



Adjacent to the Stonehenge replica (below), Carhenge's Car Art Preserve features sculptures created from various automotive parts including (far left) a spawning salmon and (left) Dino, the dinosaur, inspired by *The Flintstones*.

Nebraska's Stonehenge

A unique attraction in the town of Alliance, Carhenge mimics England's prehistoric monument with a carefully arranged ring of vintage cars

article by Suzan Jackson

Just north of tiny Alliance, Nebraska, is an unusual roadside attraction, a bit of unique Americana known as Carhenge. Seemingly in the middle of nowhere (though not far from the Oregon Trail and on the way to South Dakota's Black Hills) stands a full-size replica of Stonehenge...made out of classic American cars and arranged to reproduce the ancient cluster of monoliths in England.

Jim Reinders created this unusual sculpture as a tribute to his late father. Reinders lived in England and is fascinated with Stonehenge, so he studied its design and thought it would be fun if his hometown had a "Stonehenge West." His family decided to create a replica as a memorial, and in 1987 about 35 family members gathered to build it.

They carefully placed 39 vintage American automobiles in the shape, arrangement and dimensions of Stonehenge. The vertical cars are buried trunk-down in 5-foot-deep pits, with other cars forming the arches, fallen stones and "heel stone." The

whole thing is spray-painted gray to mimic Stonehenge. Carhenge was officially dedicated to Jim's father on the summer solstice in 1987 and has been open to the public ever since.

The site also features the Car Art Preserve with colorful metal sculptures made from cars and car parts, including a dinosaur, a flower and a prizewinning spawning-salmon sculpture. Reinders himself added the sculpture *Four Seasons*, using Ford cars to represent wheat in Nebraska during spring, summer, fall and winter.

Carhenge is open daily year-round with free admission and attracts more than 68,000 visitors annually from all over the world. The Pit Stop Gift Shop is open during the summer months. In town, the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center complex is known for its local-history exhibits and research room with microfilmed newspapers, photos and genealogical files.

Less than an hour's drive southwest of Carhenge is Chimney Rock National Historic Site in Bayard, Nebraska, another worthwhile stop

in the region. Chimney Rock is a prominent natural landmark along the Oregon and California trails that was well known to pioneers and Native Americans. A museum in the visitor center explores the unique rock formation and the human history of the area along the westward trails.

For those seeking RV accommodations, Over the Hill Campground, a new RV park next to Carhenge, is scheduled to open this summer. Located on County Road 59, the park will have 15 campsites with water hookups and four with full hookups, and plenty of room for self-contained RVs. In Bayard, Chimney Rock Pioneer Crossing Campground offers 16 pull-through sites with full hookups and views of Chimney Rock. Those wanting more amenities can travel to Gering, about 60 miles southwest of Alliance, to Robidoux RV Park, with 42 paved sites, including 37 with full hookups.

Carhenge

308-762-3569, www.carhenge.com

Chimney Rock National Historic Site

www.nebraskahistory.org/sites/rock

RV Parks

Over the Hill Campground, Alliance

308-762-3763

Chimney Rock Pioneer Crossing Campground, Bayard

308-631-4700

www.chimneyrockpioneer Crossing.com

Robidoux RV Park, Gering

308-436-2046

www.gering.org/robidoux-rv-park

