Round Peak Vineyards

### The Best Travel Companions Often Have Four Legs

The Dapper Hound boutique to purchase the latest pet fashion accessories, along with locally made Mutt Munchies dog treats.

If your dog loves watching "The Andy Griffith Show", make sure to visit the replica courthouse and jail beside Wally's Service Station. Later, snap a photo in front of the TV Land Andy & Opie Statue.

Shelton Vineyards in Dobson is a mustvisit. Stroll manicured grounds with your pup in tow and enjoy the beauty of the area's largest winery. Pack a picnic for a doggone good time.

Pet-Friendly Lodging

The Yadkin Valley website makes it easy to identify lodging spots that welcome pets. Look for the paw print beside *the name of the* accommodation, or

scan this code to see only pet-friendly options.



#### THINGS TO DO

## @ Blue Ridge Craft Trail

### Explore the Area's Rich History of Craft and Creativity

rtists and crafters bring creativity and authenticity to the places they call home. We're fortunate to have a collection of these folks who make visiting our towns more interesting.

A great way to seek these creators is via Surry County's Blue Ridge Craft Trail, one of several aligned trails throughout Western North Carolina.

As visitors travel the trail they meet renowned artisans, discover one-of-a-kind craft and experience small-town charm.

In Elkin, the trail includes the Foothills Arts Center and Yadkin Valley Fiber Center. Both hold classes in fiber arts, drawing, painting,

photography and clay. The space is also home to luthier Joe Thrift, who builds fine violins and teaches the art of making them.

John Furches Gallery in Elkin shows off the artist's watercolors of nature. Through etching, printmaking and watercolor, Furches transfers the natural world — birds, wildflowers, rolling landscapes — into art.

Just up the street from Furches' gallery, The November Room brings together multiple artists' work in an emporium-style space. Shop for home decor, craft items, jewelry and specialty clothing.

A few steps farther along Elkin's Main Street is Yadkin Valley Quilts, where crafters find

supplies and inspiration for all sorts of fiber projects. Finished quilts by local artists are sold in the shop.

ount Airv's Whittling Wall

In Mount Airy, the Surry Arts Council celebrates local artists, musicians and hometown hero Andy Griffith. The main Arts Council building houses the Andy Griffith Museum and additional exhibits. The council also operates the Earle Theatre, Old-Time Music Heritage Hall and Blackmon Amphitheater.

A favorite stop in Mount Airy is the Whittling Wall. Created by North Carolina artist Brad Spencer, the wall features brick sculptures of notable local artists, musicians and dignitaries.



## Acritourism Six Great Spots for a Fun and Educational 'Field Trip'

xperience agriculture, history and unexpected curiosities at these Surry County attractions.

Horne Creek Farm, a state historic site near Pilot Mountain, demonstrates what rural life was like in central North Carolina from 1900-1913. Staff members and volunteers plant crops, bring in the harvest and prepare for winter the same way it was done more than a century ago.

Go back even farther into Surry County's history at the Richard Gwyn Museum. The building is named after Elkin's founder, who built the structure in 1850 as Elkin's first school and church. Assorted tools, household

items and photographs tell bits and pieces of local history.

Mount Airy Museum of Regional History also recounts stories of the past, as well as the area's penchant for producing famous people, including Andy Griffith, Donna Fargo and Tommy Jarrell. Take a museum ghost tour to learn about the town's "less mortal" friends and where they spend their time.

pumpkins at Miss Angel's Farm in Mount goods, homemade ice cream and baked goods. Children can play in a giant barn



## Get Crafty With Us

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area allows folks to customize an itinerary for Surry's Blue Ridge Craft Trail. *Scan the code to* 

go to the itinerary builder, then select your favorite craft locations and other points of interest.









The Farm in Dobsor

In season, visitors can pick 23 varieties of peaches, plums, apples, flowers, berries and Airy. Also offered are fresh produce, canned

playhouse or explore the corn maze. Soft drinks, wine, beer and cider are available.

The Farm in Dobson invites visitors to pick their own strawberries in the spring and pumpkins in the fall. Other activities include barnyard animals, a barrel train, jump pillow, playground and corn maze. During the holidays, take a hayride through light displays, roast s'mores and visit with Santa.

Minglewood Farm and Nature Preserve in Westfield hosts workshops, hikes, plant sales, field trips and outdoor dinners throughout the year. All events support its mission to spread awareness about native ecology and the local food system.

Facebook & Instagram: @YadkinValleyNC





🔁 Golfing in Wine Country

## A Trio of Courses Provides Country Club Access to All

#### Cedarbrook Country Club, Elkin

Enjoy the country club experience on this semi-private course designed by Ellis Maples, one of the states's most noted golf architects. Maples, who studied under Donald Ross in Pinehurst, carved Cedarbrook from rolling countryside and thick forests.

Unlike Ross, Maples often incorporated water hazards into his designs, and his work at Cedarbrook reflects that signature. It is considered a true classic.

From the front nine's majestic, undulating greens to the back nine's requirement of shot-making precision, the course is challenging, but fair, and rates highly with most everyone who plays it.



#### Cross Creek Country Club, Mt. Airy

Cross Creek is situated just north of Mount Airy, about two miles from the Virginia line, with a striking backdrop provided by the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The course was renovated and redesigned in 2007 by Greensboro architect Kris Spence. Spence took a very good course, which opened in 1973, and improved it. He lengthened several holes for modern play, while adding accents of traditional golf architecture that were absent in the original design.

The par-72 course measures around 6,900 yards from the back tees and has been ranked among the state's top 100 courses. Its four finishing holes are particularly well-designed.

## Yadkin Valley Tee Party

Interested in teeing it up in wine country? To learn more about these three country club experiences, as well as other golf courses in the region, scan the code.

#### Pilot Knob Park, Pilot Mountain

Another country club that welcomes nonmembers is Pilot Knob Park.

Its calling card is a picturesque layout that flows through a hilly tract of land adjacent to Pilot Mountain's iconic 2,200-foot knobby peak, which is visible on 13 of the 18 holes.

Pilot Knob Park was designed in 1963 by architect Gene Hamm. The par-70 course is not overly long, measuring 6,225 yards from the back tees.

It is a treat to play, offering plenty of room to hit the ball off the tee, with increasing difficulty as you approach the greens. The greens are composed of heat-tolerant zoysia grass, which stays lush all summer.



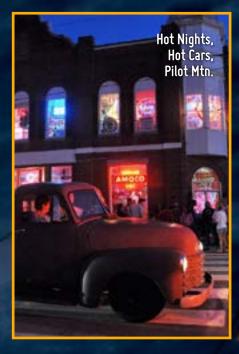


Dearly Departed Ghost Tours, Mt. Airy



When the sun goes down and daylight ends, a different type of Yadkin Valley adventure begins





Market Street Arts District Breweries, Mount Airy Hampton Inn & Suites, Dobson

## Play Hard, Rest Easy

### Lodging Options to Please a Variety of Travelers

#### - BED & BREAKFASTS -

A Mighty Oak B&B Pilot Mountain, North Carolina Purpose-built inn with four large suites, mountain views and daily breakfast from adjoining farm. AMightyOakBedandBreakfast.com 336-325-3285

#### Heart and Soul B&B

Mount Airy, North Carolina Upscale inn with six spacious guest suites and gourmet breakfasts. Walking distance to downtown Mount Airy. HeartnSoulBB.com 336-789-0126

**Pilot Knob Inn & Cabins** Pilot Mountain, North Carolina *Romantic bed & breakfast inn close to Pilot Mountain with five spacious suites, six cabins and one cottage.* **PilotKnobInn.com** 336-325-2502

#### Rockford Inn

Dobson, North Carolina Antebellum house in historic Rockford community. Choose from three suites or entire house. Breakfast not included. RockfordInn.com 336-469-4601

#### Six28 House B&B

Elkin, North Carolina Renovated boarding house near town. Comfy rooms and chef-prepared breakfast daily, timed to your schedule. Six28House.com 336-530-4080

#### - HOTELS -

Fairfield Inn & Suites Elkin, North Carolina Top-tier property in the Fairfield brand and 'Award of Excellence' recipient. Modern guest rooms, indoor pool/hot tub. Marriott.com/intje 336-353-2008

Hampton Inn & Suites Shelton Vineyards Dobson, North Carolina One of the top-rated Hampton Inns and the only one with a wine bar. Shuttle service to nearby Shelton Vineyards. HamptonInn3.Hilton.com 336-353-9400

Hampton Inn Mount Airy Mount Airy, North Carolina Hotel has 125 updated guest rooms and several spacious suites. Amenities include indoor pool and fitness center. HamptonInn3.Hilton.com 336-789-5999

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Mount Airy, North Carolina Four-story hotel is walking distance to restaurants. Amenities include indoor pool, fitness center, business center. IHG.com/holidayinnexpress 336-719-1731

Quality Inn Mount Airy Mount Airy, North Carolina Located near shopping and restaurants. Offers continental breakfast, outdoor pool and whirlpool tubs in select rooms. QualityInnMountAiry.com 336-789-2000 Three Trails Boutique Hotel Elkin, North Carolina Beautifully renovated historic building converted into a 14room boutique hotel on Main Street in Elkin. TheCarolinaExperience.com 919-893-4424

#### - INNS & MOTELS -

Andy Griffith Parkway Inn Mount Airy, North Carolina Budget-friendly motel located on U.S. Hwy. 52 (Andy Griffith Parkway) that offers queen and king rooms. Booking.com 743-333-2432

#### Bryson Inn

Mount Airy, North Carolina The inn has 59 guest rooms and is located off I-77 at Exit 100, just nine miles from downtown Mount Airy. BrysonInn.com 336-352-3400

#### Comfort Inn

Mount Airy, North Carolina King and queen rooms with complimentary breakfast served daily. Amenities include indoor pool, fitness center. ChoiceHotels.com 336-783-0008

#### Econo Lodge Pilot Mountain, North Carolina This 56-room property is conveniently located off U.S. Highway 52. Amenities include outdoor pool. ChoiceHotels.com 336-368-2237

Elk Inn Elkin, North Carolina Elk Inn provides cable TV and free Wi-Fi in every room. Some rooms have microwaves and refrigerators. MotelElkInn.com 336-835-7780

Knights Inn Mayberry Mount Airy, North Carolina Conveniently located to the Mayberry attractions. Amenities include outdoor pool, high-speed internet access. RedLion.com 336-786-8387

Mayberry Motor Inn Mount Airy, North Carolina Well-maintained vintage 27-room motor court with outdoor pool, gazebo and walking paths on property.

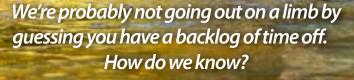
MayberryMotorInn.com 336-786-4109

Surry Inn Dobson, North Carolina Just off I-77, this 30-room motel was renovated in 2019. Centrally located to all attractions in Surry County.

Surrylnn-Dobson.us 336-366-3000



## Sitting on a Backlog of Vacation Days? Let Us Help With That.



The average American worker finishes each year with nine unused vacation days. This year, don't be that person. Visit the Yadkin Valley instead.



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336-786-6116



