

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

The best holiday gifts are closer than you think

Looking for some fun gift ideas for loved ones on your list? Here are some "insider tips" from Ozaukee County Tourism professionals!

■ **Wayne F. Chruscziel, executive director, Port Washington Tourism:** My kids and grandkids are very active, so when they come home to visit I love to give them experiences that are unique to the area. Snowmobiling and snowshoeing are great winter activities — check out Ozaukee County Planning and Parks for trail conditions, and snowrunnersltd.net for snowmobiling maps and grooming reports. Port Washington offers a number of places to buy and rent outdoor gear, or book activities like kayaks, canoes and fishing charters. A planned charter may be a few months off when given for the holidays, but if I pair it up with some outdoor gear from a place like Sherpers, the kids have a cool gift to open, and something to look forward to when they visit in the summer!

■ **Maggie Dobson, executive director, Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce:** One of my favorite holiday "tricks" is a gift certificate to a local restaurant! Not only is it supporting a local establishment, it gives a way to celebrate a favorite place or help someone try a new dining experience. A certificate to a fun place like Toast Cedarburg, Fork & Tap or The Stilt House is a great conversation starter and a perfect addition to anyone's stocking! Also, many of our local chambers, including Cedarburg, offer Chamber gift checks that are good at any member business. This is a great way to

gift someone an experience they can really make their own.

■ **Irene Buechler, Buechler Farms LLC:** Looking for that perfect tree, or a seasonal gift for a loved one? Consider a tree-hunting trip with the family or a group of friends! Memories are great gifts, and the perfect tree or a seasonal gift will remind someone of you for weeks and months to come. At Buechler Farms, all the trees are freshly cut and out of the elements, and our wreaths and planters are lush and beautiful. The smell of the barn is heavenly — visiting with a friend is a gift in itself. Stop in our shop where you will find local vendors, hot cider, cocoa or even grab some hot chili. Don't forget about Santa! He will be visiting every weekend from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. through Dec. 10.

■ **Elizabeth Mueller, executive director, Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce:** Do you struggle to find just the right gift — the right color, the right size? Grafton Area Chamber Gift Checks are the perfect solution. The checks can be purchased for any denomination starting at \$10 and are redeemable at over 250 chamber businesses. The recipient could redeem it for a nice dinner out, sign up for a class, play a round of golf or purchase a much-desired item. No need to stand in a long line after the holidays to return a 'bad' gift... purchase the gift that fits every time. Feel free to call the Grafton Chamber office at 262-377-1650 to pre-order the gift checks and they will be ready for pick up at your convenience.

■ **Sean Dineen, Inventors Brewpub:** Someone once said, "people who say you're hard to buy

for must not know where to buy beer." Ozaukee County has so many great places to stop for a local craft beer, glass of wine or bottle of spirits. Consider putting together gift baskets as a personalized gift for a friend — a growler or a few cans of locally brewed beer, a bottle of wine or flavored moonshine, a pair of pint or shot glasses, some salty snacks and maybe a gift card or two and you're all set. A growler of a unique seasonal beer also makes a great host gift when you're showing up to a holiday party.

■ **Corinne Kangas, Hampton Inn & Suites:** I always love it when someone plans a special getaway as a gift, even if it's just a night or two in the next town over. Kids love a chance to explore a new town, stay in a hotel, swim in a pool (especially in the winter!) and eat in new restaurants — and they don't care if home is just a 10-minute drive away! You can even find hotels that are pet-friendly, so you don't have to leave your furry family members behind!

■ **Mary Ann Velnetske, Ozaukee County Historical Society:** Consider a gift that will not be forgotten and a gift for someone who has everything! An Ozaukee County Historical Society gift membership is an experience for the whole family ... a membership provides free admission to most Pioneer Village events, a 10% discount in the gift shop and one hour of free research at the Hazel Wirth Archives.

■ **Tara Williams, executive director, Belgium Chamber of Commerce:** Belgium is unique in its deep connection to the tiny European country of Luxembourg. Did you know that the Luxembourg American Cultural Society not only offers gift membership packages, but also has its own Luxembourgish gift shop (in person or online at www.lacs.lu), filled to the brim with Luxembourgish wearables, drinkware, games and other items not available anywhere else? To bring things a bit closer to home, the Belgium Area Chamber of Commerce suggests a Chamber Gift Certificate. Available at Port Washington State Bank in Belgium in the denomination of your choice, these handy gifts serve the same as cash at nearly 80 businesses in Belgium and the surrounding areas. The perfect way to ensure your gift will benefit a small local business while providing a wide variety of uses — from home improvements to retail shopping, flowers, haircuts, dining, entertainment and so much more!

■ **Cori Rice Kaminsky, White Rice Advertising:** My parents live out of town, but two of their favorite things are still back up here in Wisconsin — their grandchildren. They love receiving branded T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats and spirit wear from our local stores, and from the high school representing the kids' sports and activities. Places like the Cedarburg Visitor Center, the Shops of Cedar Creek Settlement, the



Submitted photos

Top, the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts gift shop has jewelry and a large selection of other hand-made art as well as museum memberships. **Above**, guided hiking tours and merchandise from Ozaukee County-based Trail Dog & Company are an option for the active person on one's list.

Cedarburg Cultural Center and Locally Inspired in Port have great selections of locally branded items, as well as our local schools! If you're ever in Hot Springs Village, Ark., and see a friendly couple boasting Cedarburg gear, you'll know who they got it from!

■ **Melissa Wraalstad, executive director, Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts:** If you have an art lover on your list, check out the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts' Gift Shop in Cedarburg and Locally Inspired in Port Washington. The museum's Gift Shop features one-of-a-kind handmade items from local artists. The Gift Shop is free to visit; no admission is required to shop! For the quilter or budding artist on your list, museum memberships make a great, year-long gift and provide free admission and class discounts. Support local artists while also supporting a local museum. And be sure to stop by Locally Inspired. This fun shop features a carefully curated selec-

tion of handmade items from Wisconsin artists in a cozy and uplifting setting. Both places offer you a chance to shop local and find that unique item you won't see anywhere else.

■ **Andrew Struck, director of Planning & Parks, Ozaukee County:** Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department offers a number of great gift opportunities, from gift certificates to the golf courses and pro shops at Mee-Kwon Park and Hawthorne Hills, to disc golf annual passes at Tendick Nature Park, to memorial trees, benches and pavers that can be placed in places like our parks and courses, along the Interurban Trail, or at our new Virmond County Park stairway. What a great way to give a gift that can last throughout a season ... and in some cases, even a lifetime!

On behalf of your Ozaukee County Tourism Board, thanks for shopping, dining and spending your time in Ozaukee County this holiday season!



Submitted photo

The Stilt House and many, many other restaurants offer gift cards.