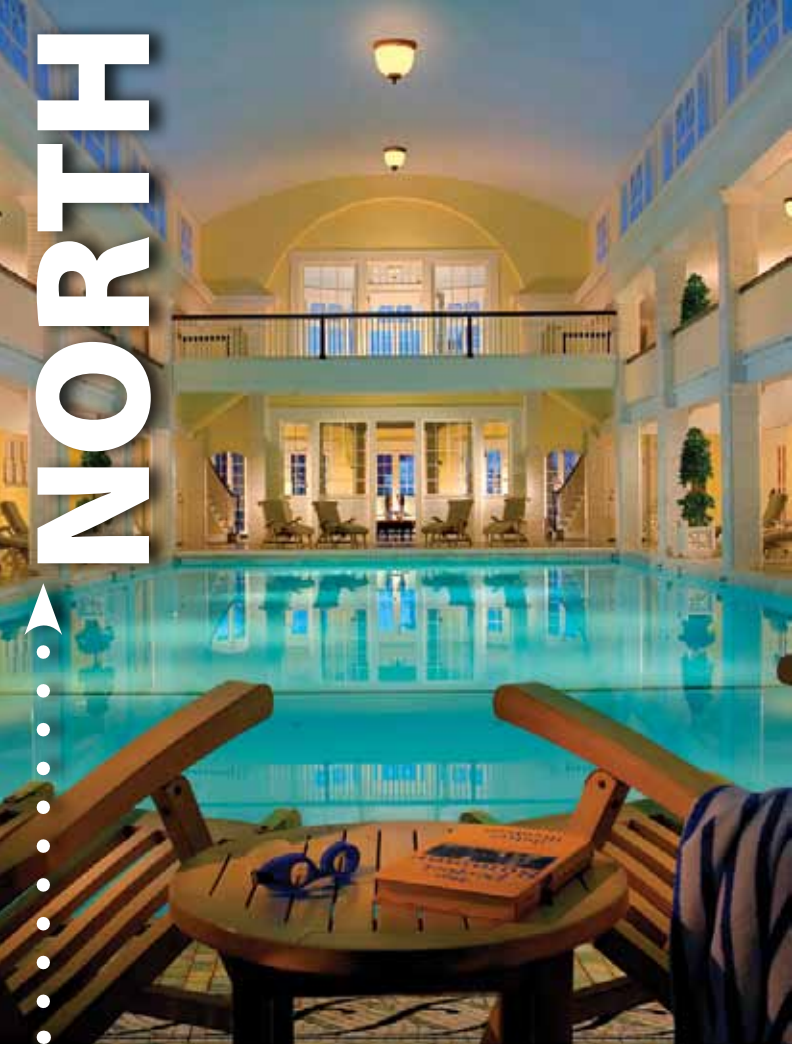


**NORTH**



**EAST**



**WEST**



**SOUTH**

By Carrie O'Brien

# Navigate Your Perfect Getaway

*North, South, East or West—Relax and Recharge*

**A**s the temperatures drop and you prepare for another busy holiday season, don't forget to plan some time to unwind. Whichever way your inner compass points – towards luxury, family fun, spa pampering or winter sports, this guide to holiday resort getaways maps out an easy route to relaxation.

## North

### Omni Bedford Springs Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania

For the ultimate in spa pampering, and a close getaway that will make you feel as if you've gone much farther, head north to the Omni Bedford Springs in scenic south-central Pennsylvania. Golf, fine dining and a spectacular spa are the mainstays at this historic retreat, and always have been.

"The big attraction has always been the eight mineral springs and the medicinal benefits," says Tim Bugas, director of sales and marketing. That's right—this resort is the site of not one, but eight healing springs. Native Americans called the area Medicine Spring, and named the first seven springs Sweet, Iron, Magnesia, Black, Limestone, Sulphur and Crystal.

The eighth spring, Eternal, was discovered during the resort's recent \$120-million renovation that used the finest modern materials to restore it to historically accurate splendor. The columns, sweeping staircases and intricate cherry and mahogany woodwork reflect the resort's Colonial past. Some furniture and many artifacts were saved and reused in this painstaking restoration.

"In the early 1800s, it became a tradition for young brides to etch their names in the glass panes of the front windows," says Bugas. "I don't know if they were making sure the diamonds in their wedding rings were real, or if they just wanted to show they'd been there, but those etched glass panes are still here today."

Another longstanding tradition at this resort is golf. The Old Course was originally designed in 1895 by Spencer Oldham, and is one of the first golf courses designed in this country. Forse Design recently renovated the course, which features natural spring beds, native grasses and water elements on every





hole. The course was named “#1 Classic Playable Course in Pennsylvania” by Golfweek Magazine in 2010.

## Healing Waters

The healing springs are integrated into all facets of this resort experience, from the water elements on the golf course, to the spring-fed indoor pool, to the spa treatments, to the signature Bedford Bath Ritual available to all guests.

“The water for the indoor pool comes from the Eternal Spring, and is filtered and kept at a temperature somewhere in the high 70s or low 80s, and it is the same water that flows into the spa,” says Bugas. The Springs Eternal Spa features massage, bodywork, hydrotherapy, facials, salon treatments, as well as an array of signature cures and rituals that utilize the mineral springs.

The Bedford Bath Ritual includes dips, deluges and soaks in a variety of hot and cool mineral baths. The process concludes with a hydrating stop in an aroma mist infused with botanicals from the region. The Bedford Bath Ritual is complimentary with any stay at the resort, although most participants elect to book further spa treatments, such as the Eternal Luxury Cure, the

Mountain Detox Ritual or the Relaxing Medicine Ritual featuring lotus flower and water lily extracts.

## Nutcracker Suite

For the holidays, the Omni Bedford Springs offers a traditional and comforting way to celebrate. The season kicks off on Thanksgiving with a feast in the Colonnade Ballroom that showcases aromatic spices and hearty seasonal cuisine.

In December, programs include breakfast with Santa, gingerbread decorating with Mrs. Claus, cooking classes with Chef David Noto, and live music in the Frontier Tavern. Acoustic musicians play contemporary music as well as a mix of seasonal favorites to get you in the holiday spirit.

The resort transforms for the holidays with boughs of holly and other classical Colonial décor. Displays throughout the property feature more than 500 nutcrackers from the collection of local Pennsylvania resident Gary Bartik, who owns one of the largest collections in the country.

The Omni Bedford Springs offers 216 historically restored rooms and suites, most with their own porch and rocking chairs for reading or relaxing. [www.omnihotels.com/BedfordSprings](http://www.omnihotels.com/BedfordSprings)



## South

### Wintergreen Resort

#### Wintergreen, Virginia

If your idea of winter fun is the adrenaline rush of careening down snow-covered mountains, then point your skis south. In the heart of Virginia Wine Country, within minutes of the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail, lies a paradise for nature-lovers and active outdoorsmen—Wintergreen Resort.

It may seem counterintuitive to head south for great winter sports, but Wintergreen is 4,000 feet above sea level, and besides, they don't depend on Mother Nature for snow—they make their own! Opening day for the 2011 ski and ride season is projected for Dec. 10, but the tubing park is expected to open for Thanksgiving Weekend.

This snowy getaway boasts a terrain park, a snow-tubing park, and 26 slopes that range from easy to the experts-only double black diamond run called the "Lower Cliffhanger." Beginners can take advantage of the Guaranteed Learn to Ski and Ride



package, and children can join ski and ride programs through The Treehouse, which focuses on fun and provides lunch and snacks for full-day participants.

## White Christmas—and Thanksgiving, Too!

The holiday season kicks off on Thanksgiving with a traditional feast in The Copper Mine Bistro. Gingerbread house workshops, wreath workshops and children's ornament workshops begin and continue through December.

One of the latest improvements at Wintergreen is Shamokin Ice. Added last year, this neighborhood-style ice skating rink is located right in the heart of all the action in the central Mountain Village area of the resort. The rink is 4,000 square feet of fun and allows 60 skaters at a time to enjoy the traditional winter activity. On weekends and holidays, skating continues under the stars and lights until 10 p.m.

Christmas brings Santa on the slopes, story time with Mrs. Claus, broomball and ice bowling. New Year's Eve offers parties for families, couples and teens.

"We have different New Year's Eve parties depending who you are and what you'd like to do," says Dana Quillen, vice president of sales and marketing. Almost every venue has a different type of party, from a kids' party in The Treehouse, to one for teens in the Discovery Ridge Adventure Center, to parties in the restaurants and ballroom.

## Refuel and Relax

After a day on the slopes, warm up at one of the seven dining options that range from The Market with pizza and snacks, to casual cafeteria-style at Pryor's Cafeteria, to more elegant destinations like The Edge or The Copper Mine Bistro.

The Edge is a family-friendly restaurant that overlooks the slopes and the Blue Ridge. You'll find traditional American fare at The Edge, as well as dishes sporting a little local flair like country-fried steak sliders and fried green tomato BLT paninis. At night, The Edge becomes a social hotspot. Multiple flat-screen televisions line the bar, and frequent live music on the corner stage transforms this venue into a dance floor.

The most refined dining is offered at The Copper Mine Bistro, but the restaurant is still accessible and reasonably priced. A European-style restaurant, The Copper Mine Bistro offers spectacular views and a cozy warmth that emanates from the restaurant's central, copper-topped brick fireplace. Cuisine features French, Italian, Spanish and Greek influences, and offers small plates and flatbread pizzas in addition to full entrees. The wine list is well chosen and sure to help you unwind after an eventful day.

Another activity that is sure to help you relax is a stop at the spa. The full array of spa services are available at comparatively reasonable prices, but with the knowledge, service and ambiance that compete with any of the best spas. The spa even offers Vichy showers for customers getting any of the body treatments.

"After your body scrub or mud wrap, we use the Vichy shower, which is this long arm with lots of shower heads attached along it, and the arm swings over to rinse you, sort of like a car wash," says Rebecca Sell, masseuse at the spa. So if your idea of relaxation is getting active outdoors—or taking your shower lying down—Wintergreen Resort is a destination worth exploring.

Wintergreen Resort offers a range of accommodations, from lodge rooms that sleep two people to condos and houses that sleep up to 14. All rooms, condos and houses offer kitchens or kitchenettes. [www.wintergreenresort.com](http://www.wintergreenresort.com)



## East

### Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina

#### Cambridge, Maryland

For an easy-breezy family vacation, point your compass toward the gentle waves of the Eastern Shore. Winter usually means an end to the fun of beach vacations, but the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Golf Resort, Spa and Marina offers a great family getaway even after the temperatures drop.

Decorated in cool canvas tones, warm wood, and the reflected blues of the sky and sea, this getaway will bring an effortless peace to maritime enthusiasts. As its name suggests, the resort specializes in golf, spa and marina activities. The 18-hole championship golf course was designed by Keith Foster to provide a friendly challenge to all levels of players.

The Stillwater Spa offers the full range of spa fare, including regional favorites like the ocean waves body wrap, caviar facial, and the blackwater ritual that uses thousand-year-old moor mud to re-mineralize, soothe and rejuvenate tired muscles and skin.

And what would a beach resort be without a marina? The River Marsh Marina is home to 150 slips and offers guests sailing lessons, fishing excursions, kayak and canoe rentals, boat tours through the Chesapeake Bay tributaries, and sunset dinner cruises.

#### Family Fun

Every night families gather around the outdoor grand fireplace and roast marshmallows to make s'mores. This is just one example of the little touches that make this an excellent family destination.

"We are a family resort," says Cari Ruppert, senior sales manager. "We have so many return guests, so we like to come up with new ideas all the time, like the bounce houses that we put on the beach or in the ballroom, yoga, nature walks and tons of other complimentary activities."

Dive-In Movies at the indoor pool, tennis, sand volleyball, mini golf, and disc golf are just some of the year-round offerings. Self-guided tours of The Blue Heron Rookery are available until Dec. 14 when the rookery closes for nesting season.

The Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay even remembered to include that furry member of your family. With nine pet-friendly rooms located on the ground floor for easy outdoor access, the resort is decidedly dog-friendly. A dog menu offers dog food, chews, treats and toys on demand.

#### Holidays on the Half Shell

Thanksgiving gets an Eastern Shore twist as it coincides with Oyster Week, Nov. 23 through 27. Oyster-related activities include menu specials, oyster tastings and wine pairings, oyster shooters at happy hour, cooking demonstrations, oyster art for kids and a special oyster cookout. The Thanksgiving Day buffet in the



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