

Delaware beach town is a blessing

Rehoboth turns peace, good times into a winner

Rehoboth Beach is a slice of heaven tucked away off Route 1. It's a small town blessed with a Norman Rockwell appeal.

Trees line the streets. Serenity fills the air. The locals welcome you into their tiny village and leave a lasting impression.

Few things are more relaxing than a morning walk in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. It often begins on the boardwalk and meanders through a series of streets comprised of beautiful homes, stunning landscaping and cordial visitors. Dogs walk in step with their owners. They stop to say hello.

Cross a small bridge over a calm, pristine lake. Mansions surround the waterway. They sit like castles and add to the ambiance. It makes you wonder how beautiful this setting must be during the holidays.

Rehoboth Beach warms your heart and raises your spirits. The sun awakens from the horizon of the Atlantic. Puffy clouds dot blue skies. Your day begins with a smile and ends the same way. It's fulfilling and deserved. Rehoboth meets any challenge travelers might offer.

It's teeming with mom-and-pops that only enhance its reputation as a family destination. Have breakfast at a cozy diner; lunch at a legendary



SERENITY NOW – Mansions sit around a calm lake in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. *Image: Frank Verdecchia. AAA.*

greasy spoon; and dinner at an intimate restaurant.

Hundreds of locally owned businesses take up residence throughout town. Bars and eateries have eclectic themes and menus, satisfying the tastes of all who visit. Shops sell unique jewelry, clothing and other items. Motels snugly fit among their peers. They're small and comfy. Some have patios that rise above Rehoboth Avenue. People-

watching doesn't get much better.

The gem among eateries, meanwhile, is a scruffy diamond. It opened in 1956. Owners rebuilt it following a storm six years later. It's doubtful it's been updated since.

This is Gus & Gus Place – the iconic joint on the corner of boardwalk and Wilmington Avenue. Burgers, hot dogs, sausages, eggs and other sandwich meats sizzle on a worn grill

engulfed in flavors engraved by past ingredients. Delectable aromas envelop the area for blocks. Lines form early and don't end until the final order is taken.

The star of this show is the cook – also known as the GOAT. He hovers over a full grill and works it the way Michael Jordan worked helpless defenders. How he never botches an order is amazing.

He's an interesting character among Rehoboth's fairytale setting. It's a lengthy cast meant to engrain special memories and make sure you return.

Conversations spark at watering holes. The grapefruit crush ranks atop Rehoboth's list of signature cocktails.

Obie's By the Sea plunges the fruit in front you. The establishment highlights the northern end of the boardwalk. The scent of saltwater wafts from the ocean and tickles your nostrils. It doesn't get much better.

Grotto Pizza can be found throughout Rehoboth, including the boardwalk. Order a slice or a whole pie. You won't be dissatisfied, either way.

Enjoy a bucket of fries. Have an ice cream cone. Or just find a seat and people-watch.

And don't forget about the beach – miles of wonderful sand. Take up residence under an umbrella, grab a book and allow your concerns to wash away.

This isn't a dream. It's Rehoboth.

Popularity of EVs growing in number of areas

AAA finds travelers are renting them on vacation for test drives

Consumer interest in electric vehicles has skyrocketed during the past decade. EV purchases totaled 96,000 in 2013 and are expected to reach 1 million by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, travelers are beginning to take notice and some are "taking one for a spin" while on vacation, thanks to them being available as rental cars. AAA's rental-car partner, Hertz, has been investing heavily in EVs for its fleet with purchases from Tesla, Polestar and GM.

The company has tens of thousands of EVs for rent at more than 1,600 locations in 44 states. Hertz is focusing on providing nearly 2 million EV rentals by the end of this year – about five times the number of EV rentals it had in 2022.

Record-breaking fuel prices have inspired consumers to purchase EVs. Sales increased by more than 65% from 2021 to 2022. Drivers regularly say cost, range anxiety and availability of charging stations are among their prime concerns as to why they are skeptical to purchase an EV.

A recent survey by Verra Mobility found that 78% of Americans would consider renting an EV to become more familiar with the car before making a purchase.

A AAA survey from 2020 found that



PLUG IT IN – Hertz plans to have 2 million electric vehicles available to customers by the end of this year. *Image: AAA.*

driving an EV alleviated concerns and of the those surveyed, 77% said they were less or no longer concerned about range after buying an EV; and 96% said they would buy or lease another EV the next time they were in the market for a new car.

Many of those who remain uncertain or are considering buying an EV have been renting them to "kick the tires." It may be test-driving one for the

weekend in town or planning ahead and requesting one for a trip.

What first-time EV drivers should consider:

Understand the driving range – The rental-car agent should explain to you how far you can expect to go on a full charge and how that changes depending on how many passengers you have and how much luggage and gear you are packing. It's important for drivers to

pay close attention to the charge they have and to know how far they need to travel to recharge the vehicle.

Finding and booking a charging spot

– Charging an EV is different than filling up a traditional vehicle. Researching charging locations and how to pay to charge a vehicle are important steps before renting an EV. Some states and regions have more charging opportunities than others.

Road trips take more planning

– Planning is essential if you are renting an EV for a road trip at your destination. Charging stations normally are along the busiest routes. There are fewer charging options in rural areas. Make sure there are ample charging stations available if you are traveling to a remote location.

Understand the technology – EVs are different from internal-combustion engines. The gauges will look different and the onboard electronics may seem unfamiliar to anyone who is new to EVs. Most EVs also come with advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) like lane-departure warnings, blind-spot warnings, automatic-emergency braking and adaptive-cruise control. Acceleration and braking also are different. Knowing what the car can and cannot do are important before hitting the road.