

TIME TRAVEL USA

Bump up your coolness factor with a *retro vehicle* on your next vacation

BY SARAH SEKULA

Road-tripping on Hawaii's island of Maui is a no-brainer: You've got hundreds of miles of coastline, jagged cliffs straight out of *Jurassic Park* and rolling lavender fields. It's several microclimates all perfectly packaged on one small island.

Now imagine cruising along, taking in those scenes in an arctic blue, two-seat convertible. More specifically, a 1957 Porsche 356 Speedster

reproduction. And voila, the trip is instantly more appealing. That's what I'm banking on, at least, when I show up at **Maui Roadsters** (mauiroadsters.com) on the south side of the island.

On the outside, the flashy car, appropriately named **Mano** (Hawaiian for shark) is sleekly silver. In different lighting, however, it can appear blue. Inside, there's a sporty red interior and a wood-grain steering wheel.

I am easily transported to a time before self-driving Teslas, backup cameras and

seat warmers were a thing.

It was all quite simple: I reserved the car online. Then, I watched an orientation video explaining the quirks of the car and some entertaining new terms like "frunk," for example. That's a trunk in the front of the car where today's engines normally would be.

Soon enough, three friends and I hit the open road: two of us in my SUV and two in the Speedster.

As we navigate the spellbinding twists of the famously scenic Road to

Hana, the swaying bamboo stalks look impossibly tall. Not to mention the semi that passes us also looks larger than life. Why? Because Mano is very low to the ground, making every facet surrounding us look much more grandiose.

It occurs to me: Wouldn't every vacation be that much better if you swapped out your typical mode of transportation? From vintage boats to classic camper vans, it's all at your fingertips, you just have to choose the adventure. >



Volkswagen Samba Microbus, Monterey Touring Vehicles

GETTY IMAGES

ROBBIE JOY



1957 Porsche 356 Speedster reproduction, Maui Roadsters



Ford Shelby Cobra tribute, Monterey Touring Vehicles

Retro Roadsters

Next thing I notice is that passersby tend to gawk, and I don't blame them. You don't encounter a car like this every day. It's like bringing your most popular friend to a party knowing that subsequently, lots of strangers will want to chat.

"The view from the seat of a Speedster on the Road to Hana is nothing you can replicate in any modern car," says Jérôme Bosch, co-owner of Maui Roadsters. "New cars have taken a lot of (the feel) out of driving." In other words, things like automatic gearboxes, power steering and power braking take a lot of effort out of driving.

Lane-departure signals, monitoring for blind spots, air conditioning and cup holders surely make long trips more enjoyable. "Don't get me wrong, all of these features are fantastic for the everyday drive," Bosch says. "But for that one special day where you just want to really experience the road and open up all of your senses, there is nothing better than a classic car."

If you're on the West Coast, exploring California's Highway 1 Discovery Route is a solid road-trip option. Just ask Thorsten Claus and his family. They recently took a weekend trip to the seaside city of Monterey, Calif. There, they happened upon a fleet of 30 classics — including a 1970 Chevrolet Corvette and a 1965 Shelby Cobra tribute — at **Monterey Touring Vehicles** (montereytouringvehicles.com).

There was even a DeLo-rean, a la *Back to the Future*. Tempting, yes. But, it wasn't until they spotted a deep blue 1970 Corvette Stingray cabriolet with gleaming side pipes that it turned into a must-drive-this-car-immediately situation.

"My 9-year-old son and I were in heaven; people waved at us everywhere," he says. "Never did we feel like (we were) renting a car, but rather like being granted a wish. ... Everywhere we went we got thumbs-up and smiles. We ended up meeting several celebrities around Carmel who casually shared their car stories with us."

Take the section of Highway 1 that cuts through San Luis Obispo County for 100 miles of coastline and worthy pitstops like Ragged Point, San Simeon and Cambria, a small town known for its antique shops. With a national marine sanctuary, national estuary, 13 state parks, an elephant seal rookery, Monarch butterfly preserves, two historic lighthouses, five historic piers and acres of vineyards, it's impossible to be bored in this county.

If you make it as far south as Costa Mesa, swap

your classic car for a surf mobile from **Vintage Surfari Wagons** (vwsurfari.com). Here, you've got a huge selection of Volkswagen pop-top campers that are between 1973 and 2002 vintage, each brimming with personality.

Known as the Airbnb for motorcycles, **Twisted Road** (twistedroad.com) offers motorcycle-sharing services for a flat, daily fee. Take your pick from rides like a 1976 Honda CB550 or the Ural Retro bikes that come complete with a sidecar. Tip: Wear vintage goggles and a scarf to really get into character.

Wind and Water

If you'd rather spend a day on the water, take a vintage boat for a spin at **Chicago Retro Boats** (chicagoretroboats.com). Choose from a whole fleet of boats, made between 1955 and 1969, that have been retrofitted as electric.

If you'd like to play captain for the ride, you must be at least 21 years old and have a driver's license. However, if you prefer to be a passenger, you can request a captain for an additional charge. Either way, you'll have a perfect view of the Chicago skyline to capture amazing photos. Note: Since the boats are electric, you'll only go about 5 to 8 mph, so it's more about the experience and less about speed.

In Brodhead, Wis., head to **Gypsy Air Tours** (gypsyairtours.com) and soar through the sky in a 1930s WACO Taperwing, believed to be one of only seven still flying in the world. The engine on this rare plane is an original Wright



Twisted Road



Chicago Retro Boats



Gypsy Air Tours

Whirlwind that is similar to the engine in Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis when he flew across the Atlantic. Sit in the open cockpit as the engine roars to life with a puff of smoke and a whirling propeller. You will have a bird's-eye view of the circuitous rivers, the orchards, barns and people coming out of their houses to look up and wave.

Roll into yesteryear by taking an Amphicar for a spin at **Disney Springs**

(disneysprings.com) in Orlando, Fla. Originally created during the 1960s, the vehicles, combination boat and car, are available for tours around the lake. Only about 3,200 of these were made. Today, there are likely about 300 or so left. Afterward, grab a bite to eat at The Boathouse, where oysters, lobster and the legendary baked Alaska top. End your day at one of the three outdoor bars for a craft cocktail. ■