

Living

Halloween weddings: Couples go for holiday costumes and decor as they exchange vows

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Zombie Erik and Sara (as Amy Winehouse) Heise renew their vows in a less-than-conventional ceremony.

Before Glen Bagley even met his wife, he knew he wanted a Halloween wedding.

"I've kind of always had that in my mind, even before I met Sarah," he says. When Glen started dating Sarah in 1995, he told her about his idea, and she was immediately on board.

"Basically, the next order of business is, when is Oct. 31 going to fall on a Saturday?" Glen Bagley remembers. They started making plans for Oct. 31, 1998, "but we weren't sure if her parents dug the idea."

The Bagleys decided pretty quickly not to have the wedding party in costume.

"I was 21 at the time, and I wanted that white dress," says Sarah Bagley, now 33. "The Halloween wedding is all about fun, but as far as the tradition of a wedding, I just wanted that white dress and him in a tux. But everything else was a party."

About one-third of their 150 wedding guests attended in costume -- including a couple dressed as Frankenstein's monster and his bride, and a vampire couple with their vampire baby.

"My best friend's dad was a three-headed vampire kind of guy," Sarah Bagley says. "That was pretty hilarious."

One area where Halloween bridal couples can really go all-out is decor.

"Generally, the bride and groom either want to go completely Halloween, or they don't want Halloween at all," says Page Winograd, floral designer and artistic director for

[Vibrant Table Catering & Events](#)

. She says it's easy to accommodate one extreme or the other, but the middle road is "when we get into the fun stuff."

Winograd says typical Halloween wedding colors are white, black and shades of dark red -- and she's seen one "really gorgeous" combination of black, plum and pewter.

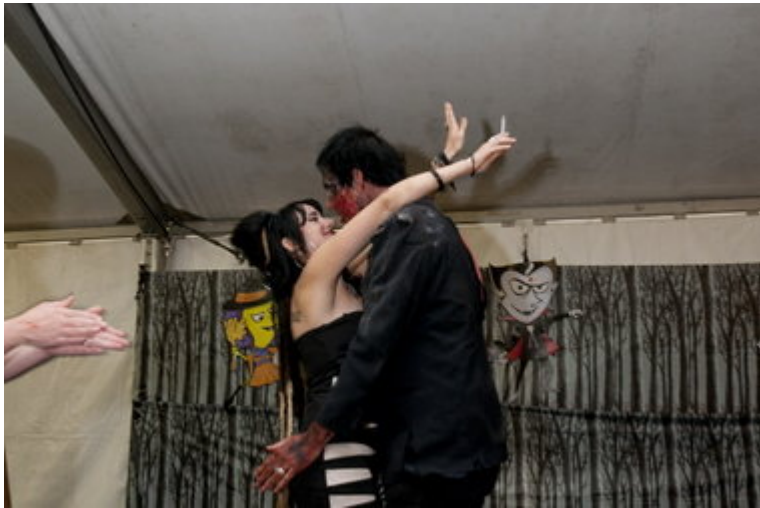
Seasonal flowers -- like chrysanthemum, leycesteria and snowberry -- are in vogue as couples become more "green" with their weddings. "We do a lot of branches," says Winograd, "and play with different flowers, pods, berries and things that are seasonal that have that little bit of a witchy or fun Halloween look to them."

Winograd is helping a couple plan a Halloween 2011 wedding in Goth-hipster style -- complete with sugar skulls, black feathers and raven artwork on the stationery.

"Then, of course, we're bringing in some hammered metals and some dark cast iron and stuff like that to take it a little bit more toward the Gothy aspect of things."

The Bagleys' guests danced to

at the reception and took home custom lollipops decorated with wedding bells, bats, doves and jack-o'-lanterns as favors, but when it came to their wedding service, the Bagleys opted for traditional rites.



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the bride, endure.

Even when the groom is one of the undead and the bride is one of the brain dead, certain traditions, such as kissing

But if you're after a spooky ceremony -- any time of year, really -- look no further than Voodoo Doughnut.

[Voodoo Doughnut](#)

co-owner and ordained minister Cat Daddy (real name: Kenneth Pogson) officiates at many of the weddings at both Voodoo Doughnut locations in Portland and has a variety of costumes on hand to suit the couple's needs.

"I'll read the couple and see if I should wear the banana suit or the tuxedo, or the giant fantail mask or a nice pink-and-red outfit," he explains.

Cat Daddy sees an average of one Voodoo Doughnut wedding each week, but "high holidays" like Halloween and Friday the 13th bring an increase in bookings. Nine weddings already are booked for Portland locations and one in Eugene. With bridal couples still calling, Cat Daddy hopes for one wedding every hour during Halloween weekend.

At the Portland Halloween Bazaar on Oct. 10 -- 10/10/10 -- Cat Daddy performed a second wedding for Voodoo Doughnut wedding planner Sara Heise and her husband, Erik.

While the Heises elected to dress in costume -- as Amy Winehouse and a zombie -- Cat Daddy says brides and grooms opting for a Voodoo Doughnut wedding might show up

Daddy says brides and grooms opting for a voodoo Doughnut wedding might show up in anything from "some crazy thousand-dollar gown and tuxedo" to a themed couples costume.

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"A hot dog and ketchup!" Cat Daddy exclaims, remembering one of the first couples he married. "That's what makes the fun part of my job. It's always a new experience. You never know what to expect."

Cat Daddy says there's no typical Voodoo Doughnut wedding, though elements like the kiss and jumping the broom -- a custom believed to have originated in West Africa and which survived through American slavery to be incorporated into modern celebrations -- are common. For the Heises' Halloween Bazaar wedding, he summoned the spirits to witness the event, and asked the bride and groom to pledge their love to each other "through thick and thin and voodoo and sin."

"Amy Winehouse" sang her vows to her husband, and "Erk" the zombie grunted in reply.

"We always wanted a wild and kind of different wedding," says Erik Heise. Their original wedding -- paid for by their parents -- was much more traditional. "But we always wanted something different, and we finally got the chance."

Sarah Bagley loved her Halloween wedding and says she and her husband have a great time celebrating their anniversary going trick-or-treating with their young daughter, Elizabeth -- although when Elizabeth first learned that her parents had gotten married on Oct. 31, her eyes grew wide and she asked incredulously, "You mean, you missed trick-or-treat?"

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Glen Bagley's advice to hopeful Halloween bridal couples is to book a location early. About a year in advance of their 1998 wedding, the Bagleys settled on the Melody Ballroom. Its dark red walls and large chandeliers were a perfect Halloween fit.

"Just don't be afraid to show your personality," Winograd advises wedding couples, particularly those who are willing to "risk it all" and have a Halloween wedding. "They should definitely show their colors -- especially if they're orange and black."

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[Jennifer Willis](#)

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