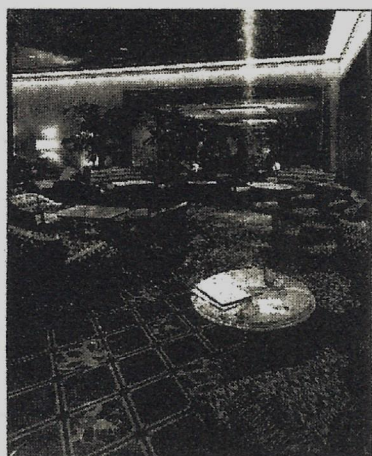
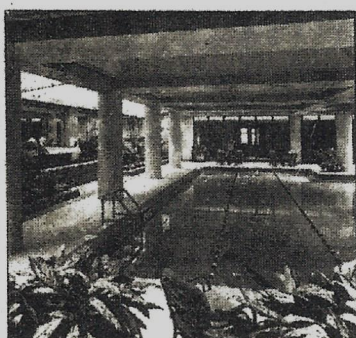


TRAVEL



The Swann Lounge (above) is one of the features at the Four Seasons Hotel that makes for an elegant weekend getaway. For those who like to mix fitness with relaxation, the hotel also has an indoor pool and other athletic facilities. Other hotels in the area offer similar packages.



No need to go far for a much-needed change of scene

By BARBARA ROSENBERG
Special to the Exponent

A weekend away from home, but within easy reach, may be just the thing you're looking for. As it happens, right now — practically right under your nose — there are so many opportunities for sparkling weekend hotel packages that it's dizzyingly difficult to choose from among them. Imagine achieving a feeling of total change, with no long automobile rides, no jet lag — yet with all manner of perks right here in Philadelphia. What a treat!

You can choose from among different locations, each with its own atmosphere: downtown (historic); uptown (sophisticated business); and City Line (bordering on suburban, but with a difference).

Actually, the oldest part of the city has some of the newest hotels: the Sheraton Society Hill, Omni, the Independence Park Inn and Penn's View Inn. Each has a variety of weekend packages.

The Sheraton Society Hill offers

romance packages that include accommodations, champagne, parking and breakfast for \$149 per night. An additional \$50 per night purchases the deluxe romance package, with "deluxe" denoting dinner for two at Hadley's, the hotel's dining room.

If you wish to bring your children, the Sheraton also offers a "V.I.K. (Very Important Kids)" program, including special check-in, with a computer available for kids to input such vital information as name, address, birthday — and, best of all, their favorite candy. On Saturdays, the hotel's Wooden Nickel lounge turns into the "Kid's Quarters," with a variety of games, free popcorn and movies. Youngsters also receive a "welcome kit" filled with toys and other goodies.

If you think you need just a little longer than a normal Friday-to-midday-Sunday break, you might be a candidate for the Sheraton's "Endless Weekend," starting as early as Thurs-

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day. Sunday check-out isn't until 6 p.m.

The dignified Omni, just across the street from Independence Park, coddles its weekend guests in large, quietly appointed rooms and with breakfast or brunch in the Azalea, its restaurant known for contemporary American fare.

A special Picasso package will be offered during the run of the landmark show, June 16 to August 23, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The package includes two unrestricted tickets to the exhibit, one night in a deluxe room and full American breakfast for two, all at a cost of \$142 per night.

The tiny, 28-room Penn's View Inn, located in a lovingly restored 1828 building overlooking the Delaware, sponsors a weekend-escape package offering two nights in a double-occupancy room, dinner for two at Restaurant Panorama, champagne delivered to the room and continental breakfast. The total package, costing \$199 for two, is offered for either Friday and Saturday, or Saturday and Sunday, nights.

Independence Park Inn, an American translation of an understated European hotel, also has some weekend specials at different times of the year.

Moving away from history to sophisticated "uptown" locations, people have several choices, ranging from tradition (in the Hotel Atop the Bellevue, often fondly referred to as the "Grand Dame of Broad Street") to contemporary elegance (the Rittenhouse Hotel and Condominiums and the Four Seasons). There is also the Ritz-Carlton,

the luxurious "new kid on the block" — relatively speaking — at 17th and Chestnut Sts. All have attractive weekend specials.

The Hotel Atop the Bellevue pairs sybaritic accommodations with the very "in" concept of fitness and health as the theme of one of its most popular packages. It offers unlimited use of the Sporting Club, a complete exercise facility; a choice of pampering spa treatments at Pierre and Carlo's European Spa and Salon; and, in keeping with the theme, "gourmet" spa meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Other specialized services, such as styling, makeup and a one-on-one session with a registered dietitian, are available at extra cost. Otherwise, all services for the three-day package are included in the price of \$539 per person.

The Four Seasons Hotel offers a variety of choices for weekend getaways: a simple bed-and-breakfast package at \$199 per night; "Suite Romance" for a honeymoon, an anniversary or another occasion that calls for romance; or "Elegant Relaxation." The "Suite Romance" package — \$270 per night — includes accommodations in an executive suite, champagne, flowers, a gift and breakfast; the "Elegant Relaxation" package, for \$280 per night, consists of a private, 30-minute massage for each guest, breakfast and valet parking.

The Rittenhouse Hotel and Condominiums also has a great variety of weekend options. The "Weekend on a Whim," available on Friday and Saturday nights, starts at \$135 per night for single or double occupancy, and includes valet parking, unlimited use of the health club, swimming pool and exercise equipment, taxes and gratuities. The "Indulge Weekend" offers accommodations

For Main Liners looking for a change of pace, there's the Adam's Mark Hotel. The complex includes the Marker, known for its fine dining, as well as varied entertainment facilities with jazz and other live music. It also has indoor and outdoor swimming pools, racquetball facilities and other attractions.

Packages at the Adam's Mark range from \$68 per night for a two-night stay to \$149 for the "Romantic Package." The latter includes a deluxe room; a Chateaubriand dinner for two, with wine, served in the room; cocktails for two in Quincy's nightclub or Pierre's cocktail lounge; and breakfast for two in the room or in Appleby's, a family restaurant.

With such a rich assortment of choices, why would anyone want to stay home? ■