

The
Week
Ender

Newport



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News from...



NJF

500,000

unique monthly
visitors

Why we love Newport

- It's not your grandmother's Newport (or your rich uncle's).
- A fresh entrepreneurial spirit, from food to hotels to shopping.
- Water, water everywhere.

When you think of Newport, Rhode Island, you usually think of Gilded Age mansions and million-dollar yachts. But there's a new Newport emerging, one that's a lot less fancy, with cool boutique hotels, an ever-evolving food scene, style-forward shops, and a welcoming vibe. It was exactly this Newport that attracted automotive superstar Donald Osborne. A classic car expert who has appeared on Jay Leno's Garage, Donald left Palm Springs last year and moved to Newport to run the [Audrain Automobile Museum](#). He has never looked back.

"When I first visited Newport 35 years ago, people either came here to sail, to hang out in the bars on Thames Street, or to see the mansions — but you never crossed from one side of town to the other," says Donald. "And that's the difference in Newport today. The city is really unified. It's not at all a stuffy, old-time, old-money kind of place."



Donald Osborne (L), Paula Silva (R)

This is also what inspired Paula Silva to create [Rhode Island Red Food Tours](#), which takes travelers on eating trips to discover the city's surprisingly diverse culinary landscape. "We're not going to the fancy, buttoned-up seafood restaurants of old Newport," says Paula. "We're going to small, locally owned places that have different kinds of food — Guatemalan, Mexican, Jamaican, fusion — and a unique American story."

If you know The WeekENDER, then you know that this is the kind of story we love. So join us as we discover all the joys of the new Newport.

[-Laura Begley Bloom](#), New York's Senior WeekENDER Writer

Editor's Note: Your safety is our primary concern. We encourage you only to travel when it's safe to do so. While we've vetted businesses featured here to ensure they are adhering to the state's current COVID requirements, the situation is fluid. If you're not comfortable traveling, save this guide for a later date, as all these activities will be just as amazing in the future as they are today.

For more info on travel within Rhode Island, visit the state's official [COVID-19 information page](#).

Map of the area



1. Blithewold Mansion
2. Rail Explorers
3. Newport Craft Brewing & Distillery
4. The Wayfinder Hotel
5. Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina
6. Belle's Cafe
7. Pour Judgement
8. Fort Adams State Park
9. Audrain Automobile Museum
10. Brenton Point State Park
11. Ocean Drive

Where to stay



The Wayfinder Hotel

A flurry of recent hotel openings has ignited the Newport hotel scene, but there are also some classics that never go out of style. These are the top spots on our list.

For Instagrammers: [The Wayfinder Hotel](#) - Expect a funky motel-style exterior, a postcard-perfect pool, and a range of excursions that highlight local traditions like oyster foraging and sailing trips complete with a New England lobster bake.

For foodies: [Hammetts Hotel](#) - This newly built 84-room boutique hotel has stunning views of the harbor and the marina, plus a serious culinary program.

For eco-chic travelers: [Forty 1° North](#) - At the first LEED-certified hotel in Rhode Island, the rooms, suites, lofts, and cottages are outfitted with state-of-the-art technology and environmentally-friendly amenities.



The Brenton Hotel (L), Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina (R)

For adventurers: [The Brenton Hotel](#) - Smack on the waterfront, this new 57-room hotel has a "Pick your Pastime" package that encourages guests to experience some of what Newport is known for: polo, tennis, boating, and more.

For water lovers: [Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina](#) - Hidden away on a small isle in Narragansett Bay, Gurney's has water views in every direction. Don't miss the weekend "docktails," the bayside cabanas, and the free water shuttle to Fort Adams, home to Newport Jazz and other festivals.

For history buffs: [Hotel Viking](#) - One of the oldest hotels in Newport, this landmark Bellevue Avenue property just got a top-to-bottom overhaul. Check out the panoramic views from the rooftop bar.

For a cheap(ish) sleep: [The Outlook Inn](#) - This peaceful 11-room B&B in Newport's historic district has a noteworthy breakfast and an innkeeper who will make you feel right at home.

Where to eat & drink



Belle's Cafe

Over the past few years, Newport's food scene has exploded, with a range of cuisines that crisscross the globe and plum the depths of the surrounding ocean. Here are the addresses to know.

Breakfast

Belle's Cafe - This open-air dining spot hidden away in a working shipyard is the place to experience the real Newport, with its mix of boat workers and yacht owners. The signature Slammin' Shipyard Sandwich is a heavenly egg-and-cheese creation.

Caleb & Broad - Local art, chill vibes, and an excellent weekend brunch. The Broadway Bloody is the restaurant's spin on a Bloody Mary: It's loaded with blue cheese, olives, and candied pork belly, and finished off with a dry rub rim.

Nitro Cart - An entrepreneurial local couple started what they call the "Nitro Cartel" — nitro cold brew coffee carts. Check out their bricks-and-mortar space on Pond Avenue, which also serves light bites.

Lunchtime



Mission (L), Drift Cafe (R)

Knot Norms Catering Co. - A local catering group opened a neighborhood waterfront restaurant that has quickly become a cult favorite for its killer lobster rolls.

Mission - This casual lunch joint is from the team behind the acclaimed Thames Street Kitchen. The organic burgers and house-cased dogs are irresistible.

Drift Cafe - Want to keep it healthy? Drift is the local bowl expert. Choose from savory lunch blends or fruit-forward acai versions.

Global flavors



La Vecina Taqueria

Leo's Food Market - Hidden away in the back of a Latin American food market is a small restaurant known for its *carne adobada*, grilled pork carnitas served in a red chili sauce with vinegar and oregano.

Humming Bird - A Jamaican couple serves up family recipes ranging from jerk chicken to a vegan red bean stew that people buy by the quart.

Boru Noodle Bar - This isn't the 99 cent ramen you ate in college. We're mildly obsessed with the Tokyo Tater Tots, topped with soy mayo, *furikake*, and sriracha.

La Vecina Taqueria - After debuting as a pop-up ghost kitchen this winter, La Vecina has moved into a permanent home in historic Washington Square, serving authentic Mexican street tacos, margies, and more.

Date night



Nomi Park (L), TSK (R)

Nomi Park - This new restaurant in the Wayfinder Hotel has serious Brooklyn vibes and is helmed by James Colleran, who was named Rhode Island's chef of the year in 2019.

Giusto - Chef-owner Kevin O'Donnell calls his menu "freestyle Italian," which is just another way of saying "delicious." You'll devour creative dishes like the Ricotta Frittelle, a twist on arancini (fried risotto balls) topped with honey, truffle, and parm.

TSK - The new version of Newport's groundbreaking Thames Street Kitchen spotlights seasonal local ingredients. And while its predecessor used to be BYOB, now you'll find a creative cocktail program.

Drinks



Newport Craft Brewing & Distilling Company

Pour Judgement - This proudly divey dive bar is frequented by laid-back locals and well-heeled summer folks. Look for live bands and a surprisingly sophisticated food menu to wash down the drinks.

Newport Craft Brewing & Distilling Company - Back in the 18th century, Newport was a rum capital. This distillery taps into that heritage, producing a range of spirits (from gin to rum) and craft brews. Have a tasting and play lawn games in the outdoor pavilion.

What to do



A view from Ocean Drive

Outdoors

Want to take in the fresh ocean air? Here's where the locals go in and around Newport.

Best drive: [Ocean Drive](#) - Audrain Automobile Museum's Donald Osborne can't get enough of the 10-mile drive that hugs the southern coast. "Once a week, I make a point of driving along this road because it reminds me of what an extraordinary place this is," says Donald.

Best picnic: [Fort Adams State Park](#) - Newport Stylephile blogger Andrea McHugh recommends the historic fortification for a waterfront picnic. Get your provisions at the aptly named [Picnic](#), a takeaway spot at the Hotel Viking. Or go all out: [Stoneacre Garden](#) can cater an elevated picnic experience. "It's your Instagram dream, with low tables, fluffy pillows, and awesome food," says Andrea.



Fort Adams State Park (L), Rail Explorers (R)

Fly a kite: [Brenton Point State Park](#) - Catch the breezes at this spectacular oceanfront spot. "It's the best place to fly a kite," says Andrea McHugh.

Secret beach: [Reject's Beach](#) - The cleverly-named beach is located on a strip of shoreline next to the exclusive Bailey's Beach. There's no parking, but it's free to the public and accessible via a footpath.

Next-level biking: [Rail Explorers](#) - Founder Mary Joy Lu created this innovative experience after seeing a strange rail-biking contraption in a Korean soap opera. It's hard to describe, but you're basically pedaling down an old railroad track (safely).

Arts & culture



Audrain Automobile Museum

It's no secret that Newport is known for grand mansions that the former inhabitants referred to as "cottages." Want to avoid the crowds? Here are some of the lesser-known things to do in the area.

[Audrain Automobile Museum](#) - On Bellevue Avenue, you'll find 7,500 square feet of gallery space devoted to the history of cars. The museum also hosts regular events like "Cars & Coffee," where auto enthusiasts come to share their passions. Want to drive a classic car around Newport? The museum's Membership Club has a fleet for members to borrow.

Blithewold Mansion - This turn-of-the century mansion set on 33 acres with gorgeous gardens is worth the detour to nearby Bristol.

Mount Hope Farm - Another highlight that makes Bristol worth a visit: this national historic site where you can explore trails that go down to the water.

Coggeshall Farm Museum - Kids will love this coastal farm in Bristol, which is Newport's version of Colonial Williamsburg, featuring interpreters and reenactments of farm life in the 18th century.

Events



Newport Folk Festival (L), Newport Jazz Festival (R)

Newport is known for its epic events, which are back this season. A few not to miss:

Newport Flower Show (June 18-20): “Back in Bloom: A Ballroom Floral Fantasy” is a self-guided tour of flower exhibits and garden vignettes at Rosecliff Mansion.

Bristol's Fourth of July Parade (July 5) - The longest running Independence Day parade in the country dates back to 1785 and will be taking place this year on Monday the 5th.

Newport Folk Festival (July 23-25 and July 26-28): Newport Folk is doing things a little differently this year with a pair of three-day events highlighting music, storytelling, and more.

Newport Jazz Festival (July 30-August 1): This year, the city's legendary Jazz Festival will present three days of performances and surprise collaborations at Fort Adams.

Shopping



Wald & Sea

Newport's shopping scene is getting a boost from a host of local entrepreneurs. We got Andrea McHugh, founder of the blog [Newport Stylephile](#), to share her favorite places.

[Wald & Sea](#) - Beautify your home at this chic design shop. "It's California meets New England style — all in aesthetically pleasing whites and neutrals," says Andrea.

[Charter Books](#) - The place to get a standout beach read. "It's a cool new independent bookstore in a beautifully renovated space that kept the building's architectural integrity," says Andrea.

[Harper & Tucker](#) - Cutting-edge clothing. "People think of Bellevue as Rodeo Drive, but this shop is run by two women who are making a youthful splash," says Andrea.

[Bohemian Bias](#) - Cool fashion trends, accessories, candles, and more. "It's like Anthropologie before it went mainstream," says Andrea. "Next door, they have Baby Bias, the cutest shop for kids."

[Newport Wine Cellar](#) - "A boutique wine shop with small production bottles and a mural on the outside of the building from talented local artist Chris Wylie," says Andrea.

Getting there

With the traffic on I-95, it's hard to say how long it will take to drive to Newport. But you should budget [at least three-and-a-half hours](#) from Midtown Manhattan. Want to get there faster? [Tradewinds Aviation](#) now offers 40-minute flights from the Westchester airport. Another summer travel hack: Take Amtrak to Providence, then hop on the [Seastreak Ferry](#) to Newport.

Pit stop

Break up the journey by stopping for a bite at New Haven's [waterfront food trucks](#), just off I-95 at exit 46. (And come back in two weeks, when The WeekENDER will tell you about more things to do in New Haven County.)

Listen

[Best of the Newport Jazz Festival](#) - A collection of tunes from the summer music festival that has been showcasing jazz greats since 1954.

Weekend plans. Shared.

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