



**ROCK RETAIL** Fashions fill downtown boutiques such as Take Heart (left) and Celeste's (above).

9 a.m.

### Kojay's Cafe

This breakfast-and-lunch cafe fills its pastry cases with savory popover quiches and berry scones. Smear your wheat-raisin muffin (\$2) with house-made jam, and head to the patio for a view of Main Street and a breath of fresh mountain air. 1132 Main Street; 828/295-0015

11 a.m.

### Blowing Rock Art & History Museum

This recently opened, 23,000-square-foot building houses the only art and history museum in the High Country, as well as the town's visitors center. The exhibit "North Carolina Treasures"—showcasing works from celebrated artists from the Tar Heel State, including painter Bob Timberlake, potter Glenn Bolick, and chair-maker Max Woody—runs through November 26 (\$8 adults, \$5 children ages 5 and up). Corner of Chestnut and Main streets; [blowingrockmuseum.org](http://blowingrockmuseum.org) or 828/295-9099

#### DAY TRIP

# Cool Off in Blowing Rock

*Nestled on the Blue Ridge Parkway, this North Carolina town offers great barbecue, fine art, and, come September, average highs of 69 degrees*

▶ **NAMED FOR** a wind-whipped cliff that hangs 3,000 feet above the Johns River Gorge just south of downtown, Blowing Rock is surrounded by some of the tallest peaks and most scenic mountain views in the South. The area's natural beauty has inspired generations of painters, potters, and sculptors—and for the past 50 years local and regional artists have gathered

downtown for the once-a-month "Art in the Park" event. This September 8, the juried show on the American Legion grounds will feature booths filled with paintings, pottery, metalwork, and jewelry ([blowingrock.com/artinthepark](http://blowingrock.com/artinthepark) or 800/295-7851). Even if you can't make it to Art in the Park, September is still a great time to spend a day exploring the town's shops, museums, and eateries.



**ON MAIN STREET** Find home decor at Celeste's (left) and cobbler at the Storie Street Grille (above).

**7 p.m. Storie Street Grille**  
End the day on the back patio of the Storie Street Grille, an upscale but casual restaurant that uses local products such as pecan-crusted goat cheese from Ripshin Goat Dairy. Executive chef Andrew Long creates North Carolina-inspired dishes such as Jr. Johnson Midnight Moon Pasta with fried okra, green tomatoes, country ham, and moonshine cream sauce (\$18). 1167 Main Street; [storiestreetgrille.com](http://storiestreetgrille.com) or 828/295-7075

**IF YOU STAY THE NIGHT**

Right off Main Street, **The Inn at Ragged Gardens** is a picturesque poplar-sided lodge with 11 rooms and suites, as well as two guest cottages. Each room comes with a fireplace that's just right for curling up in front of as you enjoy the complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres served from 5 to 6 p.m. (rates start at \$175). 203 Sunset Drive; [ragged-gardens.com](http://ragged-gardens.com) or 828/295-9703

**1 p.m. Woodlands Barbecue & Pickin' Parlor**

The sweet aroma of barbecue cooking over hickory charcoal has surrounded the family-style picnic tables, Mason jars, and paper towel rolls of this down-home pig-pickin' parlor for decades. Try the chopped pork platter served with hush puppies and Lexington-style vinegar slaw (\$9) or a bucket of house-sauced whole wings (\$15). 8304 Valley Blvd.; [woodlandsbbq.com](http://woodlandsbbq.com) or 828/295-3651

**2 p.m. Main Street**

Start an afternoon of shopping at **Take Heart** (1009 Main Street; 828/295-3444), a feminine boutique housed in a quaint purple cottage. Inside, bundles of dried lavender adorn shelves brimming with lacy frocks by Gypsy Junkies. Just down Main, **Celeste's** (1132 Main Street; [celestesinteriors.com](http://celestesinteriors.com)) is a home interiors and dress shop festooned with birch trees growing into the ceiling and a faux fireplace.

**3:30 p.m. Beautiful views**

If you'd like to stretch your legs, follow Main Street to Annie Cannon Gardens and the Glen Burney Trail. The steep, mile-and-a-half-long trail ends at **Glen Mary Falls**, and a round-trip hike takes about two hours. If you'd rather drive to a view, follow the Blue Ridge Parkway to the scenic **Moses H. Cone Memorial Park** about 3 miles north of town. Check out locally made crafts at the **Parkway Craft Center** in the park. 828/295-7938



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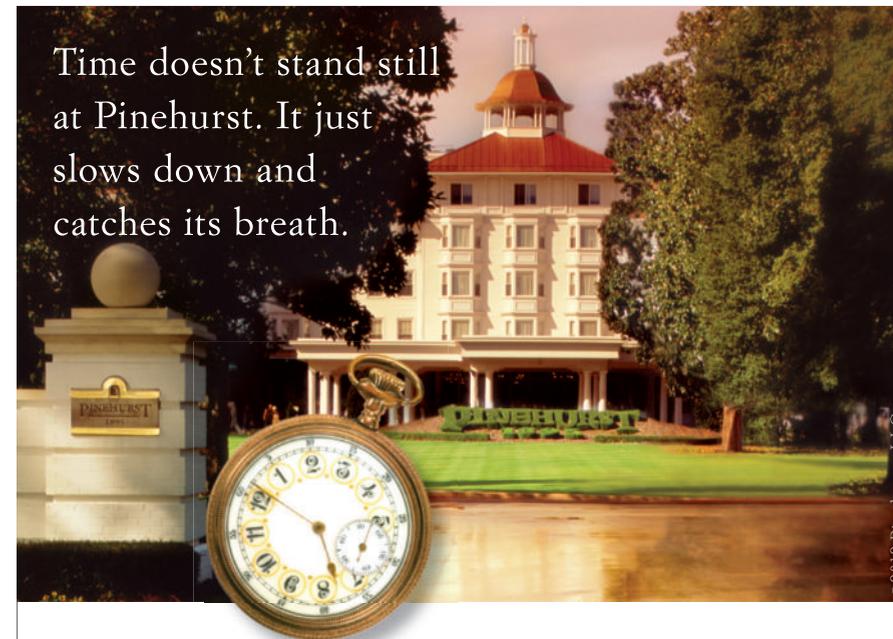
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