

FIRST PICK

AT SURRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SPRING 2025

VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY
PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Cutting edge program that provides workforce, training, research, and development for North Carolina's \$2 billion wine industry supporting 10,000 jobs
- Only community college in the Southeast with licensed, bonded winery and on-site vineyard where students gain hands-on experience producing Surry Cellars wine from grape to bottle
- Only wine making program on the East Coast to teach sparkling wine production
- Surry Cellars has earned 96 awards since 2009, including 2 Double Gold awards at the 2016 NC State Fair, a 2020 NC Fine Wines Competition Best White Vinifera award, and 2021 NC Fine Wines Competition Best Sparkling award.
- Located in the \$5 million Shelton-Badgett North Carolina Center for Viticulture & Enology complex completed in 2009 and funded through NC General Assembly appropriations, NC Community College System grants, NC State bonds, and private donations
- Enology instruction offered in the center's state-of-the-art, bonded winery with a 3,500-gallon tank capacity and 3,000-gallon barrel storage capacity
- Hands-on Viticulture instruction supported with 5-acre teaching and demonstration vineyard established with diverse plantings of Vitis Vinifera, Muscadine and hybrid bunch grape varieties.

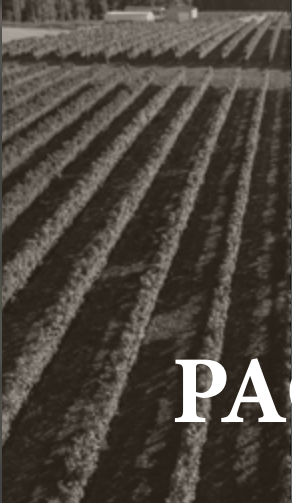


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SUMMER AND FALL SEMESTER 2025

With flexibility built into your education, pursuing knowledge has never been easier. For more info, visit our program page. Registration is open now so don't wait!

RECOMMENDED COURSES

Vineyard or Winery Operations (Each Class 4 Credits)

Covers basic operations necessary for a successful vineyard and winery operation.

Wine Tasting (1 Credit) *ONLINE*

Introduces key wine tasting concepts utilized by wine tasting professionals.

Wines of the World (2 Credits) *ONLINE*

Provides an introduction to the major wine-growing regions of the world.

Grape Harvest (1 Credit)

Introduces grape harvest practices and maintenance of fruit quality and grape crush.

Intro to Winemaking (3 Credits)

Learn about small scale wine production and make your own wine in this class.

Intro to Viticulture (4 Credits)

Covers the essentials of grape growing, from vine anatomy to cultivation techniques.

Viticulture & Enology Students Can Apply for 9 Dedicated Scholarships, with Additional Opportunities for Students Across All Programs.

For more info about the program or to apply:

1. Go to surry.edu/paying-for-college/scholarships
2. Click 'Apply for Foundation Scholarships.'

Jeff Jones, Science Division Chair

Call (336) 386-3391 **Email** jonesjr@surry.edu

Go Online <https://surry.edu/wine>



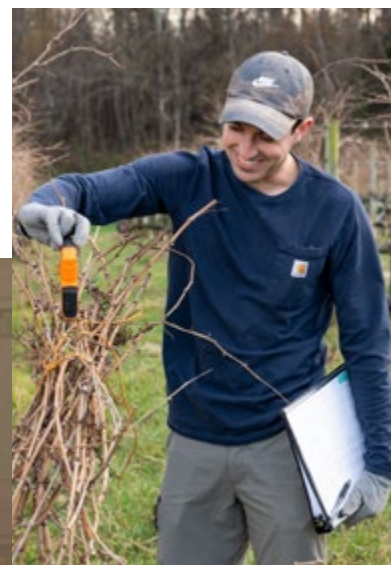
EXCEPTIONAL
INSTRUCTION



FLEXIBILITY



ROBUST
NETWORKING





OPEN HOUSE

Friday, May 2nd | 10am - 1pm

Join us for an exciting Open House at Surry Cellars Winery and Vineyard! Prospective students can explore the vineyard, meet our team, and learn about opportunities in the wine grape industry. The program offers a variety of course delivery options including in-person and Online. Attendees can also apply to Surry Community College on-site, and be entered to win a \$500 scholarship. This free event requires pre-registration, don't miss your chance to take the first step toward your future!

Pre-register at www.surry.edu/wine.

SCHEDULE

Program Overview: 10:00am - 10:30am

Vineyard Tour: 10:30am - 11:30am

Winery Tour & Tasting 11:30am - 12:30pm

College Application and Financial Assistance will be available on-site for the duration of the event.

FESTIVALS

For even more chances to learn about what we have to offer and of course to try our delicious wines, check us out at these two upcoming events.

1. Budbreak Festival Wine & Craft Beer: Saturday, May 3rd 12pm - 5pm.
2. Yadkin Valley Wine Festival: Saturday, May 17th 11am - 5pm.

GRADUATE ZACH TILLEY

Cultivating Passion, Growing the Future

Zach Tilley's journey into viticulture began with a desire to take a different path. While studying agriculture at Wilkes Community College, he sought an alternative to traditional greenhouse work and pursued an internship at Raffaldini Vineyards. This experience ignited his passion for the industry, ultimately leading him to enroll in Surry Community College's Viticulture and Enology program to deepen his understanding of vineyard and winery operations.

Throughout his five years at Raffaldini, Zach has gained extensive hands-on experience, complementing the technical knowledge acquired in the classroom. He particularly enjoys working outdoors and operating vineyard equipment, though he admits that pruning in the cold is his least favorite task.

Upon graduation, Zach plans to continue his career at Raffaldini Vineyards while seeking opportunities to expand his expertise internationally. He aspires to travel to renowned wine regions in Australia, Europe, and South America to gain a broader perspective on global viticulture and wine making practices.

Reflecting on his time at Surry, Zach emphasizes the program's impact on his professional growth. "My experience has been exceptional. The hands-on training, access to industry-specific equipment, and networking opportunities have been invaluable," he says.



As Zach embarks on the next stage of his career, his dedication to the field serves as an example of how education and real-world experience can pave the way for success in the wine industry. His future in viticulture looks promising, and we look forward to seeing where his journey takes him next. **FP**

EXPLORATION

PRUNING

Experimentation with Pruning Techniques

During the Spring 2025 semester, students in Grape and Wine Science will each design a controlled experiment using the scientific method to assess how different pruning techniques impact vine phenology. Pruning is a vital vineyard management tool that influences vine growth and yield, and could potentially mitigate spring frost damage.

Each student will work with Merlot, a *Vitis Vinifera* cultivar known for early budbreak, to investigate pruning as a method for delaying bud-break and reducing cold injury risk. This hands-on approach highlights the value of small-scale research and data collection in viticulture.

Vineyard pruning is not just about shaping the vine, it is a key factor in controlling vine vigor, optimizing fruit ripening, and balancing yield. Careful pruning decisions can determine whether a vineyard produces high-quality grapes or struggles with uneven growth and disease pressure.

To deepen their understanding, students will select and test different pruning methods, documenting changes through observations, pictures, and data collection. Their findings will be analyzed and presented to classmates, sparking discussions on whether results align with their hypotheses and how these insights might shape future vineyard practices.

By engaging in applied research, students gain firsthand experience in the trial-and-error process that drives innovation in viticulture. Experimentation allows vineyard managers to refine techniques and adapt to climate challenges, ensuring sustainable and high-quality wine production. The answers to their questions will unfold as the experiments progress, offering valuable lessons in both vineyard science and problem-solving. **FP**





NEW WINES

Exciting new releases are making their way from the vineyard to the glass, showcasing both innovation and tradition in wine making. This season's lineup includes a Petit Manseng Pet-Nat, crafted from late-harvest grapes to deliver vibrant complexity and natural effervescence. The 2024 Albariño offers a crisp, refreshing expression of this beloved varietal, perfect for warm-weather sipping.

For red wine enthusiasts, Duo presents a bold co-fermentation of Petit Verdot and Merlot, highlighting deep fruit character and refined structure. Rounding out the collection is the Blue Ridge Rosé, a unique take on rosé crafted from Carbonic Macerated Malbec grapes, resulting in a lively, fruit-forward profile.

Stay tuned for release dates and tasting opportunities, these wines are sure to make an impression!



surry.edu/wine



[ncviculturecenter](https://ncviculturecenter.org)



[surrycellars](https://www.instagram.com/surrycellars)