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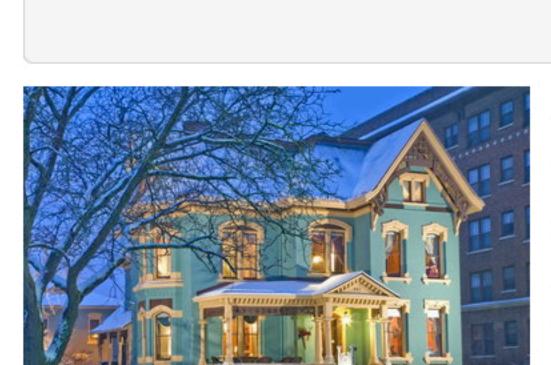
Warm up your winter, B&B style

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By Kim Schneider



Courtesy photos | Kalamazoo House Bed and Breakfast

The Kalamazoo House Bed and Breakfast in Kalamazoo offers a package that includes wine tasting and glass blowing lessons

Take a cozy room at a country inn, add a fireplace and a cushy robe, and a blissful winter retreat is pretty well ensured.

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But who is going to argue with an innkeeper who opts to add a steaming mug of hot chocolate after an ice skating outing on a winter afternoon or perhaps a day spent molding hot glass in a blast furnace, followed by mulled wine by a roaring fire?

Laurel Parrott, innkeeper and owner of the stately Kalamazoo House Bed and Breakfast in downtown Kalamazoo has one of the more creative ways to warm up this winter:

The Warm Hearts, Fine Wine and Hot Glass package.

This two-night package, running \$185 a couple in addition to the room rate, includes wine tasting at Tempo Vino Winery in downtown Kalamazoo; those who want to make their own private label wine can do that, too, for an additional fee.

Work with glass

The centerpiece of the package, though, is the chance to work hot molten glass (with the help of an instructor) into an artsy vase, bowl or glass at the nearby West Michigan Glass Art Center. A stained-glass artist, Parrott has taught classes at the center and boasts a mantel filled with pieces she's made at the newly remodeled center, which now offers classes.



A room with a cozy fireplace is a great way to chase away the frost.

The stately inn inspires the warm "hearts" part, particularly through rooms featuring fireplaces or jetted tubs for two. Room No. 4, the home's original master bedroom, has a combination of fireplace and jetted tub and its unique nightlight.

Just out the window lies inspiration for the art glass adventure — a glowing Chihuly glass sculpture that hangs in the foyer of the neighboring Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Each stay also includes a cooked-to-order breakfast served in front of a breakfast room fire.





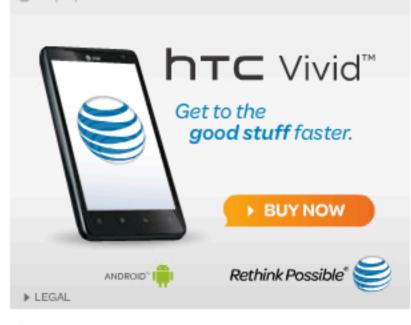
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Tea and sweets are a great

winter warm up in a cozy

bed and breakfast.







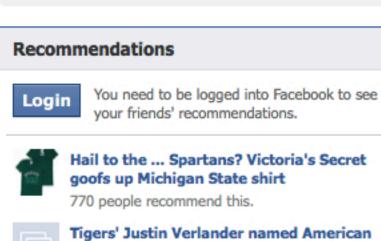












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Other stays

Other regional offerings to warm body and spirit include:

The Great Skate Escape at the **Songbird Prairie Bed and Breakfast**, located just over the border in Valparaiso, Ind. This package wraps in the entrance fee for ice skating on the 14,500square-foot plaza of the Deep River Water Park and a warm-up hot chocolate and cookies.

The new Robin Suite has a warm and cozy fireplace operated from the comfort of your king-sized bed, after enjoying your whirlpool for two, radiant heat floors, plush robe and slippers and video library.

Breakfasts carry options such as rosemary and thyme braised ham, pumpkin bread pudding and

fruit salads of melons cut into the shape of various birds. The inn keeps three microphones in the sunroom to pipe in the sounds of the many birds that

winter on the grounds — blue jays, cardinals, nuthatches and barred and great horned owls. Packages start at \$199/night and go up depending upon room choice. (songbirdprairie.com; 219-749-4274).

The Huron House Bed and Breakfast in Oscoda is notable for its great views of Lake Huron, which offers a different experience when frigid waves are carving ice sculptures on the shore.

Outdoor hot tubs with a view are popular during winter snowfalls. Indoor Jacuzzis are an option, too, with most situated for a view of the lake and the in-room fireplace. Click on the website "specials" link to take advantage of rotating monthly deals, prominent in the offseason.

The Run Away from Home package at the **Betsie Bay Inn** in Frankfort is a two-night package (\$299) that includes a luxury suite, such as the St. Andrew's Lodge with its steam shower, double Jacuzzi tub and Swedish sauna all within a log cabin-style room with soaring ceiling and

skylights.

wine and chocolate-covered strawberries and a free appetizer with dinner.

This packagealso includes a free breakfast entree in the restaurant each morning, chilled sparkling

Most couples opt to eat in the private wine center, Spiral, where menu items include hearty Scottish fare.

Film and food Films and Fondue is a package add-on at **Chateau Chantal**, a Traverse City winery, tasting room and bed and breakfast. The package includes chocolate fondue with fruit for dipping, Cerise cherry port-style dessert wine and the DVD player and choice of movie for \$40 in addition to the room

rate. In November and December, if you stay Sunday you get Monday night half off; January

through March, midweek stays come with a second night free.

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