

# RED BANK

A great place to live, work, shop, play and dine



Red Bank offers stunning views of the Navesink River from our waterside parks and boutique hotels. Our downtown has charming historic buildings and Victorian streetscapes, dining for all palates and pocketbooks, theater, music, art, modern amenities, boating and fishing, and seasonal outdoor fairs and festivals. These are all peppered with just enough grit to keep it real, making Red Bank a regional destination and the envy of towns for miles around. RiverCenter and our business members work hard to maintain the right balance between atmosphere, amenities, and old-fashioned hospitality. Red Bank is a local and regional center, steeped in culture. We provide a welcoming and engaging environment, a nurturing business community, a real-world town square, and a learning hub that is accessible to all. It is no wonder that Smithsonian Magazine named Red Bank the third best small town in America.

## A Local and Regional Center

Red Bank is the downtown for the Borough of Red Bank, for surrounding townships, the region and beyond. Borough residents stop downtown on foot, car or bike before work for coffee, during the day for shopping, a haircut, lunch, or a business meeting, and in the evenings for dinner and a movie, a free concert, or just to enjoy the breeze in one of our riverside parks. Surrounding townships like Middletown and Shrewsbury (which have strip malls instead of “downtowns”) also claim Red Bank as their downtown. It’s where they shop, dine, play and, in many cases, work. Visitors and tourists are drawn from

all over New Jersey, New York City, Philadelphia and beyond by our award-winning restaurants, theaters, shops and galleries, and rich offering of seasonal outdoor food and entertainment festivals.

## Steeped in Culture

Residents and visitors to Red Bank enjoy culture that is highbrow, lowbrow, and just about everything in between. The Count Basie Theatre, named after one of Red Bank’s most famous native sons, William “The Count” Basie, presents national headliners in music, comedy, and dance as well as local and regional theater. Offerings include the New

Jersey Symphony, New Jersey Ballet, Phoenix Productions, classic films and more. The Two River Theater is an Equity house offering a New York caliber repertoire spanning plays from Shakespeare to Wendy Wasserstein as well as original works by up-and-coming playwrights. The visual arts are well represented by commercial and non-profit galleries and an increasing number of restaurants and salons that host art and photography exhibitions. There are also enough antique dealers to whet the appetites of any collector. The public enjoys music of all eras and genres from resident groups such as the award winning Monmouth Civic Chorus and the Red Bank Chamber Ensemble. During the summer months, local folks and visitors are drawn into town by weekly Jazz concerts in Riverside Gardens Park, and a wide variety of musicians and visual artists performing on downtown streets on Saturday nights. Outdoor music and food festivals feature well-known local and regional bands. Our vibrant club scene and available rehearsal space and professional recording studios



make Red Bank an incubator for musicians and songwriters. During the holiday shopping season, professional singers stroll through the streets serenading shoppers with carols and other holiday fare.

## **A Real-world Town Square**

Red Bank belies the conventional wisdom that social media platforms have replaced the traditional town square. Red Bank is real-world town square, giving people what they need—a sense of community and ready access to the necessities of life. It also gives them what they want—convenience, unique experiences and a sense of place. Our downtown is frequented by an intergenerational mix of folks who are about being in community on our streets, in our parks and inside our theaters, galleries, restaurants, and shops. With each passing year, Red Bank moves closer to the mixed-use model community. New housing developments are springing up inside the special improvement district, repurposing the remnants of our industrial past. These are close to the NYC train, restaurants, arts and antiques, and live theaters. These new residents are taking the train to work and walking around town on nights and weekends. Whether they live in the center of Red Bank, on the outskirts of town, across the river or across the state, Red Bank offers visitors countless opportunities to be out and about, to meet and mingle with others as they enjoy good food and experience art and culture. Free movies in the park on Tuesday nights during the summer bring families together on the banks of the Navesink as do the jazz concerts on Thursdays and exercise workouts in the park on Wednesdays. Dog Days closes Monmouth Street and turns it over to dogs, dog lovers, dog vendors and dog rescuers on third Tuesday nights during summer to celebrate all things canine. From 6 to 9 pm, the street becomes a canine carnival with special guests like the Seeing Eye and Dancing Nathan of Internet fame. Every Saturday night in June, July and August the streets are alive with musicians and artists hired by Red Bank RiverCenter's StreetLife program to share their art with others and create a festive atmosphere.

During the lunch hour, town is alive with business people, tourists, residents and shoppers criss-crossing the streets to run errands, get in some exercise, or meet friends for lunch. Evenings see even more foot traffic to and from happy hour, dinner, a show at the Count Basie or Two River Theater, or the Bow Tie Cinema, our local art film house. On weekend nights, even in the dead of winter, the streets are busy into the wee hours due to Red Bank's vibrant club scene. The ever-growing Red Bank Farmers Market draws

people from far and wide every Sunday from May through November. After picking up their Jersey Fresh produce for the week, they'll stop for brunch at one of our west side eateries. During the holiday season, there are free horse and wagon rides through town, many opportunities to interact with Santa Claus, as well as our 12 Days of Christmas Scavenger Hunt, in which shoppers look for clues in store windows and enter to win great prizes.



Five or six times a year, Red Bank pulls out all the stops and becomes the town square for tens of thousands of visitors through its street fairs and festivals that acquaint new people with our town and raise funds for local organizations that help the most vulnerable members of the community. The two largest festivals are focused on food and music—the International Flavor Festival (spring) and the Guinness Oyster Festival (fall). Held in the White Street parking lot, these feature two stages with continuous live music and a variety of fine food from Red Bank restaurants from noon to 7 pm. Managed by RiverCenter, these festivals are designed to promote the town's restaurants and New Jersey bands. Also in

April and September are the Red Bank Street Fairs, managed by Streetfairs.org. These are held on Monmouth and Broad Streets, which are closed to accommodate the many art, craft, and food vendors that are the focus of these events. In June, Riverfest is held on the river in Marine Park. This is managed by the Eastern Monmouth Area Chamber of Commerce and promotes vendors from its purview. All of these festivals raise more than \$50,000 per year for local charities including the Parker Family Health Center, Lunch Break, the Red Bank Public Library, Monmouth Day Care, Riverview Hospital, Red Bank Police and Fire Departments.

## **A Welcoming, Engaging Environment**

Red Bank is visually engaging and makes people feel at home. During the summer months, the sidewalks and street poles in town are laden with lush and colorful flowers and plants that are always well watered and maintained through a partnership between Red Bank RiverCenter, its business members, Red Bank Dept. of Public Works, and volunteers from local garden clubs. In winter, the town becomes a holiday village, festooned with an amazing array of holiday lights and decorations. A 40-foot Christmas tree towers against the backdrop of the frozen river at Riverside Gardens Park and a beautiful Menorah stands in the square at Red Bank train station. Brick sidewalks, wrought iron

light fixtures and benches complement our many historic facades, creating a charming setting for pedestrians and al fresco diners. To keep the downtown streets clean and inviting, RiverCenter complements the efforts of the Borough's DPW with two, part-time sidewalk ambassadors, who perform litter control, minor landscaping and generally keep downtown tidy. To add the human touch, RiverCenter funds the Red Bank Visitors' Center, a separate 501(c)(3) that provides information and general assistance to Red Bank visitors on the phone and in person 7 days per week. If our visitors wish to stay for more than a day, our two boutique hotels, the Molly Pitcher Inn and The Oyster Point Hotel, are a short walk from the heart of town. Their excellent service, stunning river views, and award-winning restaurants provide a venue for a single weary traveller, an important business meeting or an entire wedding.

### **A Hub of Learning and Creativity**

People gravitate to Red Bank from miles around to study music, art, dance, theater, foreign languages, and a range of fitness related disciplines. Home to the Monmouth Conservatory of Music, children and adults study classical piano, violin, guitar and a wide range of orchestral instruments and perform in small ensembles and orchestras. The Monmouth Civic Chorus and Red Bank Chamber Music Society provide additional classical music opportunities. More contemporary genres can be learned at School of Rock, Monmouth Music and the Count Basie Theater Academy for Performing Arts, which offers youth programs in jazz and rock. Both the Two River Theater and the Basie offer performing arts instruction in their own facilities and in the public schools. Red Bank has four dance studios focused on ballet, tap, modern dance, and more; the Art Alliance is an artist coop where artists can study drawing and painting and exhibit their work when they are ready; the Language School teaches foreign languages to all ages and also offers translation services. For the fitness focused there are 10 fitness vendors including yoga, Pilates, Pure Barre, workout centers and gyms. KidFit Academy teaches youth about healthy eating, exercise, and body image. Last but not least, is the Barbizon School, where people of all ages learn to put their best foot forward through better grooming, deportment, and public speaking.

### **A Nurtured Business Community**

Throughout the year, Red Bank's businesses benefit from a range of promotions and events designed to help their business thrive by bringing customers into

town. These include the award-winning Red Bank Wedding Walk held each March that brings more than 700 brides, grooms, and wedding party members to interact with the many wedding related businesses in town; in October, Girls Night Out brings hundreds of women of all ages into town on a Thursday evening to enjoy specials just for them: happy hour, dinner specials, shopping and spa specials. Restaurant Week entices equal numbers into Red Bank's eateries during February's frigid, post-holiday doldrums to get acquainted with new restaurants and many old favorites. In summer, we have the annual Red Bank Sidewalk Sale, now at 61 years and counting. The Red Bank Food and Wine Walk attracts participants from all over the state and beyond to taste wine, beer,



mixed drinks, as well as savory and sweet goodies from the town's finest restaurants. The money raised from this event is used to market the participating restaurants. These events are run by Red Bank RiverCenter and its business members with plenty of support from the Borough of Red Bank and its agencies.

### **Accessible to All**

Red Bank is easily accessible to its residents and visitors travelling on foot, by bike, by car, and by public transportation. Even for residents living on the outer reaches of the borough, the walk downtown is less than a mile. New Jersey Transit links Red Bank to other towns from New York City to Bay Head Junction by the North Jersey Coast Line which runs every 15 minutes during rush hour and hourly in each direction at other times and on weekends. Local bus service connects Red Bank with other Monmouth County hubs like Freehold, Sea Bright, and Brookdale Community College. More and more visitors from New York City are coming to town via the Sea Streak or New York Waterways ferries to Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, or Belford, and then cabbing it into town. Finally, those coming into town by car will find on-street parking or parking in municipal lots at a rate of \$0.50 to \$1.00 per hour. At this time, RiverCenter is launching a pilot program of 15-minute parking spots near rapid turnover businesses like coffee shops, pizza shops and bakeries. People who work in town can purchase parking permits from either the town or Red Bank RiverCenter. After 2 pm, these permitted spots become available for use by the general public. To alleviate pressure on the parking lots closest to the most popular evening destinations, RiverCenter offers a public valet service 7 nights per week that anyone can use for a fee of \$7. After 6 pm Monday through Saturday and all day Sunday all parking in town is free as well as for ten days before Christmas and during the annual sidewalk sale.