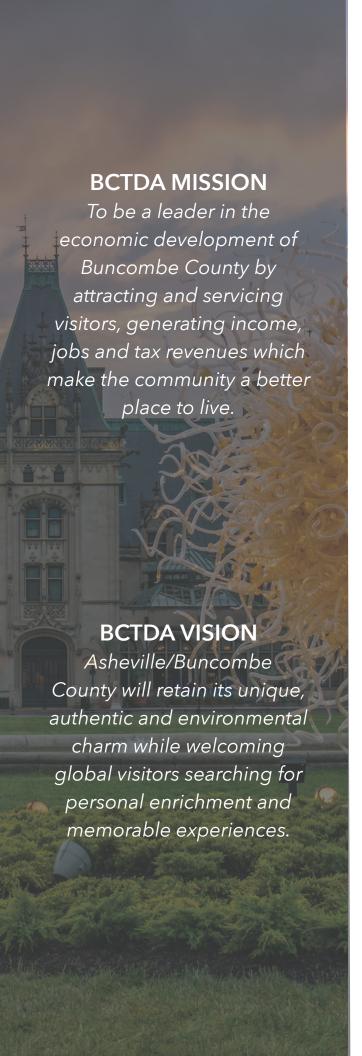
BCTDA ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018





BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Jim Muth, Chair Beaufort House Inn

Gary Froeba, Vice Chair The Omni Grove Park Inn

Leah Ashburn Highland Brewing Company

> Andrew Celwyn Herbiary

Chip Craig Greybeard Realty

Himanshu Karvir Virtelle Hospitality, LLC

John Luckett Grand Bohemian Hotel Asheville

> John McKibbon McKibbon Hospitality

> > Paula Wilber Biltmore

Councilwoman Julie Mayfield Asheville City Council, Ex-Officio Member

Commissioner Joe Belcher Buncombe County Commission, Ex-Officio Member

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Jay Curwen Nantahala Outdoor Center

Mark Hemphill Biltmore

Christopher Levine The Omni Grove Park Inn Fielding Lowe Carolina Alliance Bank

David McCartney Aloft Asheville Downtown

Ken Stamps Navitat Canopy Adventures

Ruth Summers Grove Arcade

A MESSAGE TO OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNERS

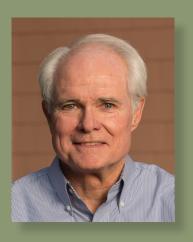
2018 marks the 35th anniversary of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and the first year of operation of Explore Asheville as an independent organization. It's been a monumental year of change and accomplishment for this community's official tourism organization, and for the industry partners we serve.

Buncombe County was among the first three municipalities in North Carolina to impose a tax on lodging to create a source of funding to attract overnight visitors. The BCTDA was established to represent the businesses being taxed and to oversee the administration of the revenue

That spirit of innovation to overcome challenges is alive and well today. Explore Asheville implemented national television advertising for the first time this year, along with a series of creative partnerships that included a video with mega-influencer Zach King, a 30-minute program developed with National Geographic, and the Amazon Ad Platform. Meeting planners were targeted with strategic sponsorships and compelling client events. And, Asheville hosted two international sporting events – FedCup and Haute Route.

The Explore Asheville team is proud to work with industry partners to grow Buncombe County's economy by attracting visitors that support local businesses. We have also worked together to support the community with initiatives that collected socks, toys, and backpacks. And, the CVB team volunteered for Manna and GreenWorks during two service days this year.

We are fortunate to live in this very special place, and to share it with people who visit from around the nation and across the globe. It is our great pleasure to be part of the Asheville tourism industry – working with you, serving our visitors and helping our community to thrive.



Jim Muth BCTDA Chair Beaufort House Inn



Stephanie Pace Brown President & CEO Explore Asheville



HISTORY OF THE BCTDA

1980's





Occupany Tax + BCTDA

The occupancy tax was established by state law, and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority was formed to administer the tax revenue for tourism promotion to attract and sustain overnight visitation.

1982

1981

1983

+1% Increase

An additional one percent was added and the tourism promotion effort gained traction.

Tourism Product Development Fund

An additional one percent was added to create the Tourism Product Development Fund.

1990 1995 2000

2001



TPDF is a grant program providing capital for development projects that drive visitation.

Fiduciary Task Force

A Fiduciary Task Force was created to modernize the administrative structure of the CVB.

2005 2010

1984

1985

2015

+2% Increase

The occupancy tax was increased from four to six percent maintaining 25 percent dedicated to the Tourism Product Development Fund.

Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund

Earned income from advertising sales on ExploreAsheville.com was dedicated to supporting festivals and cultural events. 2016

2017

Explore Asheville CVB was established

Based on the recommendation of the Fiduciary Task Force, an independent organization was established as Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

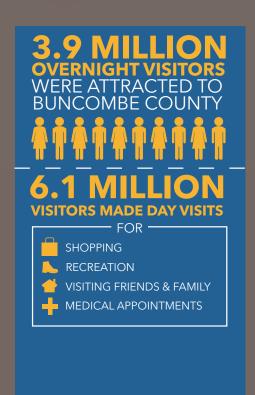
Happy Anniversary

The BCTDA turned 35 years old and Explore Asheville CVB celebrated it's first anniversary!

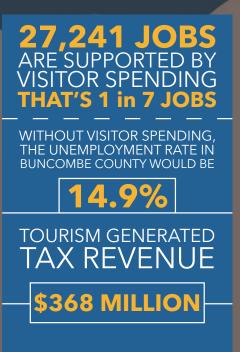
2018



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY







Source: The Economic Impact of Tourism in Buncombe County 2017

	LODGING SALES	% CHANGE	HOTEL ROOMS SOLD	% CHANGE	SHORT TERM UNITS BOOKED	% CHANGE
FY 15-16	\$311M	17.6%	1.83M	3.6%	137,443	N/A
FY 16-17	\$352M	13%	1.9M	3.8%	281,266	104.6%
FY 17-18	\$390M	11%	2.04M	6.5%	485,869	72.7%

ELEVATING THE ASHEVILLE AREA BRAND

Explore Asheville uses an integrated approach to its marketing efforts, coordinating paid, earned and owned media while also building flexibility into the plan to take advantage of unique opportunities. Advertising is used to reach a target audience, while media relations and social media are used to inspire and amplify the message, building direct connections to fans and followers.

NATIONAL ADVERTISING TV BUY EXTENDS AUDIENCE REACH

Spring 2018 national cable reached 31% of adults ages 35-64 across the country.

Explore Asheville launched, for the first time in its history, a significant national cable TV buy as part of its record paid media campaign in FY17-18. More than 460 Explore Asheville broadcast spots aired on the Travel Channel, HGTV, and The Weather Channel

during spring 2018. The national buy generated more extensive reach touching additional critical geography in key markets more efficiently than buying spot TV.

The partnerships also included other unique opportunities such as sponsored taggables by Joanna Gaines of Fixer Upper on HGTV, an Asheville showcase as the Great Weekend Destination on The Weather Channel, and the Destination of the Month spots on Travel Channel. The cable flight was part of an unprecedented paid media effort that encompassed advertising, content partnerships and a unique influencer opportunity. TV spots also aired on



broadcast TV and via digital streaming in core and opportunity markets such as Cincinnati, Washington, D.C. and regions of Florida.

EARLY ADOPTER OF AMAZON AD OPPORTUNITIES

Explore Asheville was among the first destinations to partner with the Amazon Ad Platform. The spring campaign included a video ad takeover of the Kindle Fire wake screen that ran throughout June, generating more than one million views.

Advertising also included a strong digital presence in other areas, including display advertising, paid search, sponsored and native digital advertising and content opportunities. All told, advertising in FY17-18 generated 706 million impressions.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL PRESENTS ASHEVILLE BY DESIGN



A significant relationship with National Geographic was extended, and included production of a half-hour special on National Geographic Channel (NGC) in September.

A NGC crew was in Asheville during spring to film the program, Asheville by Design. Shortly thereafter, NGC developed a series of posts and video shorts that ran in the spring to build excitement about the program.



By The Numbers

706 MILLION

TOTAL
PAID ADVERTISING
IMPRESSIONS

599SIGNIFICANT PLACEMENTS

\$8.3 MILLION

TOTAL PUBLICITY VALUE

358,000 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

3,039
TOTAL
MEDIA
PLACEMENTS

4.3 MILLION USER SESSIONS ON

EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM

PROACTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS SUPPORT

Advertising is complemented by a proactive public relations program and influencer media coverage that generates national earned editorial coverage. The team executed 913 significant media touchpoints and generated 1,079 targeted pitches in FY17-18. This outreach resulted in 5.6 billion impressions.

The PR team also supported 78 media site visits, including seven of the world's top equestrian writers preparing advance coverage of the World Equestrian Games for AP, Reuters and equestrian publications in Japan and Sweden.

Photo: Public Relations Manager Landis Taylor (left) and Anchor Mary King during the 2017 Fall Media Tour at WIS-TN in Columbia, SC.





The 2018 exhibit of Dale Chihuly's famous glass sculptures in the gardens at Biltmore Estate was the perfect opportunity for convening area glass artists and gallery owners to discuss a new collaborative vision – one that would use the Chihuly exhibit as a springboard to connect visitors with the deep history and contemporary expertise of glass art in WNC. What blossomed over the next several months was a true community celebration of regional glass art that included:

SUMMER OF GLASS

- 60+ participating artists, studios, galleries, museums and tour operators, brought together to host events, demonstrations, workshops, VIP tours and travel packages.
- A Summer of Glass microsite on ExploreAsheville.com, with unique design, interactive maps to glass experiences, and four new evergreen articles on glass art. In the first three months, the microsite attracted more than 27,000 pageviews and excellent page engagement.
- Social media posts on Facebook that reached more than 700,000 users with additional impressions on Twitter and Instagram.
- A Summer of Glass press release distributed nationally via PR Newswire and pitched to targeted media contacts.
- Summer of Glass media coverage directly influenced by the Explore Asheville PR team including:
 - -TravelChannel.com -"NG -WSLS-TV Roanoke -Leis -WSPA-TV Greenville -ABA
- -"NC Weekend" on *UNC-TV*
 - –Leisure Group Travel Magazine
 - -ABA Destinations Magazine



ASHEVILLE MUSIC PROJECT HONORED BY U.S. TRAVEL

U.S. Travel honored Explore Asheville's work on the Asheville Music Project by selecting it as one of three finalists in the integrated marketing category for its annual Destiny Awards.

The Asheville Music Project achieved its top objective of elevating Asheville as a national music destination with earned accolades putting Asheville alongside iconic music cities like New Orleans, Austin and Nashville.

EARNED ACCOLADES:

- "America's Next Great Music City" –COS
- One of the nation's "Top 10 Music Cities" –Nat Geo
- "One of America's 12 Greatest Music Cities" –Thrillist

MEDIA REACH:

- 180 articles reaching 482 million readers
- \$1.5 million ad value
- 46K article shares



MAGICAL INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIP WITH ZACH KING

Explore Asheville's past digital influencer partnerships include outdoor adventure photographers, solo travel experts, national media brands and scores of food bloggers, but in FY17-18 the team added "digital magician" to the mix for a content collaboration with YouTube and Instagram star Zach King.

Asheville was the first destination to approach Zach King, inspired by Explore Asheville's "Let the Magic Find You" campaign. The partnership expanded into a short film concept with iconic locations and magic tricks across Asheville. Within 24-hours of posting, the magical slapstick adventure video "Whole Latte Trouble" went viral.

- 4.5 million views on Instagram (597K likes)
- 877K views on YouTube
- 260K added-value views from two Zach King behindthe-scenes videos
- "Asheville, NC" geotag and callout in caption
- TOTAL VIEWS: 5.6 million



EXPLORE ASHEVILLE FY17-18 SOCIAL METRICS



@VisitAsheville on Instagram48,477 followers
332,614 engagements on 242 posts



Visit Asheville on Facebook 275,000 followers 33 million impressions



Explore Asheville on Twitter 30,687 followers 1.3 million impressions

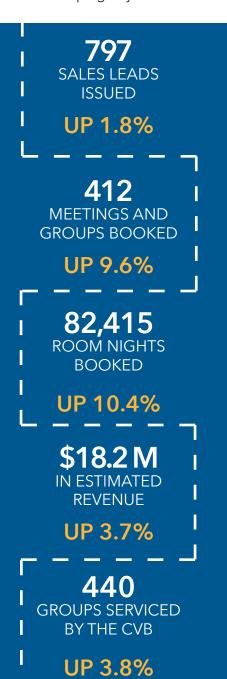
ASHEVILLE TRAVELER E-NEWSLETTER

120,000 subscribers | 17.4 percent open rate (up 30 percent) | 3.5 percent click-through rate (up 25 percent)

ELEVATING GROUP BUSINESSIN LOCAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL MARKETS

The goal of the Group Sales & Services team is to increase group room nights. Strategies used to achieve this goal include direct sales, hosting client events, attending targeted trade shows, hosting buyers through FAMs, advertising and more. We elevate the Asheville meeting brand among decision makers able to bring regional or national meetings and events to the destination. Well-placed sponsorships are a strategic priority.

Trade show presence was amplified by adding sponsorships and orchestrating pop-up client events to capture additional exposure in FY17-18. The team increased the number of direct and indirect client connections, had strong interactions with buyers during tradeshows and marketplaces, hosted five client events in key cities, and brought more than 130 buyers representing all market segments to experience the destination firsthand. Efforts targeting sports, group tour, wedding and AAA markets continued. Hosting the high-profile U.S. Tennis Association's Fed Cup and the international bike race Haute Route resulted in significant exposure for our community. The initiatives were tied together through a well-planned communication strategy aimed at keeping buyers connected to Explore Asheville throughout the year.



12,564	DIRECT CLIENT CONNECTIONS		
81,828	INDIRECT CLIENT CONNECTIONS		
74	INDEPENDENT CVB-HOSTED SITE VISITS		
3	48-HOUR MEETING PLANNER & NC/SC "REDISCOVER ASHEVILLE" EXPERIENCES HELD		
27	PLANNERS PARTICIPATED IN MEETING FAMS		
5	CLIENT EVENTS HELD IN ATLANTA, WASHINGTON, D.C., RALEIGH, CHARLOTTE, AND LAS VEGAS		
135	BUYERS ATTENDED THESE EVENTS		
22	MOTORCOACH PLANNERS ATTENDED "ABSOLUTELY ASHEVILLE" FAM		
16	INTERNATIONAL BUYERS ATTENDED THE "SOUTHERN PEARLS" CHINESE FAM		
25	TRADESHOWS, MARKETPLACES AND MISSIONS		
4,000	ATTRACTION VALUE CARDS DISTRIBUTED TO ATTENDEES		
365	AAA STAFF PARTICPATED IN 14 IN-OFFICE DESTINATION TRAININGS AND FOUR WEBINARS		
30	AAA/CAA ATTENDED THE ANNUAL BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION FAM		

SIGNATURE SPORTING EVENTS



Asheville hosted the **2018 Fed Cup**, the world's largest annual women's team tennis tournament. The crowd exceeded 3,500 attendees over the course of two days, and an estimated \$3.5 million was generated in total business spending.

Asheville welcomed cyclists (and their families and friends) in May 2018 for the inaugural **Haute Route Asheville**. The prestigious European cycling event was attended by 300 riders, and an estimated \$870,000 was generated in total business spending.

For the sixth time, the US Cellular Center hosted the **SoCon Basketball Tournament**. Total attendance was 31,488, and an estimated \$6.9 million was generated in total business spending. We are looking forward to the 2019 event.

REGIONAL & NATIONAL SPONSORSHIPS

ASAE Foundation-Chuck Fazio Executive HeadShot LOUNGE

More than 425 industry professionals visited the Chuck Fazio Headshot LOUNGE sponsored, in part, by Explore Asheville during the American Society of Association Executives' 2017 Annual Meeting & Exposition. Attendees were exposed to Asheville via on-site marketing materials, video streaming, branded Asheville items, hosted receptions and more. Approximately 2,500 association executives attended the event.



Meeting & Conventions Interact Southeast Destinations

Seventy-five planners attended the breakfast sponsored by Explore Asheville during this hosted-buyer event for elite meeting and incentive professionals. Sponsorship included a 15-minute speaking opportunity, materials in registration packets, pre- and post-marketing and more.



Smart Meetings West National

More than 100 industry professionals attended the networking lunch sponsored by Explore Asheville. Attendees saw the video, heard from Explore Asheville staff, received pre- and post-promotion and included sales materials in registration packets.



American Bus Association-2018 Marketplace

The annual Marketplace brought more than 3,500 motorcoach industry professionals to Charlotte, NC, and Explore Asheville took full advantage of the opportunities. In addition to a pre-FAM trip "Mountain Views and Brews", we hosted a sponsored reception room during the opening event which drew 500 and an invitation-only private client event with 25 attending.



Destinations International-Destination Showcase 2017

DI represents destination organizations around the world. Approximately 200 corporate and association meeting planners attended the Showcase. Explore Asheville President & CEO Stephanie Brown was introduced during the event, and Asheville music was played during the reception by Abby the Spoon Lady and Chris Rodrigues.



Meeting Professionals International-New Jersey

Twenty-five planners attended the Explore Asheville co-sponsored event and were exposed to Asheville through video, signage, and pre- and post-event exposure.

TOURISM BUILDS COMMUNITY

11 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AWARDED \$51,500 FOR EVENTS SUPPORT UTILIZING EARNED INCOME

Arboretum Summer Lights ASAP Farm Tour ADA Independence Day Celebration Asheville Percussion Festival Black Mountain College 9th Annual (Re) Happening Brother Wolf Animal Rescue Asheville VeganFest WNC Green Building Council CiderFest NC Eliada Home Corn Maze Montford Holiday Tour of Homes Montford Annual Neighborhood Festival RiverLink RiverMusic 2018 RiverLink RiverFest 2018 Southern Highland Craft Guild 71st Annual Craft Fair

19 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVED \$65,000 IN SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT UTILIZING EARNED INCOME

ADA'S Urban Speaker Series Creative Sector Summit The Summer of Glass Organic Growers School **Xpand Fest** ClimateCon 2018 AMP Rocks Asheville! Media Arts Project Connect Beyond the Page Strive Forward Summit Downtown After 5 Asheville Chamber Annual Meeting **AMOS Science Pub** Asheville Tennis Association Blue Ridge Parkway Association 48 Hour Film Project Woman Up City of Asheville's Steep Canyon Rangers Leadership Asheville Breakfast Buzz



The City of Asheville was awarded \$7,125,000 in TPDF funding for riverfront development including 14 Riverside Drive.



The Bob Lewis Ballpark was awarded \$2 million in TPDF funding.

\$34.5 MILLION IN TPDF FUNDING AWARDED TO 33 PROJECTS SINCE 2001

Tourism product development funding (TPDF), generated from a portion of room tax revenues paid by overnight visitors in Buncombe County lodging accommodations, is designated for projects that not only demonstrate an ability to produce incremental overnight stays in Buncombe County lodging, but also ensures that projects are successful in creating spending at local businesses, jobs and tax revenue.

Since the inception of the TPDF program in 2001, BCTDA has awarded \$34.5 million to 33 community tourism projects that serve the tourism industry and benefit community residents. The amount includes more than \$22 million provided to City of Asheville-owned projects which accounts for more than half of all funding.

In the 2017 grant cycle, the BCTDA awarded \$200,000 to the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center for its relocation and expansion into a new space at 120 College Street on Pack Square Park. The project will help solidify the museum as a strong and vital international art center, and further cement Asheville as a major cultural destination.

Utilizing available funding at the end of the 2017 cycle, the BCTDA increased support of the River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (RADTIP) with an additional \$4.6 million award, bringing total BCTDA funding for the City of Asheville's River Arts District development to \$7,125,000. The enhanced TPDF grant will facilitate the completion of the southern section of the RADTIP including roadway improvements, sidewalks, street trees, a protected bike lane, greenway, on street parking, public art and storm water improvements.

Photo (left to right): TPDF Committee Chair Robert Foster, Mayor Esther Manheimer, BCTDA Chair Jim Muth, and Explore Asheville President & CEO Stephanie Brown.

"The City is excited to be awarded this additional funding of \$4.6 million. This is an example of the important partnership between the City and the BCTDA. The BCTDA is living up to its mission to be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County."

~ Mayor Esther Manheimer, City of Asheville





The Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center was awarded \$200,000 in TPDF funding.



The US Cellular Center was awarded an additional \$1.5 million in TPDF funding bringing the total to \$5,675,000.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Public Affairs team manages a robust partner engagement program including a series of annual headliner events, partner forums, monthly orientations and extranet trainings, and consistent communications via newsletter emails, Facebook, and the AshevilleCVB.com industry website.

Additional events centered around the launch of the new Explore Asheville organization and relocation.

Events included a Media Preview, Open House, CVB Holiday Party, Hospitality Outlook, National Tourism Week Summit, Major Events of 2018 Partner Forum plus ten orientation meetings.

In addition to hosting programs for tourism industry partners, members of the Explore Asheville team build and strengthen community relations by serving on various boards and committees.







COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service and volunteering with local partner organizations is a priority for the Explore Asheville team.

In FY17-18, the team participated in the Asheville Downtown Association's Downtown Clean-up Day, sorted food at Manna FoodBank, and collected and packed school supplies for the United Way Backpack Drive.

And, our generous hospitality industry helped to increase our collective impact with their donations to the school supply drive and the Toys for Tots toy drive.





1,200+ TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNERS & FRIENDS

Destination promotion is funded 100 percent by the tax on commercial lodging in Buncombe County, but every tourism-related business is represented by the sales and marketing efforts of Explore Asheville at no charge. This collective source of promotion provides many opportunities for local businesses to participate. These businesses, or tourism industry partners, can learn about Explore Asheville's marketing initiatives by attending an Explore Asheville CVB 101 Orientation offered monthly.

In FY17-18, 72 attended a CVB 101 Orientation, and 103 qualifying tourism industry partners were provided listings on ExploreAsheville.com.

NEW TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNERS IN FY17-18

Ambrose West Appalachia Guild of Healing Arts Archetype Brewing

Asheville Barn Weddings

Asheville Detours Asheville Glamping

Asheville Photo Tours, LLC

Asheville Wine Market

AUX Bar

Baba Nahm

Baked Pie Company

Benjamin T Warner DJ and Musician

Better Than Unicorns

BimBeriBon

Biscuit Head - Biltmore

Bliss Farm and Retreat

Brie Capone

Bright Light Wellness LLC

Bullington Gardens

Burgerworx - Downtown

Burgerworx - South

Cambria Hotel Downtown Asheville

Casablanca Cigar Bar

Christmount

CLEASTER COTTON Art

Copper Crown

Craft Centric Taproom and

Bottleshop

De La Terre Skincare and Holistic Spa

Deb Williams Designs

Devils In Dust

District Wine Bar

Doc Brown's BBQ

Earth Magick

embellish asheville

Emma's Lounge

Fairfield Inn and Suites Asheville -

Tunnel Road

Foothills Butcher Bar and Kitchen:

West Asheville

Foundation Woodworks

Gan Shan West

Ginger's Revenge

Grey Eagle Taqueria

Haiku I Do

Hemingway's Cuba

High Rock Rentals

Hillman Beer

Holiday Childress

Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Biltmore

Village Area

Imperial Auto Rental

Inn on Westwood

Izzy's Coffee House

Jack's 47

Jane Kramer

Jarret Porter Photography

Jordan Okrend

Joseph Dix Photography

JuneBug Retro Resort

Kathy Beaver Photography

Koresma

L'Ecluse

Leene's Glassworks

Longleaf Vineyard

Luella's Bar-B-Que South Asheville

Majik Studios

Midnight Snack

Mingle Events and Rentals

Momentum Gallery

Moonlight Makers

New Moon Marketplace

Nicolette Leigh Arts

Nikki Talley

Oak and Grist Distilling Company

Ole Shakey's Getaway

Open Hearts Art Center

Peaceful Hollow

Peggy Hustad

Pillar Kitchen

Pink Dog Creative

Polanco Restaurant

Purple Crayon

Que Sera Restaurant

Randall Glen Resort

Rebecca King Hawkinson Fine Art

Roanline

Rustic Grape

Sassafras on Sutton

SIYAH

Sly Grog Lounge

Stargazers Designs

Susanna Euston Photography

Taste Carolina Gourmet Food Tours

The Barn at Honeysuckle Hill

The Zuzu Welsh Band

Thomas D. Potts Fine Art Photo.

Tin Foil Hat

Up Jumped Three

Violet Owl Wellness

Vivian

WAXON Batik and Dye Studio

Wedge at Foundation

White Labs Kitchen and Tap

Woodfire Bar and Grille

Yesterday's Tree Furniture

"#1 FOODIE CITY" IN THE WORLD

THE TRAZEE AWARDS 2018

"THE TOP 15 CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES"

TRAVEL + LEISURE

"TOP 10 MOST HOSPITABLE U.S. CITIES, ACCORDING TO AIRBNB" TRAVEL CHANNEL (ASHEVILLE #1)

"BORN IN THE USA: TOP 10 MUSIC CITIES"

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER (ASHEVILLE #5)

"18 TOP DESTINATIONS OF 2018"

FORBES TRAVEL GUIDE



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