

Own This City

For the love of New York

"Gothic: Dark Glamour"

The Museum at FIT honors the little black (gothy) dress—and we tell you where to rock it.

By James Y. Lee

Warning! The goths have risen from the depths of hell (and shopping-mall food courts), and they're taking over our runways! "Gothic: Dark Glamour," opening **Friday 6** at the Museum at FIT, examines "death, destruction and decay" through the threads of more than 60 designers, including Alexander McQueen, Thierry Mugler and Anna Sui. "It's all about death and terror, but it's also superglamorous," says curator Valerie Steele. "You're running around in blue jeans, and they're wearing poetry, decadence and dark romanticism."

So smear on that eyeliner and join us for a tour of Elvira's dream wardrobe—plus a few joints where New York's indubitably undead like to (in morgue terms) chill out.

→ READY TO GO?

"Gothic: Dark Glamour": The Museum at FIT, Seventh Ave at 27th St (212-217-4558, fitnyc.edu/museum). Fri 5–Feb 21.

NIGHT OWL Don't wait till someone croaks to flaunt your funeral finery: Class it up Morticia-style at Contempt's 10th Anniversary Black & White Ball on **September 20** at M1-5 (52 Walker St between Broadway and Church St, m1-5.com).

CORPSE BRIDE Black widows can go for a modern spin with this brocade-and-lace-gloves ensemble by Kambriel, on view at FIT.

WANNA CYBER? To be goth is to change with the night—or with influential horror movies and comic books. "Cybergoth is influenced by industrial music and is more high-tech and masculine," says Steele of this look. "Her wire-tubing hair extensions give her a sci-fi edge."

LADY AND THE VAMP In the '90s, the East Village was loaded with gothy retailers. The best one left is Trash & Vaudeville (4 St. Marks Pl at Third Ave). "I go there for black skinny jeans and platform boots," says Kysiah Hell, a writer for the website *Morbid Outlook* and ten-year vet of the local goth circuit.

DEAD HEAD PVC-piped hairdos often look like they're made from Radio Shack's trash. Canal Rubber Supply Company (329 Canal St at Greene St, 212-226-7339) sells the good stuff cheap.

Dead can dance

Where do the lords of the underworld like to party? We asked a goth musician, a funeral director and a Hot Topic employee.

Chris Santiago

Assistant manager, Hot Topic, Corona, Queens
"I put on my false eyelashes and most expensive heels and go to the Knitting Factory (74 Leonard St between Broadway and Church Sts, myspace.com/necromanticnyc) for **Necromantics**, which happens on the first Friday of every month. That's the best old-school goth night in the city. They spin electronic music, but no new stuff—more like Sisters of Mercy."



Chris Martinez

Funeral director, Ruggiero & Sons Funeral Homes, Bronx
"I'm not only the funeral director; I do the embalming, makeup and even drive the hearse. I'm a homebody, but I do like a good laugh since it does get a bit depressing on the job. I like to hit a bunch of the comedy clubs in the Village, but my favorite is the **Comedy Cellar** (117 MacDougal St between Minetta Lane and 3rd St; 212-254-3480, comedycellar.com). I'm a big fan of their regulars Colin Quinn, Jim Norton and Louis C.K."



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Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, freaks and weirdos—the renegade clowns, acrobats, stilt walkers and bearded ladies of Saturday's Circus Amok have hijacked the next few pages! It's nuts, we tell you! Nuts!



5 killer reasons to turn goth

BLACK HOLE SUN

Even city goths fight pesky rays. "I prefer La-Roche Posay Fluide Extreme SPF 50+," says Hell. Her other cosmetic fave is MAC's Cyber lipstick for that "perfect shade of blackish purple."

OUTWARD BOUND "For custom-made stuff, I give my measurements to starkers.com," says Hell. S&M shop Demask (144 Orchard St at Rivington St, 212-466-0814) also stocks full-body corsets and simple waist cinchers; menfolk lookin' for a face-up should check out Purple Passion & DV8 Fetish Store (211 W 20th St at Seventh Ave, 212-807-0486).

GOOD MOURNING Evan Michelson's Victorian mourning dress (c. 1880) is a classic example of 19th-century funeral attire; it's made almost entirely of nonreflective crape. "Victorians took their mourning seriously," says Steele. "This dress fulfilled social conventions but was also fashionable. It plays with the whole femme fatale look."

Voltaire

Goth singer-songwriter, Manhattan

"As a touring musician, I spend more than enough time in smoke-filled clubs. So when I'm back in town, I opt for a quiet night at the **Bourgeois Pig** (111 E 7th St between First Ave and Ave A; 212-475-2246, thepigny.com). I like its dark interior, baroque furniture and heavy velvet drapes. Tom Waits is on ludicrous rotation; they have a fantastic selection of fondues; and the sangria is to die for—despite its conspicuous absence of fruit. Maybe the fruit committed suicide, I'm not sure."



1 The females run the show
"Women in the goth scene have a strong sense of self and are in touch with their sexuality," says Sir William Welles, founder of the listings website New Goth City. Translation: The chicks pick up the dudes. "I'd recommend hitting the **goth events at Home Sweet Home** (131 Chrystie St between Broome and Delancey Sts; 212-226-5708; 10pm), or the outsider-friendly **Salvation parties at Don Hill's** (511 Greenwich St at Spring St; myspace.com/salvationnyc; every other Sat 11pm; \$3-\$5)." Oh, and if you do buy a girl a drink, make it a Bloody Mary.

2 Halloween lasts the entire year and your October is insane
"Every month there are events with different themes," says Welles. "On **September 14**, I'll be at the **Clockwork Orange party at the Delancey** (168 Delancey St between Attorney and Clinton Sts, myspace.com/byte). One time, the theme was military or law enforcement, and we had latex cops with miniskirts!" And come October, every goth and his evil twin wants to throw a Halloween party. Says Welles: "I'm pretty much out every night then. We have to think of different costumes, too: Last year, I dressed like a normal person."

3 It's the tightest community you'll ever belong to, outside of a support group
Whether you're gay, straight, a friggin' vampire, whatever—you'll never meet a friendlier bunch.

"Nobody judges you, as long as you're not creepy," says Welles. "And there's a difference between creepy and spooky." So where are all of these so-called community members? "Most people don't dress up during the day," explains Welles. "Some work on Wall Street, and we call 'em corporate goth. The ballpark figure is around 500 that are truly goth in the five boroughs. Sorry—we don't have a census bureau."

4 You can finally ask people to call you Death God Vengeance...the Third
Live as a freak and you can reinvent yourself however you like. "You can have a goth name to sound more ominous or darker," says Welles, who actually goes by his real name. "It's about having a double life; you could call someone Mildred by day and Dark Raven at night."

5 Enjoy all the personal space you want
When you're wearing 17 pounds of makeup, a spiky dog collar and a barbell in every orifice, people notice. "If I'm at a deli, I get compliments on my bold style," says Welles. Outside the deli is a different story: "People give you more space, like when you're taking the L. I always get two to three seats to myself."

Serious like a heart attack about joining this morbid bunch?
Read more about it in Gavin Baddeley's *Goth Chic: A Connoisseur's Guide to Dark Culture*.