

Asheville April 2021

This was our first trip in 14 months due to the pandemic. We are double vaccinated, so felt safe to drive to Asheville and stay in a small, “safe” hotel right downtown. It was wonderful from beginning to end. We do not travel the expressways to/from Asheville but enjoy the country roads instead. It is bit longer and worth every minute for the scenery and the ambiance. The drive through the mountains is so beautiful with the flowering trees in bloom and the buds all fresh and chartreuse. On the way home I managed to get lost and took I-64 south (missed the I-40 turnoff) and then took route 64 through the Highlands to 23. It was quite slow – and ever so beautiful. Also fun to drive!

All in all, it was a great first trip in 2021. Below are some summaries.

We stayed at the “**Windsor Boutique Hotel**” in the center of downtown Asheville.

This unique hotel is right in the heart of Asheville walking distance to the multitude of shops and restaurants. It is also a very interesting building with wide-planked antique recycled flooring that is unique and beautiful. The staff is all very helpful and friendly. The door locks are simply your last 4 digits of your phone number, so no losing the key or getting accidentally locked out. The rooms are complete apartments with a full kitchen and even a washer & dryer! Being during the pandemic, there is no daily maid service, which ironically made it even better. (Towels and trash are placed outside the door in the morning and clean towels left there for you later). We could leave kindles and computers out like it is our own home-away-from-home! We do recommend booking the top floor, as you do hear the folks above you. We would definitely book here again next time we come to this delightful town.

We walked and ate and relaxed. Love this town. The sad thing is that at least half of the art shops that dotted the city are now either close (but still stuff in them) or are empty shells. Still, it was a delightful bunch of days with miles of walking and fabulous food.

Restaurants in order of excellence (in our opinion):

Mela Indian Restaurant (6*). Has been years since eating here, and all other times it was for the lunch buffet, which is wonderful. But this year we went for dinner and it was just excellent. The “Rack of Lamb” and the Butter Chicken” were among the most delicious meals we have had in a restaurant for some time. The spinach and cheese Naan bread was amazing. The wait staff was efficient and informative.

Salsa (5*). Wonderful rustic setting with fabulous food at very reasonable price. We shared a tuna poke took that was heaped so tall you could only eat it with a knife and fork. Then we shared a chicken and mushroom paella. Both were excellent.

Zambra (5*). Recommend the Tapas rather than meal offerings, as they were excellent. We enjoyed: Tortilla Espanola: (Light filo dough tortilla with egg and potato filling), Pomegranate Braised Pork Spring Roll and Whole Trout. All were perfectly done and delicious.

Well-Bred Bakery & Café (4*) in the Biltmore Village. We shared a bacon quiche and a chicken & Kale salads. The person taking the order was patient and helpful as we tried

to decide and the food came quickly. It was very good. Great place for a meal on the run!

Tupelo Honey Café (2*). Was a real disappointment, as we have eaten there several times before. The catfish was WAY over blackened and even the tartar sauce was extremely hot. The chicken was also too spicy. Both the crackling potatoes and the cheese grits were room temp when served. The pour of wine was tiny. That is two strikes for Tupelo, so will not go there again.

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We recently we returned from four days in Asheville NC. This was our first trip in 14 months due to Covid-19. Before Covid we would visit Asheville quite often for one art fair or other. We walked and ate and relaxed and enjoyed the street musicians. We love that town. The sad thing is that at least half of the art shops & galleries that dotted the city are now either close (but still stuff in them) or are empty shells. Still, it was a delightful bunch of days with miles of walking and fabulous food. Attached is our "Trip Report" and the few pictures from the trip are at <https://bit.ly/3dJDQPS>