

Sparkling eyes: Places to ring in the New Year - both near and far

Plenty of options - both near and far - to celebrate New Year's Eve

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun

On New Year's Eve, energy is high and the air is filled with electric verve in anticipation of what's to come. Is there any better time to celebrate?

Whether you prefer to party gala-style with friends or celebrate at a chic and romantic bed and breakfast with that special someone, the options are abundant. And if driving on New Year's Eve is a downer for you, there are plenty of getaway packages where the elevator will be your only transportation. We've found the festivities, large and small, at lovely locales all within a few hours' drive.



You can celebrate like a rock star with tickets to a big-name concert then hang out with the band over cocktails. Afterward, mosey upstairs to your ensuite bed. Prefer more elegance? Deck out in black-tie duds for a cocktail soiree before a five-course-gourmet dinner with supper club entertainment. That leads into an uber-glam gala ball and a midnight balloon drop, showering your champagne toast. Then retire to your feather bed accommodations.

If you and the gang prefer a ramped up New Year's Eve, check out one of the city-sponsored events in Washington or Philadelphia offering all-inclusive parties with a multitude of venues under one roof, including live bands, comedy shows, karaoke open bar, buffets, and midnight fireworks, with complimentary trolley service back to your hotel.

Whatever you choose, make your reservations early, because many of these galas sell out.

Downtown Baltimore

Intercontinental Harbor Court Hotel

Celebrate: "Ultimate 2011 New Year's Eve" includes a private one-hour cocktail party for six with live music and gourmet dinner prepared by the executive chef. Afterward, the group moves on to the exclusive Zebra Room to enjoy two bottles of Veuve Clicquot, and access to the Explorers Lounge for dancing, a chocolate buffet and indoor front row view of the midnight fireworks over the Harbor.

Stay: This package includes overnight accommodations for two in the Presidential suite, with VIP rose petal turndown, keepsake champagne glasses, round trip limousine transport to and from the hotel, and

the above celebration package for \$11,000.

If you don't have that much dough, a celebration for two at Brighton's restaurant plus dancing and views of the fireworks and a courtyard room starts at \$399 per couple.

Info: 410-234-0550, ask for the Presidential package or the New Years Eve package.

Harbor Magic Hotels

Celebrate: "New Year's At The Top of the World" includes dancing, food, drinks and music by a DJ in a celebration on the 27th floor/observation level of the Baltimore World Trade Center. And, of course, at midnight — fireworks on the Inner Harbor.

Stay: Package includes party favors, champagne in your guest room, overnight accommodations, tickets to the Top Of the World Party and breakfast. Brookshire Suites begins at \$419 per couple; Admiral Fell Inn begins at \$449; and Pier 5 Hotel starts at \$569.

Sail: Harbor Magic's three-hour "Inner Harbor Gala Cruise" departs at 9:30 p.m. from the Pier 5 Hotel aboard a private yacht featuring a cocktail reception, gourmet dinner seating and dancing with a DJ and views of the fireworks on the harbor. The package includes overnight accommodations, breakfast, party favors, in-room champagne, and two cruise tickets. The package is \$529 per couple at Brookshire Suites; \$559 at Admiral Fell Inn; and \$679 at Pier 5 Hotel.

Info: 866-583-4162, harbormagic.com

Maryland

The Atlantic Hotel, Berlin.

Celebrate: "Elegant New Year's Eve Soiree" includes a champagne and hors d'oeuvres reception, a five-course dinner with supper club entertainment and dancing to live jazz. Watch the ball drop at midnight outside the hotel with hot chocolate, hot cider and roasted chestnuts. Package is \$120 per person.

Stay: The "Victorian Romance Package" includes two nights in a deluxe room, champagne, flowers, turn-down service with chocolates and dinner for two in Drummer's Cafe. Package begins at \$386 per couple.

Info: 410-641-3589, atlantichotel.com/berlin-maryland-packages

Loews Hotel, Annapolis

Celebrate: Pat McGee's "Down the Hatch" New Year's Eve 2010 features an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, a champagne toast at midnight, music by the Pat McGee Band and a dance party with a DJ. Party tickets begin at \$109 per person, and reservations are required. Go to pmband.tickets.musictoday.com.

Stay: Guests attending "Down the Hatch" event qualify for Lowes New Year's Eve overnight rate of \$199, which includes breakfast. Make reservations by phone and mention Pat McGee's New Year's Eve.

Info: 410-263-7777

Antrim 1840, Taneytown

Celebrate: "Stunning New Year's Eve" begins with a raw bar and hors d' oeuvres passed throughout the festively decorated mansion, leading to a seven-course dinner with music and dancing on the veranda. The New Year is heralded with a Scottish bagpiper performing "Auld Lang Syne" followed by a champagne toast. Tickets are \$150 per person.

Stay: Overnight package includes lodging in the mansion, welcome toast at check in, afternoon tea and breakfast, starting at \$260 per couple.

Info: 410-756-6812, antrim1844.com

Inn At 202 Dover, Easton

Celebrate: "Elegant New Year's Eve" includes a five-course dinner with a glass of champagne and dancing to live music under the stars in the conservatory.

Stay: One night's accommodation with the New Year's Eve event and New Year's Day brunch starts at \$650 per couple. Stay a second night, and the suite is half price at \$225, including breakfast.

Info: 800-450-7600, innat202dover.com

The Lighthouse Club Inn at [Fager's Island](#), Ocean City

Celebrate: "Rockin New Year's Eve" features two live bands, Big Romeo and DJ Grove and noise makers. The back deck has been enclosed so the dance floor extends out to the beach. Champagne toast at midnight.

Stay: Package starts at \$799 per couple and includes two nights' accommodations in a suite at the [Fager's Island](#) Lighthouse Club, champagne reception, dinner for two at [Fager's Island](#) Restaurant, access to the party — including transportation and Live Jazz Brunch on New Year's Day.

Info: 410-524-5400, <http://www.fagers.com/hotel/packages.php>

Inn At Perry Cabin, St. Michaels

Celebrate: A five-course prix fixe New Year's Eve dinner for two including wine pairing and a glass of champagne, plus dancing.

Stay: Minimum of two nights is required. Package starts at \$700 per room and includes brunch, breakfast for two in luxury in Sherwood's Landing, one-hour cocktail reception and complimentary access to the Linden Spa.

Info: perrycabin.com or call 866-278-9601

The Princess Royale, Ocean City

Celebrate: Two party packages are available, one for a buffet and the other for a five-course dinner.

"Atrium Stars" includes an open bar, dinner buffet, live band, champagne toast and favors. "Palmetto Ballroom Gourmet Dinner" offers a five-course gourmet meal, six-hour open bar, live band, champagne toast and favors.

Stay: Atrium Stars party package includes one-night pool view suite accommodations, starting at \$149 per person. The Palmetto Ballroom party package includes one-night oceanview suite accommodations, starting at \$179 per person.

Info: 800-476-9253, <http://www.princessroyale.com/pdf/newyearsblast.pdf>

The Clarion Fontainebleau Hotel, Ocean City

Celebrate: The Grand New Year's Eve gala includes dinner buffet with open bar and three bands in separate banquet rooms.

Stay: An ocean-view room with late checkout, tickets to the New Year's celebration and a pass to the hotel's on-site spa starts at \$249 per person for two nights, and \$269 per person for three nights.

Info: 410-524-3535, clarionoc.com

Washington

Gaylord National Resort

Celebrate: "Big Night DC Gala" tickets include admission to 15 themed party areas with headliner party bands and DJs, five dance floors, all-night buffet and midnight celebration. Party tickets are sold separately for \$109 per person.

Stay: Rooms begin at \$179 per night for ticket holders and may be booked through the Big Night website.

Info: 301-965-2000 and mention the group code "BIGNITE," bignightdc.com

The Grand Hyatt Washington

Celebrate: At "Downtown Countdown," the Grand Hyatt partners with radio station DC101 to host five all-inclusive, in-house open bar parties with live bands, comedy shows, buffet and the city's largest balloon drop. Prices begin at \$109 per person. (Be aware that the prices increase as tickets diminish.) The Hyatt Regency Baltimore also offers a similar event called Mother's Downtown Countdown.

Stay: Ticket holders receive discounted rooms starting at \$179 per night.

Info: Book rooms at downtowncountdown.net.

The Park Hyatt, Washington

Celebrate: "New Year's at The Park" event includes two tickets to the New Year's celebration in The Lounge, featuring open bar, live Brazilian bossa nova music, tapas buffet, dessert and chocolate buffet, and champagne toast at midnight.

Stay: The hotel packages this event with a spacious Premier Park Deluxe king room, special welcome amenities, breakfast for two and valet parking for \$559 per couple.

Info: parkwashington.hyatt.com

Virginia

The Homestead Resort, Hot Springs

Celebrate: "New Year's at The Homestead" offers champagne upon arrival and an escort to dinner. There are two after-dinner parties from which to choose: a swing party in the main dining room and a soul and funk party featuring Motown sounds in the Grand Ballroom.

Stay: Overnight accommodations, breakfast, all resort activities and gala tickets begins at \$790 per couple.

Info: Package must be booked by calling 540-839-1766.

Warner Hall, Gloucester

Celebrate: "New Year's Dining and Entertainment Weekend" begins with a five-course dinner on New Year's Eve, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and wine. Next is live music, dancing and a champagne toast at midnight, with chocolate dipped strawberries. On New Year's Day, enjoy brunch in the morning and an "I'll be good ... tomorrow!" dinner buffet with cocktails in the evening. The next day features a gourmet breakfast with a "Healthy Resolutions" option for all who want a fresh start. \$299 per couple and includes all above.

Stay: The package starts at \$299 per couple. Book at third night for 50 percent off the room rate.

Info: 804-695-9565, warnerhall.com/bed-and-breakfast-virginia-specials.asp

Williamsburg Winery and Wedmore Place, Williamsburg

Celebrate: "Dance the Night Away at the Winery" features a four-course dinner paired with wine and served while Heritage Dancers demonstrate traditional Colonial dances. After dinner, dance to the Williamsburg Symphonia and enjoy a champagne toast at midnight.

Stay: Overnight accommodations, event tickets, continental breakfast with a mimosa and a tour and tasting for two at the Williamsburg Winery begins at \$495 per couple.

Info: 757-229-0999 ext. 191, wedmoreplace.com

Tides Inn, Irvington

Celebrate: This black-tie-optional event includes a wine and cheese reception, followed by a three-course dinner. After dinner enjoy a live band, dancing and cash bar.

Stay: Deluxe waterfront accommodations in the main inn of the resort, the gala celebration and New Year's Day breakfast starts at \$386 per couple.

Info: 800-843-3746, ask for the New Years Eve Package

West Virginia

The Blennerhassett, Parkersburg

Celebrate: "Glamour, Baby, New Year's Eve" is a night of "Hollywood elegance," featuring dancing and dinner for two in the style of a 1950s supper club. It includes a midnight champagne toast and buffet.

Stay: Overnight package includes the dinner party and starts at \$199 per couple.

Info: 304-422-3131, theblennerhassett.com

The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs

Celebrate: The "New Year's Eve Gala" features an orchestra, plated dinner, a midnight champagne toast and access to the resort's new Casino Club, starting at \$250 per person.

Stay: Greenbrier's Holiday Meal Plan package includes accommodations, breakfast and dinner, resort activities and special holiday events, including daily performances and entertainment, demonstrations and workshops, beginning at \$670 per couple, per night. Two-night minimum stay required.

Info: 800-453-4858, <http://www.greenbrier.com/packages-offers/New-Year's-Eve-2010.aspx>

Bavarian Inn, Shepardstown

Celebrate: Black-tie-optional package includes New Year's Eve Gala with four-course dinner, dancing with live band, midnight champagne toast, and breakfast at 1 a.m.

Stay: The package includes the gala and two night's accommodations, beginning at \$560 per couple.

Info: 304-876-2551, bavarianinnwv.com

Pennsylvania

New Years Eve Philadelphia

Celebrate: The city hosts two-signature events with free trolley transportation between the galas and partner hotels. Be certain to check out the VIP tickets offering exclusive amenities. Book this soon as event tickets become more expensive as the date draws near. The event includes:

- The 8th Annual Glitter City Gala at the National Constitution Center featuring live entertainment and music over two enormous ballroom floors, a DJ between band sets, open bar including champagne toast at midnight, specialty martini and margarita bars, beer bars, food stations, party favors and views



of fireworks show at midnight. General admission tickets start at \$120 per person. Go to nyephilly.com.

•The 5th Annual "12Midnight at the Crystal Tea Room" features live dance music with Philly Funk Authority, DJs, multiple dance floors, light show, open bars, specialty tequila, martini, margarita and wine bars, beer stations, buffet food stations, midnight balloon drop and favors. General admission is \$99 per person.

Stay: Several hotels tie in overnight packages to both events. The Loews Hotel package includes deluxe accommodations for up to four people. The hotel is one block from Philadelphia Mummers Day Parade the following morning. Rates begin at \$189. Check out all of the lodging specials at nyephilly.com/hotels.

The French Manor Inn and Spa, Poconos

Celebrate: This intimate, refined inn celebrates New Year's Eve with a black-tie, eight-course dinner with wine pairings and champagne, jazz band and party favors.

Stay: Two-night packages include lodging, full country breakfasts, candlelight dinners, turn-down service with chocolates, New Year's Eve activities and gifts, beginning at \$415 per person.

Info: 877-720-6090, thefrenchmanor.com/nye

The Gateway Lodge, Cooksburg

Celebrate: "New Year's Weekend" includes an appetizer buffet, five-course seated dinner, live, local bluegrass band and a midnight champagne toast.

Stay: The package includes two nights in a fireside Jacuzzi suite, chef tasting for two, New Year's Eve dinner and breakfast both mornings for \$599 per couple.

Info: 800-843-6862, gatewaylodge.com

The Mercersburg Inn, Mercersburg

Celebrate: This black-tie-preferred evening begins with a five-course chef's dinner with wine, then features dancing in the Great Room and midnight champagne toast with finger sweets for \$160 per person.

Stay: Accommodations include a plush feather bed dressed in Egyptian-cotton linens, New Year's Day three-course breakfast and late check-out, beginning at \$160 per room, per night.

Info: 717-328-5231, mercersburginn.com/newyearseve2008.htm

The Lodge At Woodloch, Hawley

Celebrate: The "New Year's Eve Ball" begins with a cocktail party with violin and cello accompaniment. Next is a "tasting" dinner paired with fine wines and ales, followed by live music dance party and champagne toast at midnight.

Stay: Package includes the dinner party, two nights' accommodations and access to resort amenities beginning at \$324 per person, per night.

Info: 866-953-8500, thelodgeatwoodloch.com/special-packages/newyearseve

Nemacolin Woodlands, Farmington

Celebrate: "New Year's Eve at Falling Rock" features live music and dancing, party favors, champagne toast at midnight and balloon drop.

Stay: This package includes accommodations, breakfast and New Year's dinner at Aqueous, New Year's Eve party and access to all resort activities for \$1,752 per couple. (Resort fee of \$15 per day is additional.)

Info: 724-329-8555, nemacolin.com (click on special events)

Marriott Lancaster

Celebrate: The evening begins with a cocktail reception with hors d'oeuvres, leading to a three-course seated dinner with music provided by a jazz trio. After dinner, enjoy a live music dance party with open bar and midnight champagne toast, followed by dessert and coffee.

Stay: A standard room, including the New Year's Eve party, begins at \$349 per couple.

Info: 717-239-1600, marriott.com/hotels/travel/lnsmc-lancaster-marriott-at-penn-square

Delaware

The Atlantic Sands Hotel, Rehoboth Beach

Celebrate: "New Years Eve Gala" features buffet dinner, open bar, live band, party favors and midnight champagne toast.

Stay: Overnight accommodations for two, including the gala is \$353 per couple.

Info: 302-227-2511, atlanticsandshotel.com

Hotel Dupont, Wilmington

Celebrate: "Green Room Gala" begins with a six-course dinner with wine pairings with music, dancing to a live band and champagne toast at midnight.

Stay: The "Green Room Gala" package includes overnight accommodation with early check-in/late checkout, overnight valet parking, welcome bottle of champagne upon arrival and New Year's Day breakfast for \$575 per couple.

Info: 800-441-9019, hoteldupont.com/specials-packages/index.cfm

New Jersey

House of Blues in Showboat Casino, Atlantic City

Celebrate: The extraordinary Rock Star Package features two tickets within the first three rows of the New Year's Eve Maroon 5 concert, VIP entry for the concert and "meet and greet" with the band.

Stay: Two accommodations packages are available: "The Rock Star" includes overnight accommodations at one of the exclusive rock-star-inspired House of Blues studio suites with state-of-the-art entertainment systems, personal concierge and access to House of Blues recording studios, starting at \$1,699 per person. (There are a limited number of packages remaining.) "The Standard" NYE package includes a standard room, two tickets to the concert, and access to The Foundation Room, where fans can share a cocktail with the music stars after the show (food and beverages not included), starting at \$749 per person.

Info: Reservations by telephone only: 609-343-4000

Congress Hall, Cape May

Celebrate: The "Glitter Ball" features five-course dinner, live dance band, open bar, party favors, and midnight champagne toast.

Stay: New Year's Eve package includes a three-night minimum stay, daily breakfast, and tickets to the ball, beginning at \$1,135.90 per couple.

Info: 888-944-1816, congresshall.com

Tropicana, Atlantic City

Celebrate: Black-tie-optional dance party in Trop's Grand Exhibition Center featuring full buffet dinner with open bar and a balloon drop in the casino just outside the ballroom.

Stay: Overnight accommodations for two, including New Year's Day brunch and the party is \$425 per person.

Info: 800-345-8767, mention code TNYE10

