



## Summer styles

Lata Patkar

This summer will be very exciting for fashionistas, as the ramp styles available range from newer fabrics / sharper cuts / bolder silhouettes / brilliant colours – a veritable feast of styles.

As for the textures, fashion designers opine that any fabric that combines the sheen of silk and the feel of cotton should be okay. Mumbai designer Harish Desai opines that while plain cotton will keep up its place with leading couturiers, dual shaded linen and cotton lycra are the fabrics to opt for.

In this competition for suitable textiles, *khadi* cotton is often preferred as per the leading designer duo Samaldas Rath and Vijay Mehra. Sheer organza patchwork seemed to be favourite embellishments, while the focus is on surface textures and solid colours. This means that denims in various colours, from bleached white to black, peppered with rivet patches and tiers also make the grade.

For example, the white stretch pipe trousers with their low fits and the ubiquitous punky jeans will retain their place in the 2010 style world, says designer Veena Mehta of Mumbai and explains that the "soft washed denim will reflect a youthful and holiday spirit. Also animal prints will come in a big way."

When it comes to men's jeans, the style is to have a low waistline with flared legs / boot cuts combined with washed looks. For the 'washed look' raw hems / washed out jersey / linen and cotton crepes are a must.

For college-goers – for boys – the accent will be on loose comfort-fit trousers, but narrower and more stylish. Girls will have the option of short skirts as well, with detailing like frills and gathers down the front and paired with tops with puff sleeves, silver buttons and lace details. "This is a season for long, clean silhouettes," opines fashion designer Reena Singh of Mumbai. "For instance, the Chinese coat style will make a comeback in a huge way. Traditional *salwar-kameez* suits will reflect the Chinese high collar, loose straight sleeves, a clean front and minimal embroidery."

Apart from high collars, the summer would witness a revival of cotton tops paired with straight pants and shorts in affordable Italian polymeric fabric. "We must understand that people are usually in a holiday mood and not inclined to spend heavily on clothes at this time of the year," a boutique owner pointed out.

Then there are the ever popular *kurtas*, both in bright shades and pale white. "Short *kurtas* with a fusion of eastern styles and western silhouettes are really hot this summer," informs Kiron Mathur, a specialist in women's wear. "These would most suitably be paired with trouser-cut *salwars*."

His partner, Chandrika Nanda, points out that pret lines are what the youth is looking at. "We are working on asymmetrical lines, both on necklines and hemlines and are introducing micro-short *kurtis*, which can be worn with sequined hot pants and stoles."

Other designers point out that flowing chiffons would co-exist with structured linen during the summer. Mathur and Nanda are pitching for *chikan*-work *kurtas*, while Nikhil Gohain feels *georgette churidar-kurti* combos will appeal to women of all age groups.

For a more dressy look, Nikhil advises short *dupattas* with dye and weaving details. "Short *dupattas* can always be worn with short *kurtas* and can also be doubled as stoles," he points out. Besides, there are colourful scarves and perhaps, simple cotton purses with braided handles that can do the trick.

On the colour front, two distinct palettes would dominate this summer. As Gohain puts it, all the colours would be either bright with a tangy edge or soft, with a touch of white. Moreover, for a change, colours would determine designs, rather than the other way around.

Kiron Mathur adds that their summer collections are in all shades of pink, along with sharp lime, turquoise green, light orange and the neutral shades.

Store owners point out that as the season unfolds, faded pastels in natural fabrics will make way for pale white and honey. Then, bright shades like lemon yellow, orange and red would also become very popular.

In between, bold contrasts like red and yellow would show up, besides polka dots in black and white, as well as window pane checks in white on beige or black base. However, intricate block prints and graphic reproductions would fall from favour, barring stray instances of T-shirts and tops.

# Halo of the outlaw

Sometimes, you have to literally put years and years between some experience and yourself to figure things out. Take for instance, a poem we studied in our final high school year. It was a bitter sweet year. On the one hand, we were ready to venture out to the wide world beyond, on the other hand, we wanted to cling to this safe world of mother hen clucking nuns, non-negotiable rules and chewing gum stuck under benches. It was in this last summer that we endlessly recited *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes. Looking back, it seems surreal and rather hilarious that a bunch of wide-eyed convent school girls, too timid to say boo to a goose, in a forgotten corner of a country lost by the Empire, should commit to memory a poem about an English robber so clearly on the wrong side of the law. At an age when even chatting innocently with a member of the male species could condemn one to mass censure, here we were, secretly cheering for the black-eyed Bess, who not only loves the scoundrel, but blows herself up to kingdom come to save him. Really, this poem, with its unapologetic rooting for the outlaw and the dark undercurrent of forbidden passion, had no business creeping into any schoolgirl's curriculum. But I am glad it did, for it awakened in us the fact that as humans, we have in us a peculiar moral ambivalence, a willingness to bend the rules, and that nothing is black or white, but a fascinating amalgam of the two. As girls on the brink of womanhood, we didn't care a fig how many wayfarers the highwayman robbed. We didn't want to know about his loot. But yes, we cared deeply that his love for Bess was true, and that, like a true lover who would never go back on his word, he would gallop in the moonlight to be with her. Enraptured by the rhythm of the lines, caught by the hypnotic spell of its imagery, all of us let out a collective sigh, wishing to find in our own drab lives a man so reckless and daring, so true to his love. Whether or not we ultimately did has never been discussed. That old magic has dispersed, and when we meet now, our children and their futures are our consuming passion.

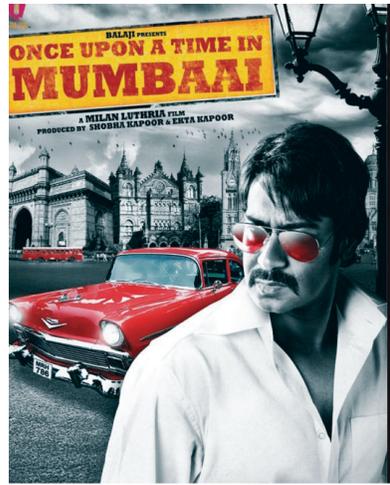
The outlaw is a figure who looms larger than life on the popular imagination. He is so much more layered, more nuanced than the do-gooder hero, and his very daring in questioning the establishment rules wins him grudging admiration. Michel Foucault, the great historian and philosopher, said that the lyricism of marginality may find inspiration in the image of the outlaw... the great social nomad, who prowls around the periphery of a docile, frightened order. If you look around you carefully enough, you will see men are rewarded for learning the practice of violence in all spheres by money, admiration, recognition, as if their masculinity has been proved. In male culture, the police are heroic and so are outlaws, males who enforce laws and men who break them. It was around this same time of our girlhood

that another literary figure-Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* rode into the edges of our uneasy awakening. Like countless readers, we fervently



wanted to give this brutal man the benefit of the doubt, but the creation of a misunderstood antihero who is pure good within continues to be a cliché used by romance writers to this date. And we are still unwilling to accept that some bad pennies are beyond redemption.

All these random thoughts were generated when we went for a late night show of *Once Upon a Time in Mumbai*, the new Bollywood take on one of the most charismatic of our underworld dons – the late Haji Mastan. Haji Mastan strode like a colossus in the Mumbai of the 1970s. Displaced from his home due to a flood, he survives as a child by smuggling gold in the Mumbai docks. As he rises in power, he carves up the dream city into clearly demarcated areas for the other dons to rule peacefully, and puts his foot down on taking human lives, or smuggling drugs. Finally brought down by his own protege, Haji Mastan was revered by the poor he supported all his life. If this film has not created too many waves at the box office, it is less to do with its own making than the fact that the jaded Indian public has ceased to be surprised. The public, thanks to Bollywood again, can speak the *bhalingo*. Even a five year old can tell you the meaning of *supari* these days, or stage an "encounter" of the class fatso. We have indeed come a long way since the days the only villains were characters from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The demons then gave way to cruel *Zamindars*, and unscrupulous money lenders. Filmmakers of the 1990s like Ram Gopal Varma turned their gaze on the world of organised crime and the underworld. Today, the villain is more antihero than villain. Unlike the villain, the antihero is typ-



## 3rd eye

Indrani Raimedhi

ically a man forced by circumstances to embrace his dark side.

But when we talk of outlaws, it would be unjust to make it gender specific. I would like to discuss three women outlaws in celluloid. The first, of course, is Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen*. The story of Phoolan Devi has taken enigmatic proportions in Indian folklore. Born to an indigent sharecropper family oppressed by India's rigid class and caste system, a prepubescent Phoolan is married off to a man thrice her age. After running away from this abusive husband, a cousin lets her be kidnapped by marauding brigands. With her lover Vikram Mallah, she unleashes terror on the countryside, robbing and killing. After the killing of her lover and her gang-rape by the Thakurs, she is believed to have massacred twenty of them at Behmai. A vigilante liberator of the class struggle, she finally surrenders to police forces. *Bandit Queen* chillingly endorses the truism that evil begets evil. Another powerful female outlaw film is *Godmother* by Vinay Shukla, starring Shabana Azmi. It is based on real life don Santokhbhen Jadeja. When an imminent drought threatens to ruin their crops, Rambhi and her husband Veeru move from their village to the city. Through threat, violence and blackmail, Veeru makes a career as a mafia don in a corrupt political setup. But he is killed by a powerful lawyer. Rambhi steps in, exacting a terrible revenge for her husband's death and fighting the political system. In the end, she is shown paying the price for trying to unite a Hindu girl and a Muslim boy.

Perhaps one of the most pitiless evocations of female evil is Charlize Theron's portrayal in the



she was as much victim as perpetrator.

Every actor worth his salt dreams of playing the antihero with conviction. If Marlon Brando's name instantly conjures up the raspy-voiced, saturnine Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*, Al Pacino will always be associated with Scarface and Michael Corleone. Leonardo Di Caprio pulled off a very believable Frank Abagnale in *Catch Me If You Can*. John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd echoed the desperate times of the great Depression in America. Whether it was Jesse James or Bonnie and Clyde, their elusiveness, their ability to stay one step ahead of the law, have fired the imagination of the common man, who is too weak to circumvent the system, and so projects his secret fantasies on these, outlaws. As far back as in 1969, Eric Hobsbawm's *Social Bandits* argued that a few individuals in the history of crime and politics transcend the status of the criminal to become truly representative of an oppressed group struggle. This has led to the birth of a new theory – the Robin Hood principle. This implies that the targets are the privileged, and the beneficiaries are the deprived. If this applies to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, it would also apply to David Murcia Guzman of Columbia, who started out as a snot-nosed kid in a Bogota slum, and went on to create a hydra-headed money laundering scheme that siphoned off billions of dollars. In the end, he says, "My only law is that I dreamed."

The public today, even more so than previously, is inclined to take a lenient view of those on the wrong side of the law. This is hardly surprising, as politicians, bureaucrats, the police, all conspire to subvert the system and take the state hostage. The outlaw at least is unapologetic about his misdeeds, and so doesn't appear a hypocrite. Another point worth noting is that in the recent film *Raavan*, the kidnapped Aishwarya displays the classic symptoms of the Stockholm syndrome. It is a term to describe a paradoxical psychological phenomenon whenever hostages express adulation and have positive feelings towards their captors. It is named after a bank robbery in Stockholm in 1973, in which the hostage bank employees sided with their captors and defended them after their release. The term Stockholm syndrome was first coined by criminal psychologist Nils Bejerot.

So, while outlaws are born every day due to the flaws of society, they will continue to be chronicled in our collective memory, in our songs, films and plays. They will provide us chilling glimpses of human depravity. And somewhere, there will always be a bored schoolgirl in a ponytail, dreaming of a highwayman galloping to her rescue.

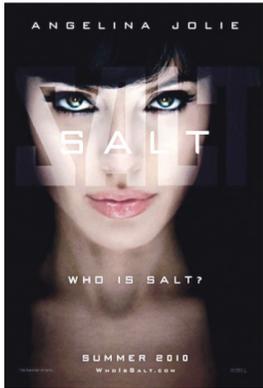
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## SALT

Cast: Angelina Jolie, Live Schreiber, Chiwetel Ejiofor.  
Director: Pierre Coffin, Chris Renaud.

Angelina Jolie gives it her all in the title role, and her seasoned performance is almost enough to save *Salt* from its predictable and ludicrous plot. As a CIA officer, Evelyn Salt (Jolie) swore an oath to duty, honour and country. Her loyalty will be tested when a defector accuses her of being a Russian spy. Salt goes on the run, using all her skills and years of experience as a covert operative to elude capture. Salt's efforts to prove her innocence only serve to cast doubt on her motives, as the hunt to uncover the truth behind her identity continues and the question remains: "Who Is Salt?"

Director Phillip Noyce does a fantastic job of initially drawing the viewer into the unabashedly ridiculous narrative, as the filmmaker, working from a script by Kurt Wimmer, effectively elevates the material with a series of superbly conceived and executed action sequences.



## Cats & Dogs: The Revenge Of Kitty Galore

Cast: James Marsden, Chris O'donnell, Jack Mcbrayer.  
Director: Brad Peyton.

**MOVIE WATCH**  
Vikram Barkataki

**TOP 10 Hollywood**

- The Other Guys
- Inception
- Step Up 3-D
- Salt
- Dinner for Schmucks
- Despicable Me
- Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore
- Charlie St. Cloud
- Toy Story 3
- The Kids Are All Right

In the age-old battle between cats and dogs, one crazed feline has taken things a paw too far. Kitty Galore, formerly an agent for cat spy organisation MEOWS, has gone rogue and hatched a diabolical plan to not only bring her canine enemies to heel, but take down

her former kitty comrades and make the world her scratching post. Faced with this unprecedented threat, cats and dogs will be forced to join forces for the first time in history in an unlikely alliance to save themselves – and their humans.



"GPS technology has been around forever. Every time I lost weight, it always found its way back!"



"If you are not thrilled and delighted with your purchase, go for a brisk walk and see if that puts you in a better mood!"



"The pills probably work better if you don't dunk them in cake frosting."



"We spent a fortune for a home alarm system — but the Wrinkle Fairy still breaks in every night!"

## FORECAST

AUGUST 16 - 22, 2010

**ARIES (MAR 21-APR 19)**  
Someone needs some attention on Monday — someone you adore, someone who deserves all the attention the world has to offer — but they might be too shy to ask for it. Tuesday and Wednesday, you have little attention for anyone. In fact, you can barely keep your eyes open, and you feel like you're walking through molasses. You don't come into your own this week until Thursday and Friday. Saturday and Sunday, use your friends to help you get something you want. Success is there for the taking.

**TAURUS (APR 20-MAY 20)**  
The way to get motivated about a new fitness routine is to get someone else to do it with you. Play tennis on Monday or, if you're feeling ambitious, go for a long jog. Exercise keeps you thinking clearly. On Tuesday and Wednesday, you're going to need as much exercise as possible! By Thursday and Friday, as much as you might want to wind down the workweek (or school week) doing something social, being on your own will be more rewarding. Same goes for the weekend.

**GEMINI (MAY 21-JUN 21)**  
Put all of your energy — and you have lots to spare on Monday — toward another person. Tuesday and Wednesday are slower, murkier days. But Thursday and Friday, get in on the action again. If you feel like taking an impulsive road trip with this person and you have the time to do it, well, what's holding you back? Saturday and Sunday are less purely enjoyable. Something's going on below the surface and you can't quite put your finger on it.

**CANCER (JUN 22-JUL 22)**  
Domestic life is the source of heartache on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, the emotional intensity extends to your work life, leaving you indecisive and unable to think clearly about the particulars of a financial transaction. Put it off for now. Thursday and Friday, do something that only you would find fun: Go to a movie, or take the car through a car wash just for kicks. Then, this weekend, chill.

**LEO (JUL 23-AUG 22)**  
You blurt out an idea without even thinking about it on Monday, and suddenly, everyone's acting like you're Albert Einstein. You're brilliant! You've solved the world's biggest mystery! Not quite. But it's exciting to be so loved and respected. Tuesday and Wednesday, you see through the surface of a social interaction to what's really going on, and you can't help but share your theories with a trusted pal. A burning hot romance is in the stars on Thursday and Friday. Spend the weekend together.

**VIRGO (AUG 23-SEPT 22)**  
Make a big splash on Monday. Show up wearing a dressy shirt with an image of a whale on it, or get a new haircut, maybe even a Mohawk. It's okay to go for a look that's totally bizarre. Tuesday and Wednesday, however, your energy should be focused on intellectual matters (rather than fashion). Delve deeply into a subject that fascinates you. Thursday and Friday, you'd love to rush through work and get things done. Saturday and Sunday are romantic. Yippee!

**LIBRA (SEPT 23-OCT 22)**  
Things just don't get better than Monday. Romance is the order of the day, and someone is set to flirt with you in an unexpectably adorable way. It thrills you. Tuesday and Wednesday are more money-focused, but Thursday and Friday return you to the very happy territory of feelings, ideas and friends. In the domestic sphere, everything falls out of whack on Saturday. Weird. Stick around the house this weekend.

**SCORPIO (OCT 23-NOV 21)**  
You're a snail on Monday, and you're hanging out under your shell. It's not that you're unhappy; you just don't feel like making any decisions. Tuesday sees you emerging a bit, rubbing your eyes. You might say something funny in passing that has friends busting up for hours. Wednesday is a great day. Thursday and Friday, with your spirits up and your confidence fully restored, you find yourself the life of a party. This weekend, you have some business to attend to.

**SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22-DEC 21)**  
People keep coming to you for answers on Monday. It's like you're on a quiz show or something. Tuesday and Wednesday, much as you love everyone right back, all you want to do is be alone. And that's perfectly understandable. But Thursday and Friday, someone grabs you by the arm and pulls you into a social situation. Lo and behold, you have an incredible time. Saturday and Sunday, save your pennies.

**CAPRICORN (DEC 22-JAN 19)**  
The start of the week is the start of the rest of your life — and your approach on Monday is rightfully optimistic. Tuesday and Wednesday, a few friends might want to jump on the bandwagon. Obviously, the more the merrier. Thursday and Friday, you feel pants of doubt: Can you do so many things at once? And is this really what you want? But you have the discipline to persevere, and you'll be glad you did. This weekend, you'll already start to see results.

**AQUARIUS (JAN 20-FEB 18)**  
A short, funny note to someone you barely know — but have always felt you wanted to know better — may be the start of an incredible new friendship. Monday is about connection. Tuesday and Wednesday, you feel emotionally exposed, but in a way that's healthy, natural and good. Then, on Thursday, you have something of a breakthrough — suddenly, you feel like a cloud. Thursday evening and Friday should be spent with groups of people who value what you value. This weekend, the fun is in sleeping.

**PISCES (FEB 19-MARCH 20)**  
You're standing at a crossroads on Monday. The best guidance is going to come from your heart. Tuesday and Wednesday, someone on another path might tempt you with where they're headed and want you to follow them, but the timing is wrong. Thursday and Friday, be alert. Luck comes to those who are ready for it. This weekend is a breeze.