



JEFF MORGAN/STONE HEARTH INN

by **andrea carter**

Winter Getaways

Seeking romance, or just a little peace and quiet? These retreats may be just what you need.

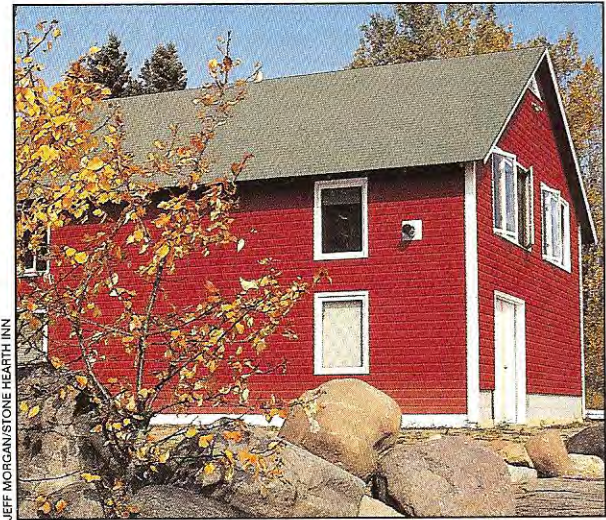
FROM THE SERENE BANKS OF THE North Shore to the towering bluffs of Winona, Minnesota offers a lot more than lakes for a romantic or peaceful getaway. And what better time to take a retreat? Minnesota has a number of cozy spots sure to chase away winter's bitter chill.

A ROOST ON THE ROCKS

If you're serious about a getaway, one of the best places to separate yourself from daily routines is the North Shore. Before you write off this area during the frigid months, remember that no matter what the temperature, its beauty and charm lasts year-round.

Start with a scenic drive up the shore's coast on State Highway 61. Not only will you be able to take in an extraordinary view of Lake Superior, you can also stop to enjoy a number of notable sites along the way. Places like breathtaking Gooseberry Falls State Park and historic Split Rock Lighthouse are right on your path, as well as many other enchanting ports and hiking trails on this panoramic journey through the rugged shore.

If hunger gets the best of you, you'll find a quaint lit-



JEFF MORGAN/STONE HEARTH INN

The Stone Hearth Inn, near Little Marais, is the epitome of winter getaways. Its cozy inn (top) and restored boat house (above) treat guests to all the amenities, including a stunning view of Lake Superior.

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◆ ST. JAMES HOTEL ◆

tle restaurant, the Scenic Cafe, that serves a number of culinary delights in a cottage-style atmosphere. Treat yourself to Julie's Blueberry Chicken or the Autumn Risotto.

Return to Highway 61 and head to your evening destination: The Stone Hearth Inn, a bed-and-breakfast located near Little Marais, (218) 226-3020. Although the picturesque inn contains four rooms with private baths overlooking the lake, you'll want to reserve the fully-renovated boat house. Perched at the rocky shore's edge, the boat house has two suites that feature queen-size beds, double whirlpool tubs, gas fireplaces and, of course, an incredible view. Complimentary continental breakfast awaits your morning rise.

ELY'S HISTORIC MANTEL HOUSE

While visiting Minnesota's great northlands, you may want to pursue Ely. Twist your way along the curves of State Highway 1 and keep an eye open for moose and other wildlife spotted frequently on this stretch of highway.

Complete your stay by spending the night at the Ely Mantel House, (218) 365-2620. Built in 1923 by prominent businessman Joe Mantel, this house features antique furniture and "theme" bedrooms—such as the Fisherman's Suite, the Wolf's Den and the Berry Patch (decorated in Ely's specialty, the blueberry). Let the proprietors, John and Betty Knott, know you're on a romantic getaway. They'll add special touches such as chocolates on your pillow and iced champagne in your room.

Winter is the perfect time to discover why the town of Embarrass is famous. Known as "the nation's cold spot," Embarrass broke its official thermometer in 1982. However, the colder it is outside, the cozier it becomes in this "warm" community of Finnish heritage.

ALONG THE RIVER VALLEY

Sculpted by water and wind hundreds of years ago, the southeast corner of Minnesota is an entirely different domain. The breathtaking bluffs and river valley are the setting for Winona.

Spend the afternoon taking a romantic carriage ride through historic Winona, touring the 1870s downtown

area and the large, Victorian-era homes. During the holidays, River City Carriage Inc. visits Winona's Valley Oaks subdivision, ablaze with holiday lights for the season.

You'll also want to check out the view from atop Garvin Heights Park, a municipal park more than 500 feet above the Mississippi River Valley. This spectacular view is especially glorious right after a heavy winter snow.

For dinner, enjoy fireside dining at Finn and Sawyers overlooking the Mississippi River at Levee Park. If you and your partner are fish or seafood lovers,



During the winter, the grounds of the Lady Slipper Inn are perfect for cross-country skiing.

be sure to feast at the internationally-known Hot Fish Shop.

A romantic stay at a fantasy suite might be just the thing to finish off your trip to Winona. The Riverport Inn and Suites, (507) 452-0606, offers theme suites, such as the Early American Honorary Suite or the Roman Bath Fantasy suite.

LOVE NEST IN THE WEST

Although you won't be able to view the state's delicate flower, the Lady Slipper Inn, near Osage, offers much more to entice you.

Each room of the inn, (218) 573-3353, features a double whirlpool bath and deck, and four rooms also include a wet bar and fireplace.

By day, you can snowshoe the 160 private woodland trails owned and maintained by the Lady Slipper Inn—which also provides the snowshoes. You may also want to take a ride on a horse-drawn sleigh or cross-country ski the Tamarac Refuge.

Whatever you choose for your getaway, Minnesota offers the escape you've been dreaming of. ■

ANDREA CARTER is a staff writer for Home & Away's Minneapolis edition.