



BRISTOL
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Media Contact:
Bonni Pear or Carol Vesely,
Miller Pear Public Relations,
(312) 647-4566;
info@millerpear.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Romancing the Faire

**Amour & Armor Take Center Stage at 23rd Annual
Bristol Renaissance Faire, Opening July 10**

KENOSHA, Wis. (June 28, 2010) ó Midwesterners will find more to love at the 23rd annual Bristol Renaissance Faire, opening July 10 for nine weekends through Labor Day Monday, Sep. 6. Amidst the usual complement of 16th Century arts, games, rides, food and music, the arrival of Queen Elizabeth's final and arguably most ardent suitor in the British hamlet of Bristol will set the stage for a season of romance where love is in the Faire.

Much to the dismay of many of the Queen's most trusted councilors, Hercule François de Valois-Angoulême, Duke of Anjou, will be Her Majesty's constant companion, enflaming the Court with blatant flirtations and stirring rumors of pending nuptials between the Frenchman and England's most eligible monarch. Barely half the age of the Queen, who reportedly quite smitten has playfully nicknamed him her öfrog,ö Anjou will attract mistrust as a foreigner, a Papist, and the son of a notorious Jezebel (Catherine de Medici).

Anjou is not this summer's only newcomer among the colorful cast of characters that inhabit the 30 wooded acres of the Bristol Renaissance Faire. Captain James Alday, Lady Mary Killigrew and fellow pirates will set up camp in the Faire's Traders Cove, providing formidable street-fighting foes for Robin Hood and his Merry Men. Undoubtedly at opposite ends of the interactive popularity scale for most patrons, the Bristol Census Taker will arrive in the village for the first time this summer, as will the resident Kissing Wench. In all, more than 1,200 period performers, artisans and merchants will be on hand each weekend to take visitors on a rollicking romp through

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Elizabethan England, captivating guests with an incomparable spectrum of experiences from unabashed revelry to first rate people-watching.

Live Action Fantasy-Play

Bristol's RenQuest brings the worldwide popularity of massively multiplayer online role-playing games, like *World of Warcraft*, into the live action dimension of the Renaissance fair, offering gamers an unprecedented opportunity to interact with Faire characters and test their role-playing prowess beyond the realm of their computer screens.

This summer's RenQuest will provide the final chapter in The Bloodtharcken Trilogy, a story tracing the ongoing struggle between the brave and noble Order of the Sun and the wild, chaotic Lunar Tribe, and the legacy of the Dragon Bloodtharcken. As players engage in an evolving adventure of riddles, spells, hunts and other challenges and advance through the levels of the live action game, they earn individual player achievement rewards and accumulate points toward the advancement of one of the two feuding factions with which they're aligned. Some quests last a day; others extend over multiple weekends or the entire Faire season.

Merriment & Music

Sixteen entertainment stages, including the newly constructed four-story, amphitheatre-style Midsummer Stage, will feature performances by swashbuckling swordsmen, dancers, musicians, acrobats, rope-walkers, fire-jugglers and an eclectic assortment of comedic performers who invite audiences to become part of the act.

Among an impressive roster of special guest artists scheduled to perform on select weekends throughout the summer are: Doktor Kaboom!, who takes audiences on a sidesplitting journey of increasingly spectacular (and often successful) science experiments from a Renaissance perspective; Tartanic, men without pants performing an interactive spectacle of bagpipes and drums of fury, and the Tortuga Twins, a juggling, whip-cracking, sword-fighting comedy trio that originated at Bristol and now returns to the Faire for the first time in more than a decade.

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One-of-a-Kind Wares

Between stages, Faire streets are lined with game and ride areas, food vendors, and merchants selling everything from sterling silver jewelry to rare-edition books and hand-blown glass. More than a dozen new merchants will be joining the ranks of Bristol's artisans this summer, including Joshua Diliberto of Madison, Wis., whose masterful hand-work in six-link titanium defies the traditional expectations of chainmail art, and potter Theresa Wooden of Burlington, Wis., whose head-turning garden totems are just one example of her beautifully unique stoneware and high-fire porcelain creations.

Artful Expression

Installation artist Kim Wozniak of Pulaski, Wis., will provide a visual feast for Faire-goers throughout the summer with a display of mammoth, one-of-a-kind works created from tile, glass, stone and concrete. And in a special, first-time event, artists from across the region will converge on Bristol, July 31 and Aug. 1, for Ren Plein Aire ó a slight paraphrase of the French expression, *en plein aire* (literally "in the open air"), used to describe the act of painting outdoors. Ren Plein Aire artists will position themselves at work throughout Bristol's grounds, drawing their inspiration from the sights and characters of the Renaissance Faire. On Sunday afternoon, the paintings will be sold on-site at live auction, with proceeds benefitting Variety, the Children's Charity of Wisconsin.

Equine Enchantment

In what producers are describing as Bristol's "Triple-A" summer ó art, amour and armor ó the third A evokes images of one of the most perennially popular attractions of the Renaissance Faire, jousting knights on horseback. Home to three crowd-rousing jousts a day, including the midday Royal Joust attended by Queen Elizabeth herself and the day's end Joust to the Death, Wyckham Field and its environs will be transformed into a haven for horse-lovers this summer, re-dubbed The Royal Mews ("Queen's Stables").

Trainer Laura Amandis will present an equine liberty act showcasing the beauty, grace and power of two stallions performing loose in the joust ring in response to only

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her audible cues. Bodini, a world-champion Fell Pony from Wisconsin's Dream Hayven Farm, will also take up residence in the Mews, performing a variety of duties from drawing Queen Elizabeth's carriage in the daily parade to pulling the playfully-named pony zamboni that smoothes the field between jousts. Perhaps the most intriguing (and illusive) of all the Mews inhabitants will be a majestic unicorn whose gold hoof cast-offs can only be seen by fairies.

Located just west of I-94's Russell Road exit, near Kenosha, Wis., the Bristol Renaissance Faire will be open rain or shine, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., every Saturday and Sunday, July 10 through Sep. 5, and on Labor Day Monday, Sep. 6. Tickets are \$18.95 for adults and \$9.50 for children. Advance ticket discounts available at renfair.com or (847) 395-7773.