

# NEW YORK POST

## #42 STAUNTON, VIRGINIA



May 15, 2009 --

**TRAVEL TIME** 6 hours by car

**WHY?** One of Virginia's many handsome small cities, the hometown of President Woodrow Wilson is a back-from-the-dead success story that'll make you smile.

**MUST DO** While any time is a good time to stop in Staunton, plan your visit around the performance calendar of the **American Shakespeare Center**. Just around the corner from the shops, galleries, restaurants and cafes of Beverley Street, the Center's Blackfriars Playhouse is the only existing faithful recreation of Shakespeare's original London theater. This summer, expect everything from "Much Ado about Nothing" to "Titus Andronicus". A block away, the **R.R. Smith Center for History and Art** houses three cultural institutions, including the galleries of the Staunton-Augusta Art Center, featuring the work of regional artists. Stop in next door at the **Historic Staunton Foundation** for information on their Saturday walking tours, offered through October -- they begin at the **Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library** and give a good overview of Staunton's interesting history and architecture. While you're never hard up for choice around here, the table to book in town is dinner at **Zynodoa**, a down-to-earth (and yet chic) celebration of local and seasonal cuisine, simply prepared and at affordable prices. Make sure to order the Virginia cheese plate at the end of the meal (115 E. Beverley St., [540] 885-7775).

**STAY HERE** At this point, you've probably figured out that everything in Staunton is next door to everything else, but the revitalized **Stonewall Jackson Hotel** is located right next to the Blackfriars Theater, making it easy for you to roll out of bed and into a performance of Hamlet. Or whatever. What was recently a dismal flop is now a scrubbed-up jewel, featuring nice rooms, nice staff and nice prices. As you enter town, just look for the cool neon sign on the roof (from \$135; [540] 885-4848). A couple of blocks from downtown in the historic Gospel Hill district, the **Shenandoah Valley Inn** is the pick of the bed and breakfast crop, with four nicely decorated rooms, peaceful gardens and a breakfast that skews healthy/organic where possible (from \$150; [866] 466-1733).

**HAPPENINGS** Shakespeare's obviously the big deal around here in the summer, but in August, the **Staunton Music Festival** does the classics, mostly at Staunton's historic Cobble Hill Farm. Every Saturday, a parking lot a block off of Beverley Street turns into the **Staunton-Augusta Farmers Market**, featuring local produce and local music through September.

**HOT TIP** The classic drive-in restaurant is not dead. Out on the fringes of downtown, you'll find **Wright's Dairy Rite**, which has been around since the 1950s. Order by speaker from your car or table; they're famous for their malts and homemade onion rings (346 Greenville Avenue, [540] 886-0435).

**LEARN MORE** [www.visitstaunton.com](http://www.visitstaunton.com)

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