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13 Horror Film Festivals to Die For

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Nowadays, horror film festivals seem to be popping up faster than the undead in a George Romero zombie flick. For those looking to spend this Halloween season in style, *MM* has picked 13 fests that offer just about everything a horror fan would die for. So take a look at some of the most frightfully fun festivals taking place this October. You're guaranteed to have a spookactular time!

Dark Carnival Film Festival

Bloomington, Indiana

October 21-23

Recognized by *MM* as one of the top "25 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee," the eerie Dark Carnival has been scaring audiences silly since 2007. This unique fest takes its wicked title to heart (Bloomington was, in the early 20th century, home to many traveling circuses), by creating a terrifyingly twisted carnival atmosphere, complete with cackling psychotic clowns and a live side show. Special events this year include a Monster's Ball at Jake's Nightclub (featuring live music and a costume contest) and a special effects workshop. Films, which include the best in indie horror from around the world, are screened in a vintage 1930s-era movie theater, complete with state-of-the-art sound and projection equipment.

Eerie Horror Film Festival

Erie, Pennsylvania

October 21-30

What better excuse to take a trip to Erie, PA this October than by attending the aptly named Eerie Horror Film Festival? Since 2004, the fest has attracted thousands of fans, moviemakers and screenwriters for a four day celebration of the best in genre cinema, featuring celebrity guests, screenings and workshops. Taking place at the prestigious Warner Theater, this year's special guests include the stars of cult favorite *The Boondock Saints* (Sean Patrick Flanery, Norman Reedus and David Della Rocco), Alex Vincent (little Andy from *Child's Play*) and A. Michael Baldwin (the *Phantasm* series).



A Leatherface fan attends the Dark Carnival Film Festival.

Fear Fête Horror Film Festival

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

October 28-30

Louisiana's premier independent horror film festival, Fear Fête makes its debut this year. The fest will feature local, national and international horror flicks. Fear Fête organizes its films by specific sub-genre blocks (labels include Fantasy Horror, Zombie, Paranormal, Thriller and Comedy Horror), with each program consisting of two or three shorts followed by a feature. The festival ends with a "Best of the Fête" block, concluding with David Valdez and Philip Gunn's sure-to-be terrifying *Klown Kamp Massacre*.

Freak Show Horror Film Festival

Orlando, Florida

October 7-9

This October, why not get your Freak Show on at this ghoulishly fun three-day fest? Named one of *MM*'s "20 Coolest Film Festivals," Freak Show was founded by veteran independent moviemaker Robert J. Massetti as way to showcase some of the

most talented, up-and-coming horror moviemakers working today. This year's scheduled premieres include George Clarke's *The Last Light*, Kenneth Cran's *The Millennium Bug* and Travis Betz's *The Dead Inside*. Winners receive a unique, specially designed "Freaky" award created by special effects makeup artist Barry Anderson (*Jeepers Creepers*), and this year's winning short films will be shown on FEARnet.com. The festival is part of Spooky Empire's Ultimate Horror Weekend, a huge horror convention that takes place at the Wyndham Orlando Resort.

Madison Horror Film Festival

Madison, Wisconsin

October 8

Featuring a ghoulishly entertaining mix of the latest buzz-worthy independent features (this year, the selection includes the latest from Lucky "May" McKee, *The Woman*) and shorts, the Madison Horror Film Festival also provides an opportunity for talented young moviemakers to showcase their work. Taking the spotlight this year are Christopher R. Mihm (with *Attack of the Moon Zombies*) and Thomas Berdinski (with *Zombie Abomination: The Italian Zombie Movie - Part 1*, *The Giant Rubber Monster Movie*). And don't forget to attend the festival pre-party on October 7, which will feature a freakishly fun, "live and undead" performance by The Zombeatles (along with a screening of their film, *All You Need Is Brains*) and a screening of the much-talked-about *Troll Hunter*.

Mile High Horror Film Festival

Denver, Colorado

October 7-9

Taking place at the Starz Film Center, the Mile High Horror Film Festival hopes to bring much attention to the film scene of Denver while also showcasing the latest in independent horror. This year, the fest welcomes Daniel Myrick, co-writer/director of *The Blair Witch Project*, who will serve as a judge for the feature film category. Also in attendance will be actor Michael Berryman (*The Hills Have Eyes*; *The Devil's Rejects*; the genre veteran will be honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Horror Film. This year, Mile High also offers a number of exciting prizes for winners of the fest, including a chance for the 2011 Best Short Film to be shown in its entirety on FEARnet.com.

New Orleans Horror Film Festival

New Orleans, Louisiana

October 28-30

Known for its thriving music scene and unique local culture, New Orleans would seem to have it all... except its own horror film festival. But have no fear, since this year marks the first NOHFF. The fest will take place at the elegant and historic Inn on Bourbon in the heart of the French Quarter, where such anticipated genre features as Bradley Scott Sullivan's *I Didn't Come Here to Die* and Bruce Ornstein's *Vamperifica* will be screened. With its historic locale (a perfect place for watching horror movies) and commitment to celebrating the craft and art of genre moviemaking, NOHFF is sure to become a must-attend destination for horror fans around the globe.

Puerto Rico Horror Film Festival

San Juan, Puerto Rico

October 20-26

Now in its third year, the PRHFF is one of Latin America's premier horror film festivals. In addition to showcasing the best genre films that indie moviemaking has to offer, this exotic fest also features a number of special events, including a presentation on sound design in the films of Alfred Hitchcock and the Fashionably Spooky Show. This creative fashion competition invites young people to submit a design inspired by one of three horror classics: *Nosferatu* (1922), *Bride of Frankenstein* and *Night of the Living Dead*. The ten finalists will present their pieces to the public during the festival.

Rhode Island International Horror Film Festival

Providence, Rhode Island

October 27-30

Now in its 12th ghoulish season, RIHFF boasts the claim of being New England's largest horror film festival. The fest takes place throughout historic sites in Providence, including the spooktacular Bell Street Chapel Theatre, as well as other haunted venues. Here, audiences can check out some of the most terrifying flicks on the indie horror circuit. Coolest of all is the H.P. Lovecraft Walking Tour—a 90-minute stroll that provides the backdrop for the life and work of Providence native and hugely influential horror writer Lovecraft. Taking place on October 23 and being led by the Rhode Island Historical Society, the tour takes participants past the site of Lovecraft's former home, as well as the locales mentioned in such chilling stories as "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," "The Shunned House" and "The Call of Cthulhu."

Screamfest Horror Film Festival

Los Angeles, California

October 14-23

What better place to spend ten fright-filled days in October than L.A.'s renowned Screamfest? Dedicated to discovering horror's new blood (*Paranormal Activity* premiered at the fest two years before becoming a box-office smash hit) and honoring the genre masters, Screamfest celebrates its 11th anniversary this year, and horror fans have a lot to look forward to. Rose McGowan's latest horror flick, the aptly titled *Rosewood Lane*, directed by Victor Salva (*Jeepers Creepers*), will screen at Screamfest this year, as will *Livid*, the latest from French moviemaking team Alexandre Bustillo and Julien Maury, who directed 2007's gruesome *Inside*.

Shriekfest

Hollywood, California

September 29-October 2

Voted by *MM* one of the top “25 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee,” Shriekfest is still going in its 11th year. With its widely recognized screenplay competition, Shriekfest ensures that genre scribes around the globe get the recognition they deserve. This year’s screenplay finalists include Steven McCarthy’s *The Glass Casket: Last Days of Edgar Allan Poe* and Brandon Bestenheider and Allen Bey’s *Grimm Night*. In addition, such buzzed-about features as *The Feed*, *Isle of Dogs* and *The Mole Man of Belmont Avenue* (starring Robert Englund, a.k.a. Freddy Krueger) will be shown.

Telluride Horror Show

Telluride, Colorado

October 14-16

Move over, world-renowned Telluride Film Festival—there’s a new fest in town, and this one provides a lot more ghoulish fun. The second annual Telluride Horror Show is a three-day genre celebration where fans can check out the latest horror, sci-fi and fantasy flicks in Telluride’s historic Sheridan Opera House and Nugget Theatre. The fest will screen over 40 shorts and features (including the much anticipated horror-comedy *Tucker & Dale vs. Evil*, the John Landis-produced *Some Guy Who Kills People* and the retro anthology *Chillerama*), as well as host a variety of special events (last year’s Horror Show featured a Q&A with horror legend Tom Holland, writer-director of *Child’s Play* and the original *Fright Night*).

Toronto After Dark Film Festival

Toronto, Canada

October 20-27

Things get a little strange after dark at this popular fest, held for eight terrifying nights at the Toronto Underground Cinema. Showcasing the hottest new horror, sci-fi, action and cult films (both features and shorts), Toronto After Dark has become an epicenter for genre fans across the globe. This year’s most notable selections include the epic Opening Gala film *Monster Brawl* (“It’s the fight of the living dead!”), the latest sick and twisted tale from Troma Studios, *Father’s Day*, and the seven-story anthology *The Theatre Bizarre*, starring horror icons Udo Kier and Tom Savini.

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