

# Our Own Willy Wonka: A Chocolate Factory in Raleigh?

Christa Riley, Staff Writer



image via www.thesplintergroup.net

Imagine walking in downtown Raleigh with your friends, peeking into shops to see what they have for sale when you suddenly notice that the shop owners are making their own chocolate. Sam Ratto, who co-owns Videri with his wife Starr Sink, says that there was “magic” the first time he started working with the delectable dessert. Videri had its grand opening on January 13th, 2012, and Raleigh citizens were elated. This elegant shop with gold lettering over the front door is located in front of The Pit, on W. Davie Street. This new business is sure to be good news to Raleigh and will likely bring in a lot of revenue.

Videri allows anyone to come in and tour the chocolate factory with an employee that will explain the process of “bean to bar.” All of the beans that Videri uses are fair trade, which means that better trading conditions are used. The beans come from places such as Venezuela and Peru because chocolate beans can grow only 20 miles North or South of the Equator. A lot of hard work goes into preparing the chocolate. The employees at Videri sort and inspect each individual bean by hand. The beans then go to the roaster and through a few other machines until they are put in the

refrigerator to harden for two to three months. Next the chocolate is tempered, then hand wrapped by the employees. The only things added in with the beans to make the chocolate are pure, organic cane sugar, cocoa butter, and milk powder.

Meredith students are psyched to know that they will be able to visit a chocolate factory so close to home. Junior Donna Williamson is eager to see what this store has to offer. After hearing about it she said, “It sounds great. I love anything involving chocolate!” Freshman Felicia King has already visited Videri and gives high praise to the taste of the chocolate. It is a nice addition to the Raleigh area and is conveniently located only five miles away from Meredith.

Ratto and Sink made it clear that they would love for Meredith students to come see the shop and try some of their chocolate. Before buying it customers can sample the different flavors, which include: milk, peppermint, sea salt, peppercorn and dark chocolate. Videri is open Wednesday-Sunday from 11 AM to 7 PM and other times if you make an appointment. The owners are enthusiastic to about sharing information about Videri with inquiring customers.

# Rembrandt Brings Visitors to Raleigh

Julia Dent, Staff Writer

On the last weekend of the Rembrandt in America exhibit at the North Carolina Museum of Art, the parking lot was overflowing with cars bearing license plates from states such as Illinois, Massachusetts, and Florida. With a total of forty-one countries, all fifty states, and all one hundred North Carolina counties represented, the Rembrandt in America exhibit was quite a hit, reaching a total of more than 150,000 visitors on its extended last day in town. Although its numbers did not beat the numbers from the Monet exhibit five years ago, the Rembrandt in America exhibit now holds the record for the highest number of people visiting in a single day—7,121 people on January 21.

This exhibit featured the largest collection of authentic Rembrandt paintings ever shown in the United States with more than thirty signed paintings. Most of the legendary Dutch artist's pieces are on loan from either private collectors or American art museums, including the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The exhibit will be moving to the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts later in the year.

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The North Carolina Museum of Art divided the exhibit into separate sections to feature the contrast between Rembrandt's younger days

and later years as well as his mythological and religious paintings. One section, called Rembrandt or Not Rembrandt, showed paintings done both by Rembrandt and his followers. This section challenged and questioned the authenticity of these particular works, claiming that Rembrandt may not have painted these works himself.

Rembrandt's style drew visitor's attention because of its uniqueness. Although Rembrandt changed his painting technique over the years from a very detailed style to a more impressionistic style, all of his paintings have the same dark, somber feeling that was popular during his time period. The exhibit featured the only two full body portraits that Rembrandt ever painted.

So why was this exhibit so popular that it attracted visitors from all over the world? “I think it was the name recognition that comes with Rembrandt,” said Natalie Braswell, the museum's public relations specialist, “He was the Old Dutch master and set a golden standard for everyone to follow.”

The museum got very good feedback from its visitors. “The exhibit was nice and very educational,” said Angie Holloway, who travelled from Fayetteville for the last day. “It was a once in a lifetime event. I'll definitely be back for future exhibits.” Although there were a few complaints about the crowds, the noise level was never a problem. “Everyone was so quiet and reverent, even with six hundred people with children in the room,” Braswell stated. “I think people really got involved with the art.”

With the surprising success from the Rembrandt exhibit, the museum has high hopes for the future. The next exhibit to come will be that of contemporary African artist El Anatsvi, who not only paints but also sculpts and makes tapestries with eclectic materials such as bottle caps. “It will be a total 180 from the Rembrandt exhibit,” Braswell said excitedly. This will be an experience art lovers will not want to miss.

## What's Up In Raleigh: 2/1-14

Collected by Ashleigh Phillips

1 - 5: Green Day's American Idiot @ Memorial Auditorium

2 - 14: Man of La Mancha @ Burning Coal Theater

10 - 11: NC Symphony Presents Firebird @ Meymandi Concert Hall

3: WKNC's Double Barrel Benefit featuring Organos @ Pourhouse

UNC Clef Hangers @ Meymandi Concert Hall

4: The Vagina Monologues @ Lincoln Theater

Chairmen of the Board @ Lincoln Theater

WKNC's Double Barrel Benefit featuring Kingsbury Manx @ Pourhouse

10: The Old Ceremony @ Pourhouse

11: Valentine's Rave of Hearts @ Berkeley Cafe

American Aquarium @ Pourhouse

14: Les Miserables @ Memorial Auditorium