

As surfboard shapers and crafters realized the surf industry's potential for a huge economic market along the Jersey coast, many took the chance in setting up shop along the Atlantic Ocean. Rosenblatt explained, "People started realizing that there is, indeed, surf here in New Jersey, but we still weren't considered a destination worthy of visiting because waves are pretty non-existent during the warm summer months." The improvement of wetsuit technology, combined with the arrival of social media and digital photography, led to another shift in the perception of Jersey as a legitimate surfing spot as more people were exposed to the reality of Jersey's awesome breaks.

Swells wane and wax with the tides and the weather and have been known to frustrate Jersey Shore surfers by remaining glassy and flat, sometimes for weeks at a time. But after an offshore storm system such as a hurricane or a nor'easter churns or approaches, locals and out-of-towners alike flood well-known breaks such as Jenkinson's in Point Pleasant Beach, 10th Avenue in Belmar, Casino Pier in Seaside Heights, J Street in Seaside Park, or the Manasquan Inlet Surfing Beach. Fall and winter storms along the Jersey Shore create waves like

Sam Hammer getting air at Jenkinson's in Point Pleasant Beach.



Ray Hallgreen

nowhere else in the country so much so that eleven-time world surfing champion Kelly Slater was spotted surfing in Monmouth County with fellow professional surfer and Lavallette native Sam Hammer in the Halloween storm of 2017.

As a result, both novice and experienced surfers must appreciate the ocean and take precautions against rip tides while learning how to properly withstand dangerous currents and tidal surges. However, it's that "Jersey Attitude" that makes Jersey surfers stand out in a positive manner.

Jersey surfers possess a certain urgency when entering the water that differs from surfers in other areas of the country, especially the West

coast. "Jersey surfers know the window of rideable waves can be short. A shift in the wind can mean waves quickly disappear or suddenly kick up in the middle of the afternoon. That lack of consistency fuels the awareness that the waves might not be here tomorrow, so no matter what, Jersey surfers will get up bright and early to catch those waves today," Rosenblatt explained. "That attitude, combined with the incredible surfing abilities found riding the Jersey Shore breaks, led to the world respecting our stage."

New Jersey has set the bar for cultivating, honoring, and preserving all things surf through two separate yet linked initiatives: the New Jersey Surf Museum and the New Jersey Surfing Hall of Fame (NJSHOF). In fact, New Jersey has the exclusive distinction of currently being the only state on the Eastern seaboard with both a museum and a hall of fame dedicated solely to surfing and to honoring its own.

The New Jersey Surf Museum

In 2010, Long Beach Island native Jon Coen pitched an idea to Tuckerton Seaport about an exhibit dedicated to surfing. Coen, a well-known area surf writer, photographer, and content creator knew from his vast portfolio of work centered around surfing that such an exhibit would be well-received. With support from the Seaport and a host of like-minded supporters, that surfing exhibit swelled into what is today known as the New Jersey



A quilt made from surf t-shirts at the New Jersey Surf Museum.

Jill Ocone