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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Boone Businesses and Nearby MerleFest Voted as Best in North Carolina for 2021

Three Boone businesses, plus one mountain region festival, made the lineup when Strange Carolinas announced their 2021 Best of NC award-winners on March 22.

Readers of the popular website vote on nominees each March. The first-, second-, and third-place winners are announced after three weeks of voting each year.

Booneshine Brewing Company was voted Best Brewery in N.C.

Booneshine Brewing Co. opened a new, full-service tasting room and restaurant in 2019, and in 2020, added a large beer garden with their own food truck, to enable social distancing.

Given the current 50% dining capacity inside due to state Covid-19 restrictions, there is a waitlist system in place to serve customers during busy times.

Booneshine is open for lunch and dinner. The tasting room offers dog-friendly outside seating (weather permitting) and bar, table, and loft seating options inside. The spacious beer garden allows for additional pet-friendly, outdoor seating with easy social distancing.

Foggy Pine Books won Best Bookstore in N.C.

In February, The Late Show with Stephen Colbert featured Foggy Pine Books in a big way during the Super Bowl. Weeks before, the show producers had sent a film crew to create a small business "Super Bowl" commercial so they could declare Foggy Pine Books as THE small business of the Late Show Super Bowl Special. Amazingly, actor Sam Elliott narrated the advertisement video and Tom Hanks sang a specially-written jingle. Upon opening the shop the next morning, the proprietor found more than 500 online orders waiting to be shipped! Orders from all over the nation have continued to pour in since that day and Foggy Pine Books has hired additional employees to help manage the demand.

Readers of Strange Carolinas agree that Foggy Pine Books at 471 W. King Street in downtown Boone is the Best Bookstore in the state!

El Tacorriendo took first place as the Best Food Truck in N.C. for the third consecutive year.

El Tacorriendo food truck makes it their goal to serve the best and freshest, most authentic Mexican food around. Sourcing whole foods from local vendors and making all meals to order, El Tacorriendo starts with homemade corn tortillas and makes their tortas with fresh-baked bread from a local bakery. They slice and marinate all meats in-house, and dice quantities of vegetables to order to ensure the freshest ingredients for each customer. El Tacorriendo makes the best salsa made from the freshest produce, too. Valuing fresh, local ingredients gives El Tacorriendo's food the most authentic, high-quality flavors. No wonder they are so wildly popular!

MerleFest in nearby Wilkesboro is the 2021 Best Music Festival.

After the postponement of last year's 33<sup>rd</sup> annual music festival, every Americana music fan is looking forward to the return of MerleFest, named in memory of Doc Watson's musically talented son, Merle. Instead of the traditional last weekend of April, this year's four-day event will be held September 16-19, 2021. MerleFest plans to return to its April schedule for 2022. With 13 stages and numerous performances in a variety of traditional folk music styles, everyone enjoys MerleFest, the Best Music Festival in N.C. Explore Boone is proud to be an annual sponsor of this family-oriented music festival.

Visit these winners soon by planning your trip at [ExploreBoone.com](https://ExploreBoone.com)!