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Plan Your Next Getaway Visiting This Old Hollywood-Inspired North Carolina Museum

If you love the golden age of Hollywood, then you need to add The Ava Gardner Museum to your bucket list.



Roughly a little over a four hour drive from DC, Smithfield, North Carolina may be best known to Washingtonian's for its rural, small-town vibe. But, that doesn't mean the town isn't home to some impressive sites to see, as well. One major attraction that is getting a lot of buzz right now is the celebrity-themed museum that honors the life and career of local

Hollywood legend, Ava Gardner. The Ava Gardner Museum is nestled right in the county seat's downtown area and showcases an incredible collection of original scripts, photos, costumes, and personal effects of the prominent movie and TV star.



Gardner's life and career in showbiz is reminiscent of a true Hollywood "Cinderella" story and is definitely one to explore if you consider yourself celebrity obsessed. Before taking over movie and TV screens from the early '40s to the late '70s, she grew up in Smithfield, North Carolina. She rose to fame due to her onscreen charisma and throughout her career she starred alongside a variety of film icons, such as Clark Gable, Grace Kelly and Gregory Peck. Her lifestyle offscreen also gained her recognition, since she was linked to several headline-making stars. Her marriages with Mickey Rooney, Artie Shaw, Frank Sinatra, as well as her other friendships with A-list celebrities from her era are all highlighted in the museum and are also a must-see.



In 2021, The Ava Gardner Museum also underwent an extensive remodel, so visitors will now be able to experience a new look throughout the building as well as new exhibits and collection items. Two brand new exhibits now feature some of Gardner's most-well known costumes, such as jewelry from the movie *Pandora & the Flying Dutchman*, clothing given to her by business magnate Howard Hughes, and more.



After exploring the Ava Gardner Museum, visitors to Smithfield will be charmed by the town's unique aesthetic and won't hurry back home, but enjoy a long weekend, instead. Located on I-95, Exit 95 (easy to remember), the town offers fun shops like Oak City Collections, and restaurants like Simple Twist for burgers and SoDoSoPa for local barbecue. For coffee and a fresh-made lunch stop by The Gilded Pear Brew House. Visitors may also want to explore two stops on the Beer, Wine and Shine Trail nearby; enjoy a wine tasting at Hinnant Vineyards and relax in the beer garden at Double Barley Brewing.

Ready to start planning your getaway? To learn more about The Ava Gardner Museum you can visit their website [here](#). For more information on where to book your stay in Smithfield, check out their hotel offerings [here](#).

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