

# Demand Runs High For Rock Locations

By Katie McFadden

Rockaway has always been a star but now it's camera ready thanks to Claudia Bloom of Rock Locations. For almost five years, Bloom has been a bridge between production companies and photographers who are looking for the perfect location to film, and property owners who are willing to have their space featured. And while Covid-19 paused filming at the peak, Bloom's phone has been ringing off the hook as crews look to make Rockaway a part of their story.

After moving to Rockaway in 2015, it wasn't long before Bloom saw its potential as a place that movie, television, magazine and other film crews might find ideal for filming or photoshoots. Since launching, Bloom has connected with a number of homeowners and businesses and now offers more than 100 properties as potential filming locations, including nearly 40 homes, nearly 70 businesses, and even houseboats, vehicles and pets that can be used for shoots. And despite Covid-19 changing the way filming is done, Bloom says Rockaway has become an even more desirable spot for crews to seek out sets.

Bloom says Rockaway has always had its benefits when it comes to filming, with the biggest draw being the beach. "I had one crew guy that had a surfboard in his car and ran out to the ocean right after the shoot," Bloom said. But Rockaway has much more to offer. Being part of New York City makes it convenient, but it offers things that popular filming locations like Manhattan and Brooklyn do not, like more parking in the offseason and a quieter atmosphere without the constant background noise of sirens, horns and other city sounds. Though she was once asked if she knew the schedule of when planes fly over houses.

When coronavirus became the star of the show, shutting down the film industry nationwide, the future of Bloom's business was up in the air. "I

was panicking. I thought we might not come back," she said. Yet she also used that time of panic as a time of productivity. "I started doing research and got on Zoom meetings with producers and art directors and photographers to figure out how this would impact our business," Bloom said. She also completed a Covid-19 Production Infection Control course and is now certified.

The preparation came in handy and the panic subsided when filming was able to resume. While she lost a gym, a houseboat and an office due coronavirus-related impacts, Bloom says most of her locations remained and when cameras started rolling again, Rock Locations was a hot commodity. "When we were allowed to start reshoots in July as New York City entered Phase 4, my phone did not stop ringing," she said.

Bloom started to realize that in this new Covid world of filming, Rockaway had become even more desirable. "This has been my busiest year," Bloom said. "Covid has been horrible in so many ways but for my business and industry it's been amazing." Needing to keep social distancing in mind, film crews are now opting for more spacious locales rather than cramped quarters of Manhattan or Brooklyn. After all, it's not common to find backyards or front porches to spread out on in those boroughs. "People can't hang out like they used to. With social distancing, crews have to be more careful about spreading out and most of my homes offer that space," Bloom said.

Bloom is mostly a one-woman show, but her website designer Alexandra Lorrae helps list the many properties on RockLocations.com and provide updates in the monthly



Rock Locations Claudia Bloom in front of House 35.

Photo by Ben Diamond Photography.

newsletter.

The updates are aplenty. Since filming started up again, Bloom has connected some local locations for some exciting projects including a photoshoot for Esquire Magazine, reality shows for TLC and USA, a Comedy Central video about voting and music video shoots. In many instances, the shoots required using multiple locations in town. For instance, in the TLC show, "Long Lost Family," which tells the story of a reunion of an adopted woman with her birth mother who lives in Rockaway, Bloom connected TLC with a home in Rockaway Beach and another in Belle Harbor to get the scenes they needed. When new show "The Rev" on USA needed a backyard to film in, they reached out to Bloom who found them the perfect backyard space, but it was in the back of a home in need of repair. So she found them another home just three blocks away that could pass as the home where the backyard was, so they could film the front of it. "My website designer was surprised by how everyone fakes everything but it's just the magic of TV and movies. I got two jobs for that one shoot," Bloom said.

Other shoots have reminded Bloom that Rock Locations is making meaningful connections. "We had a music video shoot in Rockaway Beach for a British band called The Doves, which had stopped per-

forming and recently made a comeback. A few weeks after, a manager of one of my locations who has his own film company came up to me and said, 'You did the Doves? Oh my God, the Doves are back!' He was so excited, and it just makes me feel like I brought something special here and the video turned out awesome. It takes a while for works to be released but I'm so proud of what I see," Bloom said.

Going forward, Bloom hopes to make even more meaningful connections and hook a major company or star-studded production. And she's gotten close. Bloom says she almost booked a house for the recent filming of "Only Murders In the Building," which brought Martin Short, Steve Martin and Selena Gomez to town, but they ultimately created a home on a set that had all the components they needed. She's also had people from HBO, Netflix and Disney come to scout locations, but hasn't landed them yet. But Bloom is hopeful. "I have this fantasy that I'm running from location to location, overseeing multiple locations in one day. That would be really cool," she said.

To learn more about Rock Locations or to sign up for the monthly newsletter, check out Rocklocations.com and to get a glimpse of some of the many properties Bloom offers, find RockLocations on Instagram or Facebook.