



# CAETANI CENTRE

3401 Pleasant Valley Rd. Vernon BC, 250-275-1525, [www.caetani.org](http://www.caetani.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 11, 2023

## **They're Back! Halloween Tours Return to Vernon's Notorious Haunted House...**

*Vernon's notorious Halloween house on Pleasant Valley Road once again opens its doors for three nights of Haunted Halloween Tours, Oct. 26-28.*

VERNON, BC — Oh, the stories within its walls. The big old house set back off of Pleasant Valley Road was notorious. There were legends whispered of the three mysterious women who isolated themselves inside for decades. And, once a year, the gates would swing open on Hallowe'en, inviting in those who dared.

The children of Vernon would line up to get a glimpse of the women who opened the gates once a year and gave out hand-designed satchels filled with horseshoe suckers, European chocolates, and other delicacies. Some would even change their costumes and line up for more.

The Caetani Centre is living up to its legendary status by hosting guided, theatrical tours of the house exploring some of the lore and legends within. Said to be haunted, the Caetani house opens for three nights of spooky tours from October 26 to 28.

The tour will allow patrons glimpses into the lives of Italian Duke Leone Caetani, his partner Ofelia, their daughter Sveva, and the family's private secretary, Miss Jüül. Together, they left their life of privilege, fleeing the rise of Fascism in Italy, and arrived in Vernon in 1921. When Leone died in 1935, the women shut the gates on their property and secluded themselves from the world.

"After the death of her beloved Leone, Ofelia, who had never adjusted to life in small town Canada, went into mourning...and never came out," explains Executive Director, Laisha Rosnau. "She wouldn't leave the house again until her death 25 years later. Unfortunately, she coerced her daughter, Sveva, and Miss Jüül into a life of lonely seclusion with her."

As time went on, the only time the gate to the normally closed-off mansion opened was on Halloween.

“Halloween was one of Sveva’s favourite times of year. She and Miss Jüül would greet neighbourhood kids lined up outside their door and hand out imported European confectionaries encased in beautifully decorated loot bags designed by Sveva herself.”

The tour captures some of that history as well as the unexplained and ghostly occurrences that residents, staff and visitors have experienced in the house over the years.

Telling these tall tales will be professional actors Harrison Coe as Leone, Amelia Sirianni as Ofelia, Tiernen O’Keefe as young Sveva, Julie Armitage as Miss Jüül, and other special guests. The tour also includes a rare peek upstairs, an area normally closed off to the general public.

Proceeds from the presentation will go towards the maintenance and upkeep of the Caetani Centre and its facilities and programs.

The Haunted Halloween Tours take place Oct. 26, 27 and 28 at 6:30, 7:45, and 9 p.m. Tickets are \$30/adult and \$20/youth 18 and under, available at the Ticket Seller, 250-549-SHOW (7469) or online at [www.ticket seller.ca](http://www.ticket seller.ca).

Tours take approximately one hour and are not recommended for children 12 and under or for those sensitive to frightening content. Mobility issues should be taken into consideration as guests will be required to climb stairs.

The Caetani Centre is located at 3401 Pleasant Valley Rd. Vernon. For more information, visit [caetani.org](http://caetani.org) or call 250-275-1525.

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**Link to photos, logo, poster:**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-72Lh84esuuNYtWmZwJrMlBmR1dbUEbb?usp=sharing>

**About the Caetani Family:**

Duke of Sermoneta, Leone Caetani, his partner, Ofelia, and their daughter, Sveva Caetani, arrived in Vernon, British Columbia in 1921. They lived a life of wealth, privilege, travel, and luxury throughout the Roaring Twenties until the economic crash of 1929 decimated their fortunes.

Following the death of Leone in 1935, Ofelia and Sveva went into self-imposed exile. During this time, mother and daughter rarely left the house, and Sveva was not allowed to pursue her love of art. It was not until her mother's death in 1960 that Sveva, now in her early 40s, started painting again.

Her economic circumstances dictated that she find work for the first time in her life. She took on teaching positions at St. James Elementary and Charles Bloom Secondary. Around this time, Sveva began work on her Recapitulation series, featuring 47 large-scale vibrant watercolour paintings, documenting her story and journey through life.

In the mid-1980s, due to several mitigating circumstances, Sveva donated the complete Recapitulation series to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA). The works left the province of British Columbia for 35 years. The AFA provided access to the collection through exhibition loans and an online database.

Now, after more than 30 years since the first painting travelled to Edmonton, Sveva's Recapitulation has returned home to Vernon permanently and is now part of an extensive collection held by the Caetani Cultural Centre Society and on display at Sveva's former home, which is now the Caetani Centre in Vernon, BC.