“Black cats and goblins and broomsticks and ghosts. Covens of witches with all of their hosts. You may think they scare me, you’re probably right. Black cats and goblins on Halloween night.”

Well, we’re not quite to Halloween yet, but with the 15th annual Screamfest underway last night, I think it’s perfectly appropriate and safe to shout out chain-rattling chants and revolting rhymes. It’s quite a coincidence how the folks behind Screamfest host their never-ending grab-bag of ghastly goodies during the same month as All Hallow’s Eve. Oh – wait. I’m being told that it was planned that way. It all makes sense now!

Here we are back in the heart of Hollywood. The historic Roosevelt Hotel just across the way, Madame Toussaud’s on the other side, the Ripley’s Believe it or Not! Odditorioum kitty-corner (where we all landed for the after-party) and the TCL Chinese Theatres once again playing host to the “Sundance of Horror” – Screamfest.

Opening up the festival is the latest horror anthology, *Tales of Halloween* – including 10 separate stories of devilish deliciousness with efforts from such horror auteurs as *The Descent*’s Neil Marshall and *May*’s Lucky McKee – among many others! Check out our review here. And along with those 10 separate short films, comes 10 separate casts and 10 separate crews making their way in front of the cameras for opening night. Needless to say, it was a zoo (in a good way) on the packed black carpet for the step-and-repeat festivities.

Frankly, it was a horror freak’s dream come true. With the likes of *Insidious*’ Lin Shaye, Scream Queen Barbara Crampton, *Cabin Fever*’s Cerina Vincent, *Dawn of the Dead*’s Ken Foree, legendary director Joe Dante (*Gremlins*), prolific horror producer Jason Blum (Blumhouse in the house, yo!) and a host of other horror heroes walking the Screamfest carpet, I could barely contain any embarrassing nerd-gasms! This has never happened to me before! Ahem.

Behind *Tales of Halloween* is Axelle Carolyn. She’s one of the producers and contributing writer/directors for this spooky anthology film. I politely reminded her that we’d met before – sometime last year when I played the role of cashier to her (and her husband, *The Descent* ’s Neil Marshall) customer in my former retail gig. I asked her how *Tales of Halloween* came about, and our conversation was a sparkling example of the small world that is the LA horror community. In my brief year at the front-lines for Best Horror Movies, I can attest to the warm reception and genuine camaraderie of this group of artists. Screamfest is a prime example and perfect location to show off this loving, genre closeness.

**AC:** I used to live in London, and I would visit LA on a regular basis. And we would meet all of these filmmakers, and found out that there’s a genuine community here. And people hang together and don’t just make movies in a vacuum. They all work together and support each other and like each other. I lived in London for 10 years. They’re all great guys but they don’t hang. In LA, there’s not that kind of competition. So I thought it’d be really fun to see how it would work if we all worked together on this – and I thought an anthology film would be ideal. The idea of Halloween came up later.

**BHM:** There are no other genres that are this close – this close knit. I think that’s something you really tapped into with *Tales of Halloween*.

**AC:** I don’t think the masters of comedy gather very often. I hope that it’s something that comes across when you watch the movie – that people can tell it comes from a place of love and a lot of friendships.

I also spoke briefly to Dave Parker, the writer/director behind “Sweet Tooth”, one of the episodes in *Tales of Halloween*. His story stars horror regulars Robert Rusler (*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy’s Revenge*) and Caroline Williams (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2*’s “Stretch”). Parker’s inside scoop was this: When Caroline was brought on board (she and Parker already knew one another), and it was clear from the script that she would have to make out with her scene partner – per Parker, this was Williams’ request:

“This is my first on-screen kiss. You better make the guy f\*\*\*ing hot. What about Robert Rusler?”

Speaking of Robert Rusler, I chatted at length with him about *Tales of Halloween* and his many other current projects. He re-teamed with Williams for the recently-wrapped remake of *Blood Feast*, shot in Germany. In addition, he’s re-launching a Kickstarter campaign on Halloween – for his eventual directorial debut *The Wicked Sick* (formerly called *Black Asylum).*

**RR:** It’s a throwback ‘80s flick, sort of like an *Expendables* cast of horror film actors. Everybody that’s in the film has been in at least one big franchise horror film.

**BHM:** It’s a big year for you as far as movie anniversaries. 30 years for *Nightmare 2* and *Weird Science*. How do you feel, what do you think?

**RR:** I feel old. I feel super proud. Being part of something as magical as the John Hughes era – I’m flattered. I’m grateful. I love the fans that have stayed with *Weird Science* over the years. We miss John dearly. I loved being part of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise as well.

**BHM:** There’s a new love for it [*Nightmare 2*]. It was always the red-headed stepchild. The past 5 to 10 years, it’s gotten this brand new following.

**RR:** I love that. There’s a whole new generation of horror fans. Sometimes the horror fans – when they catch up and see where all of the movies originated from – like we did in the ‘80s. I’m a big fan of the original Universal Monsters. And then through the ‘70s – movies like *The Omen*, *Carrie* and *The Town That Dreaded Sundown* – some of those movies that really impacted me and made me a horror fan. And then being able to make a movie with an icon like Robert Englund – it really makes me feel good. It’s really given me longevity in the business. I’ve been working in the last 6 months, more than I have in a few years. I’m really busy and it’s motivated me to do what I’ve been preparing to do for years, which is to direct. There are so many great horror films. I’m hoping to really be a part of that, and make my own mark in the horror world. That’s not all that’s on my slate, but that’s where I’m starting, ‘cause horror fans are the most loyal fans in the world.

I also found myself flushed as I saw Lin Shaye (the *Insidious* franchise) make her way down the carpet toward me. When she reached me, I babbled on about how she’s everywhere, and in my brief time writing reviews, I’ve covered about 3-4 of her pictures, i.e. *she’s damn busy*.

**LS:** I’m having the best time of my life, for real. Yesterday was my birthday. I’ve really reflected on where I’ve been. As you get older, that’s one thing you have the luxury of doing. You have a past. I have the best past and the best present and the most amazing future ever. I am the freaking luckiest, happiest actress in Hollywood.

There’s been so much in the news lately, about Hollywood sexism and ageism, and I believe that Lin defies those statistics. She’s on a roll, and wherever you turn, she’s popping up with a new project. I asked her how she feels, or what she believes about this very real problem in Hollywood.

**LS:** Personally, when you look at numbers, it’s freaky. It feels like smoke and mirrors. I have no relationship to the number of my birthday yesterday. What I do have a relationship with is the energy and the joy that I have around me – right now in particular. I’m the happiest I’ve been in my whole life. And I do feel like a poster child for women in my category, because there aren’t any. There are a few, I shouldn’t say there aren’t any. There are a lot of women obviously, but this has been such a resurgence in my career. I thank all of the energy and angels around me – living and not.

And when we turned to *Insidious*, I told her how she kicked ass in the latest chapter. She did the majority of her own stunts (which she proudly proclaimed), and when I asked about anything further into the world of “The Further”, she dropped eye contact, turned her head and coyly replied, “I just don’t know.” Gee, what does that mean?

And I couldn’t resist asking Lin to replay (“I’m here to amuse you?”) her iconic line from the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street* -- something to do with a hall pass?

Continuing on a resurgence theme, I chatted up the one and only Ms. Barbara Crampton. She has a small cameo in *Tales of Halloween*, but honestly, she could be at any red carpet event touting any number of amazing projects recently added to her resume. And as was the case when Ms. Shaye approached, I got a little googly-eyed and nervous as I realized – I was about to interview Scream Queen Barbara Crampton.

**BHM:** Tell me a little bit about – I don’t want to say “comeback” – that’s a horrible term, but this resurgence for you. You’re all over the place.

**BC:** I came back with *You’re Next,* and I had semi-retired and was concentrating on my family, taking care of my kids and my husband and our house and our life together. And I got a call out the blue to be in the movie. I thought it’d be a fun little departure from motherhood. And I found that it turned out to be this very well-renowned movie and when we played in Toronto, there was a bidding war. Five different companies wanted to buy it before Lionsgate finally sealed the deal. I think it allowed people to know that I wasn’t dead – and I was still around and available. People started calling me. I think there was a period of time in my life when I wasn’t really working as much in my late 30s. So it was a good time for me to get married and have kids. And now I’m playing the mother role. Pretty soon I’ll be playing the grandmother role. I’m happily back into the genre again. The community has just taken off since I was away. And I’ve met so many amazing people, doing amazing work. It’s all digital now and they’re doing it fast – a lot of product and a lot of collaboration. I feel like I’m part of a community that I didn’t know I belonged to until I came back.

**BHM:** It’s only the horror community. You don’t see dramas --

**BC:** All the drama people aren’t doing karaoke and going bowling together.

Indeed.

Chatting with all of these horror legends – let’s just say I’m spent. Nerd-gasm complete. But the greater revelation at hand is the enduring and ever-growing sense of support and loving community within the hallowed halls of horror. I count myself lucky to be a part of this fun since I was a young kid, and now – since I started writing with the good folks of Best Horror Movies, I can realize to a greater depth just how cool and special us horror freaks really are. So embrace your gore and suspense-loving tendencies, and drag your rotting shells over to Screamfest! Be a part of it. We’ll open our arms (even if they’re dangling by a torn tendon) and embrace you. I promise.

But, as we move into these 10 glorious days of home invasions, severed heads, ghastly ghosts and psycho-killers, these are a few of the things you should keep in mind.

Of particular note, there will be a 10th anniversary screening of John Gulager’s instant classic *Feast* (Friday, October 16th at 7:30pm), the world premiere of the latest ghostly chapter in the *Paranormal Activity* franchise – *Paranormal Activity: Ghost Dimension* (Thursday, October 22nd at 9:30pm) and a free screening of the film which started it all, the original *Paranormal Activity* – discovered at Screamfest in 2007 – and playing here again on Wednesday, October 21st at 9:30pm.

And if you’re into the short blocks (who isn’t?), you can catch the latest efforts from Screamfest alums, the Boxleitner Brothers with *Die! Sitter! Die! Rupert* (Tuesday, October 20th at 7:30pm – accompanying the feature *They Look Like People*) as well as Antonio Yee’s new short *Oh, Darling* (Sunday, October 18th at 2pm). Their films last year were fantastic, so we have high hopes for their latest offerings!

I also want to mention that I’ve already seen one of the highlighted features – *The Abandoned* (formerly called *The Confines)* from director Eytan Rockaway. Check out my 4-star review here, and buy your tickets for the screening on Sunday, October 18th at 7:30pm. I can state without hesitation, that this film is worth your time.

There are also plenty of other undiscovered features and shorts (for all of us horror-hungry viewers), and who knows? You might be in the audience for the next big thing! I know I will be! The festival runs through October 22nd, and all of the schedules, synopses, trailers and many additional events not mentioned in this article can be found at [www.screamfestla.com](http://www.screamfestla.com).

If you’re in LA during these screenings and you’re a horror freak like us at Best Horror Movies.com, you won’t want to miss out! And don’t turn that dial, ‘cause we’ll be providing in-depth reviews of practically all of the features at this year’s Screamfest (and there are a lot of them), as well as a wrap-up with all of the winners and highlights when the festival concludes.