



HALF MOON BAY FOR A PUMPKIN VACAY!

By Sheryll Alexander | September 19, 2011

Did you know **Half Moon Bay** is recognized as the pumpkin capital of the world and fall is the best time to travel to this rugged and scenic slice of California just 40 minutes from San Francisco? Yes, everything in this charming, yet upscale town is about the pumpkin in autumn from brilliant orange pick-your-own pumpkin farms to pumpkin beer to homemade pumpkin gnocchi to pumpkin-inspired spa experiences.

Here's a summary of this year's pumpkin-related events, dining experiences, spa treatments, farm visits and more in Half Moon Bay.

October 15-16: 41st Annual Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival

Half Moon Bay celebrates its bountiful fall harvest with a fantastic lineup of rustic pumpkin patches, harvest-inspired crafts, home-style foods, expert pumpkin carvers, the Great Pumpkin Parade, a bone-chilling haunted house, a titanic weigh-off of champion pumpkins, a pie-eating contest, pumpkin carving, costume contests, a pancake breakfast, a five & 10K run/walk and three stages of blockbuster entertainment. New this year is the **iPumpkin**, the official mobile application of the Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival. iPhone and iPad users can download the application for free. *Admission to the festival is free. Main Street , (650) 726-9652, www.miramarevents.com.*

Pick-Your-Own Pumpkin Patches

An autumn visit to the pumpkin fields around Half Moon Bay is a popular annual tradition for many families. Spread out along Highway 92 and Cabrillo Highway (Rt. 1), visitors discover pumpkins in a wide variety of colors, shapes and sizes in beautiful rural settings at dozens of family farms and nurseries including Andreotti Family Farm, Tunitas Creek Family Farm, Bob's Pumpkin Farm, Repetto Nursery, Farmer John's Pumpkin Farm and Lemos Family Farm.

Pumpkin Fall Cycle Adventure

Half Moon Bay is home to one of the nation's most ecologically diverse habitats, and **Coastal Elegance Tours** offers outdoor adventure-seekers the perfect way to experience this fascinating piece of the coastside. Take a tour with one of Coastal Elegance's local guides, and pick out a pumpkin from a local pumpkin patch. Coastal Elegance's ECO Beach Hikes or Cycling Tours also includes complimentary wine tasting at Fogerty Winery. *For more information and reservations, call (650) 712-8456 or visit www.coastalelegancetours.com.*

Half Moon Bay Accommodations

The Beach House Hotel is celebrating the pumpkin season throughout the month of October. Guests will receive a miniature pumpkin upon arrival, as well as a map to the pumpkin patches in the area. For those with their own pumpkins, the hotel will provide space to carve, knives and other materials to upon request. Feast on pumpkin muffins and pumpkin breads as part of the complimentary Continental breakfast. *4100 North Cabrillo Hwy, (800) 315-9366, www.beach-house.com.*

For a romantic getaway this fall, book the Couples Massage Package at **Half Moon Bay Lodge**, which includes a one-night stay for two in a deluxe room equipped with a fireplace, as well as a sensuous one-hour in-room couple's massage with an aromatic pumpkin spice oil hot towel treatment (available now through November), a complimentary bottle of champagne, chocolate truffles and breakfast buffet. In the spirit of the season, the Half Moon Bay Lodge is adding pumpkin waffles to its deluxe continental breakfast during October. The breakfast is complimentary to all guests. Couples will also enjoy the heated outdoor pool, whirlpool, fitness center, sauna and relaxing outdoor fireplace. *2400 S. Cabrillo Highway, (650) 726-9000, www.halfmoonbaylodge.com.*

Culinary Adventures in Half Moon Bay

Half Moon Bay Brewing Company will release its annual Mavericks Harvest Pumpkin Ale, a pale ale made with over 120 pounds of locally grown, roasted and spiced Sugar Pie pumpkins added to the brew kettle. This unique beer will be available on tap at the restaurant and at the Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival. Throughout the fall season, delicious pumpkin crab bisque, cheese ravioli with prawns in roasted creamy pumpkin sauce and homemade pumpkin pie and gingersnap crust pumpkin cheesecake will be on the menu. *390 Capistrano Avenue, Princeton-By-The-Sea, (650) 728-BREW, www.hmbbrewingco.com.*

Sam's Chowder House, known for fresh, off-the-boat seafood and stunning

views of the Pacific, is featuring several pumpkin specialties throughout the month of October including roasted sugar pie pumpkin soup, served with sweet shrimp, mascarpone and toasted pumpkin seeds. Also on the menu is roasted chicken with pumpkin gnocchi, sides of roasted sugar pie pumpkin and pumpkin mouse with ginger-molasses cake. 4210 North Cabrillo Highway, (650) 712-0245, www.samschowderhouse.com.

-For contemporary Italian cuisine created from the bounty from Half Moon Bay 's farmers, artisans and fishermen, head to celebrated **Pasta Moon**. Throughout the month of October, guests can feast on laced battered quintale pumpkin served with apple butter and pumpkin seed pesto, apple blossom pumpkin gnocchi with Harley Farms goat cheese, dried cranberries, purple sage and duck confit, and pumpkin risotto with day boat sea scallops wrapped in pancetta, lacinato kale and lemons. Guests who save room for dessert can enjoy pumpkin gelato with seckle pear and vin santo. 315 Main Street, (650) 726-5125, www.pastamoon.com

Spa & Beauty in Half Moon Bay

For a seasonal experience, try the signature Half Moon Bay Facial at **The Ritz-Carlton Spa**, which utilizes a nourishing pumpkin enzyme masque high in beta-carotene & vitamins A and C. *Available during the month of October only. \$245 for 80 minutes; a special 25% discount is available when booking. One Miramontes Point Road , (650) 712-7040, www.ritzcarlton.com.*

Gaia Essentials has created Half Moon Bay pumpkin soap utilizing ground pumpkin, vanilla & clove essential oils, cinnamon and ginger as well as certified organic food grade extra virgin olive oil, coconut, and pure nutmeg. This seasonal bubble soap has the delicious aroma of spiced pumpkin and gives a light exfoliation due to the ground pumpkin. *Available during the month of October. To purchase this one-of-a-kind soap, call (650) 728-7745 or visit www.gaia-essentials.com.*

Half Moon Bay Arts & Crafts

On October 8, 9 & 10 from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., the grounds of **La Nebbia Winery** will be transformed into a glistening **glass pumpkin patch** featuring the work of artist and glass blower Doug lass C. Brown, owner of Colquhoun Glass Works. This artistic installation will feature a large selection of one-of-a-kind glass pumpkins available for purchase. For those who prefer a more hands-on experience, Brown offers glass blowing classes where visitors can create their own pumpkins. *For more information and to sign up for a class, call (650) 712-*

1500 or visit www.ColquhounGlassWorks.com. La Nebbia winery is open daily for wine tasting from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. 12341 San Mateo Rd. , (650) 726-9463, www.lanebbiawinery.com.

Local artisan business **Posh Pumpkins** creates luxurious velvet pumpkins, made with real pumpkin stems acquired from local Half Moon Bay farmers. To get your own plush pumpkin, look no further than Main Street Hair Designs, 840 Main Street #B-3, (650) 726-2622, Adobe, 417 Main Street, (650) 726-6060, www.adobehalfmoonbay.com, Savvy Skirts, 270 Capistrano Rd, Suite 8, (650) 560-0142, www.savvyskirts.com and at the Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Festival.