

Behind The NASCAR Scene: Shops, Museums and More

Concentrated near Charlotte, top NASCAR teams have built sprawling facilities used to maintain the fleets of race cars they use to chase not only wins, but championships. Their proximity to one another allows you to hop from one shop to the next to get a behind-the-scenes look at the sport any time of the year.

3-day itinerary

Day 1

NASCAR racing's tradition and history are built on two names: Petty and Earnhardt. Visit their museums and learn more about the men who drove the sport from small dirt tracks to superspeedways.

Day 2

Visit several of the shops where you can watch mechanics turn wrenches on race cars and then pick up a souvenir or two. Finish the day with some shopping and dinner at a racing-themed restaurant in the shadows of Lowe's Motor Speedway.

Day 3

Visit the sport's two biggest shops and their museums. After, climb aboard a van for a tour of the home track of NASCAR teams.



There are many NASCAR team shops in the greater Charlotte area. This itinerary gives you a chance to visit some of the bigger teams with added bonuses along the way. Customize the itinerary by incorporating specific tour information from your favorite driver's Web site.

Day One

Begin with a walk down memory lane at the **Richard Petty Museum** in Randleman where you can view items from The King's career. Included in the collection are race cars, trophies, mementos and a special showcase dedicated to his 200th career win, which came at Daytona in July 1984.

Heading west from Randleman will bring you to Welcome, home of **Richard Childress Racing**. Here is where the cars Dale Earnhardt drove to achieve so much of his success were prepared. Take your time viewing the almost two dozen Earnhardt race cars that are on display and Childress's museum dedicated to enjoying and conserving the outdoors. The **RCR Fan Walk** allows you to view the daily activities of the current RCR teams as they prepare cars for drivers Jeff Burton, Clint Bowyer, Kevin Harvick and Casey Mears.

After a short drive, finish your evening with dinner at **Sushi at the Lake** in Cornelius or at **Red Rocks Cafe** at Birkdale Village in Huntersville. Both places are favorites in racing circles and offer you great opportunities to spot drivers or crew members.

Day Two

Start your day at **Joe Gibbs Racing** in Huntersville. Viewing areas are offered for all three of the team's cars - Joey Logano's No. 20, Kyle Busch's No. 18 and Denny Hamlin's No. 11. Take some extra time in the **Joe Gibbs Racing Store**, which was named by *The Charlotte Observer* as one of the best in NASCAR.

Next, hop in your car and head up I-77 to Mooresville and **Penske Racing**. Here you will be able to view three Sprint Cup teams from both the ground level and a second-floor walk that runs the length of the shop. Penske's IndyCar teams are also based here, but your access to these teams is limited.

Leaving through downtown Mooresville, N.C. 3 will take you to **Dale Earnhardt Incorporated's** original facility. Showroom displays include Michael Waltrip's Daytona 500 winning cars and stories from Earnhardt's life. Find out what The Intimidator gave his employees for Christmas and some of his superstitions.

Finish your afternoon at **Concord Mills** for some shopping at its more than 200 stores. The mall is also home to **NASCAR SpeedPark**, where you can race go-carts, ride racing-themed rides or purchase NASCAR-licensed merchandise and apparel.

End your day at **Quaker Steak and Lube**, a motor sports-themed restaurant just down the road from the mall. The restaurant is known for its chicken wings that come in all degrees of hotness.

Day Three

Roush Fenway Racing will be your first stop of the day. The facility is home to NASCAR Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Truck Series teams. If the shops are quiet, spend your time in the team's museum. You can watch video clips of the teams in action in the theater and look at winning cars just as they were in victory lane.

Head across I-85 and past **Lowe's Motor Speedway** to find **Hendrick Motorsports**. Park your car at the team's museum. Take your time here. Televisions throughout the museum play videos of Hendrick's drivers sharing stories from their careers. Two displays give you good explanations of the working parts of the cars and engines. Race cars on exhibit will take you from the team's one-car beginnings to its current four-car dynasty. When you're done, take a short walk up the hill to the shops and peer through huge windows at cars being prepared for Mark Martin, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jeff Gordon and three-time and current Sprint Cup Champion Jimmie Johnson.

After spending the last two days looking at parked race cars, finish the day with a tour of **Lowe's Motor Speedway**. Step aboard a van for a ride around the track, through the garage area and down pit road. Be sure to get a picture of yourself when the tour stops in victory lane.

If you are so inclined, head south to Charlotte and finish the evening at Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s popular establishment at the EpiCenter in Uptown, **Whiskey River Bar**. Nightly entertainment includes live music.

Where to eat:

Sushi at the Lake (Cornelius) - dinner

Red Rocks Café (Huntersville) - lunch, dinner

Quaker Steak and Lube (Concord) - lunch, dinner

For more information:

Cabarrus County

www.visitcabarrus.com

12/08