



Poster for Vacationland



Meet Beth, aka Betty! Not only is she a fellow Betty but in her free time she scours her home country (all 50 states) for all things vintage and retro to share with her readers on, what is fast becoming, our favourite website. Always dreamed of taking a roadtrip across America, then let Betty from Retro Roadmaps show you a few places to stop along the way....

We love Retro Roadmaps so much that some of the Betty team have booked a trip there in September, now that's inspiration for you. When did you set up Retro Roadmap and why?

Though I've been visiting and taking photos of "vintage, retro and cool old places" for years, I officially started Retro Roadmap in May of 2009. It all came together when we had to travel to a friend's wedding in a neighboring state. I wanted to make it a fun road trip, and not just a drive down the highway and eating at chain restaurants. I quickly discovered that I had to research many different websites for information on diners, old downtowns, vintage shops, classic roadside restaurants that all had that cool vintage vibe. There wasn't one main website that I could go to and read about all the fun vintage places to visit in an area. I also realised that not everyone would go through what I did to scout out unique places like this. So I decided to create RetroRoadmap.com as the destination website for all the cool old retro and vintage places worth visiting - to make it easy for folks to find unique spots that turn any regular drive into a Retro Road Trip!

What has been your favourite discovery so far?

There have been so many "Oh-Boy!" moments - that's the best part about doing "research" for Retro Roadmap and the thrill of a discovery. One place that sticks out in my mind is my discovery of The Roxy Theatre in Northampton Pennsylvania. I had no idea it existed, and just happened to take a detour into the little downtown where it is located. Driving down the road and seeing the fabulous vintage neon sign and marquee was like stepping back in time, and discovering a lost treasure on an archeological dig! I called my husband, told him I wouldn't be home for a few hours, and waited so I could see the neon sign lit up, and it was well worth it. I shared my excitement with a dapper gentleman working the door at the theatre and he ended up being the owner, inviting me to take a tour of the place. It was a magical discovery for sure.

Do you have a favourite place to visit or somewhere you love to go back to?

I am originally from Massachusetts, and I do like travelling home to New England and seeing the cool old places that are still around. We've got some great vintage diners and I love seafood, so anyplace on the coast - from Maine to Cape Cod is fine with me! I love playing miniature golf, discovering a drive-in movie theatre to visit and sampling regional food, visiting thrift shops and getting the feel for how a place really is - anyplace with back roads to drive on and small towns to explore is fine with me!

Where have you not visited yet and can't wait to explore?

It may sound like a cliché, but I'd still love to "get my kicks on Route 66". Not only for the historic road itself but because it goes through so many states not yet on the RetroRoadmap! It's a goal of mine to have all 50 US States represented on the RetroRoadmap - and foreign countries too!

Have you got any advice for our readers who want to set out on a road trip of their own?

My advice is just do it! You can have a pre-planned route with stops or go on "an adventure" or you can just point your car in a general direction and hope for the best, either way is fun. Wherever you go, if you look close enough you'll (hopefully) find some cool old places to visit. Maps are handy - I love old paper maps but I admit that the map app on my iPhone is incredibly useful to gauge distances and alternate routes. With the right mindset you can have an adventurous road trip and not even be an hour from your own home - it's all about taking time to discover the places you may have normally passed by. It can be fun to be a tourist - even if you've lived someplace all your life!

What is the best part about Retro Road map?

While I do love the "thrill of the hunt" and discovering new old places, I think the best part about Retro Roadmap is that hopefully I'm helping these cool old businesses stick around for a while longer. I figure if I make it easy for folks to find these places - and learn a little bit about them through my photos and words, and realise they're worth stopping at, that they'll try them out.



If that happens then these folks are spending their money at these businesses, which keeps them alive. While I'd love to, I can't buy every vintage diner, amusement park, carousel or movie theatre - but maybe with my photos and words I can help them survive and be visited by a wider audience.

What is your wardrobe essentials when setting out on the road?

Oh, there's nothing I love more than waking up on a warm sunny day, putting on a vintage sundress, slip on my flip-flops or Keds, with my oversized sunglasses, grabbing my cardigan sweater and hitting the road! I'm rarely seen without a cardigan - no matter what season. If it's too cold for that it's a pair of jeans and a t-shirt (plus cardigan and Keds). I love the summer months and try to get out on the road as much as I can during the warm weather.

Tell us one thing about you that we should know...

Hmmm...well my family and friends call me Beth - but I'm really a Betty at heart! My nickname Mod Betty came about from a small "shop" I used to have, selling vintage and mid-century-modern house wares, vintage clothes, records etc. I've been told that my enthusiastic disposition, friendliness and helpful nature truly make me a textbook Betty (Note from Editor - she sounds like a Betty to us!).

This is our Summer issue, what are your favourite things to do in summer?

Summer - my favourite time of year! I was born in August and I always say my favorite months are "the ones without an R in them". Summer to me means hopping in the car on a warm summer morning and going "exploring" in uncharted RetroRoadmap territories. I love getting fried clams up in Massachusetts, or going to a drive in movie whilst eating ice cream from a local dairy stand.

What is your favourite Summer memory?

Oh it's so hard to pick just one! We stayed at The Caribbean Motel in Wildwood New Jersey a few summers ago, it's a wonderfully restored 1950's motel just a block from the beach. Sitting around the poolside with our friends, looking around at this great little motel with great vibrant colors, angled walkways and fake palm trees - it really felt like we stepped back in time - we played shuffleboard and everything! We were just a block away from the amusement pier and boardwalk, yet had a cool little retro oasis of our own. We're actually going back there for a weekend this summer- I can't wait!

What is your perfect soundtrack to a road trip?

Though my husband is the professional musician in the family (Cliff-Hillis.com) I love to sing along to whatever is playing when I'm driving. I like everything from Ella Fitzgerald to Fountains of Wayne, The Beatles, Mike Viola & The Candy Butchers, The Bird & The Bee, I've got pretty wide and varied tastes in music. I love being able to learn the word to the old jazz standards while I'm behind the wheel - Sinatra, Astrud Gilberto, Nat King Cole. When I'm singing along in the car no one can tell if I've messed up a lyric AND if I turn up the radio loud enough no-one can hear those missed notes.

Most importantly what is your favourite thing to eat on a hot day?

If the day is really hot, ice cream is all I can think of - a cone from a farm stand, a sundae at the shore, a frozen custard at a vintage soda shop - it's all good to me!

Other than that, nothing beats getting fried clams on the North Shore of Massachusetts - they're a regional delicacy, and to me a summer is not complete without a red striped box of fried belly clams. C'mon summer!

