ON THE VINE
Carolina Wine Country News

Fall 2021

BUDBREAK WINE & BEER FESTIVAL
YADKIN VALLEY GRAPE FESTIVAL
YADKIN VALLEY PUMPKIN FESTIVAL
GLAMPING AT PURPLE ALPACA
GRASSY CREEK TRAIL MURAL
GREAT AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION
NEW WINES FROM SURRY CELLARS

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FALL FUN abounds in wine country

The summer has flown by and now it's time for cooler temperatures and fall festival season. While many spring wine festivals didn't happen this year, several have moved to the fall months which is sure to make for a beautiful experience for wine lovers.

Mount Ayr's annual Budbreak Wine and Beer festival is scheduled for Aug. 28 and the Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce will host its Grape Festival in October.

Wine festivals aren't the only fun happening this time of year, the Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival, scheduled for Sept. 25, is sure to get folks in the fall spirit with plenty of fun wine-related activities. The festival includes a slate of new wines from area wineries claim multiple awards.

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BUDBREAK

Wine Festival planned for August

Staff Report

MOUNT AIRY — Planning for events in 2020 has been a challenge and many events still did not get off the ground due to safety concerns from the pandemic. Mount Airy’s annual Budbreak Wine and Craft Beer Festival, did make the 2020 calendar, just a little later in the season than its usual date. May 2020 marked the 10th year of the festival which is a fundraiser for the Mount Airy Rotary Club and is held in cooperation with the Mount Airy Downtown Business Association and Mount Airy Tourism Development Authority.

“We are excited for our rescheduled festival,” said Event Director Bob Meinecke. “We have several new wineries and breweries that will be joining us this year!” Budbreak is typically held in early May, timed to correspond to the part of a grapevine’s growth cycle when buds break. Meinecke added that this year’s festivities are a break from busily serving customers at the 2020 festival. Slightly Askew Winery Owner Tim Gentry said the festival had become a highly anticipated event for wine and beer producers in this area.

“This year particularly seems to have good participation,” added Gentry, whose winery has enjoyed a participation at Budbreak during its decade-long duration. “We have several new wineries and craft beer producers in this area. It seems to get better every year,” said Tim Gentry, the owner of Slightly Askew Winery of Elkin, one of the wineries participating in the 2020 festival.

“It seems to be more enjoyable for the general public,” Gentry said. “We have more street vendors and it is a bigger event than we had in 2019.”

In addition to Slightly Askew Winery, Skull Camp Brewery and Winery has been a part of Budbreak since its origins, “We were here absolutely every year,” said Skull Camp co-owner Kari Heerdt said in 2020. Heerdt remembers when Budbreak was strictly a wine festival.

“We don’t want to be the biggest, just the best,” said Bobby Todd of the Yadkin County Tourism Development Authority.

YADKIN GRAPE FESTIVAL

planned for October 16

By Kitsey Burns Harrison

Yadkinville’s annual Grape Festival is planned for Oct. 16 of this year from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Like many events, it was cancelled last year due to the pandemic and organizers are keeping a watch on local guidelines to make sure the event can safely be held this year.

Jaime Johnston of the Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce which hosts the event said there are around 17 area wineries expected to be at the event.

The festival will feature food and craft vendors as well as music from the band Mogo from 3 to 5 p.m. Shuttle service is expected to be available provided by YVEDDI transportation, pending federal guidelines on transportation due to safety issues with the pandemic. Shuttle service will run from area hotels and back. There is no cost but reservations are required for the shuttle.

“This year’s festival is sponsored by First National Bank, Jonesville County Tourism Development Authority, Skyline National Banks, Yadkin County Tourism Development Authority, and the Yadkinville Tourism Development Authority,” Johnston said. The festival is planned for Oct. 16 of this year from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Like many events, it was cancelled last year due to the pandemic and organizers are keeping a watch on local guidelines to make sure the event can safely be held this year.

**Festival packages are available which include: General admission, local accommodations and transportation, as well as a complementary bottle of wine.**

A $10 general admission ticket will give those attending access to festival wine glasses and wristbands, with proof of ID, to purchase wine tastings at the various vendors’ booths. Children 12 and younger are admitted free with paying adult. Day of event tickets are $25. Food and non-alcoholic beverages will be available at select vendor locations as well.

“By buying your tickets online in advance and save,” Meinecke advised.

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We are pet friendly and we love kids!

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See BUDBREAK | 15

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“We don’t want to be the biggest, just the best,” said Bobby Todd of the Yadkin County Tourism Development Authority.

Local bands perform throughout the day at the 2019 Yadkin Valley Grape Festival in Yadkinville.

Stony Knoll pours wine at the 2019 Yadkin Valley Grape Festival in Yadkinville.

Step Back in Time & Visit Our Many Vendors

**Mount Pilot Antique Mall**

Downtown 336-368-1617

& Visit Our Many Vendors

Photos by Tom Joyce | On The Vine

Slightly Askew Winery of Elkin was a popular stop at Budbreak 2019.

Byline: Photos by Tom Joyce | On The Vine

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NEW MURAL
brings Grassy Creek’s Forest Bathing Trail to downtown Elkin

By Kitsey Burns Harrison
burns@yadkinripple.com

Sarah explained. “His full self into teaching,” he had gone to school for but hadn’t had the time to really invest in when he was pouring more reflection and dialogue and we want to bring that to places where it wasn’t necessarily abundant.”

Andrew added that their aesthetic for small towns has grown since their first projects in small towns. “There’s a richness there in rural communities that allows for more opportunities to connect with people. When you’re always rushing off to something you don’t have the quality time to connect with people. It’s really kind of been the cornerstone of all that we want to do is that connection to people. All these things in life are connections from connecting with other people, our self and our planet.”

As part of their process to truly connect with the communities in which they create their art, the McWilsons found a way to take their life on the road. They now call a former U-Haul box truck home, an unusually shaped white vehicle known affectionately as the “Marshmellow.”

Last fall the McWilsons visited the Elkin area with Sarah’s mom Maureen, who grew up in nearby State Road and spending time outdoors on the Blue Ridge Parkway. “It really impacted me on a deep level as a child,” she said.

During their visit last fall the couple attended the dedication ceremony for the new Forest Bathing Trail at Grassy Creek Vineyard. They were the first to walk on the new trail on its opening day. The Forest Bathing trail is based on a Japanese concept called shinrin-yoku, which means therapy in nature. The couple was blown away by the fact that the Elkin Valley Trails Association had taken this step to create a special trail which encourages hikers to take a step away from technology and truly immerse themselves in nature. “The fact that it was made with that intention spoke volumes about the kind of people here and how people are appreciating this nature,” said Andrew.

When the couple connected with the town of Elkin and Explore Elkin to create a mural downtown they knew that the forest trail was to be the inspiration for the art work. “We wanted to bring that intentionality of the Forest Bathing Trail to the downtown area,” Andrew said. A photo taken of Sarah that day on the trail serves as the model for the mural. “We like including the human form,” Andrew explained. “I think when you see a larger than life human form on a wall it not only gives the wall a bit of a life and a bit of a spirit, it just seems alive. That’s something we’re definitely attracted to is just telling that human story.”

While the image is of Sarah, the couple said they hope viewers will be able to see themselves in the art. The whole idea wasn’t about being a specific person, this whole idea was allowing the viewer to connect with the story that it was anyone finding that feeling in nature,” Sarah said.

To view more of Andrew and Sarah’s art visit handinhandcreative.org.

By Kitsey Burns Harrison may be reached at 336-256-4035 or follow her on Twitter and Instagram @wvkr14wvkr14.

Andrew and Sarah McWilson of Hand in Hand will soon put the final touches on their mural in downtown Elkin. The McWilsons have created murals in Florida, South Carolina and Texas so far, most in very small rural towns.

Creating public art in rural communities has become an important part of their work. “In a rural community everyone hard time to talk, it was a really slow tempo and we really felt just that do work that is public that is not something that has to be bought or hung up on a wall or something you have to go to art school to understand. We want to create something that is free and open and public...so that started our journey of murals,” Andrew said.

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Help Tourists Find You!
Contact Holly Lamm to add your logo, tasting room hours, phone number, website, etc.

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The operators of Purple Alpaca in Boonville have also opened their farm store and cafe, serving tea and espresso and selling alpaca fiber products such as stuffed animals, soap-making kits and yarn.

By Lisa Michals
lisa.michals@yadkinripple.com

BOONVILLE — Boonville is getting a little dose of Asheville-esque tourist lodgings, with the launch of glamping at Purple Alpaca Farms. Handcrafted wicker four packages are also available for glamping guests. Glamping, lavishly camping, offers the outdoor experience of camping with amenities that make the experience more like a hotel or resort experience, such as beds with hotel-caliber mattresses. Purple Alpaca owner Gloria Folaron admits she is not a camper, “so we’re making camping for me,” she laughs, describing her guiding principle in setting up the site. She said the sites are “still on the cusp of primitive, as they do not have electricity or running water inside the tents.”

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NOW WINERIES CLAIM AWARDS

By Kitsey Burns Harrison
kharrison@yadclubpic.com

Multiple Yadkin Valley wineries claimed awards this year at the Great American International Wine Competition (GAIWC), held July 10 and 11 in Rochester, NY. There were a total of 31 entries from North Carolina facing off against stiff competition with wines from Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Spain, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Canada, Serbia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and many more.

The competition welcomed 600 guests in a large tent before selling out earlier this year. It was so well attended that Purple Alpaca Farm, a family-run local farm that offers glamping, was unable to handle the volume of guests. This is the first time that Purple Alpaca has offered glamping during the competition, and the farm plans to continue to offer this experience in future years.

Purple Alpaca Farm is located in the Yadkin Valley, which is known for its award-winning wines. The farm is situated on land that they have been leasing for a decade. They have a large variety of animals, including alpacas, chickens, goats, and pigs. The farm offers a variety of experiences, including yoga, wine tastings, and farm tours.

The farm has recently added a new feature, glamping, which has been well-received by guests. They have been able to connect with people from all over the world, and they have been able to provide a unique experience that is different from what they have offered before.

The farm has been a popular destination for weddings and events, and they have been able to connect with people from the community who have been able to enjoy the farm. They have also been able to connect with people who are interested in learning about the farm and its operations.

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added new wine to offerings

Surry Community College Viticulture and Enology students are producing a new wine called Chambourcin or ‘Chambo’ under a new label called Surry Labs. Wines made under Surry Labs are experimental and unique.

“Understanding regional terroir is a logical next step in building quality wines from the Yadkin Valley region; this wine is a true expression of the fruit,” Bowser said.

To prove the grape was truly wild or native, Students in the VEN 385 Wine Production and Analysis course conducted a genetic analysis with the help of ETS Laboratories, a company that specializes in analytical services for the wine industry. When analyzing the data, the dominant strain in the mixed fermentation was not able to be identified in any known yeast database. This lends credence to the wine being a true North Carolina product.

After fermentation, the wine spent nine months in neutral French oak barrels. SCC students Eric Younts and Andre Lamb worked closely on the project. “2019 was a year of many experiments. The whole point was trying to be natural and in tune with our local yeast,” Bowser said.

The wine is made in a French, glou-glou style, a style of winemaking that yields fruit-forward results. The heart of the wine comes from the wonderful fruit straight from the Surry Cellars vineyard.

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The annual Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival will return this year with a slate of activities for all ages. Wine drinkers visiting the area may want to plan a stop at the festival in downtown Elkin on Sept. 25 to enjoy craft and food vendors and more.

Misty Matthews of the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce said wine lovers would enjoy the event and can also take advantage of wine selections at downtown restaurants and bars including The Wisdom Table, Angry Troll, Southern on Main and more.

The festivities begin Saturday morning with the Annual Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off at The Heritage Center on the corner of Bridge and Standard Street. There will be pumpkins and watermelon from growers located all over the East Coast. Some will weigh-in at an excess of 1,000 lbs with hopes of placing in the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth top ten.

Matthews said “as long as the weather holds out we may have a new State Record Pumpkin” this year.

Festival goers will also enjoy shopping from local vendors.

“We have many crafters. People love hand made items unique to our area,” said Matthews.

There will be food trucks on site for the festival as well.

Matthews said this year’s festival will include a large Kid Zone, new this year, with pony rides, bounce houses and petting zoo at the Heritage Center.

Other new additions to this year’s festival will include a dunking booth and axe throwing booth.

For more information visit the Yadkin Valley Pumpkin Festival Facebook page or yadkinvalley.org.