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8 great Halloween winery adventures

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Castello di Amorosa transforms its Tuscan-style winery for the annual Pagan Ball. (Courtesy of Jim Sullivan)

Vines gnarled like a witch's back. Cobblestoned barrel rooms splattered with red stains. Labs brimming with beakers and gurgling mystery brews.

Face it -- wineries were made for Halloween. This month, vintners from Sonoma to the Santa Cruz Mountains are unlatching their cellar doors to host costume parties, pagan balls, horror movie screenings, pumpkin patches and even a carnival for kids.

This year, skip the tricks and treats for sips and scares at these eight great events.

Mountain Winery's Halloween Bash

The bash: Enjoy a creepy test tube shot in the Mad Scientist Bar, take a break by the fire pit in the Black Cat Cellar Patio, or sip from the sangria cauldron in the Haunted Forest Witches Wine Bar. Nibble on creepy appetizers in the Voodoo VIP Lounge, or dance the night away to cover tunes by The Cocktail Monkeys on the Grand Hall & Winery Deck. 21 and older.

Witching hour: 7 to 11 p.m. Oct. 31

Devilish details: \$35 online; \$40 at the door; \$110 for VIP lounge. Food and beverages not included. Reservations recommended. Mountain Winery, 14831 Pierce Road, Saratoga; www.mountainwinery.com (<http://www.mountainwinery.com>)

Spooky Day at MJA Vineyards

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Concannon Vineyard's Hallow Wine Walk

The bash: Souls of Concannon past are floating around this 130-year-old winery. Perhaps you'll run into a few on these frightful evening strolls through their Livermore vineyards. Tour the historic grounds and drink the blood of the vine as you listen to the ghosts of vintages past tell their tales. This spooky adventure includes a special wine and Halloween candy pairing at each shadowy encounter. Costumes encouraged. Flashlights, too.

Witching hour: After sunset, Oct. 23-25

Devilish details: \$25 (21 and older). Reservations recommended. Concannon Vineyard, 4590 Tesla Road, Livermore. www.concannonvineyard.com (<http://www.concannonvineyard.com>)



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Spider webs add a spooky factor to Concannon Vineyard, which hosts nightly Halloween wine walks in the vineyards. (Courtesy of Jessica Betando)

<http://tinyurl.com/l4mc28l> (<http://tinyurl.com/l4mc28l>)

Francis Ford Coppola Winery's Halloween Carnival

The bash: The ninth annual Kids' Harvest and Halloween Carnival is all about family, with kid-friendly games, DJ entertainment in the winery's spacious Pavilion, pumpkin decorating and costume celebration.

Witching hour: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 26

Devilish details: \$10 per child, free for accompanying adult. Francis Ford Coppola Winery, 300 Via Archimedes, Geyserville. www.francisfordcoppolawinery.com (<http://www.francisfordcoppolawinery.com>)

Castello di Amorosa Pagan Ball

The bash: The Tuscan-inspired winery's sixth annual Halloween party begins with an early RIP (that's not a typo) reception followed by wine, To Die For food and wine stations, fortune telling, self-guided tours of the haunted chambers (which include a prison and 300-year-old iron maiden) and a Haunted Haybale Lounge.



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The bash: This Hawaiian-themed tasting room will be transformed into a ghoulish party, complete with costume contest (the winner gets a free bottle of reserve wine and tastings for two) and a mighty mead or sangria witches brew station. Pumpkin patch outside. Mahalo-ween.

Witching hour: Noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 25

Devilish details: \$8. Complimentary cheese and chocolate. MJA Vineyards, 24900 Highland Way, Los Gatos; www.mjavineyards.com (<http://www.mjavineyards.com>)

Raymond Vineyards' Crystal Costume Ball

The bash: For the fifth annual costume ball, proprietor Jean-Charles Boisset is transforming Napa's adult Disneyland into a 007-themed rager. Don your best Grace Jones costume or dress up as the devilishly handsome agent himself. From the fur-covered trapeze in the mirrored, stainless steel tank room to the velvet-lined lounge lit by Baccarat chandeliers, Raymond promises to be a hot spot for Halloween.

Witching hour: 7 p.m. to midnight Oct. 25

Devilish details: \$50. Raymond Vineyards, 849 Zinfandel Lane, St. Helena.

Witching hour: RIP reception, 7 p.m. General admission, 8 p.m. All ghouls return to the grave at midnight. Oct. 25.

Devilish details: \$125-\$155. Reservations required. Castello di Amorosa, 4045 St Helena Highway, Calistoga. www.castellodiamorosa.com (<http://www.castellodiamorosa.com>)

Rutherford Hill's Zombie Ball

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Flora Springs hosts an October scary movie night and releases a Ghost Winery bottling every year for Halloween. (Courtesy of Mora Cronin)

The bash: All ghouls, goblins, witches and zombies are summoned for a night of terror-ific fun. Appear at the winery's haunted cave for a spooktacular evening of wicked wine, devilish

dinner and a dance floor fit for all boogying zombies. Dinner starts at 7 p.m., and the ball begins at 9.

Witching hour: 6 p.m. to midnight Oct. 31

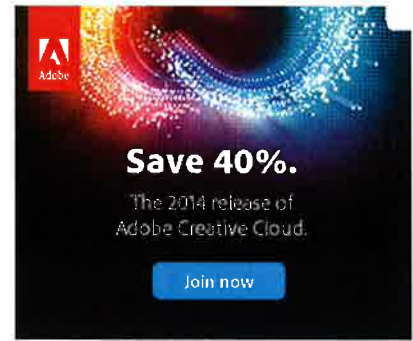
Devilish details: \$130 includes dinner. Rutherford Hill Winery, 200 Rutherford Hill Road, Rutherford. www.rutherfordhill.com (<http://www.rutherfordhill.com>)

Flora Springs' The Room Halloween Harvest Picnic & Movie Night

The bash: October's movie night will feature attendees' favorite scary movie -- check the winery's Facebook page for the final vote -- screened in the rooftop lounge, plus a classic candy and popcorn bar. Want to make a night out of it? Begin with live music in the vineyard courtyard along with a picnic (bring your own or order via the winery two days in advance).

Witching hour: 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Oct. 18

Devilish details: \$20 for movie and popcorn; \$55 for vineyard courtyard picnic; \$35 for picnic pail. Flora Springs Winery, 677 South St. Helena Highway, St. Helena. www.florasprings.com (<http://www.florasprings.com>)



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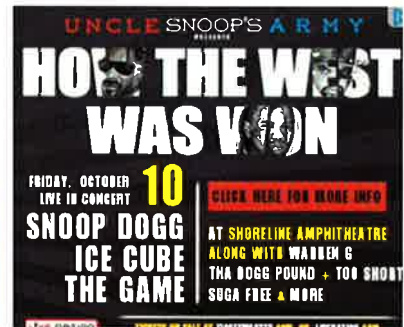
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