

# Design and Décor: Welcome to Whimsy

By Claire Pavlik Purgus

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Having lived most of my adult life overseas, I believe I see things with eyes unaccustomed to what may seem *ordinaire*, or even dreary to local folks. I say dreary with a twinkle in my eye... because in fact, dreary is hardly how I'd describe Southcoast in October!

I'd describe Southcoast as *whimsical* in October! People seem to break out of any solemnity that's petrified within their houses and yards. Decorations are put up with unsullied abandon and represent a wide assortment of fantastically freaky, gruesomely garish, and wonderfully whimsical objects. Each year it seems to get better!

I recall a day last October. I was headed out for a walk that began peacefully enough: I passed a neighbor quietly planting crocus bulbs in her front yard, a man cutting his lawn, and a woman gently swinging her baby, readying him for his afternoon nap. I remember I headed for the old road, a narrow higgledy-piggledy residential road overhung with tree branches. The sunlight sifted through the brilliantly colored canopy of trees and so I intermittently walked through sun and shade.

The beauty of that day experienced at a trot was enough to get the blood and endorphins pumping full speed; but there was more. I remember it clearly: from behind trees and porch steps and from within gardens, lurid eyes were upon me. Strapped to a mailbox a witch looked on in horror. Other witches were lashed to trees or electrical poles, white-faced black-eyed scarecrows sat atop bales of hay, demons in black capes dangled from tree branches, black cats crouched amidst bright orange and russet chrysanthemums! The scene was too much! Every turn of the road was a gruesome scene that made me gasp and giggle. Dare I say it? My neighbors were crazed!

I say that in a nice way... I appreciate the pleasure people take to decorate their houses and yards for Halloween. Seems we're all kids at this time of year. And why not?

Or is there something deeper lurking in our subconscious minds as we set out our collections of fall décor? As autumn leaves drop and cold temperatures set in, I have to wonder if the season's outrageous accoutrements are perhaps a stab at warding off the death implicit in winter – aye – a stab at warding off death itself. Maybe these ghoulish creatures are a superstitious attempt to protect ourselves from the evils of the world, to fight evil with evil. Maybe.

When I returned home that day from my walk, I felt a strange elation. I'd seen my neighbors in a new light, and it gave me the giggles. Maybe we best call a cat a cat – Halloween today is a grand excuse for a little fun and whimsy! Welcome to it! Thank you, Southcoast, for the smiles. And happy Halloween!