

## “Let’s Have a Tasting” – It’s Easier Said than Done

Dave Cannon :: Charlotte  
September 6, 2011

Historically, tobacco has been the cash crop North Carolina. But recently, grapes and hops have become an important part of the state’s evolving economy.

Consider this from The N.C. Department of Commerce and the N.C. Brewers Guild:

- N.C. is home to more than 100 wineries and 400 vineyards
- The state ranks 9th in wine and grape production in America
- The wine industry creates an annual economic impact of \$813 million while supporting 5,700 jobs
- There are more craft breweries in N.C. than any other state in the South
- N.C. is home to 21 brewpubs and 28 production breweries



As the beer and wine industries grow, so does the competition. Wineries and brewers are looking for new ways to market, advertise and promote their products. One of the most popular ways to spread the word is to hold a beer or wine tasting.

But, before you start making plans for one, be aware that such tastings are heavily regulated by North Carolina law. Among the requirements for holding a beer or wine tasting:

- A special permit from the ABC Commission
- Signage with specific language about the legal drinking age
- Training for employees working the event
- Size limit for samples
- Time limit on length of tasting
- Maximum number of wines and beers that can be sampled

These are just a few of the requirements spelled out by North Carolina state law. Many local city and county governments have passed their own regulations regarding beer and wine and may require other permitting for tastings. So, before you start putting the beer on ice and breaking out cork screws - make sure you have taken the necessary steps to make your event complies with the law.

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