

CSI Award for Best Public Space

Haunted Mansion Parlor

Opening Date: 12/21/2024

Location: *Disney Treasure* – Disney Cruise Line

Project Description:

OVERVIEW

A “spirited” hangout where grim grinning ghosts – and Disney Cruise Line guests – come out to socialize, this happy haunting lounge incorporates special effects, illusions and stories that are inspired by and build on more than 50 years of one of the most popular and beloved Disney Park attractions. It’s a “ballroom” with a nautical bent, featuring an ever-escalating anthology of illusions, both brand new and classic, in which guests will be “dying” to come back to see what the lounge’s spirits have in store (and which spirits are on tap and in bottles). For the specters, spooks and apparitions who populate the lounge, it’s their version of an open house: celebratory gatherings designed to lure their guests into signing (or at least drinking and snacking) their post-life existences away.

DESIGN

The first of its kind not just on a Disney cruise ship, but *anywhere*, Haunted Mansion Parlor offers guests the opportunity to do something they can’t do in the classic attraction: sit down, “relax” and mingle with the spirits and specters.

The spirited shipboard soiree comes “alive” with a “living” room full of ghastly gags, dreadful delights and faintly familiar frights that take place in a séance-like atmosphere – and guests are right in the middle of it. Among the grim, grinning goings-on (many inspired by artwork, gags and effects in the park attractions) are:

- A wood-heavy interior with stately columns, leather sofas, ornate chandeliers and an intricate and deceptively beautiful rug that reveals its true, more sinister nature on closer inspection. Plus, there’s the iconic, purple-tinged wallpaper from the attraction.
- Portraits of *Poseidon*, *The Siren*, *The Captain*, *The Pirate*, *The Mermaid* and *The Mariner* that, when thunder claps and lightning flashes, change from their mortal, corruptible states into their true ghoulish forms. A few of them even break out into their own versions of “Grim Grinning Ghosts – The Screaming Song.”
- An ominously green-glowing clock that strikes 13.
- A macabre music box belonging to the Bride that, when opened (and it will be opened!), reveals a spine-tingling secret.
- A (slightly) melting bust of *Brother Roland*, a tribute to Disney Legend and Imagineer Rolly Crump, most of whose designs for a *Museum of the Weird* during the development of the original *Haunted Mansion* never made it past the concept stage, but many of which are, for the first time, featured here in Haunted Mansion Parlor.

- A mirror on the back bar that is often inhabited by the ghostly apparitions of such famous *Haunted Mansion* denizens as the Hitchhiking Ghosts, the Hatbox Ghost, the Singing Busts, a band of graveyard musicians who turn the parlor into a “swinging wake” and the mysterious Madame Leota, the powerful medium who acts as a connection point for guests to the spirit world and conducts the séance that causes the spirits to materialize.
- A fish tank that by all appearances seems perfectly normal – until the skeletal fish start swimming about.
- Signature cocktails, both alcoholic and zero proof, that provide their own surprises and illusions.

The Haunted Mansion Parlor unfolds as an approximately 45-minute loop of sequences based in part on scenes from the park attractions, ranging from a séance with Madame Leota and a swinging wake with the denizens of the ballroom to a bridal suite featuring the Bride and her various (unfortunate) husbands.

The experience extends to the staff, Disney Cruise Line crew members who interact with guests and even get them to sign Death Certificates (otherwise known as bar tabs).

Among its early accolades, Haunted Mansion Parlor has received an award for lighting design from the Illuminating Engineering Society.