

Taste

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THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2007

SCARE UP A PARTY

HOW TO THROW A MEMORABLE
HALLOWEEN SOIREE PG 6



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Haunted parties

EVENT PLANNER SHOWS HOW TO THROW A BASH WITH HIGH STYLE



ROB GOEBEL / The Star

A light show bathes the front of the Dezelan home in Meridian Park.



Anne-Marie Dezelan made sure guests had a frightfully good time.

Stories by **Jolene Ketzenberger**
Star correspondent

Halloween isn't just for kids anymore. Grown-ups are getting into the spirit of the occasion, too, and celebrating the haunted holiday with parties of their own.

According to the National Retail Federation, 85 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds and 70 percent of 24- to 44-year-olds attended Halloween parties last year. That's a lot of witches, pirates and vampires (the top three costume choices for adult revelers).

While costumes weren't required at a recent adults-only Halloween bash thrown by event planner Anne-Marie Dezelan of Annie-O's, hand-delivered invitations specified black attire — and at least one witch's hat was spotted among guests' varied ensembles. The white-boxed invitations, which also included a colorful plastic spider, set the tone for the spooky soiree that Dezelan threw in early October to show Taste how it's done.

An impressive invitation allows a party-giver to present the theme of an event as well as offer attendees important

information. Dezelan noted on the invitation that her recent party was an adults-only event and specified the style of dress — all black.

"Tell them what to wear," Dezelan said. "People like to know."

Whatever the style, make sure guests have something in common, Dezelan said. She settled on a neighborhood get-together and set about turning the Historic Meridian Park

home she shares with husband Marty into a classic haunted house, an effort that wasn't lost on guests.

"It's a blast, and it's good for the neighborhood," said Meridian Park resident Jim Naremore. "This neighborhood really gets into Halloween."

Dezelan decorated the front porch with spider webs and fall decor, but brought in local AV specialists Evans Audio Visual to handle the special effects. By party time, spooky lights accented the exterior of the home. Guests walked up through wisps of fog, as stormy sound effects added atmosphere.

Inside, tattered cheesecloth and Spanish moss, as well as skulls, chains and ravens decorated the rooms.

"I eliminated every bit of



For a photo gallery from the event, go to IndyStar.com



Annie Owen (left) and Carlene Hiner chat near a confections table and black candy bar. The hostess asked guests to wear black.

ROB GOEBEL / The Star

orange this year, and anything that was cartoonish," Dezelan noted. "I was going for a high-style, sophisticated Halloween."

The dining-room table, decorated with black linens from A Classic Party Rental topped with tattered cheesecloth, continued the theme. Food from MBP Distinctive Catering was labeled with Halloween names such as Bat Wings, Spicy Tarantula Tortes and Spiderchoke Dip.

Dezelan advises hiring a caterer for big events and designating a greeter for the front door. Otherwise, she said, at a party like this recent bash for more than 100, she would have been constantly in the kitchen — or at the door.

"There's absolutely no time to visit with your guests when you're doing all that," she said.

For smaller events that a host can handle alone,

go for easy-to-eat foods served at room temperature.

"I love the Greek direction," she said. "I love the cheese and olive display, the hummus, the tabouli. Cheeses on a cutting board with a cluster of grapes look great."

And always consider vegetarian guests when planning the menu,

Dezelan said. "Have one or two dishes that don't have any meat."

As for drinks, Dezelan set up a help-yourself Bloody Mary bar. A bartender served beer, wine and the evening's signature drink, a vodka- and rum-spiked Witches Brew, complete with floating eyeballs. Frozen "hands," created with the help of

latex gloves, kept the punch chilled. A dessert bar featured black candy and white chocolate ghost cookies — an easy treat made from Nutter Butter cookies dipped in melted white bark coating with chocolate chip eyes. A cake labeled "Death by Chocolate" had been stabbed with an oversized carving knife.

"This is typical Anne-Marie," said neighbor Scott Rieger, who has attended other neighborhood get-togethers at the Dezelans'. "Each time she kind of outdoes herself."



Guests gather around the treats table at Anne-Marie Dezelan's Halloween party.

Decor: Dezelan's tips for a fab party



A spider with a 3-foot-plus leg span attaches to a window. And cheesecloth is "so affordable, you can use it everywhere."



Red lighting on this glowing skull livens up the front door. "The entry is very important. Focus on your entryway."

Below, showing Janet Leigh in "Psycho" lends atmosphere; old movies are "eye candy" for guests.



Menu: Dig in to tasty treats

Most items had Halloween-inspired names. Besides deviled eggs and a cheese board with plastic mice, these tasty treats from MBP Distinctive Catering were served.

- "Broken Bones" Breadsticks
- "Spiderchoke Dip"
- Artichoke dip
- "Bat Wings"
- Barbecued chicken wings
- "Spicy Tarantula Tortes"
- Mozzarella, cheddar-jack cheese torte
- "Rigaboney" Rigatoni
- "Road Rat Crisp"
- Beef tenderloin on a cheddar crust
- Black candies, White ghost cookies and "Death By Chocolate" cake

How to make ghostly goodies



ROB GOEBEL / The Star



Spicy Tarantula Tortes (left) were served on the buffet at Anne-Marie Dezelan's party. The Ghost Cookies (above) are deceptively easy to make.

2 ounces green chiles, drained
2 eggs, large
2½ tablespoons milk
1½ teaspoons flour
3½ ounces sour cream
¼ ounce chipotle pepper

1. Mix all ingredients together. Place in 9-inch square baking pan that has been sprayed with cooking spray. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes.

2. Let cool for 10 minutes. Cut into squares or wedges; serve warm.

Witches Brew

Fills a 12-quart cauldron
4 (48-ounce) cans pineapple juice
96 ounces orange juice
4 2-litre bottles Sprite
1 1.75-litre bottle vodka
1 1.75-litre bottle rum

1. Mix ingredients together. If desired, add ice that has been frozen in clean latex gloves.

Ghost Cookies

1 package Nutter Butter cookies
24-ounce package white bark coating
Chocolate chips

1. Melt white bark in the microwave according to package directions.

2. Dip cookies into melted bark, submerging completely; place on waxed paper.

3. When slightly cooled, place 2 chocolate chips on each cookie for the ghost's eyes. Allow cookies to cool completely before serving.



Plastic eyeballs float in a witch's brew punch of orange and pineapple juices, vodka and rum.

Here are recipes for dishes served at Anne-Marie Dezelan's party. The torte recipe is from MBP Distinctive Catering.

Spicy Tarantula Torte

Serves 12

6 ounces cheddar/Jack cheese, shredded

6 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded

Perfecting the party

Event planner Anne-Marie Dezelan of Annie-O's offered a few decorating tips for hosting the perfect haunted house party.

- ◆ Use general fall decor outdoors to last past Halloween. "Corn husks will carry me over to Thanksgiving," said Dezelan. "All I have to do is take the cobwebs down."

- ◆ Buy yards of cheesecloth. "It's so affordable, you can use it everywhere," Dezelan said. "That's what ties your look together."

- ◆ Color-coordinate decorations and tableware. "I can't do a party without going to Cash & Carry Paper Co.," Dezelan said of the Downtown Indianapolis business at 914 E. New York St. "You can find anything you're looking for, any color you can think of."

- ◆ Pop in a classic scary movie, but turn off the sound. "It's one more piece of eye candy," said Dezelan, who had a DVD of "Psycho" playing during her party. "It's one more element to surprise your guests."