

Hoosier Hideaways

Treat your special someone to an old-fashioned romantic weekend

Story by Ashley Petry

This is a quieter time of year. The holiday decorations are back in their boxes, and the chaos of summer vacations and neighborhood barbecues is still months away. Before the world starts buzzing again in the spring, take advantage of this lull to slip away with your sweetheart. With Valentine's Day approaching, we've compiled five of the Hoosier state's most romantic destinations.



A HOOSIER UTOPIA

Harmonist Labyrinth in the snow. Photo courtesy of Historic New Harmony

New Harmony

New Harmony was founded in 1814 and re-conceived in 1824 as a utopian community in the wilderness—the kind of place where money wasn't necessary and equality was paramount. The Harmonist experiment was short-lived, but its legacy lives on in the architecture and culture of this peaceful town. “What makes New Harmony a romantic place to visit is the sense of seclusion that you have here, the sense of separateness from the pace of everyday life,” says Missy Parkison, community engagement manager for Historic New Harmony. “At the same time, you're still in a place where you can have a fine dining experience.”

Start your romantic getaway on a walking tour with Historic New Harmony (10 a.m. and 2 p.m., weekends, through March 1). Stops on the tour include the roofless church, an early Hoosier log cabin, a labyrinth and several restored Harmonist homes. Afterward, you and your sweetheart can explore the compact downtown, with boutiques and art galleries such as Harmony Pottery (310 Main St.), New Harmony Woodworks (609 Main St.), Firehouse Antiques (608 Main St.) and the Stephen Pace Gallery (500 Church St.). When you need to warm up, head to Sara's Harmonie Way, which offers growlers of beer brewed with the original Harmonist recipe.

For dinner, make a reservation at Red Geranium Restaurant, located within the New Harmony Inn. “The dining

room is beautiful, the service is very nice and it's just an intimate dining experience,” Parkison says. “You immediately kick down a notch when you walk into the dining room.” Start your meal with platters of cheese and fruit, shrimp and butternut squash bisque, or Maryland-style crab cakes. For your entrée, try decadent but traditional preparations of fish, steak, pasta and chicken. Back in your room after dinner, you can take in a view of the lake from your balcony or curl up in front of your fireplace, perhaps with a nightcap from Sara's Harmonie Way. The founders of New Harmony never realized their utopian vision, but perhaps you'll find your own version here.

Traveler Info:

Historic New Harmony,
401 N. Arthur St., (812) 682-4474,
www.usi.edu/hnh

New Harmony Inn & Red Geranium Restaurant,
504 North St., (800) 782-8605,
www.newharmonyinn.com

Sara's Harmonie Way,
610 E. Church St., (812) 682-3611

Madison

Madison is known for its riverfront downtown, a 133-block historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places. But if it's too cold for a casual stroll, you can instead explore the six local wineries included on the Indiana Wine Trail. In downtown Madison, the highlight is Thomas Family Winery (208 E. Second St.), which offers a casual pub setting, cellar tours, complimentary wine tastings and live traditional music most Saturday nights. "It's not like most wineries where you go and do a tasting and leave," says Linda Lytle, director of Visit Madison. "People go in and hang out and stay." Other wineries on the trail include the Lanthier Winery (123 Mill St.) and the Madison Vineyards Estate Winery; three others are located in nearby Vevey, Batesville and Commiskey.

In 2005, Madison Vineyards Estate Winery opened its

own bed and breakfast, with guest rooms that look out over the vineyards. Guests at the inn enjoy private wine tastings and tours, as well as multi-course hot breakfasts. Ask for the Valentine's Day package, and you'll also receive a bottle of wine and appetizers upon arrival, chocolates and fresh flowers and a four-course dinner at the winery.

Downtown, one option for a gourmet dinner is Bistro One, where the menu is influenced by the cuisines of Greece and France. "It's fine dining, and people just love the food," Lytle says. Another popular choice is Key West Shrimp House (117 Ferry St.), in business since 1950 and still serving traditional seafood favorites. Whatever restaurant you choose, be sure to enjoy it with a glass of your newfound favorite local wine.



Traveler Info:

Bistro One,
122 E. Main St., (812) 273-9448

Indiana Wine Trail,
www.indianawinetrail.com

Madison Vineyards Estate Winery,
1456 E. 400 N., (888) 473-6500,
www.madisonvineyards.com



Downtown Madison. Opposite page: Lanthier Winery and Bistro One.
Photos by Bill Pohley

Brown County

In warm weather, tourists flock to Brown County for hiking, cycling and some of the state's best shopping for artisan crafts. In the fall, they come here for scenic views of the changing foliage. But in the winter, the community is quieter, and it's the perfect time to tuck yourself away—with your sweetheart, of course—into one of the many private

cabins in this area. "We have some great, cozy, two-person cabins, and some are closer to town and others are more secluded," says Jamie Newton, communications director for the Brown County Convention and Visitors Bureau. (The bureau's website lists more than 30 cabin rentals.)

In town, you'll find one of the state's highest concentrations of unique boutiques and artisan studios, including many members of the Indiana Artisan program. Look for Anne Ryan Miller Glass Studio (425 N. Jefferson), the Brown County Craft Gallery (58 E. Main St.), Bathology (58

W. Main St.) and Oak Grove Pottery (942 Oak Grove Road).

If you can pull yourself away from your crackling fire in the evening, head to the memorable Story Inn, set on the border between the Hoosier National Forest and Brown County State Park. The menu here focuses on seasonal foods from Hoosier farms, such as pork chops from Gunthorp Farms and salads made from produce grown in the inn's own backyard. For a truly special evening, check the restaurant's schedule for live music and wine dinners.

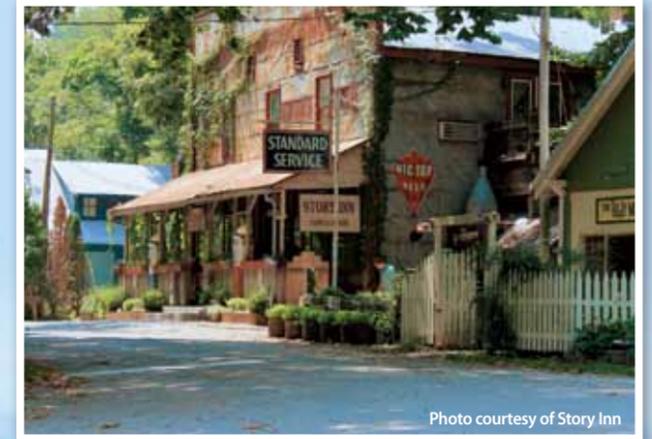


Photo courtesy of Story Inn

Traveler Info:

Brown County Convention & Visitors Bureau,
www.browncounty.com

Story Inn,
6404 S. Indiana 135, Nashville;
(812) 988-2273; www.storyinn.com

Wabash

Paris may be the City of Light, but in 1880, the tiny town of Wabash became the world's first electrically lighted city. That forward-thinking ambition is still evident today in projects like the Honeywell Center, a small performing arts venue that attracts some of the nation's top talents. The center is just one of many attractions in downtown Wabash. You'll also want to explore the restored Eagles Theatre (106 W. Market St.), the Dr. James Ford Historic Home (177 W. Hill St.) and the year-round Charley Creek Gardens (551 N. Miami St.). "It's manageable for one day to stroll around and see the historic buildings," says Debby Pyle, manager of the Charley Creek Inn.

Located near the downtown attractions, Charley Creek Inn is a restored mansion from the 1920s. "The great thing about Charley Creek Inn is that when you step inside the doors, you feel like you're somewhere else," Pyle says. "It has an old-time Chicago feel, so it transports you to a different realm." With a piano bar and separate boutiques for wine, cheese and chocolate, the inn offers a complete package for romantic getaways.

The inn also houses Twenty, a gourmet restaurant. Try pork saltimbocca, slow-roasted prime rib or decadent lobster mac-and-cheese. For dessert, Pyle recommends the indulgent raspberry chocolate cheesecake.

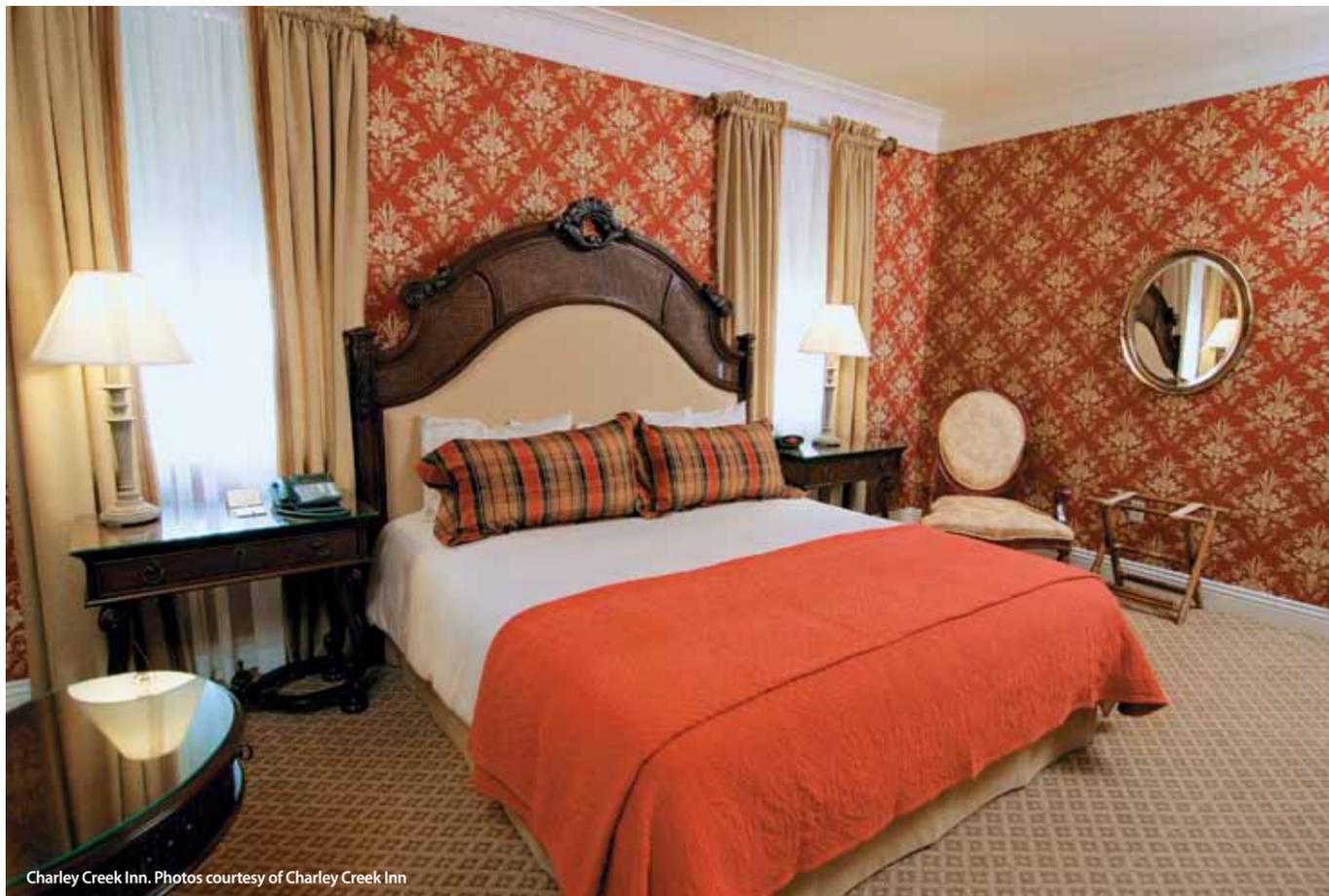
Traveler Info:

Charley Creek Inn and Twenty restaurant,
111 W. Market St., (260) 563-0111,
www.charleycreekinn.com

Honeywell Center,
275 W. Market St., (260) 563-1102,
www.honeywellcenter.org



Twenty restaurant



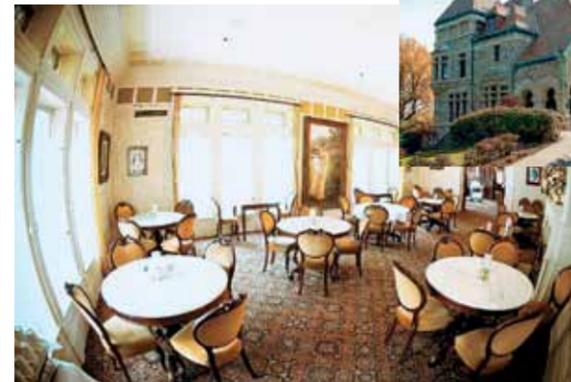
Charley Creek Inn. Photos courtesy of Charley Creek Inn

South Bend

This university town along Indiana's northern border is the perfect destination for couples who don't want to compromise. For him, the town offers the College Football Hall of Fame (111 S. Saint Joseph St.) and the Studebaker National Museum (201 S. Chapin St.). For her, there are tours of the South Bend Chocolate Co. factory (3300 W. Sample St.) and of Copshaholm, the restored 1895 home of industrialist J.D. Oliver (808 W. Washington St.). "It's one of the most historically intact homes in the country," says Alice Erlandson, owner of the nearby Oliver Inn. After a day of touring, you'll both enjoy a visit to the Morris Performing Arts Center, where February events include the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, the Golden Dragon Acrobats and the Broadway hit "Blast."

The Oliver Inn, built in 1886, was originally the home of Oliver's sister, Josephine. Now, Erlandson and her husband, Thomas, offer guests a range of romantic amenities, such as Jacuzzi's, fireplaces and chocolates. Ask for the James Oliver room, a suite with a king-sized bed, fireplace and two-person jetted bathtub. In the morning, you'll enjoy your gourmet breakfast to the tunes of live piano music.

Next door in the palatial Studebaker mansion is Tippecanoe Place, one of South Bend's top fine dining experiences. You'll feel like a Victorian houseguest in the dining room, where the menu includes lobster cakes, pan-roasted scallops and the house specialty, prime rib. With your cozy bedroom waiting just next door, you might as well indulge in that extra glass of pinot noir.



Tippecanoe Place. Photos courtesy of Tippecanoe Place

Traveler Info:

Morris Performing Arts Center,
211 N. Michigan St., (574) 235-9190, www.morriscenter.org

Oliver Inn,
630 W. Washington St., (888) 697-4466, www.oliverinn.com

Tippecanoe Place,
620 W. Washington St., (574) 234-9077, www.tippe.com

5 More Romantic Hoosier Getaways

- Relaxing in the spa and hitting the blackjack table at West Baden Springs Hotel and French Lick Resort. www.frenchlick.com
- Shopping and dining at destination restaurant Joseph Decuis, in the tiny town of Roanoke. www.josephdecuis.com
- Exploring modern architecture and sampling 240Sweet artisan marshmallows in up-and-coming Columbus. www.240sweet.com
- Splurging on a room at the Indianapolis Conrad and going on a culinary tour of the city's best new restaurants, such as Libertine, Black Market and Room 4. www.conradhotels.hilton.com/Indiana
- Noshing on a gourmet breakfast at the Sycamore Farm Inn near Terre Haute and exploring the local Clabber Girl Museum and Bakery. www.thesycamorefarm.com