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Louisiana Travels for Oct. 28

If you want to party with ghosts, New Orleans is the place for you

BY JUDY BERGERON

News Features assistant editor

November 12, 2012

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Halloween sends some brave souls in search of haunted places, and New Orleans has so many, one might need a guide.

Just in time for the spooky holiday, Clerisy Press has published *Spirits of New Orleans: Voodoo Curses, Vampire Legends, and Cities of the Dead* (\$15.95) as part of its America's Haunted Road Trip series.

The soft-cover book is by Kala Ambrose, and its 25 chapters cover the same number of spirited spots in the Big Easy, where Halloween is but another big party. But what might lurk in Pirates Alley on this frightful foggy night?

The book tells readers that it could be any of a number of spirits: maybe of those imprisoned in the old Spanish jail which once stood at the end of the alley, maybe that of the pirate Jean Lafitte, who is said to have had secret meetings with the governor and Gen. Andrew Jackson there, negotiating deals to free his brother, Pierre.

Haunted hotels are also covered, including the Place d'Armes Hotel. Some friends celebrating their wedding anniversary recently booked this hotel for that very reason. So the story goes, the first school in Louisiana once stood there, until the Great Fire of New Orleans broke out on March 21, 1788. A brave monk risked his life to save several of the children. He died two days later, but his spirit remains there, and each year on March 21, witnesses claim the monk appears and can be seen running in and out of the building for about a minute, then disappearing.

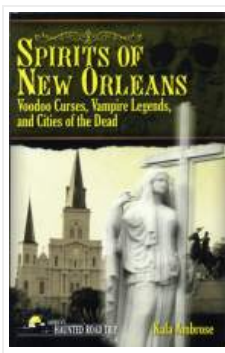


Photo provided by Carnival Cruise LinesThe Carnival Conquest, whose home base is New Orleans, recently underwent a major renovation.

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Each chapter offers a detailed history of its alleged hauntedness, along with photos and travel tips from Ambrose, such as it's safest to visit the cemeteries with a tour group during the day, what's best at Antoine's and Arnaud's, and that Reverend Zombie's House of Voodoo is a good place to have a reading. Ambrose is a psychic as well, and does include some of her eerie, extrasensory experiences at these locations.

Conquest refurbished

New Orleans' largest year round cruise ship, Carnival Conquest, has been docked for two weeks in Freeport, The Bahamas, where it underwent a major multi-million-dollar refurbishment, getting upgrades in dining, bar and entertainment. It's scheduled to return to the Port of New Orleans Sunday, Oct. 28.

Among the highlights are Guy's Burger Joint, developed in tandem with Food Network personality Guy Fieri, an EA SPORTS Bar, and the poolside RedFrog Rum Bar and BlueIguana Tequila Bar.

In celebration, Carnival is awarding one person a free Carnival Conquest seven-day cruise for two to the Caribbean.

Register by Sunday, Oct. 28 (yes, today) by completing an on-line registration form at <http://www.carnival.com>. When Carnival Conquest returns to service at the Port of New Orleans Sunday.

Other ship enhancements include:

- The Punchliner Comedy Club & The Punchliner Comedy Brunch presented by George Lopez brings comedic talent, curated by the popular comedian and TV personality, along with a humorous twist on brunch.
- Cherry on Top celebrates the joys of simple indulgences with bins of bulk candy, fun-and-fanciful gifts, just-because novelties, colorful custom apparel and more.
- By early December, the ship will also feature Hasbro, The Game Show and Playlist Productions. Hasbro, The Game Show makes guests the stars of the show through larger-than-life adaptations of the company's iconic board games, while Playlist Productions is a dramatic retooling of Carnival's legendary revues that combines live performances with high-tech LED staging and special effects.

ON THE INTERNET:

<http://www.carnival.com>

Celebrate Crawlween

Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium in New Orleans invites guests to celebrate Halloween "infestivities" at Crawlween on Wednesday, Oct. 31.

Children are encouraged to wear their Halloween costumes, learn about the myths behind some "scary" critters, make a bug craft and enjoy Halloween treats.

Staff entomologists will be on hand to talk about myths and legends behind some of the most misunderstood arthropods including roaches, spiders, and maggots.

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