

AAA World

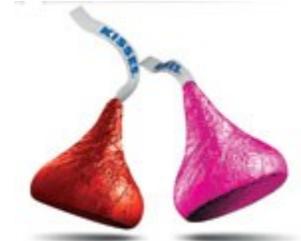
(March/April 2011)

Romantic Mid-Atlantic: Long Weekend

Sometimes a date just won't do. No, sometimes you need to pack a bag and get away to a romantic retreat. We know how you feel. We share a few of our favorites.

By Rebecca L. Rhoades

Sweet Romance IT'S BEEN SAID that chocolate is a great replacement for love. But why substitute when you can have both at the AAA Four Diamond **HOTEL HERSHEY**? Indulge your chocolate fantasies with the hotel's Romance in Hershey package, which features rose petal turndown and champagne and chocolate-covered strawberries. A day at the Chocolate Spa will further whet your appetite for love and cocoa; particularly appealing is the Chocolate Decadence Day Spa Package, which includes a Whipped Cocoa Bath, Chocolate Sugar Scrub, Chocolate Fondue Wrap, Chocolate Martini and more. A tasty treat for body and soul. thehotelhershey.com, 717/533-2171



For those located a little farther South, check out the **CHOCOLATE LOVERS FESTIVAL** in Fairfax, Virginia (March 5–6). Each year, thousands of chocoholics flock to this historic town outside Washington, D.C., for a two-day event that features chocolate vendors selling their wares; the Chocolate Challenge, an arts competition in which chocolate is the medium of choice; and a chocolate-chip pancake breakfast. To work off the inevitable sugar rush, spend some time exploring the rich history of Fairfax, which is evident in its many preserved historic homes and buildings, cemeteries and museums. fairfaxva.gov/host/clf/index.html, 703/385-1661

Bucolic Bucks County

ASK NEW YORKERS where they go for a romantic weekend, and more often than not, you'll hear "**NEW HOPE, PENNSYLVANIA.**" Situated on the Delaware River about one hour north of Center City Philadelphia, New Hope is known for its quaint bed-and-breakfasts, offbeat gift shops and charming collection of antique galleries. **Spend the night in the splendid 1870 Wedgwood Inn, voted "Best Place to Kiss" in New Hope by The Travel Channel's Romantic Places in America. Enjoy fresh-baked cookies, soak in a two-person Jacuzzi, or simply cuddle by the fireplace.** Or head two miles outside town to the only AAA Four



Diamond lodging in Bucks County: *The Inn at Bowman's Hill*. Laze by the heated pool, or relax in the privacy of your in-room whirlpool tub. Unwind with an in-suite massage. Or even surprise your loved one with a proposal in the orchid conservatory.

For that one-of-a-kind decorative piece, head across the Delaware River Bridge to **LAMBERTVILLE**, the Antiques Capital of New Jersey. While New Hope may feel eccentric and edgy, attracting bikers, gays and baby boomers alike, Lambertville is more conservative, its art and antique galleries attracting New York and Philadelphia interior designers searching for that perfect treasure. ilovenewhope.com, wedgwoodinn.com, 215/862-2570, TheInnatBowmansHill.com, 215/862-8090

A Weekend to Die For

MURDER. MAYHEM. DECEIT. These may not sound like ingredients for a romantic weekend, but chasing down clues is not only a fun way to spend a weekend; solving a mystery together can be a great bonding experience. At the **ALLENBERRY RESORT INN AND PLAYHOUSE**, you'll be wined, dined and entertained for the entire weekend as part of its Murder Mystery Weekends. And when you're not on the case, you can relax in one of the resort's historic buildings, including the Stone Lodge and Mansion House, both built in 1812 and nestled on 57 acres in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. allenberry.com, 717/258-3211

FOR EVEN MORE intrigue, check out these other Mid-Atlantic **MURDER MYSTERY WEEKENDS**.

- *La Villa Romaine Bed and Breakfast* in Petersburg, Virginia, offers a variety of scheduled and custom weekends, including a special Scottish Festival Murder Mystery Weekend. lavillaromaineva.com, 804/861-2285.
- *The Inn at Jim Thorpe* teams with one of the nation's premier murder mystery producers to bring you a two-night weekend of murder. innjt.com, 800/329-2599

The Way to a Man's Heart...

WE'VE ALL HEARD that the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach, so what better way to nurture your newfound love than to **SPEND THE WEEKEND TOGETHER IN THE KITCHEN**? A number of resorts and hotels throughout the Mid-Atlantic offer weekend escapes that feature hands-on cooking instructions and gourmet meals.

- *Brandywine Country Cooking School at the Hamanasset Bed & Breakfast*: Nurture your heart and your stomach at this historic English country house nestled in Pennsylvania's Brandywine Valley. For a complete taste of all the area has to offer, check out the three-day Bounty of the Brandywine course that features tours of local farms and wineries and a menu replete with local ingredients. hamanasset.com, 610/459-3000
- *Mercersburg Inn*: Ooh la la. French cooking is on the menu as this Central Pennsylvania bed-and-breakfast partners with the acclaimed L'Academie de Cuisine of Bethesda,

Maryland, for a series of culinary weekends. mercersburginn.com, 717/328-5231

- *Harvest Moon Bed and Breakfast*: Immerse yourself in Pennsylvania Dutch culture and cuisine during this New Holland inn's various culinary weekends. You'll learn how local ingredients are used to create Italian- and Cajun-inspired meals, tour local dairy farms and wineries, and test your knife skills making a regional German Bavarian meal.

harvestmoonbandb.com, 888/824-3763

- *The Inn at Meander Plantation*: Explore a variety of cooking styles in one of the Inn's monthly cooking weekends. From the Flavors of France to the Flavors of Summer Gardens, the New South and Spain, you'll learn new recipes and techniques while spending time in historic lodgings in Orange, Virginia, just minutes from Montpelier. The Inn also offers two-day Weekend in the Kitchen and three-night Wine Vacation packages.

meander.net, 800/385-4936

- *Culinary Country Getaway at The Atlantic Hotel*: Spend two romantic nights in deluxe accommodations in this historic downtown Berlin, Maryland, hotel while learning how to prepare a gourmet luncheon and brunch, choose the correct wine for each meal, set a formal table and prepare tea. In between daily classes, wander the town's historic commercial district, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

atlantichotel.com, 410/641-3589

WHEN IT COMES to romantic settings, nothing compares with being on the water. The only sound is the gentle lapping of waves against the hull of a boat as you enjoy the sun setting over the Chesapeake Bay. Since 1993, couples have been enjoying this exact activity aboard the **SCHOONER WOODWIND**, a 74-foot sailing yacht docked in front of the Annapolis Marriot Waterfront Hotel in downtown Annapolis. Its special Boat & Breakfast package, available May through September, has been called "one of the top 29 things to do [in the] summer in the South" by *Southern Living* magazine and "one of the 10 most unique places to stay in Maryland" by *Good Morning America*. You'll enjoy a two-hour sunset sail, followed by dinner at the restaurant of your choice in either Annapolis or Eastport. Then it's back onboard for a restful night in one of four double-occupancy staterooms.

schoonerwoodwind.com/boatandbreakfast.asp, 410/263-1981

Aaaahhh...

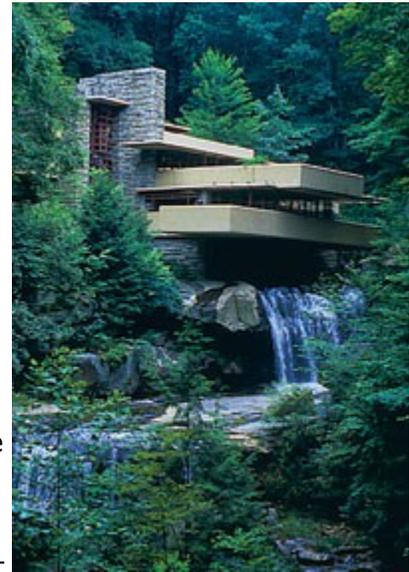
THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY is known for its natural beauty, from the majestic natural bridge and multiple limestone caverns, fertile farmlands to scenic mountain passes. Spend your days soaking up the nature's bounty on foot, bike or horseback, then rejuvenate in the natural mineral spring waters of *Jefferson Pools*. Named after our nation's third president who in 1818 proclaimed the waters to be "of the first merit," the thermal pools are a constant 98 degrees year-round, and the unique mineral content is said to provide a natural remedy to

whatever ails your body and spirit. After a long soak, retreat to your sumptuous suite in the secluded *Homestead mountain resort*, a National Historic Landmark in Hot Springs, Virginia. The Enchanted Romance Package includes champagne, flowers and chocolate upon arrival as well as turndown service. A relaxing escape from hectic city life.

thehomestead.com, 540/839-1766

Finding Mr. Wright

FOR HIS 43RD birthday, Brad Pitt was treated by Angelina Jolie to a special tour of Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, **FALLINGWATER**, located about an hour southeast of Pittsburgh. You, too, can experience the genius of America's most prolific architect, with visits to not only this National Historic Landmark, but also **KENTUCK KNOB**, another former privately owned home designed by Wright. Recessed into the Allegheny Mountain's Kentucky Knob summit, it offers sweeping views of the Youghiogheny River Gorge and surrounding area. But die-hard Wright fans will thrill to an opportunity that wasn't yet available to Pitt and Jolie—spending the night in one of unique Wright's Usonian homes. Just 15 miles from Fallingwater and 30 miles from Kentucky Knob in Polymath Park Resort, the Duncan House is one of only six Wright homes in the U.S. that offers overnight lodging, making it a perfect spot to rest on a weekend-long Wright tour.



polymathpark.com, 877/833-STAY (7829)

Rural Retreat

ITS NAME CONJURES up images of untamed wilderness and danger, but **SAVAGE RIVER LODGE** is anything but that, offering the ultimate in relaxing weekend escapes. This upscale resort nestled in the heart of Maryland's Savage River State Forest can be difficult to access, especially during the winter months, but the seclusion just adds to the romantic charm. Stay in 1 of 18 private two-story log cabins and enjoy such romantic activities as in-cabin massages by a licensed massage therapist and stargazing. Celebrate a new relationship or engagement or even elope with one of the resort's many romantic packages, or fine-tune your culinary skills as you become a "Chef for a Day." Savage River is also pet-friendly, making it a great place to bring your fur babies. It may be isolated, but when you're snuggled up with your love next to the fireplace, you'll be glad you made the trip.

savageriverlodge.com, 301/689-3200

Picture-Perfect Memories SCENIC HARBORS, magnificent lighthouses, romantic beaches, memorable sunsets. The Mid-Atlantic region is rife with these postcard-perfect settings, so surprise the shutterbug in your life with a weekend photo safari. Whether you're dating a professional photographer or simply want to remember your time together by creating some

personal mementos, a photo safari will spark your loved one's creativity and exhilarate his or her spirit. **BALTIMORE PHOTO SAFARI** offers a variety of packages for photogs of all skill levels, from two-hour treks in Baltimore's Inner Harbor to weeklong sojourns through Maryland's state parks. But for that perfect short getaway, try a photo weekend. In the summer, explore the harbors, lighthouses and maritime sites of the Chesapeake Bay; in the winter, get close to nature in Bombay Hook, Blackwater or Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuges. The memories will last a lifetime.

baltimorephotosafari.com

Back to School

IT'S BEEN CALLED one of America's "Top Ten Most Romantic Inns" by *American Historic Inns*. *The New York Times* said "the description hardly does it justice." And *Southern Living Magazine* named it one its "Four Favorite Romantic Getaways." That's quite a change for what started out in the late 1800s as a school that separated the genders—there were even separate doors for boys and girls. Today, that building has graduated into **THE HOPE AND GLORY INN**, a collection of seven rooms in the historic schoolhouse and six quaint English cottages on the lush grounds in Irvington, Virginia. Relax amongst the flower gardens, hop on a complimentary bicycle for a tour around the town, charter the Inn's own vintage deadrise boat *The Faded Glory* and head for a deserted sliver of beach complete with umbrella and blanket, or enjoy a wine tasting at the Inn's *White Fences Vineyard and Winery*. And at the end of the day, unwind with a bubble bath beneath the stars in the secluded outdoor claw-foot tub. School was never so sexy.

hopeandglory.com, 800/497-8228

Love Songs

A recent study conducted at McGill University in Montreal found the brain, when listening to music, releases dopamine, a substance that helps us feel pleasure. That same chemical is released when we make love. If this research is true, then as William Shakespeare once wrote, "IF music be the food of love, play on." And there's no better place for music-filled weekends than the Mid-Atlantic, which every summer is home to a myriad of festivals covering all musical tastes.



- *DelFest*: Every Memorial Day weekend, bluegrass lovers from around the country converge on the Allegheny County Fairgrounds in Cumberland, Maryland, for four days of nonstop performances, workshops, late-night jam sessions and a bluegrass bands competition. It's all the brainchild of bluegrass legend Del McCoury. May 26–29.

delfest.com, 510/547-1999

- *Capital Jazz Fest*: When the weather heats up in D.C., chill out with a weekend of cool jazz. For the 19th year, this weekend-long celebration of contemporary jazz and soul music will take place at the Merriweather Post Pavilion, located in a 40-acre wooded setting known as Symphony Woods in Columbia, Maryland. June 3–5. capitaljazz.com, 301/780-9300
- *North East Art Rock Fest*: Also known as NEARfest, this two-day event held at the Zoellner Arts Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, highlights progressive music from around the world. In 2008, SPIN magazine named it one of the top 72 festivals in the U.S. Get your tickets soon, as all NEARfests have been complete sellouts to date. June 24–26. nearfest.com
- *Philly Folk Fest*: Indulge your inner hippie at this long-running and world-famous music/camping/all-around good time at the Old Pool Farm in Schwenksville. Hear local groups and world-renowned acts; previous lineups included Wilco's Jeff Tweedy, Erin McKeown and Taj Mahal, to name a few. August 19–21. pfs.org/PFF.php, 215/242-0150