

HOLLYWOOD QUALITY SCARES at Woods of Terror

BY LINDSAY CRAVEN

During the Halloween season in just about any town in North Carolina, you can find a haunted house where you may get a good scream or jump. Few haunts in the area can claim to provide Hollywood quality thrills and chills, though. Woods of Terror in Greensboro has been terrifying patrons for 25 years, and with each year this haunt has continued to establish itself as one of the best in the industry. "You can go to other haunted houses and get some good actors and a few good sets, but here you get the complete package," said Eddie McLaurin, owner of Woods of Terror.

This year, McLaurin brought in the expertise of Alan Hopps of Stiltbeast Studios to train Woods of Terror actors and makeup team. Hopps has worked in the haunted house industry for 25 years. "If you interviewed 1,000 people in the industry and asked them who the best actor-trainer was, 999 would say, Alan Hopps," McLaurin said.

This year, Woods of Terror has several new additions to further its reign of terror on patrons. The Escape of Terror will open alongside the haunt this year. It features two rooms, Mortuary and Ouija. McLaurin said the United States had around 2,500 escape rooms total last year, and by the end of 2016, it is

ticket holders.

Every year, McLaurin morphs into his alter ego "Bone Daddy" and lurks along the midway for Woods of Terror. He carries his trusted companion "Dawn," the albino Burmese python, and takes pictures with patrons. Last Halloween Dawn passed away from illness, so this year return patrons will meet Spawn, the spawn of the late Dawn.

Also new this year, the bravest patrons can purchase a glow necklace to signify to the actors that it's okay to grab them as they walk through the haunt. "It's very divided, people are very adamant that they don't want to be touched, or they are completely on board with it, so we wanted to offer a new experience this year," McLaurin said. "If you buy a glow necklace, then it will be a full contact haunt. The actors can touch you, grab you, pull on you to get the best scare. If the patron is not wearing a glow necklace, however, it will remain a no-contact haunt."

This year, Woods of Terror will offer dynamic pricing. Thursday and Sunday tickets will have significant savings, and so will buying in advance online. Friday and Saturday nights and Halloween weekend and Halloween night prices will be higher. "I've never had a cutoff number before, but last year we had 6,000 people come through on Saturdays," McLaurin said. "Bringing through 7,000 people in a night would diminish the experience for our audience. I want to keep a happy customer base, and so I have to raise my prices a bit on Saturdays to keep my nights balanced." McLaurin promises that Woods of Terror will deliver an experience to remember to all of its patrons in its 25th year.

"We have a hundred little things that we've added to the show to improve the experience, but our patrons won't be able to pinpoint what exactly it was that made their experience so much better than last year. Still, it will be there, whether it's the scents we've added to the scene to put you into that place, the acute attention to detail on our set or that extra training we gave to our actors."

Know Before You Go (possibly a design graphic)

expected to be near 10,000. "The Escape Room is a separate ticket and a separate experience by reservation only. There are ten people allowed in each escape reservation. You have to find the keys and clues to escape the rooms, and there may be some zombies lurking around you have to look out for."

Also new this year is the Hell-elevator. This midway experience can accommodate five to 10 people at a time and is a simulation ride that provides the sensation of dropping ten stories in an elevator. The Hell-elevator is an additional fee with a general admission ticket, or free for all access-pass

On-site ticket and gift shop purchases are cash only, ATM available.

Parking costs \$5 and is cash only. Car-pooling is encouraged.

Parking is less than 100 yards from the entrance and illuminated.

Woods of Terror is located at 5601 North Church Street in Greensboro. For a complete schedule and reservations, call 336.643.3558 or visit the website at www.woodsofterror.com.





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