

The Bulletin



Romantic Oregon getaways

Destinations across Oregon are offering special Valentine's packages

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For more information

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Valentine's Day falls on a Friday this year. It is followed three days later by a national holiday, President's Day — which means the day of romance will kick off a three-day weekend. No doubt, many couples will want to head out of town to celebrate their passion.

Where to go? From the Columbia Gorge to metropolitan Portland, down through the Willamette Valley to Southern Oregon, a slew of destinations — most of them within three hours' drive of Bend — are pulling out all the stops for Valentine's weekend visitors.

From spa treatments to wine tastings (with chocolates), from dance music to sweet strawberries (with champagne), lovers won't find it hard to stir their ardor.

Here are suggestions for how and where to spend your Valentine's holiday:

Wine and chocolate

Thirty wineries on both sides of the Columbia River are joining hands — or at least raising toasts — to celebrate Valentine's Day in the Columbia Gorge Wine and Chocolate Weekend (Feb. 14-17). Many wineries are pouring new releases of reds, whites and dessert wines, with bottle discounts offered.

The Historic Sunshine Mill in The Dalles will offer wine and chocolate pairings and packages, with confections from the local Chocolate Lab as well as strawberries and angel-food cake. Hood River's Cathedral Ridge Winery and Naked Winery will offer gourmet chocolates with their bold reds and customized wine

flights, while the Phelps Creek Winery will serve a new sweet-wine flight that includes its own estate ice wine. The Gorge White House in Hood River will also be open for all four weekend days.

Among the highlights on the Washington side of the river, Domaine Pouillon (near Lyle) is celebrating the grand opening of its panoramic hillside tasting room by serving complementary wines with slices of wood-fired pizza from its Solstice Café. A “Toast to Passion” weekend at the Maryhill Winery will feature a photography show, live music and an artisan cheese and chocolate selection to accompany wine tastings.

Cascade Cliffs Vineyard (Wishram) and COR Cellars (Lyle) promise an assortment of dark chocolates to pair with their red wines. The White Salmon Vineyard (Underwood), Syncline Wine Cellars (Lyle), the Jacob Williams Winery (Wishram) and the Waving Tree Winery (Maryhill) also plan to be open on all four weekend days.

For additional details and lodging options, contact www.columbiagorgewine.com.

Gorge lodging

One possible accommodation choice is the picturesque Skamania Lodge, located near Stevenson, Wash., almost opposite Cascade Locks.

At once luxurious and rustic, the celebrated spa hotel is offering three “Month of Romance” packages through February.

The Lover’s Retreat (\$539) includes premier lodging, a couple’s massage, and a bouquet of tulips with a box of chocolate-covered cherries upon arrival. Two less-inclusive packages are called “A Night to Remember” (\$264) and “Passionate Escape” (\$224). (Rates do not include tax, gratuities or lodge fee.) Pianist Tom Grant and singer Shelly Rudolph will play a Friday night Valentine’s jazz and dance concert. Mimosa breakfasts-in-bed will be offered on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and the hotel restaurants will offer special dinner and cocktail menus.

The Waterleaf Spa also is offering several Valentine’s packages, including the “Four Hands and Two Hearts” couples massage (\$330 for two) — an 80-minute, side-by-side aromatherapy massage with glasses of champagne. The “Be My Valentine” package (\$340 per person) is a three-hour indulgence that includes an exfoliating sugar scrub, a massage and a facial, along with a long-stem rose and champagne. There’s also a “Sweet Red Rose” facial (\$145) and a “Devil Made Me Do It” chocolate pedicure (\$65) or manicure (\$55).

Information: 866-399-7980 or www.skamania.com/valentines-day.

Sweethearts who want a little more privacy can consider a getaway to the Historic Balch Hotel in Dufur, 13 miles south of The Dalles and just off U.S. Highway 197. A red-brick landmark in this old farming town, the Balch has just 18 rooms, and its Valentine’s weekend special includes a romantic four-course dinner. Information: 541-467-2277 or www.balchhotel.com.

Urban delights

Each of downtown Portland’s Provenance Hotels group, which includes the popular Lucia, deLuxe and Governor properties, is offering its own romance package. Hotel deLuxe is serving up a twist on the old-fashioned date night and movie. Overnight guests will enjoy a three-course dinner for two at Gracie’s restaurant with a piano serenade of classic movie love songs. After dinner, they’ll enjoy chocolates and pinot noir as they snuggle up in their room with a DVD of the 1957 Cary Grant-Deborah Kerr movie “An Affair to Remember,” which also happens to be the name given to this package. Rates start at \$249 plus tax. Reservations: 866-986-8085 or www.hoteldeluxeportland.com.

At chic Hotel Lucia, overnight guests may oversleep in newly renovated rooms with the “Morning After” package: They need not check out until 1 p.m. Priced from \$329 per night, this package features plush bathrobes, a \$30 credit for breakfast in bed, a bottle of chilled bubbly and freshly squeezed orange juice for mixing their own mimosas. Reservations: 866-986-8086 or www.hotel Lucia.com.

The “Tempting Turndown” package at the historic Governor Hotel will set the mood for romance with fresh rose petals on the bed, a chilled bottle of Prosecco and a late-night snack featuring fresh strawberries, whipped cream and gourmet chocolate sauce. Checkout isn’t until 2 p.m. the next day. The package is priced from \$239. Reservations: 888-246-5631, [www.gov ernorhotel.com](http://www.governorhotel.com).

At the Hotel Monaco, the “Even Cupid Is Blushing” package will allow couples to arrive in their rooms to find champagne on ice, rose petals on their bed, bath salts beside their tub, a feather boa and body-massage oil. Priced from \$319. Reservations: 888-207-2201 or [www.monaco-port land.com](http://www.monaco-portland.com).

At the RiverPlace Hotel, Valentine’s guests are being encouraged to check all of their personal electronics devices — cellphones, laptop computers, iPods and the like — into a private safe to enable them to enjoy a “Romantic Revival” with their loved one. Lodging in the four-star hotel will include late checkout, chocolates and sparkling wine, and a private bath butler to draw an indulgent bath with special amenities. Priced from \$454. Reservations: 888-869-3108 or www.riverplace hotel.com.

And then there’s the Vintage Plaza’s “Conceive and Receive” package. Romantic rooms come stocked not only with red wine and chocolates, but also with oysters, mood music, and a book entitled “How to Choose the Sex of Your Baby.” Parents who start a family during their stay will receive 25 percent off an annual return visit until the baby is 18 — “or 50 percent if you guess the correct sex of the baby,” according to the promotion. “No proof necessary, we trust you.” Priced from \$399. Reservations: 800-263-2305 or www.vintageplaza.com.

Willamette Valley

Lovers of Oregon’s famed pinot noir wine know to head south from Portland into the upper Willamette Valley. At the luxurious Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg, a “Valentines and Vineyards” package includes a stay in a deluxe king fireplace room with a soaking tub; a bottle of pinot noir with gourmet chocolate on arrival; a gourmet four-course dinner in the hotel’s superb Jory restaurant; and use of spa facilities, including a swimming pool, sauna and steam room. Spa treatments are additional. Priced from \$550. Reservations: 503-554-2525 or www.theallison.com.

At McMenamins’ Hotel Oregon in McMinnville, a “Sweethearts Package” (available now through Feb. 16) includes a room for two, dinner in the pub, a bottle of McMenamins’ own Edgefield sparkling wine (with keepsake flutes) and breakfast the next morning. Priced from \$155. Reservations: 888-472-8427 or www.mcmenamins.com.

The spring flowers won’t be blooming yet, but Silverton’s Oregon Garden Resort is keeping things colorful with its own Valentine’s Day package. Not only does it include lodging, dinner and breakfast for two; it also offers garden admission, a bottle of local wine and two 50-minute massages in the resort’s own spa. Priced from \$299. Reservations: 800-966-6490 or www.oregongardenresort.com.

Several of Eugene’s small hotels have specials of their own. The Excelsior Inn (541-342-6963, www.excelsiorinn.com) will present couples with roses, sparkling wine and chocolates, as well as a special dinner with live musical accompaniment. The acclaimed Campbell House Inn & Restaurant (541-343-1119 or www.campbellhouse.com) will present a five-course, prix-fixe dinner, by reservation, with optional wine pairings. The Oval Door Bed and Breakfast Inn (541-683-3160, www.ovaldoor.com) promises a complimentary bottle of sparkling wine or cider to any overnight guest on Feb. 14. And at the McKenzie Orchards Bed & Breakfast (541-515-8153, www.mkobb.com), the package includes a cooking lesson — along with lodging, dinner, breakfast, roses and chocolates.

Southern Oregon

It may be no coincidence that the annual Oregon Shakespeare Festival begins its 8½-month run in Ashland on Valentine’s night, Feb. 14, with a performance of Shakespeare’s tempestuous “The Tempest.” Two other plays — neither of them by the Bard himself — open on Feb. 15 and 16.