



# A HOLLY JOLLY HAUNTING

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SAN BENEDETTO'S PARANORMAL MUSEUM

We've got special holiday attractions at the Paranormal Museum this year. So after you take a gander at the town's 30-foot Christmas Cow, stop on by!

There's more supernatural in Christmas than elves and flying reindeer. So read on! And about that cow—it's only the town's #2 tourist attraction for one month out of the year, and *then* only because people are taking bets on whether someone will burn it down.

Not that we care.



GD Cat gives our new Christmas exhibit two paws up! This year, in addition to our Grylla the Christmas Ogress display, we have genuine cursed cowbells, all the way from Gävle, Sweden!

# DEJA MOO

San Benedetto's Swedish sister city, Gävle, is famous for the massive straw Yule goat it erects every December. And nearly every year, someone burns it down. It's not exactly a tradition, because burning it down is illegal. But the poor goat rarely makes it through the holiday season. The town tried dousing it with fire retardant. Someone burned it down. Once they soaked the goat in water, giving it an ice coating. Someone burned it down. They set up webcams to deter arsonists. As a result, there are now several excellent time lapse videos on YouTube of the goat burning down.

So why a Yule *goat* ? Why not the more traditional (ahem) reindeer? Or at least a tree?

The goat came from pagan times, representing an Indo-European horned deity spirit related to Puck and later came to be associated with the goats that pulled Norse god Thor's chariot across the sky. When the Scandinavian Santa eventually arrived on the scene, he rode a goat on his night-time rounds.

The weird thing is, Santa Claus most likely did *not* derive from Thor, but from his dad, Odin, who led the Wild Hunt during mid-winter, now the 12 Days of Christmas. A supernatural gang of hunters, spotting the Wild Hunt was never good news. A vision of the Wild Hunt either presaged disaster or led to the witness being dragged away to Fairy Land.



TONY NORDIN, [CREATIVE COMMONS]



Today, San Benedetto honors our sister city's Yule Goat tradition with our own straw cow, built by the Dairy Association and Ladies Aid.



# ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS



DAVID STANLEY [CREATIVE COMMONS]

Gryla the Christmas ogress (above) isn't the only super spooky Christmas tradition in Iceland. She also owned a giant black cat which roamed the countryside and ate people who didn't receive any new clothing before Christmas Eve. (This may explain GD's fascination with the ogress).

Gryla had twelve troll sons, the Yule Lads, or Jólásveinar. They were also known to run amuck during the 13 days before Christmas. But instead of eating children, these mischievous trolls left gifts. It doesn't *quite* balance out their mother's evil deeds, but it beats the alternative.



Our museum is growing, with new exhibits and events. This December, we'll be decursing the cursed cowbells! So I hope you're as curious and inquisitive as I am! - Maddie Kosloski

# SEEKING SPIRITS?

San Benedetto is known for its wine, but that doesn't mean we can't experiment. Experiment with these festive Holiday cocktails!

## CHOCOLATE PUMPKIN MARTINIS

If you still haven't gotten over the pumpkin spice craze, here's the drink for you.

1 part Mozart Pumpkin Spice Liqueur  
1 part vanilla vodka  
1/2 part creme de cacao

Drizzle chocolate syrup around glass. Shake alcohol ingredients with ice and pour!

## EGGNOG RUSSIAN

1/2 jigger of spiced rum  
1 jigger coffee-flavored liqueur  
3/4 C eggnog  
Ground nutmeg

Pour the vodka and liqueur into a tall, champagne-style glass. Top with eggnog and stir. Garnish with a sprinkling of nutmeg.



## CRANBERRY MARTINI

2 parts cranberry juice  
1 part vodka  
1/2 part orange liqueur  
1/2 part dry vermouth  
Cranberries to garnish  
Shake liquid ingredients in ice.  
Pour into glass. Garnish with cranberries and serve.



*A holiday tradition turns deadly, but is the paranormal museum to blame?*

Maddie Kosloski is no fan of San Benedetto's Christmas Cow, a thirty-foot straw bovine that graces the town square every December. For one thing, the cow displaces her paranormal museum as the number two tourist attraction. Plus, every year, despite around-the-clock surveillance, the cow goes up in flames.

But this year, there's more than a fire blazing in Maddie's wine-country hometown. One of the Christmas Cow guards has been found with an arrow in his chest, and Maddie's new haunted cowbell exhibit is fueling a panic. Are the spirits in her museum getting too hot to handle? If Maddie can't stop the hysteria—and the murderous archer—her holiday plans might not be the only thing full of holes.

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