

AUGUST 10, 2022

Ava Gardner Festival to host concert at The Clayton Center

This year's festival kicks off Ava's 100th Centennial Celebration and will include a multitude of exciting events

BY JOHNSTON COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU



TRAVEL Ava Gardner

by Smithfield, NC



AVA GARDNER MUSEUM/FOR PHILLYVOICE

The Ava Gardner Museum hosts an [annual festival](#) in honor of the legendary actress, fashion icon, and humanitarian Ava Gardner, a North Carolina native who grew up just 7-miles east of Smithfield, North Carolina. This year's festival, scheduled for October 7-9, kicks off Ava's 100th Centennial Celebration and will include a multitude of exciting events, as the museum unveils new exhibits, conducts heritage tours, hosts special film and video presentations, and more.

Smithfield is located just off I-95, Exit 95 only six and a half hours from the Philadelphia area. It's a perfect long weekend getaway or a great stop-over on your way further south. [The Ava Gardner Museum](#), where most of the festival activities are taking place, is located in Downtown Smithfield, at 325 E. Market Street. Smithfield is situated along the Neuse River, with a thriving downtown — new retail, restaurants, events, historic attractions, outlet shopping, and recreational activities abound.



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One of the can't-miss events at this year's festival is the musical experience dedicated to Ava kicking-off the festival weekend on October 7th!

“The [opening night concert at The Clayton Center](#) is going to be an exciting musical tribute to Ava Gardner’s life and career, and promises to be a night to remember,” stated Ava Gardner Museum Executive Director Lynell Seabold.

Billed as “A Musical Tribute to Ava Gardner,” concert goers will experience a celebration of Ava’s life through music! Ava truly loved music from the big band sounds of her second husband, Artie Shaw, to the torch songs that Frank Sinatra was so famous for singing following their break-up. Enjoy this musical tribute to Ava with the NC Revelers Orchestra from Raleigh and featuring guest performers, Broadway actor and singer John Arthur Greene, and opera and jazz singer Angelique Alexander. This collaboration also includes Jonathan Levin, founder of The Clayton Piano Festival, bringing us a medley of Ava’s movie songs and much more.

Beginning at 6:30 p.m., the Clayton Cultural Arts Foundation will host a cash bar prior to the concert in the lobby of The Clayton Center, and guests may also enjoy a slice of Ava’s Birthday Cake and light refreshments provided by the Ava Gardner Museum. Premium reserved seats will be \$45 plus fees/taxes and general seating will be \$30 plus fees/taxes. **Tickets are only available through The Clayton Center box office, online [here](#).**



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The festival continues through Sunday in Smithfield, and the following is a snapshot of the schedule:

Friday, October 7

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Museum opens with the unveiling of new exhibits

The museum board has many special tributes, events, and exhibits planned throughout the Ava 100th Centennial Celebration and we hope you will return again and again.

Admission tickets are \$12 per person and available to buy online in advance.

Saturday, October 8

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Exhibits, movies, heritage tours and more

The Museum staff will have new exhibits showcasing recent acquisitions and never-before-seen artifacts on loan from collectors, and additional events on Saturday include heritage tours, wine and whiskey tastings by Seven Jars Distillery, art vendors and sidewalk sales on Third Street, and film screenings at the Smithfield Cinemas. The dedication of the Ava Gardner Mural and Rose Garden will be held Saturday morning at 10am, to share the story behind the project and thank all those that contributed to its success.

Heritage Tours will be available beginning at 11am through 3pm with a tour guide to the Brogden Community where Ava was born and raised, just 7 miles east of Smithfield. Other points of interest will be featured in Smithfield, and the group will visit Ava's grave site, Sunset Memorial Park.

5 p.m. | Film Screening of *The Killers*

Films will be screened at the Smithfield Cinemas located at 175 S. Equity Drive near Carolina Premium Outlets. Watch Ava's breakout role as Kitty Collins, in a newly mastered 4K version of *The Killers* (1946).

7:30 p.m. | Film Screening of *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*

Cohen films released the *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951) 4K restoration in 2020, and two years later the North Carolina premiere will be during the Ava Gardner Festival.

Sunday, October 9

11 a.m. – 5 p.m. | **Museum opens with extended hours**

Return on Sunday to continue to enjoy the new exhibits celebrating Ava 100th Birthday! Special t-shirts, coffee mugs, and other gift shop items will be available all weekend for purchase in the museum, as well as online.

1:30 p.m. | **Film screening of *The Barefoot Contessa***

Visitors will enjoy another iconic Ava film, *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) on the big screen at Smithfield Cinemas, as the festival concludes.



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Click [here](#) for more information and to purchase tickets for the various events happening throughout the weekend.

Visitors to the Ava Gardner Festival will find a special room rate being offered at select area hotels (highlighted at the bottom of the festival homepage); nearby local shops and restaurants are also planning to celebrate the weekend with special offers. Make a long weekend of it and come celebrate Ava's 100th in her hometown!

As the festival concludes, the museum will continue the centennial celebration throughout 2023 with special programming and virtual offerings designed to honor Ava's many contributions to film, fashion, and philanthropy. So, even if you can't make it to the Ava Gardner Festival, visitors to the museum throughout the next year will be able to see special exhibits and items relating to Ava's 100th celebration. There will also be more unique events to come!

"Be sure to check out our gift shop as we unveil new Ava 100 merchandise and officially licensed Ava Gardner products. Sign-up for our newsletter and stay tuned to our social media, blog, and website for all the latest updates and future announcements about our plans. You don't want to miss Ava's 100th!" continued Seabold.

Visit the [event website](#) for more information on the Ava Gardner Festival.

The Ava Gardner Festival sponsors make this all possible, and to support the museum's activities, [click here](#).. The Board of Directors extends a special thanks to the following sponsors: First Citizens Bank, Winston-Salem Foundation, Joy W. Pope Memorial Grant, Johnston County Arts Council, Johnston County Community Foundation, Piedmont Pump & Tank, LLC, The Clayton Center, Smithfield Cinemas, Carroll Pharmacy, United Community Bank, Rebecca Bailey, Interstate Outdoor, Town of Smithfield, Johnston County Visitors Bureau and the Ava Gardner Trust.

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