

Skateboarding the South Coast



by Ron
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Sometimes the simplest things in life give you the most joy. For millions of people around the world, skateboarding is that simple thing. Layered pieces of plywood, metal trucks, bearings, wheels, nuts and bolts, and grip-tape are what make up a skateboard. Whether its bombing down a big hill or doing a trick onto and off of a ledge, the feeling you get when you land something is amazing. Obviously skateboarding is an aggressive hobby that's not for everyone; you're bound to get cuts and bruises. If you can tough it out and have the balance to do so, there is limitless fun to be had.



Solstice Skateboard
Shop New Bedford,
MA.

Skateboarding has thrived in the New Bedford area since the

1990s. Solstice Skate Shop (102 William St. New Bedford, MA) pretty much started the skate culture around the area. Solstice was co-founded by lifelong skateboarders, Grandison Taber II and Jay Vasconcellos in 1997. It's hard to believe that fourteen years have gone by so fast! Solstice is currently operation by Jay Vasconcellos and he is still dedicated to skateboarding. Still trying. Still rolling forever. Jay has been quoted as saying, "skateboarding has ruined life as we know it, thanks for reading this."

Local professional skateboarder Nick Dompierre was born and raised in New Bedford, and has been able to travel the world with his skills that were first honed here. He started skateboarding back in 1998 and has always had a natural balance for skateboarding. Since being a 12-year old shredder, he's now moved up to the professional level and competes against the best in the world. His current sponsors are Real Skateboards, Spitfire Wheels, Thunder Trucks, DC Shoes and Apparel, Monster Energy, No Problemo, and of course Solstice Skate shop.

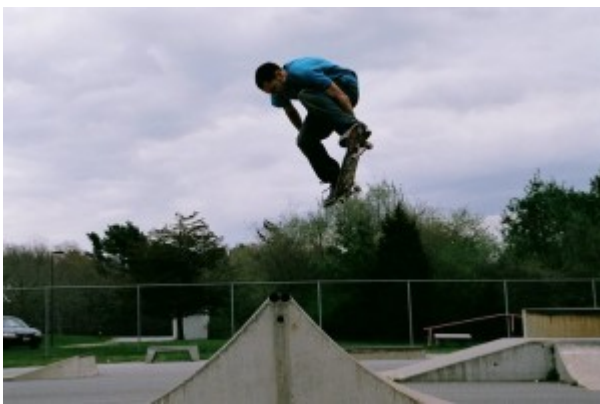
Solstice has put together many Skate Jams and demos for local youth throughout the years. There are plans to have one Thursday, July 14th downtown at the Customs House parking lot. Skateboarding is a great activity to get kids outside, stay in shape, and have a hobby that can be done almost anywhere that has concrete. Skateboarding can keep kids out of trouble, while also giving them something to focus their energy on and better themselves.

There are numerous places to skate in and around the city, many street spots as well as outdoor concrete parks. Downtown has a lot of street spots to offer, but it's best to skate on the weekend to avoid getting kicked out of a location and to



avoid obstacles like people and traffic.

There are a few outdoor skate parks in New Bedford and the surrounding towns. **Riverside Skate Park** (the corner of Belleville Ave. and Coffin St.) was built in 1999, although some of the concrete has aged, there are still plenty of objects that you can have a great time messing around on (Rails, quarter pipes, boxes, a half pipe, etc). Fairhaven has **Livesy Skate Park** (Glenhaven Ave), which is about a mile from Riverside Park. Livesy is about as old as Riverside, with some different things to skate.



The newest outdoor park is **Mattapoisett Skate Park** (East on Route 6, right at the police station) which was built in 2004. This park has the smoothest concrete and transitions around, and is used by many skaters in the area.

Sometime within the next few months, the **Skate Factory** will have their grand opening. This is a brand new indoor wooden park, located in the **Wamsutta Mill off of Route 18**. Once this park officially opens, it will be a prime destination in the skateboarding community. It will be a great way for locals to sharpen their skills on big ramps, pyramids, boxes, and rails that aren't found in the area.

The next closest indoor park is **Skater's Edge in Taunton**, which is a little over 20 miles away. It's definitely a solid park with a wide variety of obstacles including a foam pit. The park can get a little crowded sometimes, but is definitely worth the drive every once in a while.

Skateboarding, for me, has and will always be a great experience, and has brought me to some levels of defying gravity that I never thought were possible. Practice and you

will get better. I'll skate for as many years as I can. Roll Forever.

Ron at the Shred Fest Tournament Finals