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**with Leigh Anne Richards**

## *The Seasoned Performers*

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# It's a Blue Ridge Day!

from *Virginia's Roanoke Valley*

This ain't Gatlinburg! When you're in the 50+ age group you need a different pace when you travel. Roanoke Valley will fit you well. In many ways, Roanoke Valley compares very favorably to another popular Boomer destination, Charleston, SC. But Roanoke Valley offers many more new experiences to fit your Boomer Lifestyle. The restaurant scene is dynamic and innovative, with over a hundred locally owned restaurants in the area. Shopping the downtown boutiques and markets throughout Roanoke Valley will be something even a man would enjoy! The outdoor activities will take your breath away and the tranquility of the Blue Ridge Mountains, along with some of Virginia's best wines will probably lure you back a few more times. Plan a new experience to Roanoke Valley and you'll share the memory for years to come.

## BED & BREAKFASTS & COTTAGES IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Experience genuine southern hospitality at a one-of-a-kind Bed & Breakfast Inn where your hosts will treat you like a member of their family. B&B's across the Roanoke Valley vary from historic old homes in charming neighborhoods to secluded hilltop lodges overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains. Take advantage of some of their activities including fishing and even llama trekking.

## THE CAPITAL OF CUISINE IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE

Food is one of the most exciting aspects about a vacation destination.



Photos provided by Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau. [www.visitvablueridge.com](http://www.visitvablueridge.com)

Visitors will remember an area because of a delicious meal at a romantic restaurant, a unique dish at a quirky hole in the wall or a special delight made by a local. Visitors can enjoy all of these things and more

among a rich variety of eateries as robust as the region's wonderful flavors, making the Roanoke Valley the capital of cuisine in Virginia's Blue Ridge.

If you are seeking to sample some of the

region's rich ingredients, a number of farm to table restaurants feature locally grown and raised products on their menus. Alexander's Restaurant in downtown Roanoke creates sophisticated, gourmet dishes with fresh ingredients from their 7Hills Farm, located in nearby Floyd County. In their cozy Grandin Village spot, Local Roots prepares unique and delectable delights, featuring many ingredients from their own city garden, as well as other local farms. In Salem,

visitors can spread their culinary wings by enjoying local ingredients with a modern French twist at Blue Apron Restaurant & Red Rooster Bar. The gourmet restaurants in the Roanoke Valley make this an emerging destination for exceptional local cuisine.

## VINEYARDS & WINERIES IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

More than 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson knew that the fertile soil

and mild weather of the Blue Ridge Mountains were ideal for growing grapes. Centuries later, family run vineyards are thriving in the Roanoke Valley,

producing award winning wines. Experience quality wines made with old world techniques on The Wine Trail of Botetourt County. One of the most unique wineries is Blue Ridge Vineyard because they offer "Wine... paired with a View" and Saturday night concerts with Blinky Moon, a local blue grass band that will move your feet to tapping and maybe even dancing before the night is through. Also on the trail is Chateau



*Blue Apron Restaurant*



*Blue Ridge Vineyard*



*Chateau Morrisette*

Morrisette which offers beautiful vistas, award-winning wines, elegant dining and first-class hospitality. Open year round for tours, tastings, and a full on Virginia wine experience. The Roanoke Valley wineries offer tours, tasting and special events all year long.

## SHOPPING

### IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Looking for something out of the ordinary? The downtowns and farmer's markets of the Roanoke Valley are filled with delicious foods and fantastic crafts from right here in the valley.



*Chocolatepaper*

Visit one-of-a-kind shops and galleries for the perfect gift. Spend

a girls' day out exploring for antiques or the latest fashions. The sights and smells on the Market are a treasure from a bygone era — that's right around the corner. Chocolatepaper is just one of Roanoke's tasty shops. Sensuous chocolates from around the world, distinctive greeting cards for all occasions, and gifts to excite the mind and tickle the funny bone! Not far from downtown Roanoke is the very unique shopping experience of Black Dog Salvage, a 40,000 square foot warehouse filled with Architectural Antiques and Custom Designs

featuring mantles, stained glass, garden statuary, wrought iron, doors, fine antiques, local artisans, home & garden

accessories, furniture and first quality rugs. The founders even have their own television show on the DIY network Sally the Salvage Dog will be waiting!



*Black Dog Salvage*

## HIKING TRAILS

### IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Ready for a walk in the woods? The Roanoke Valley in Virginia's Blue Ridge has more than 600 miles of trails, including the Appalachian Trail, offering everything from easy strolls to challenging climbs. You can experience the incredible views from the top of McAfee Knob or Sharp Top Mountain at the Peaks of Otter. Or, you can climb to the top of Roanoke on the Mill Mountain Star Trail, which leads to the Roanoke Star & Overlook, providing you the chance to look out over the Roanoke Valley. Grab your pack and a camera. Between the trails, the wildlife, and the stunning views, there's no telling what will take your breath away.



*Appalachian Trail, McAfee Knob*

Photo by Bruce Henderson

your breath away. A fascinating world of discovery is waiting underground at Dixie Caverns and Luray Caverns. You'll stand in awe of Natural Bridge, a famous landmark once owned

by Thomas Jefferson and surveyed by George Washington. Animal lovers will especially enjoy the interesting Mill Mountain Zoo, the world's only zoo on a mountaintop. Mill Mountain Zoo is among a distinguished group of approximately 250 other

zoos that are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The zoo is home to over 170 animals from almost 90 species, 21 of which are vulnerable species. As part of

the Species Survival Plan for a number of vulnerable and endangered species, Mill Mountain Zoo has had 43

live animal births in the past 15 years.



*Roanoke Valley Loves Dogs*

Photo by Cameron Davidson

## MUSEUMS & GALLERIES IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Art, science and history come alive at exciting museums around the Roanoke Valley. Some museums feature hands-on, interactive displays for kids of all ages. Others feature rotating gallery exhibits available for a limited time. Art lovers should allow plenty of time to explore the spectacular new

Taubman Museum of Art in downtown Roanoke. History lovers will enjoy the History Museum of Western Virginia followed by visits to history museums in Salem, Fincastle and other towns across the valley.

## NATURAL SITES & ZOOS IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

The scenic Blue Ridge Mountain vistas are not the only thing that will take

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[www.chocolatepaperroanoke.com](http://www.chocolatepaperroanoke.com)  
[www.mmzoo.org](http://www.mmzoo.org)

*The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of the best places to enjoy the stunning fall foliage of the Roanoke Valley.*



*Mabry Mill in Meadows of Dan, VA.*

Photo by Bruce Henderson