



The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America

RICK'S ROADS

Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What



BLOG POST: 2024.06.11
Newport, Rhode Island (Day 2)



Mansion #2: Rosecliff

The Newport Preservation Society – yes it does sound a tad pompous, doesn't it? – operates several major mansions in Newport. The Breakers is a clear #1, but there are a handful (how ever many that is) that compete for 2nd best.

I'm not sure what feature lured me here for my next tour instead of someplace else, but it almost didn't matter. This place was easy to find and free to park at. Ding!

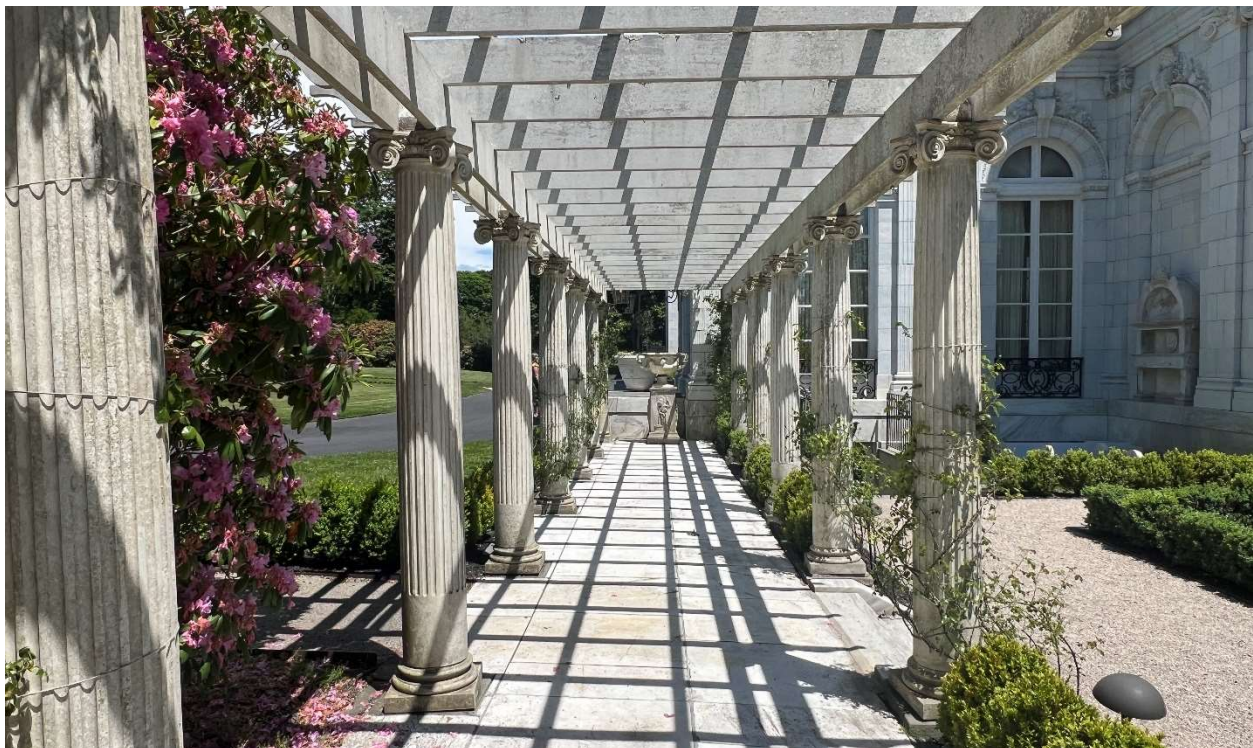
With similar architecture to The Breakers, it was easy to expect a "repeat", albeit on a slightly lower notch on the opulence scale.

[Now, I do have to mention something. Look at that photo. Does anyone else think *Beverly Hillbillies* when they see that? OK, I didn't think so. I don't either...]

But anyway, I parked, took a few outdoor shots, and ventured inside.

The ticket seller might as well have been checking me into a hotel. The desk, the attire, the demeanor, the atmosphere, if they had adopted a noble Italian accent, I might have believed I was at some posh villa in the Alps.

The young woman – I'm going to pretend her name was Naomi (I just like the name) – asked if I had done any other tours, or if this was my first one. I told her that I did The Breakers yesterday. She asked for my ticket so she could scan it and give me my discount.





ROSCOFF
THIS HOUSE BUILT WITH
ALL THE HONORS AND A
MAIN ENTRANCE THIS HOUSE
WAS BUILT BY
THE PRESIDENTIAL SOCIETY
OF NEW YORK SOCIETY
18 AND WAS A LEGAL HOUSE
1871

Discount? Tell me more, please.

Do you have your ticket?

No, I was told I wouldn't need to show it to anyone else. I don't know where it is.

She wanted to give me the Duo price, but I shrugged and said I'd just pay the single \$25 fee. And I would have been fine with that, IF this place had lived up to any of the expectations. (Hint: it did not.)

The entrance area was suitably impressive, with a wide, marble staircase and all. But, as soon as walked into the next room – the grand ballroom – and saw no furnishings except a piano, I began to wonder. I mean, look at that. Did the residents just move out or something? Hey, it's a ballroom; I guess you need room to dance.



I walked through this cavernous, empty room, my steps echoing as I crossed the parquet floor. There were a couple of other rooms through the doorways at the far end. They were nice, and the one with the funky ceiling was even furnished!



The staircase was wide, lushly carpeted, and had an ornate railing. A tall window draped in purple overlooked the middle landing. I hoped this was a precursor of a wowing second floor.



But here is where things changed. On the other side of the landing was a glass wall with a glass door. Whatever rooms had been behind them had been converted into Newport's Black History Museum.



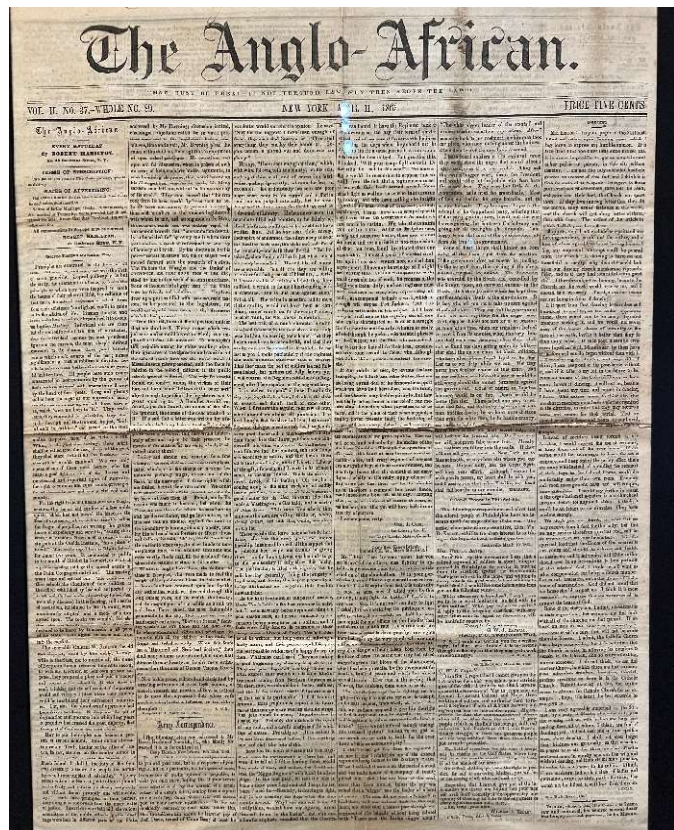
Now, I am all for such a museum, if, that is, I have paid for a museum. In this case, I had paid to see mansion full of mansion stuff: antique furniture, bronze statues, stuffy oil portraits of rich people in ridiculous clothing, Persian rugs, centuries-old tapestries, divine skyscapes painted on the ceilings, crystal chandeliers, marble

fireplaces, and anything else that these wealthy bluebloods wasted some of their very disposable income on.

So, I was disappointed about that.

But I did take the time to give the museum a good look. I strolled slowly from room to room, admiring the photos and reading a good amount of the textual placards.

I have to admit, it was an aspect of this region and that period that I never knew existed. The Gilded Age in Newport had seemed as white as white could be, so to see photos of the city's prominent black residents dressed to the nines and living large was enlightening. Many old sepia-toned photos also depicted the life of the black common folk and the servant class. All in all, it was very well done exhibit.



But that was all the inside of Rosecliff had to offer. Like I said, the museum was quite well done, but it just wasn't what I had signed on for. But the grounds were extensive, so I headed thither to explore further, snapping a few more indoor pics on the way out.











By now, it was past noon. There were a few more mansions that I thought I'd check out, so I bid farewell to Rosecliff and drove a couple of houses southward to have a look at Marble House.