

# Ava Gardner Festival: The final “Toast to Ava” Centennial Event

*This year's Ava Gardner Festival, scheduled for October 6-8 in Smithfield, NC concludes her museum's year-long Centennial Celebration festivities.*

SMITHFIELD, NORTH CAROLINA, USA, September 1, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Ava Gardner Museum](#) has hosted a year-long Centennial Celebration in honor of the legendary actress, fashion icon, and humanitarian Ava Gardner, a North Carolina native who grew up just 7-miles east of Smithfield. This year's [Ava Gardner Festival](#), scheduled for October 6-8, concludes the year-long festivities.

New exhibits will open featuring loans of Ava's movie costumes, and two newly recreated iconic gowns from Show Boat. World-renowned costumier James Kelly is traveling from London, England to Smithfield, NC to share more about his designs with festival attendees. The weekend will kick-off with an evening “Toast to Ava” reception at the Ava Gardner Museum, which Kelly will attend. In addition, the Town of Smithfield and the museum are hosting a free film screening of Show Boat at the newly renovated Neuse River Amphitheater.

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The whole weekend will be filled with special guests and tributes to Ava as our Centennial program comes to an end. Stay tuned to our website for all the latest updates about this year's festival.”

*Lynell Seabold*



Ava Gardner sings in the movie, Show Boat (1951), which MGM executives would later dub with singer Annette Warren.

“The opening night film screening of Show Boat, down by the Neuse River, seems a natural fit for a film about a riverboat”, stated Lynell Seabold, Museum Director, “we are excited to offer this special event for all that want to come to Downtown Smithfield.”

On Saturday the museum welcomes Victoria Price,

daughter of Vincent Price, the acclaimed horror film actor and Ava's costar in *The Bribe*. Victoria will give a special presentation about her father's career and relationship with Ava. Victoria will hold a book signing event and will introduce a screening of *The Bribe* at Smithfield Cinemas at 7:30pm.

Also on Saturday, festival goers can enjoy the popular Heritage Tours, a one-hour guided trip through Ava's hometown. Participants travel to the Grabtown and Brogden communities where Ava was born and raised. The tour concludes with a visit to Ava's final resting place in Sunset Memorial Park. Heritage Tours are scheduled for 9:30am, 11:30am and 1:30pm, [tickets](#) are available for tours online and often sell out. Purchasing advance tickets is encouraged.

"The whole weekend will be filled with special guests and tributes to Ava as our Centennial program comes to an end. Stay tuned to our social media and website for all the latest updates about this year's festival", continued Seabold. On Sunday, both films *The Bribe* (1:30pm) and *Show Boat* (4pm) will screen again at Smithfield Cinemas.

Additional events will run concurrently in Historic Downtown Smithfield including 15% off for museum guests at The Gilded Pear & Brew House, a street festival on S. Third St., several local retail shops offering Ava-themed unique gifts for sale, and the historic Howell Theater will show *The Great Sinner* on Sunday night at 7pm.



World-renowned costumier, James Kelly, will collaborate with the Ava Gardner Museum for the "Show Boat Costumes Exhibit", debuting at this year's Ava Gardner Festival.



An image of the Ava Gardner Museum at night in Downtown Smithfield, NC.

The Ava Gardner Museum is located in Downtown Smithfield, at 325 E. Market Street, convenient to hotels offering special rates for the weekend. For more information call 919-934-5830 or email [avainfo@avagardner.org](mailto:avainfo@avagardner.org) and to purchase advance tickets, visit [www.avagardnerfestival.com](http://www.avagardnerfestival.com).

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