

OCEAN STATE ODYSSEY

Acclaimed Rhode Island
photographer Richard Schultz
focuses his lens on
his home turf (and surf).

Unable to get up-close
onstage access at the
legendary Newport Folk
Festival, Schultz found
his perfect shot just
offshore from Fort Adams
State Park, as boaters
edged close to enjoy the
music. "One of the best
things about editorial
photography," Schultz
says, "is when you run into
a brick wall, you can find a
way to go around it."





From his boyhood in Marblehead, Massachusetts, Richard Schultz knew two things: He would be a photographer, and he would live by the ocean. As a teenager, he began learning the intricacies of his chosen craft when he joined his cousin, famed *Life* photographer Bill Eppridge, on assignments around the country; after college, he apprenticed with the noted documentary photographer and Oscar-winning filmmaker Louie Psihoyos. Having made his name as a photojournalist for *National Geographic* and other magazines, including some memorable photo features for *Yankee*, Schultz is now considered one of the leading commercial advertising photographers in the country.

Along with his wife and their two kids, he moved 15 years ago from Boston to a small town on Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay. "I worked all the time—I've always been away," says Schultz, who's been on assignment on every continent except Antarctica, compiling a client list that reads like a who's who of worldwide brands. "I had never really gotten to know my new hometown. Once in a while we'd go to Providence or Newport for dinner, but where I knew best was Warwick—that's where the airport is—I'd never really seen Rhode Island except for the highway on the drive down for shoots and meetings in New York."

But last summer, as the pandemic continued to make international travel dicey, *Yankee* asked Schultz if he would take his camera around the 400 miles of Rhode Island coastline. His reaction? "Perfect—I finally have an excuse to explore this quirky state where I live."

Giving himself the challenge of "having the water somewhere in the frame" of every photo he took, Schultz sailed the bay on his 34-foot offshore cruiser, *Bella*, walked pathways and beaches, and once in Narragansett stumbled upon town lifeguards posing for a perfect group portrait. He crashed a seaside wedding or two, and found moments at resorts as well as on quiet coastal roads.

He faced a daunting season full of rains, but in the end, when he looked through his Rhode Island summer images he not only discovered a state he had not known but also realized "how much I missed just walking around and shooting pictures, just me and a camera, not surrounded by 50 crew and agency and clients. Just shooting what I found, like when I first picked up a camera." —Mel Allen

To see more images from Richard Schultz's Rhode Island summer, go to newengland.com/richard_schultz. To see more of his body of work, go to rschultz.com.

"Sailing takes me away," says Schultz, who caught this image while heading to Block Island on his Swedish-made cruiser, *Bella*.



Seeing these teens perched on the sea wall in Narragansett while engrossed in their phones was “one of those times where you drive by, do a double take, then jam on the brakes to go back and take a picture,” Schultz says. “I photographed them for about 15 minutes, and they were absorbed doing Instagram and TikTok. And it was like I was not there.”



This is the first photo Schultz took on his coastal odyssey. To capture Bristol’s famous Fourth of July parade, the oldest in the country, he ended up walking the entire route of just under two miles “because I had given myself the challenge of showing water in every photo—and there were only two places.” The Del’s Lemonade truck completes the classic picture of Rhode Island summer.



In Newport, the alignment of a spectator’s summer hat, a sailboat, and Castle Hill Lighthouse caught Schultz’s eye during the Safe Harbor Race Weekend on Narragansett Bay. Considered a world sailing capital, Newport famously hosted the America’s Cup for more than 50 years, and today its summer calendar is filled with regattas that draw sailors from far and wide.



As twilight descends on North Kingstown Town Beach, members of the Ocean State Pops Orchestra are joined by the Narragansett Bay Symphony Community Orchestra for a Victory Day concert. A state holiday that falls on the second Monday in August, Victory Day is an only-in-Rhode-Island summer tradition, as it commemorates Japan’s surrender to Allied forces in 1945.

Oysters have been booming in Rhode Island, growing from a handful of farms in the 1990s to more than 80 today. Among those plying the waters is Mark Goerner, who was a lobsterman for over two decades until that fishery all but ended in Rhode Island. Schultz caught up with Goerner (in blue hat) aboard his boat, the *Newshell*, south of the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge.





ABOVE: Among the end-of-summer highlights at Ocean House, a grand hotel set on the bluffs above Watch Hill, is the annual Special Olympics croquet tournament. Last September, 150 Special Olympic athletes and their partners competed on Ocean House's 105-by-84-foot championship lawn, overseen by the hotel's own croquet professional.

TOP RIGHT: Keisha Marcellus and her friend Malik Gibson were just at the start of what would turn out to be an all-day date—"literally from 7 in the morning until 12 at night!" she says—when their relaxed happiness caught Schultz's eye at Misquamicut State Beach in Westerly.

MIDDLE RIGHT: The grandson of revered Rhode Island boat designer Nathanael Herreshoff, Halsey Herreshoff is a naval architect in his own right as well as the cofounder of the America's Cup Hall of Fame at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol. "It was amazing to spend the afternoon out on the water on one of his latest designs," Schultz says. "He's the sharpest, most agile 89-year-old I've ever met, by far."

BOTTOM RIGHT: More than half a mile of inviting beachfront makes Misquamicut State Beach a popular spot with both locals and visitors, such as Ashwag Alhabodal, an international Ph.D. student at UConn, out for a barefoot stroll on the sand.



"I was at Sachuest Beach in Middletown," Schultz says, "and I saw all these lifeguards running, part of their daily training. So I went running after them, shooting photos. They said they were about to do a group portrait, and I should join them." He adds, "The magic happens when you are out there and paying attention."





Coming out of the water near the Ruggles surf break in Newport, local surfer John Cranshaw was already grinning when Schultz encountered him. "Ruggles is one of those breaks that has the potential to line up at times and be world-class, and this was one of those days," says Cranshaw, who surfs here frequently. "The energy for those of us in the lineup that afternoon was positively electric."



At Historic New England's Watson Farm, a 265-acre working farm and museum in Jamestown, Schultz found not only "images that people will not expect of the coastline" but also a striking backstory: Farm manager Max Sherman (shown with farm assistant Maryelizabeth Perreira) traces his family roots back to Rhode Island farmers in the 1600s, one of whom actually built the 1796 house at Watson Farm.



Some of the quieter stretches of the Rhode Island shoreline can be found on the Farm Coast, a region in the southeastern corner of the state known for its mix of agricultural beauty and ocean scenery. On a private beach in Little Compton, Schultz came upon a woman and her Jack Russell terrier among the sea-swept boulders, enjoying the solitude in a moment he did not wish to disturb.



Perched on rocks along Ocean Avenue in Narragansett, fisherman John Lee casts in the pounding surf. A pilot boat captain who works on Long Island Sound, Lee is also a writer and photographer who showcases his love of Rhode Island waters and its fish on his website, [The Dented Bucket](#). 🐟