

Marin Independent Journal

October 7, 2012



Provided by Six Flags Discovery Kingdom

Performers show their freaky side in the Dance Macabre production at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo.

Attractions around Bay Area pull out all spooky stops

By Linda Zavoral
Bay Area News Group

THE SHRIEKS last longer. The zombies wander for weeks. The rattling of chains goes on and on. Halloween, once a one-night wonder, has become a full month of the macabre at California attractions. Here's a guide to the thrills and chills.

Winchester Mystery House

You might call this historic home California's first Halloween attraction, what with its maze of 160 rooms, secret passages, baffling staircases and architectural oddities based on the number 13. During Fright Nights, the house adds ghoulish scares to its year-round focus on the eccentric Sarah Winchester and her nonstop home expansion that, legend has it, was aimed at foiling the Winchester rifle curse.

►**When:** Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Nov. 3, plus two Thursdays (Oct. 18 and 25) and Oct. 29, 30 and 31. Hours are 6:30 p.m. to midnight most nights.

►**Details:** Because of sellouts, advance tickets are recommended. Fright Nights tickets, \$40-\$45, include a flashlight tour and a 40-minute-long Curse of Sarah Winchester Maze. (For ages 13 and up only.) 525 S. Winchester Blvd., San Jose. 408-247-2101; www.winchester-mysteryhouse.com.

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom

The North Bay theme park's Fright Fest combines nighttime gore and horror for teens and adults with daytime Halloween fun for families. New this year are the Massacre Mine, where wicked spirits haunt an abandoned shaft, and Cirkus Berzerkus, which is full of crazed, maniacal clowns.

►**When:** Weekends plus the last two Fridays before Halloween. Hours are noon to 10 p.m. Saturdays, noon to 9 p.m. Sundays and 4 to 10 p.m. Oct. 19 and 26.

►**Details:** Tickets start at \$37.99 online, a savings of \$20 over the gate entrance fee; some attractions cost extra. 1001 Fairgrounds Drive, Vallejo. 707-643-6722; www.sixflags.com/discoverykingdom.



Provided by Dark Lair Studios

Fright Nights at San Jose's Winchester Mystery House can be spooky.

California's Great America

Three nights a week in October, ghouls transform Great America into a Halloween Haunt with mazes, themed scare zones and eerie stage shows for visitors 13 and older. On weekends during daytime, there's kid fun, including a Peanuts Spooktacular show, a foamy pumpkin patch to play in, and trick-or-treating with Snoopy and the gang.

►**When:** The Haunt is open 7 p.m. to midnight Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Oct. 28. The regular park is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekends only.

►**Details:** Haunt tickets start at \$25.99. Buy a Pre-Scare Boooffet from 5:30 to 7:30 for \$14, or a Haunt Club 13 Feast for \$75. Great America Parkway, Santa Clara. 408-988-1776; www.cagreatamerica.com.

Pirates of Emerson

This East Bay Halloween tradition has taken up residence at the Alameda County Fairgrounds. Here, it has morphed into a larger attraction featuring eight haunted zones, including Arachno, Fractured Fairytales, Corn Walk and, of course, the buccaneers.

►**When:** Open 20 nights in October, including Halloween, from 7 to 10 p.m. Closed Mondays, including Oct. 29.

►**Details:** Tickets, \$20 (weekdays) to \$25 (Friday-Saturday, plus Halloween). Those who purchase vouchers online will get preference in the ticket line; box-office sales are cash only. Alameda County Fairgrounds, Bernal and Valley avenues, Pleasanton. www.piratesofemerson.com.