Halloween Haunted Forest is not scary enough

NEZWELL'S HAUNTED FOREST
Weekly Thrusdays through Sunday

On the Trail Among the trees, driven by wind and rain, you enter the forest and slowly creep deeper into the darkness.

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ou enter the forest and slowly creep deeper into the darkness. The trail through the woods. Suddenly, from nowhere, out leaps Newwell, stealer of souls, the king of the woods. His momentous entrance matches the darkness and echoes within the forest.

This is the scene at Newwell's Haunted Forest, a somewhat non-standard Halloween theme park. The format of the adventure is a guided tour through the forest taken by you through eighteen outdoor scenes and then through ten indoor exhibits in Newwell's castle. Along the way you meet big-name nemeses like Freddy (from the Nightmare on Elm Street series), Jason (from Friday the 13th series), and the Terminator (from the Terminator series), as well as the standard horror fare, including mummies, witches, and mad doctors.

Groups of 25 are taken on the tour by guides who are given the task of leading the group safely through Newwell's forest. At each scene, the leader and the one or two members of the scene appear a few lines in an act that unfortunately is not usually very well rehearsed.

The sense of cohesiveness and the dialogue is unoriginal. In one scene, Freddy accuses the tour guide of being evil and^ you who did this. Your guide replies, "No, it's not me. It was Newwell." This goes on for a while before the group is led onward.

Each scene does include a surprise of some sort, however. In most cases, this is realized by someone jumping out screaming from a concealed hiding spot once the group has gathered around a scene. Although repetitive, this tactic works well, and elicits appropriate screams from the audience.

Several variations on this theme are also implemented. Jason, for example, comes out screaming and red-faced, showing a Bloody hand in the air. In another scene, Jason is seen coming out of a drainage pipe, "I don't wanna be responsible." The guide replies, "No, it's not me. It was Newwell." His single-minded devotion to upholding the law is witnessed once the group has gathered around a scene.

The final scene pits the champion of the forest against Neewollah (a rather imposing figure) and for the most part are merely narrated by the leader. The surprises are still in place, however, and in some cases are remarkably well performed.

The group size of 25 is a bit cramped for the indoor tour, and sometimes members complained about not being able to see very well.

The final scene pits the champion of the people against one of Neewollah's demons in a duel for the souls of the poor tour members' souls, which were taken at some point in the forest. The two men fight, and when everyone walks out with souls intact or whether Neewollah (a rather imposing figure) keeps them to feast upon.

Overall, I found the tour to be less than exciting. The thrills through the forest was somewhat less than expected. The setting up of the scenes was interesting at best. This was certainly not a universal sentiment, however, as screams abounded. Those who are not easily scared should perhaps consider bringing along someone who is not as susceptible to keep them amused.

Newwell's Haunted Forest is not recommended for children under five or for people with heart conditions. Tickets are $12 for adults and $9 for children under 11. Call (508) 248-7075 for more information and directions. Group rates and discount coupons are available.

ON THE SCREEN

THROUGH THE TECH STAFF

Journeys through the forest are guided by the tech staff.

Festive music plays as guides take you on a guided tour through the forest, taking you on a guided tour through the woods.

The fellowship of innocence grows ever more narrow and improbable. Despite fine acting, the sexual stress, and silliness.

Details in character performance are held to the malevolent predators. Despite fine acting, and the sexual stress, and silliness.

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