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Thursday, January 27, 2011

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Staycation: A Better Way to Celebrate Valentine's Day



patron saint of lovers falls awkwardly on a Monday this year, normally chef's night off. Hopeless romantics that they are, however, restaurateurs, chefs, resort, inn, and b&b owners throughout the region have rallied to heed cupid's call. "We're typically not open that day," says Colin Chambers, owner of The Falls Village Inn, in Falls Village, CT. "But the ladies have informed me that you don't celebrate Valentine's Day on the 12th or the 13th, so we're staying open on Monday night and going all out."

Another thing you don't do for Valentine's Day is procrastinate until it's too late to get a reservation. Whether planning an overnight as suggested here or a dinner for two at a restaurant, now is the time to book.

Blantyre Luxury Country House Hotel not only has its own night-lit ice skating rink (actually it's three adjacent tennis courts that have been flooded), it has its own Zamboni. "Our maintenance people are out there all the time, making the ice just so," says Ann Brown, the owner. "Just so" in every detail is what this Relais & Chateaux hotel delivers so consistently that, although rooms go for between \$600 and \$2000/night, *Travel & Leisure* readers once awarded it, "Best Value" in its price range. For Valentine's Day, the 21-bedroom hotel (which has a staff of 70) will feature horse-drawn sleigh rides from 6 to 9 p.m., and a special prix fixe dinner @ \$180/person, plus tax and



Candlelight, wine, a sumptuous dinner *a deux* topped off with a shared molten chocolate something-or-other. Finally, she kicks off her stilettos...to pull on her snow boots. As the couple bundles up in coats, hats, mufflers and gloves, they brace themselves for the ardor-squelching frigid night air and the deer-, ice-patch-, and drunk-driver-fraught trip home. This is romantic?

Let's rewind back to the stilettos and try that again. Add just one small thing: a key. To a room. Right there on the premises. Now we're talking romance.

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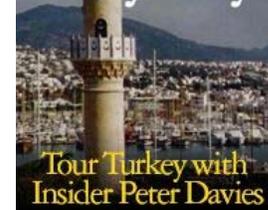
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gratuity. Normally, Blantyre requires a 2-night minimum but those who mention Rural Intelligence may book for just the night of the 14th.

16 Blantyre Road
Lenox; 413.637.3556

Ca'Mea Ristorante and The Inn at Ca' Mea, this popular Northern Italian restaurant in the heart of Hudson also has charming overnight accommodations in an adjacent building. For Valentine's Day weekend, owners Roy Felcetto and Max Cenci are offering a two-night stay (any two consecutive nights between Friday and Monday), plus a couples massage at nearby Bodhi Holistic Spa, and a dinner for two at Ca' Mea Ristorante for \$500, excluding alcohol, tax, and gratuities.
333 Warren Street
Hudson; 518.822.0005



Cranwell Resort and Spa is offering a 50% off room rate special on Sunday February 13 and/or Monday, the 14th, plus 20% off spa treatments on the day of and after you spend the night, along with full spa privileges, including heated indoor pool, whirlpools, saunas, steam rooms and fitness center. For the sports-loving couples, an invigorating snow shoe hike or some cross-country skiing followed by a massage might make a great start. Cranwell has several dining options, from casual to formal. On Valentine's Day, guests may choose either from the *a la carte* (the \$38 prix fixe ends at 6:30 p.m.). Rooms are \$132.50 plus tax for a "resort" King (normally \$265) and \$157.50 for a resort suite (normally \$315).
55 Lee Road
Lenox; 413.637.1364



Falls Village Inn Since shortly after New Year's, Inn owner Colin Chambers has been writing love notes on Facebook, "to get people in the mood," he says. "We live for holidays." On Valentine's Day, to ensure quality control over both food and service, the Inn is limiting itself to two seatings of 40 people each, one at 5:30 p.m., the other at 8 p.m. The prix fixe menu will feature firsts, entrees, and desserts designed to be shared. Though they are not offering a dinner/accommodations package, as of this writing, three rooms (starting at \$199), with complimentary champagne for the occasion, were still available for the night of the 14th.
33 Railroad Street
Falls Village; 860.824.0033



No. 9 and Simmons Way Though individually owned, the restaurant No. 9 and the b & b Simmons Way share a building, so they make a felicitous Valentine's Day combo. Normally closed on Sundays and Mondays, No. 9 will be open on both the 13th & 14th and is offering a prix fixe dinner option, in addition to its usual menu. For those having dinner at No. 9, Simmons Way is offering a special rate of \$100 for a room with a private bath. Separate reservations essential.
53 Main Street
Millerton; 518.592.1299 (dinner) , 518.789.6235 (room)



The Old Inn on the Green, is always romantic, with its authentic 18th-century ambience (lit entirely by candles every night), and fabulous food. Normally closed on Mondays, the Inn will be open for Valentine's Day and the owners Peter Platt and Meredith Kennard are offering their usual winter, mid-week, combined dinner-and-lodging rates—\$198 to \$298 for two, depending on the room's amenities (all rooms have private baths; some also have whirlpool tubs and fireplaces) plus a prix fixe dinner.
Village Green



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Peter Pan Bus Lines between *Albany, Great Barrington, *Lee, Lenox, *Pittsfield, Stockbridge, Williamstown and **Boston South Station and Boston Logan Airport** (*greater frequency, better fares)

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