



Conclave 2025 | Branson MO

NEWSLETTER #5

The Biltmore House and Asheville, NC

On Day 5 of our Tour we will be transiting to Asheville, NC for a two-night stay. After a morning drive, we will arrive at **The Biltmore House**, arguably the most famous residence in the United States, and fondly called America's House by many. My alter ego at Chat GPT describes it thusly:

The Biltmore House, located in Asheville, North Carolina, is a stunning estate built by George Washington Vanderbilt II between 1889 and 1895. Vanderbilt, a member of the wealthy Vanderbilt family, envisioned a grand country retreat, inspired by European chateaux. He hired architect Richard Morris Hunt to design the mansion, which became the largest privately owned home in the United States, spanning 175,000 square feet with 250 rooms, including 35 bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, and 65 fireplaces.

The surrounding grounds were designed by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, the creator of Central Park in New York City. Olmsted's vision transformed the estate into a lush and diverse landscape, featuring formal gardens, forested land, and farmland.

Biltmore House opened to family and friends on Christmas Eve in 1895. After Vanderbilt's death in 1914, his widow Edith and their daughter Cornelia maintained the estate. In 1930, during the Great Depression, Cornelia and her husband, John Cecil, opened the house to the public to stimulate tourism and provide jobs for locals. The family still owns and operates the estate, which now includes a winery, gardens, and various outdoor activities.

Today, Biltmore remains a testament to the Gilded Age's grandeur and a major attraction, drawing millions of visitors annually.



The Biltmore House

After an included lunch at the **Stable Café**, featuring rotisserie chicken and turkey, southern barbecue, creative salads and house-made charcuterie, we will take a self-guided tour of the mansion, with audio guides provided.

Following the tour, it's a short ten-minute drive to our home for the next two nights, **The Restoration** in downtown Asheville. The compact central core is home to unique shops and boutiques, historical buildings, several breweries and an arts district. Plenty to see and do for the balance of the evening and into tomorrow all within easy walking distance.



Downtown Asheville

Speaking of tomorrow, one option is a two-hour drive on a road known as **The Rattler**, one of the top six driving roads in the Southeast. You can make a morning circuit and still make it back in time for lunch and some more touring.



Our hotel, **The Restoration**, has several options, including the Exchange Restaurant and Bar, The Observatory on the roof, and in the basement, the Draftsman Lounge and Arcade.



The Restoration, Asheville



More information on Asheville attractions: <https://www.exploreasheville.com/>