



a different kind of local color

## Immersion Avant Garde

With hundreds of galleries and art studios, plus countless occasions for music and dancing, creative expression is a way of life in Asheville. There are plenty of opportunities for visitors to get in on the artsy fun. Take a class in clay at Odyssey Center for Ceramic Arts, or learn to make your own artistic tome at Asheville Bookworks. Looking for a girls' getaway? Asheville Art Retreats offers customized art intensives in collage, chalk, encaustic or dance. And speaking of dance, no doubt if you've been downtown on a Friday night, you've moved to the beat of the drum circle. You'll be ready to join in after a class at Skinny Beats Drum Shop & Gallery. Adama Dembele, a 33rd generation Ivory Coast djembe player, also teaches drop-in classes at Studio Zahiya.

## Leaf Through Literary Legacies

With such a spectacular backdrop from which to draw inspiration, it's no wonder so many literary figures have penned noted novels on the region. Drop by Malaprop's Bookstore to pick your read, and then make a pilgrimage to some of the famed authors' haunts. Hike Cold Mountain, the setting that inspired Charles Frazier's bestseller, or spend a day on the grounds of Connemara, poet Carl Sandburg's graceful Flat Rock home. A wander along the French Broad River is a nod to Wilma Dykeman's legacy, or stroll the shaded grounds of Riverside Cemetery to pay homage to O. Henry. And wherever you see the name Altamont, that's an ode to Asheville's native son. The Thomas Wolfe Memorial offers tours daily and free Pickin' on the Porch concerts during the summer. Even if you haven't read *The Great Gatsby*, no literary tour of Asheville would be complete without a visit to The Grove Park Inn where F. Scott Fitzgerald summered in glamorous style while his wife, Zelda, underwent treatment in nearby Highland Hospital.

## Asheville's Vaudeville Revival

To use the term "freak show," one might take offense, but not in Asheville, where sultry, sexy, comedic and vaudeville-esque theatrics are en vogue. Catch a roving comedy show on the purple LaZoom tour bus. Asheville Vaudeville troupe does it right with juggling and magic acts, burlesque, aerial arts and sideshows presented with a healthy dose of humor. The Americana Burlesque & Sideshow Festival offers shows and workshops each May that will tickle your fancy. And for



a wildly different take on Shakespearean theater, the Montford Park Players have been known to present the Bard's classics with a steampunk spin. Free productions take place at a lovely outdoor amphitheater during the warmer months.

## Folk Meets Funk: An Evolution of Art

Western North Carolina as a whole is deeply entrenched in the craft tradition. Step inside the Appalachian Craft Center, Grovewood and Ariel galleries, or the new Southern Highland Craft Gallery in Biltmore Village to realize the immense talent this region holds. But for every artisan bending to tradition, there's also an artist pushing the boundaries. Stroll through the River Arts District to see where folk and funk intermingle. Sean Pace's kinetic sculptures found in the Phil Mechanic Studios are particularly wild. ZaPow! in downtown exhibits affordable illustration and pop art; The Bender Gallery displays a museum-quality collection of emerging and established glass artists; and The Satellite Gallery always keeps it contemporary. That's to say nothing of the urban art murals around town. The gateway mural on the Lexington Avenue bridge is particularly striking.

## Top 5 Spots for a Truly Gatsby Moment

1. Order a gin Rickey at the Grove Park Inn where F. Scott Fitzgerald summered in high style.
2. Browse the shops of the Grove Arcade, then admire the Battery Park Hotel (now residences) on the north end. It was one of a couple of Fitzgerald's hideouts.
3. Peek inside the lobby of the Skyland Hotel in Hendersonville where the author penned "The Crack Up" in the mid 1930s.
4. Gaze at downtown Asheville's art deco masterpieces and picture yourself in the lavish era of the 30s.
5. Visit The Grove Park Inn in September when the hotel hosts Salute to F. Scott Fitzgerald Weekend, which includes guided tours of his rooms.

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