



small wonders

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Asplandesign



BISS

BATES  
MOTEL

STATION  
OCTOBER 7TH



# No 666

## Halloween



Something wicked this way comes? To Southgate Street in Fullerton? To the otherwise tranquil home of Russ and DeAnna Miller? Believe it, my friends, because it is the dark and animated truth. Tens of thousands witness the transformation night possession each year. They gape slack-jawed upon the eerie madness, stare unblinking into its very face – not to mention its bleeding torso and severed limbs. The visitors laugh uneasily and speak in hushed tones until finally they amble off into the night, grinning like jack-o-lanterns. Then they pronounce the experience not just wicked but “wicked cool,” and they make plans to return, perhaps with friends.

Oh, yeah. They also get candy.



mannequins in  
tortured repose

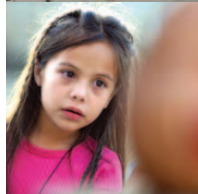
buckets of  
blood-red paint

The Millers are not Satanists, Goths or even Druid wannabes. They are simply the nice couple down the street who created a deathly Halloween spectacle and watched it take on a life of its own. It all started innocently 11 years ago, when DeAnna Miller worked at Anaheim Memorial Hospital. She discovered she had a knack for decorating the medical records office around holiday themes, and she started exercising her talent at home. By Columbus Day, mannequins in tortured repose adorned one side of the yard, while pumpkins and friendly ghosts occupied the other. The ghouls and guts attracted a crowd; the sweet stuff went all but unnoticed. It wasn't long before all semblance of cute was washed away by buckets of blood-red paint.





# Everyone needs a hobby.



It's mid-October in the Miller household, and body parts are everywhere. A mangled head rests on the carpet; a festering leg leans against a cardboard box. Outside, Russ Miller, a retired mechanic for Northrop Aircraft, fastens together the façade of a haunted colonial mansion. "Everyone," he says with a shrug, "needs a hobby."

DeAnna presses a button on a remote control to animate a porch scene she designed. A severed head elevates, rotating through a hole in the table (powered by a rotisserie motor); a nest of rats wriggles and writhes (thanks to an electric massager); a zombie-like monster rises from a bed (or is it from the dead?). DeAnna surveys her handiwork. "You know, in the real world, everything scares me," she says, smiling broadly. "The sight of blood can turn me to jelly. But this is so far from reality that it becomes fun."





So many people the Millers now call friends entered their lives through their gates of make-believe. On Halloween night, the line of onlookers snakes around the corner and halfway up the block. The sight makes the months of jury-rigging and generator-fixing, swap meet hopping and Home Depot shopping all worthwhile. But for the Millers, the best moment is when they first throw the master switch that gives their creation life. “When you sit back and look at what you’ve accomplished,” Russ says, “it’s a special feeling.” One that lasts till Nov. 1, when the Millers begin the frantic makeover for Christmas. Out with the electric chair, in with the manger; out with the hearse, in with the sleigh.

No rest for the wicked.



No rest for the  
wicked.



The background of the page features silhouettes of people in various costumes against a bright, hazy sunset sky. On the left, a person is in a costume that looks like a gorilla or a large primate, with its arms raised. In the center, there's a silhouette of a person wearing a tall, pointed hat or a decorative headpiece. On the right, another person is in a costume that resembles a devil or a creature with horns. The overall mood is festive and creative.

number

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# Halloween 2003

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