

jfW
JUST FOR WOMEN

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Issue 04
DECEMBER
2019

"I think like a filmmaker, not like an actor"
Nithya Menen

**BLAZERS 101**
SLAYING THE YEAR'S FASHION FAVOURITE

**MOVIES OF THE YEAR**
*Top 30 picks of 2019*

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# *A Stocking Full of Goodies*

Another year has whizzed past at such a brisk speed that it seems like every year's quest is to outpace the previous one. While the Christmas and New Year season unfailingly weaves its magic to lift everyone's spirits, we at JFW have a lot more reasons to rejoice. We wrap up 2019 with the blissful satisfaction of having cemented our position in the digital space. This past month has marked and surpassed various milestone numbers on all our online platforms and we couldn't have asked for a better way to call it a year.

Perfectly matching our upbeat energy, our cover girl, Nithya Menen represents the holiday cheer, with her childlike enthusiasm. This is not her first cover shoot with JFW, but I must say that every time we meet, a new and exciting dimension unfolds from her personality. It was quite something to watch her fearlessly embrace her playful side, while also channeling the accomplished young woman that she is. In the same vein, this issue comes packed with all things merry, as well as substantial; we've got bold styling choices themed after the colours of the season, an in-depth travel spread, intense rendezvous with women who share with us their breathtaking journeys, as well as an expert counsel on how to navigate a postgraduate career.

You'll need to carve out time especially for our playback article of 2019's silver-screen stunners – 30 worthwhile movies across languages, that caught our attention this year.

So settle in for an engrossing read, gorge on those festive cookies and have yourself a one-of-a-kind Christmas!

Until the New Year beckons...

CHEERS



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# Mailbox

**LOVE WHAT YOU SEE?**
Don't forget to share your thoughts and suggestions. Tag us, drop us a comment or just email us at **jfw@optionsmediagroup.in**

Comfort food in a bowl! What's not to like? Much needed recipe listing. Sometimes all you want is to taste home in a bowl. And some of the recipes sure brought back some good memories.
***- Kriti P.***




Hi JFW, I am a regular reader of the magazine and your food and recipe section is always something I earmark for later. Do you have anything special coming up for Christmas?
***- Sri Vidya,*** *Coimbatore*

*Hi Sri Vidya,*
*We have indulged our readers with Christmas bakes this editon along with an exceptional article on apples and its benefits. Hope you enjoy it!*




**The Bridal Issue** as a whole was very colourful to see. The photographers showcase was beautiful. The decor duo's story is also an exceptional one. Good variety JFW. 👍
***- Dhaya,*** *Kochi*

**Picked up my first copy of the magazine.** Just the right mix of fun and serious reads. Very well done. God Bless.
***- Josephine J.***







**Bride or not, the article on eating right is for all of us out there.** Facts that we all know but need to be reminded once in a while to get that little push we need.
***- Dharshini,*** *Hyderabad*

A-Z! Such fun topics are a visual delight.
***- Zahira***

**I love the makeup products** featured this month. Sure to try!
***- S.Kavita,*** *Chennai*



Designer: Anju Modi
Model: Archana Akil Kumar

# 'TIS THE **SEASON!**

*Show your Christmas spirit by wearing it in prints. Candycane, reindeer, snowman, and stars – oh this really is the season of joy! Here's a round-up of all things Christmassy that we're loving this year.*




*1.* Enamel plated snowflake pin brooch by **Chanel**; *2.* Snowmen crew socks by **Forever 21**; *3.* Multi coloured Christmas tree hairband by **Dorothy Perkins**; *4.* Snowgal crossbody bag by **Betsey Johnson**; *5.* Deer print leggings by **The Upside**; *6.* Many trees jumper by **White Stuff**; *7.* 3X Xmas wonder hair clips by **Monsoon**; *8.* Glittery earrings by **H&M**; *9.* Reindeer embellished Christmas jumper by **Marks & Spencer**; *10.* Indigo sequin bauble jumper by **Dorothy Perkins**; *11.* Peppermint candy clutch bag by **Judith Leiber**; *12.* Ruby reindeer slider slipper by **Monsoon**



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# A MERRY CLOSET TO YOU

*Red and green; a pairing so eccentrically cool, it would make Gucci beam with pride. Typically associated with festive fervour, it is possible to style this combo without looking like a piece of decoration. Here is how to wear and accessorise red with green in the chicest way possible this holiday season, and frankly, all through the year.*




*1.* Draped cotton-twill top by **Lado Bokuchava**; *2.* Brenna sequined tulle mini dress by **Alice + Olivia**; *3.* Opera white gold, alligator and diamond watch by **Buccellati**; *4.* Dionysus leather shoulder bag by **Gucci**; *5.* BB logo-embellished crushed velvet mules by **Balenciaga**; *6.* Monogramme quilted leather pouch by **Saint Laurent**; *7.* Embellished leather iPhone X case by **Dolce & Gabbana**; *8.* Red small hardsided spinner case by **Lulu Guinness**; *9.* Floral print shift dress by **Dolce & Gabbana** *10.* Jaelyn belted silk-crepe jumpsuit by **L'Agence**; *11.* Glittered enameled gold-tone and crystal earrings by **Gucci**; *12.* Leather and gold-tone bracelet by **Balenciaga**; *12.* Oversized square-frame acetate and gold-tone sunglasses by **Gucci**

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# Ladies, it's Time to Suit Up!

While fur coats and puffers don't make a cut to early winter, blazers sure do! ***Sruthi Ravinder*** catches up with this fall's favorite fashion moment.

## Oh So Chic!

*Fall 2019 has set free the wild side of this once-corporate staple.*

The shifting weather calls for the between-seasons jacket and what better to reach for than our beloved blazers. If you are a front-row fashion follower, the runways and street styles have left behind enough styles to steal this fall. From animal prints, satin, tailored, boxy to bling, here is how you can style this season's warmest winter trend!

## MONOTONE LOOK

Great thing about a blazer look: it means business. Pair a tailored jacket with matched separates for the best and safest workwear for a business conference or an interview where you don't want to take the risk of experimenting with your wardrobe. Another way of wearing a monotone look with lesser investment would be to layer the blazer atop a jumpsuit which perfectly mimics a look of coordinated top and pants while you are investing only in a one-piece.



Brendon Maxwell Spring '20 Ready-to-Wear Collection

WORKWEAR



Miu Miu Padded Blazer

Sapto Djojokartiko Sitta Organza Sandals



Brandon Maxwell Neoprene Wide-Leg Jumpsuit

Dolce & Gabbana Embellished Sequined Leather Shoulder Bag



Prada Ruffled Floral Brocade Jacket

GET INTO THE GROOVE

## Two-timing on a Friday night

*If you want to work the blazer from desk to dinner, invest in silky fabric. You can wear the blazer over silk shirts or even opt for a satin blazer. Pair it with a classic tote and pointy kitten heels for work and switch to sling bag and stilettos for the night.*

## SKIRT

Mean-Girls-inspired skirts with checkered blazers have always been a classic fav. The new age, however, calls for a pleated skirt with a printed blazer. Wrap up a metallic feminine fanny pack around your waist and slip into mules... you're good to go.

## BLAZER AND SLIP DRESS COMBO

The slip dress is one of the sexiest 90s' trends that revisited the runways this year. While it is elegance itself, the plunging neckline restricts it to only occasion wear. Throw a blazer over a lovely slip dress to keep you warm, comfy and extremely fashionable for any evening. Accessorise with a mini handbag, some dainty gold layered neckpiece to match the shine of the dress and throw on some strappy heels to add a touch of whimsy.

AN EVENING
FOR THE LADY



Alexandre Birman Berthe Snake-Effect Leather Sandals

Banana Republic Delicate Stone Layer Necklace





ALL DAY
ANY DAY LOOK



Large Lake Studio Pink Reversible Slip Dress

Zeynep Arçay Boyfriend Blazer



Karl Lagerfeld Agyness Tweed Shoulder Bag



Michael Kors Collection Checked Blazer



Charles & Keith Demi Chain Handle Patent Hexagon Bag

## JEAN AND JACKET

Be it skinny or the mom jeans, you can easily top it off with a tank crop and blazer. If it is for a day out, keep in mind to opt for a slightly over-sized blazer, carry it with a geometric box bag and heels. For a more polished look, opt for a fitted blazer and dark denims.



Miu Miu Sandals with Glitter Buckle

Alexandre Birman Clarita Fur-Lined Leather Sneaker

## Get the Look

*Styling your blazer look with a pair of cool white sneakers or kitten heels is hands down the chicest way to elevate your denim look.*





Brendon Maxwell Spring '20 Ready-to-Wear Collection

ONLY FOR THE FROWS!

## WITH CYCLING SHORTS

One of the biggest street styles of the year that every fashionista you know has already sported has to be the cycling shorts and blazer combos. While not all might be comfy pairing it with a bralet, you can opt for tank tops, fitted crop tops or even a slightly long shirt/t-shirt. Layer that look with a baggy blazer, gold hoops, chunky layered bracelet, and a fanny pack, you are good to attract some fashion-envy stares. ■

## So Hot!

*Shake up the classic power dressing by wearing a blazer over a statement blouse paired with wide, cropped pants and ankle boots. If you want to stand out you can also opt for checked or patterned pants.*

### BLAZER DRESS

Taking cues from celebrities like Priyanka Chopra and Hailey Baldwin, the blazer-dress is but the latest rendition of this classic wardrobe staple. Cut to the top of the thigh, the blazer dress will look great paired with boots or even pumps. Wear it with your hair down and minimal jewelry for the perfect date night.

### TEAM IT WITH YOUR LBD

Go monotone with a black boxy blazer or edgy with a satin or pop colour – think neon. Make sure to match your shoes and bag with the colour of your blazer and if you are going for black, break the monotony with a flash of colour in your accessories.



Jonathan Simkhai Sequined Distressed Crepe Blazer




Moschino Embroidered Blazer





PARTY READY FOR THE NIGHT

## Uptown Shine

*If you are one to hop into a pub any day of the week, leave the jacket in your car. Whether you're in your daily jeans, formal pants, skirt or even your track pants, throwing on a sequined jacket will immediately elevate your day time look to party-ready.*

# VR CHENNAI
ANNA NAGAR

## BRING IN THE HOLIDAY CHEER WITH
## CHENNAI'S ULTIMATE SHOPPING DESTINATION

In the midst of the hustle-bustle of Anna Nagar, lies one of Chennai's newest shopping hubs. Apart from it being the one-stop for all your shopping needs, VR Chennai is a venue that incorporates the perfect balance of food and entertainment with an event every weekend; ensuring that you're not only taking home shopping bags but also great experiences.










VR Chennai has a perfectly curated list of brands to fulfil every shopaholic's needs. What makes this shoppers' haven really stand out is its range of premium stores offering an unparalleled shopping experience. Whatever the occasion, VR Chennai has got you covered.

Starting with H&M, the perfect brand for every event; the range includes everything from sparkling gala outfits and exclusive designer collaborations to everyday basics and high-performance yoga wear to help fashion fans across the world dress in their personal style.

Another amazing brand known for its exceptional quality and confident styles showcases a wide collection across menswear & women wear, at VR Chennai is **Marks & Spencer.**

**Kenneth Cole** from New York is exclusively available in the city at VR Chennai's **Rocia** store.

Speaking of stores exclusive to VR Chennai, it has further established its name by being host to the city's first GUESS store after brand relaunch in the country - an American upscale retail brand known for their range of men's and women's apparel, especially designer jeans, and other fashion accessories.

VR Chennai is a culmination of cultures, and **Mango** compliments exactly that by bringing a little bit of Barcelona to Anna Nagar. Mango offers elegant and classy accessories and fashion for men and women, straight off the runway.

**Beverly Hills Polo Club,** the only store in South India at VR Chennai is your place if you're looking for fashionable sports and active-wear. BHPC incorporates the luxury and glamour of Hollywood into its clothing making every customer feel like a celebrity.

**Esprit,** an international fashion brand that represents style and quality, which works on a basis of creativity and responsibility, fused with a sunny Californian attitude, is yet another exclusive store at VR Chennai.







**American Eagle** which is popular for its jeans (especially the low rise jeans type), polo shirts, graphic T-shirts, sweatpants, Henley shirts, vanity boxers, boxer briefs and briefs, outerwear, and swimwear has set up its first store at VR Chennai in South India.

**Ancestry** is an assimilation of heritage with clothing and lifestyle products creating a line for the modern woman. This is Ancestry's first store and yes that is in VR Chennai.

**True Blue** which is owned by Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar; the menswear label embodies the spirit of the global Indian, the 21st-century traditionalist equally at home in New Delhi and New York is also first store in the city at VR Chennai.

Bringing a classic, cool American essence, is **Tommy Hilfiger.** This luxury brand provides superior styling and quality to its customers worldwide. VR Chennai also showcases **Calvin Klein** which offers a line of designer jeans, casual wear, outerwear and accessories. Speaking of designer, VR is also home to **Ritu Kumar**, with pieces created in collaboration with talented artists that is perfect for young, urban India.

VR Chennai even offers the best of casual wear with **Gap**; where you'll find comfort with style. Whether it's t-shirts, hoodies; great fitting pants or denim-wear, Gap has everything. **Superdry** redefines casual; worn by David Beckham, Superdry interprets British tailoring, Japanese inspiration and vintage American culture in their line of tees, sweats, jackets, hoodies, footwear and more. Another notable brand that VR Chennai offers is **Jack & Jones** which is one of Europe's leading producers of menswear, that has made its name with thousands of partners selling their products. And **Vero Moda** for the modern, fashion-conscious, young woman, with affordable, great clothes and accessories.

**Zalza Teens,** an Indian brand that takes an eco-friendly approach to fashion is yet another brand in VR Chennai.

Moving onto accessories, VR Chennai is home to the city's first and only **Daniel Wellington** store. It delivers to its customers, an affordable line of luxury watches and accessories for men and women.

Their collection of accessories also extends to prominent names like **Bluestone** - India's leading destination for high quality fine jewellery with strikingly exquisite designs, **CaratLane** - beautiful jewellery that is accessible, affordable and forever wearable and **Swarovski** - high-quality crystal products including jewellery, accessories, decorative items for the home, ornaments, and figurines.

VR Chennai takes the term 'Head to Toe' very seriously and in that light has




a sensational collection of footwear brands that encompass some of the biggest brands such as **Aldo, Charles & Keith, Steve Madden, Rocia** and **Hush Puppies.**

VR Chennai believes in providing its customers with the overall experience; and in order to do that they have a wide range of beauty brands whether it's **MAC** or **Bobbi Brown** for that right shade of lipstick or **Bath & Body Works** and **Kama Ayurveda** for some glowing skin, VR Chennai has it all.

So, clear your schedule this weekend and land up at VR Chennai for the all-round shopping experience with exciting offers this holiday season and bring in the New Year with the best of the best in fashion.

**For more details, kindly visit vrchennai.com** VR Chennai, Anna Nagar
**Tel:** 044 66705555 | **Facebook & Twitter:** @vrchennai | **Instagram:** @vr.chennai
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Sunny side UP
ANU HASAN







# Blunted Edge

*When I was younger, I wanted tools to be sharp. While pruning bushes... especially thorny brambles, I have cursed the blunted edge of the shears or secateurs which meant I had to exert more pressure to get the same result.*

But as I grow older I am beginning to appreciate the blunted edge of things. I still have the same sharp, clear sense of enjoyment of all things positive – but somehow the negative things... not so much. My reaction to those are much less sharp than they used to be... The edge of anger, the pain of disappointment and even the sting of embarrassment - they all seem to have become blunted. (Not that I am becoming Buddha – ah! We will have green snow that day in Mylapore if that happens!!)

I was at lunch with LaPa the other day. You all probably know her as Lakshmi Priya – an actor who is passionate about acting and bringing characters to life with no fear of breaking stereotypes and false constructs. But to me she is LP or LaPa, the cricketer who I have worked out with in YMCA ten years ago (and someone I was envious of when it came to technique, fitness and agility - but I

digress.) I wasn't able to make it for her wedding and so when I came back to Madras, the first thing I did was fix a date to catch up over lunch. Being the socially inept person that I sometimes am, I landed up for lunch without even having made the time to get her something nice. So I decided I would just treat her to lunch.

Sitting across the table the conversation flowed , ricocheting off principles, ideas and approaches.

I wished LaPa a very happy married life and she pulled out a bag of goodies. I exclaimed, "Oh dear! I didn't get you anything. I should be getting you something. But ok... lunch is on me."

The thought that I should have been more embarrassed flitted by but was discarded as I got engrossed in looking at the goody bag. I loved the concept. It was made from discarded bits of upholstery but it was the contents of the bag that delighted me. With minimal waste being their focus for the biggest event in their lives, the couple had put together this bag with some thoughtful gifts. There was a metal straw, a bamboo toothbrush and small bottle of balm. And here is the ultimate proof of thoughtfulness – there was a matching cleaner for the metal straw as well! I was simply delighted with this little touch.

I felt a bit of guilt wash over me when I thought of all the ways I could have done something to minimize impact on the environment – twice in fact – but then if I hadn't had those two events, forget impact on the environment, the impact on my LIFE would have been minimized. It's good to look back at these events with the blunted edge of fading memories I suppose. (And no – third time ain't gonna be lucky – not for the environment – not for me!!)

Lunch drew to a close and I signaled for the cheque and continued chatting. The girl brought the bill to the table and like a hawk swooping down on its prey, I grabbed hold of it. LaPa protested. "I wanted to treat you!" she said.

I said "Buying you lunch is the least I can do! Next time we can go dutch. This one is on me," I announced grandly.

I rummaged in my oversize handbag for my purse. And rummaged... and



"NOW THERE WERE TWO THINGS WAGING THE WAR FOR SUPREMACY – ONE, THE EMBARRASSMENT OF NOT HAVING THE MONEY TO PAY FOR LUNCH ESPECIALLY AFTER MAGNANIMOUSLY SAYING I WOULD TREAT HER TO LUNCH – BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, CONCERN – FOR THE PURSE HAD MY UK COMPANY CREDIT CARDS AND OTHER CARDS AS WELL AS MY INDIAN CARDS.

rummaged. And with a mild panic I realized my purse wasn't in my handbag. Now there were two things waging the war for supremacy – one, the embarrassment of not having the money to pay for lunch especially after magnanimously saying I would treat her to lunch – but more importantly, concern – for the purse had my UK company credit cards and other cards as well as my Indian cards.

As this mélange of thoughts clashed around, my phone buzzed. It was the real estate agent messaging to say that the wrong key had been given and the prospective buyer was outside the flat. My brain said that had to be dealt with first and I thumbed through contacts and at the same time I looked up at LaPa and said "I am so sorry I can't find my purse. You will have to pay I am afraid. I'll buy you lunch next time," and as I completed the sentence I pressed the call button and dialed the number for my agent. And I froze as I heard a voice that said "Hey Anu, what's up!" I had dialed the wrong number!!!

I managed to finish that call without letting the friend know that I had dialed his number by mistake, coordinated with the agent for the right key and apologized once again to LaPa for making her pay for lunch. I laughingly asked her "Did you realise that I had not meant to dial that person I just spoke to? She chuckled and said "No... did you do that?"

We continued chatting as we walked down the stairs and promised to meet again at least once in six months, laughingly quipping that more than that would drive us crazy.

As I drove back home, I marveled at how the blunted edge of my embarrassment and distress had helped me cope with the situation far better than I would have done when I was younger. The younger me would have been absolutely mortified about not being able to pay the bill, completely panicked about losing her wallet and distressed about the wrong key and cursing her stupidity for dialing the wrong number. Not so, the older one.

The older one simply apologized for being unable to pay the bill, calmly hunted for her wallet and found it later, smoothly coordinated for the correct key and laughed at having called the wrong number and managed to have finished the call with the friend being none the wiser. All in all, a much less stressful way of handling things and life.
I think I like this older me.

There's something to be said about the blunted edge of things, don't you agree? ■

**Connect with Anu Hasan.** Send in your suggestions and feedback at *www.facebook.com/anuhasan.india* or mail her at *anufbpage@gmail.com*



# Let's Shop for Skin Care!

Beauty store aisles can be intimidating with their towering shelves of colourful merch in fancy packaging. We walk you through the daunting process of 'Which one do I buy??'



***About the writer:***
*Dr Renita Rajan is the Chief Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist at 'Render Skin and Hair', clinic for skin, hair and body concerns. She is one among the top consultant cosmetic dermatologists in Chennai.*

Shopping for skin care products has long gone beyond the ambit of soap and shampoo. Now every shopping basket willingly accommodates an entire array of skin and hair care products. Some of these products which are purchased on a whim, end up being great skin care companions, while others end up in the wastebasket after a use or two. So how do we maximise the value of our supermarket skin care purchases?

### First, the Basics

Soap or body wash, for starters. We may choose to follow it up with a moisturiser, depending on the humidity of where we live, and our work conditions. Sunscreens are an absolute must, and so the shopping basket needs to make some room for a good sunblock product or two. Lip balms are now universally used by both genders, especially those working in air conditioned environments for long, so that's next on the shopping list. Then the hair care stuff, which should include a shampoo, a conditioner, either a leave-in or a rinse-off variant, and may be, some heat styling agents, depending on the need for the day.

### Stay Supple

The need for body moisturiser post your bath/ shower, depends on your ambient weather. The moisturiser can be skipped if you are going to be in a humid, sweaty environment. If mostly in an airconditioned environment, it is best to follow the 3 minute rule of moisturising, which is basically locking in the moisture on the skin, by applying your moisturiser within 3 minutes of your bath/ shower. A mild moisturiser is enough, given the humidity and the pollution. Again, an easy choice is a baby care range product.

## BAR OR BOTTLE?

THE CHOICE BETWEEN A BAR OF SOAP AND A BOTTLE OF BODY WASH, DEPENDS ON THE pH, AND ANY SKIN ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED.



**1**

**Soaps generally tend to be harsher, but nowadays, syndets and pH balanced soaps are available, and can be explored.**



**2**

**Body washes are gentler, but it is important to avoid strong colours and perfumes, especially if you have sensitive or itchy skin. Opt for moisturising body washes. They may lather less, but condition the skin better.**

**3**

**If confused with too many options in the body wash aisle, it is best to settle down with a baby range product, particularly for winter, even for adults.**



Sephora Coconut Lip Balm



NARS Cosmetics Orgasm Afterglow Lip Balm




Kama Ayurveda Turmeric and Myrrh Soap




Clinique Dramatically Different Moisturising Lotion




Broad Spectrum SPF 50 Sunscreen Face Cream




L'Occitane Shea Butter Hand Cream



## CAUTIOUS 'RAY-BAN'

SUNSCREENS NEED TO BE CHECKED FOR TWO PARAMETERS BEFORE SETTLING ON THE OPTION BEST SUITED FOR YOU.

1

**SPF measures the protection from UVB rays, responsible for producing sunburn. PA protection factor states the protection provided against UVA rays. UVA rays are primarily responsible for ageing and pigmentation.**

2

**Nowadays, we even have infrared and visible light filters, for those with pigmentation and skin issues, or with excessive IR exposure, like in the kitchen.**

THERE IS NO 'ONE BEST SHAMPOO' THAT WILL FIT ALL, WELL NOT EVEN ONE BEST SHAMPOO THAT WILL SUIT THE SAME PERSON, THROUGH ALL CLIMATES AND WEATHERS.THIS IS DANDRUFF SEASON FOR THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY, SO AN ANTI-DANDRUFF SHAMPOO MAY BE ADDED TO THE SHOPPING CART.



### Shampoo Shuffle

Shampoos come in various colors, variants, and when it comes to choosing the correct one, well, here's the truth: there is no 'one best shampoo' that will fit all, well not even one best shampoo that will suit the same person, through all climates and weathers.

This is dandruff season for the southern part of the country, so an anti-dandruff shampoo may be added to the shopping cart. However, anti dandruff formulations also tend to frizz out the hair, so it is better to use the anti dandruff product on the scalp, where the scaling is actually going on. The hair can continue to be washed with the regular shampoo.

### On one condition…er

Given the right product, there is no major advantage of one over the other in terms of conditioning the hair. However, a leave-on product scores over the rinse-off variant in terms of savings in time and water. Further, for heat styling and similar actions, a leave-on product becomes mandatory, so the choice is clear there.

### A lil extra goodness

So with the basics done, what else does one need? A styling agent for the hair? The rule of thumb is, anything goes on the hair, nothing gets on the scalp. The scalp is a well oiled machine, literally, so to speak, and comes with its own set of oil glands which nourish the lower part of the hair shafts. So the scalp, doesn't actually need any further oiling, leave alone overnight soaks, which can typically worsen pimples on the face and the back.

What about finishing up with some products that also work on the skin for some long term benefit? Two agents are important here, vitamins A and C. Retinol-containing creams and Vitamin C serums are fast becoming a part of everyone's daily routine. The night routine should definitely include one of these. Formulation is an important aspect to these night serums/creams, and you may need a little bit of professional help, to match the product to your skin.

Here's to happy shopping! ■

## WHAT TO PICK?

**Simplify the shampoo dilemma by looking at opaque and clear formulations.** The former tend to be gentler, and the latter, a little harsher to provide stronger cleansing. It is good to alternate between the two, depending on the oiliness of the scalp, and the dirt that you are exposed to.

# CLEAN UP!

*You've finally made it back home after a long night out, so yes, we get it if you don't want to spend time scrubbing off your makeup and would rather just jump into bed. Don't fret (and don't go to bed without removing your makeup either). As tasking as it might sound, taking off all that time and effort spent on looking flawless can be quick, gentle and not leave your skin dehydrated.*

**#BEAUTY TIP**

## SACRED TOOLS

It's not enough to rid your face of residual makeup, you also need to give your makeup brushes a good cleanse. Depending on usage, you should be cleaning them anywhere from daily to atleast once a month. (Shocker!) **Choosing the right method can make this just that little bit simpler.**




Take the day off makeup remover for lids, lashes & lips by **Clinique**

Micellar cleansing water by **L'Oréal Paris**

Gentle oil-free liquid eye makeup remover for waterproof mascara by **Neutrogena**

Sensibio H2O micelle solution by **Bioderma**

Makeup remover wipes by **Colorbar**

Ultra-soft makeup remover wipes for waterproof makeup by **Neutrogena**

Waterproof eye makeup remover by **Sephora**

Ideal clean makeup removing towelettes by **L'Oréal Paris**




*Outfit:* ***Masaba***
*Accessories:* ***Amritha Ram***

# MISSION MENEN

**NITHYA MENEN** HAS BECOME A QUINTESSENTIAL ACTOR KNOWN NOT ONLY FOR HER VERSATILE CHOICE IN ROLES BUT ALSO HER UNINHIBITED ATTITUDE WHEN IT COMES TO EVERYTHING, FROM THE INDUSTRY TO THE WORLD AND LIFE IN GENERAL. SUBSEQUENT TO MAKING HER BOLLYWOOD DEBUT AND HAVING SINGLE HANDEDLY SHOULDERED AN ENTIRE FILM, HERE IN HER CONVERSATION WITH **PREETHI SHANKER**, SHE REVEALS A DEEPER AND MORE SOULFUL SIDE TO HER PERSONALITY THAT FURTHER SETS HER APART FROM THE CROWD.

PHOTOGRAPHER **G VENKET RAM**

STYLIST **AMRITHA RAM** HAIR AND MAKE-UP **ROMI THOKCHOM** POST PRODUCTION **DISHA A SHAH**
LOCATION **HYATT CENTRIC, MG ROAD, BENGALURU**



WHETHER IT WAS OK KANMANI'S TARA OR TARA FROM PRAANA, NITHYA MENEN HAS MANAGED TO SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE HERSELF INTO HER ROLES AND ENTHRALL US WITH HER PERFORMANCE.

Be it an intense stance or a coy look with a mischievous grin, throughout the shoot, she effortlessly romances the camera and churns out some amazing shots. Once the camera is down and the makeup is off, her candid and childlike persona emerges and leaves us wanting some of her happy and positive energy rub off on us.

**"I used to do my own makeup"**

In an absolutely unassuming manner, Nithya drives herself to the location of the shoot with no entourage shadowing. Not particularly a fan of heavy makeup or even false eyelashes, she reluctantly allows her make up artist to do her work. "When I started movies, I used to do my own makeup; just a base and some liner and I was good to go," she says, and is all for the natural look. A role model to curly haired girls everywhere, she held her ground when it came to a suggestion of straightening her hair for one of the looks.

Her love for her hometown Bangalore is evident while she talks about it and she says she really enjoys finishing her work and going home. "It is a new feeling," she describes it, as she gets comfortable to start the interview over some tea she brews for herself. As we proceed with the interview, her eyes express more than her words do.

**"After every film, I told myself that it would be my last one"**

Being a natural in front of the camera, we would assume she came to the realisation of wanting to do films very early on in life. But in an absolutely honest manner, she clarifies "Nothing drew me to movies. I got started by accident. When offered a movie with Mohanlal, I more or less did it for my summer vacation, since the shoot was in London and I got to go on my first trip out of the country. I just thought it would be a fun thing to do and never took acting seriously. Up until maybe three or four years back, I was definite I would change course and after every film I told myself that it would be my last one."

KOLAAMBI IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE FILMS SO FAR. THE FILM IS RIGHT UP MY ALLEY. I LIKE TO DO FILMS THAT ARE HONEST AND SENSITIVE WITH PURE STORY TELLING.

**"I could hear the frustration of the audience and of people who wanted to see good films"**

And yet here we are almost 50 films down and Nithya is an actor whose brand has stellar standing. What made the shift in her mind? "Very recently it has started to sink in that this is my profession and this is where I am going to be. I realised the fact that I was resisting being in films, wasn't engaging with films as much as I could have and wasn't taking as many opportunities as I should have. I also remember reading an article (about me) by a writer who is now a friend; I recall hearing the frustration in his writing, talking about my potential and how I wasn't doing enough and was taking the opportunity for granted. Through his words, I could hear the frustration of the audience and of people who wanted to see good films and good performances. Although internally I was also moving towards that zone, that article woke me up and really hit home for me. I started to see how people wanted to see me, how they missed me and wondered why I was taking up such few roles."

**"I like to do films that are honest and sensitive with pure story telling"**

Just back from the International Film Festival of India (IFFI 2019), Nithya brims with pride and a visible glint in her eyes while talking about the film Kolaambi, her latest project that was screened at the festival. When asked how the response to the movie was, she jokes saying, "It was good. I mean nobody left from the theatre so I think people liked watching the film. It was nice to see so many people who wanted to watch really good films."

Something about this film must've caught her attention and we asked Nithya what tugged her heart towards it. "Kolaambi is one of my favourite films so far. The film is right up my alley. I like to do films that are honest and sensitive with pure story telling. The crew itself was amazing: Ravi Varman has done the cinematography, sound was done by Resul Pookutty and National Award winning T.K. Rajeev Kumar is the director. It is a technically sound film made by a passionate group of people. We were all making a small film and we were doing it for the passion of the film where everyone came together for the film and not for money or any particular role. That's my ideal kind of environment, filled with passion and interest in what we were doing."

**"I think like a filmmaker not like an actor"**

Recognising that she hadn't once mentioned the words 'my role' or 'my screen space', we wondered how she could see the totality of a movie. "I think like a filmmaker, not like an actor and I approach films like a filmmaker. So that is why I make certain unpredictable choices when it comes to films. I'm never thinking in terms of myself or what my character is; I see it as a film, as a whole, as a writer would and then I get excited about the role I'm going to play."

**"Once the time is right, I will most certainly make films"**

Since she talked like a filmmaker and thought like a filmmaker, it was only natural to ask her if she planned to ever get behind the camera anytime soon. Without batting an eyelid she exclaims, "Absolutely. But I don't think it would be anytime soon because I still feel like I've just started to love films and don't feel that I've done enough in terms of acting. I feel there is more potential in me. Once I think that is done and the time is right, I will most certainly make films."

**"The entire group was always so simple, very supportive and appreciative"**

Having had her Bollywood debut with a whopping star cast, Nithya recalls the work culture she experienced while shooting for Mission Mangal. "The culture was definitely more professional and nothing was haphazard. We had a huge star cast but the entire group was always so simple, very supportive and appreciative. If I looked good, they would appreciate it. If someone's movie released and it was doing well, everybody in the team would applaud, celebrating each other's high points. I found that the environment was quite warm and I never felt like a newcomer. They were well aware of the work I had done and

I THINK LIKE A FILMMAKER, NOT LIKE AN ACTOR AND I APPROACH FILMS LIKE A FILMMAKER. SO THAT IS WHY I MAKE CERTAIN UNPREDICTABLE CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO FILMS.






*Outfit:* ***Aavidi by Dimple***
*Accessories:* ***Amritha Ram***




*Shirt:* ***Zara***
*Pants:* ***SGBG Atelier***
*Accessories:* ***Amritha Ram***

they would always give me that due. Akshay (Kumar) sir would always include me in conversations during interviews, because to an interviewer, I was new and if they didn't know what to ask me, he would always point out and say, "She has done this…" It was, to say the least, a comfortable environment."

**"I was there purely on merit of what I was going to bring as a performer"**

We have all binge-watched Breathe on Prime and Amazon renewed the series with Breathe 2 starring none other than Nithya herself, alongside Abhishek Bachchan. Working on a digital series must have been a different experience from doing a full-length feature and she seemed to enjoy the pace of it too. "I just loved working on Breathe 2. Again, here, the director had insisted that he wanted me after seeing OK Kanmani. I was there purely on merit of what I was going to bring as a performer. Knowing this felt assuring. Unlike films, when it came to Breathe, I felt like there was a 'no compromise' situation because we had so much content and so much to explore and as actors, we had so much time. Unlike a film, the pace here was slower and I could take my time with every shot. The whole backdrop of the web series was so realistic and I could play the character as subtly as I wanted."

**"I've never done anything like this in my life and for sure, it is going to shock the audience"**

With only an attention-grabbing trailer to go by, Nithya was definitely tight-lipped about her character in the film Psycho, but was all praises for the director Mysskin to whom P.C. Sreeram had personally recommended her for the role. "Mysskin is honestly one of the most masterful directors I know and I would say one of the best directors I've worked with. He's got such skill and a natural talent in the craft and it is just such a pleasure working with directors like that. Because again, for him, it is purely content and all about the film, and when I am around such people, doing films like that, I feel like I am doing something good. I can't say much about the actual character, but I can say it is physically very different and got me excited. I've never done anything like this in my life and for sure, it is going to shock the audience too, staying true to the essence of Mysskin's films."

**"I went and counted on Wikipedia myself"**

In less tan 12 years, Nithya's 50th film comes up and she remains blissfully unaware of the number. "It doesn't feel that way to me. I still feel like I've just scratched the surface of what I can do. It was someone else who told me that I was closing in on number 50 and I went and counted on Wikipedia myself."

ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I THINK ABOUT WHEN DOING A FILM IS, 'HOW IS THIS GOING TO IMPACT PEOPLE?' I THINK ABOUT 'IS THIS RESPONSIBLE TO DO, FOR PEOPLE TO SEE?'

**"An intelligent story, a sensitive story, a real story… that's all I look for"**

Nithya has been heard saying that for her to accept a film 'it has to make her heart feel happy'. It turns out that no frills needed to be attached to tug at her heartstrings after all. "When I hear a 'real' story with an intelligent script or screenplay, when I see true filmmaking and when I see people are not just tossing in too many commercial elements, that gets me interested. An intelligent story, a sensitive story, a real story… that's all I look for, really."

It is true, roles for women in cinema have come a long way. But on the flipside, while talking about a female role she's read that she completely didn't see herself doing, a bit of diplomacy got involved and we got to see her filmmaker avatar surface again."It doesn't have to specifically be a woman's character. Any role when written keeping only commercial aspects in mind, then starts catering to what the audience wants. I feel like that's not how films should be made."

**"One of the first things I think about when doing a film is, 'How is this going to impact people?' "**

A recent debate has been on the accountability of cinema, the responsibility actors shoulder in terms of how they portray certain characters on screen and how they have the liberty to accept or reject a role based on their own principles. "One of the first things I think about when doing a film is, 'How is this going to impact people?' So when you talk about having a responsibility, it is extremely relevant to me, because I don't think about what I am gaining from it. I think about 'Is this responsible to do, for people to see?' If I feel like it is not something I want to put out into the world or if I think people will be negatively impacted by it, I most definitely don't go through with it and let go of money, a chance at having 'big' films or ranking. I do this only with one thing in mind – 'What am I doing and what impact does it have on people?' And I would say any job, be it a journalist, a writer or a doctor, you have to do it in a responsible way and reflect on whether it is bringing something negative into the world or spreading something positive. As unreasonable as it may sound in today's day and age, everyone has to have that personal responsibility.

**"When you are really happy, only happiness and love will pour out from you."**

Every yin has its yang and if spreading positivity is a mission to some, there is an antithesis consisting of trolling and all the anonymous negativity we see online. When questioned about this, what struck us was the ease and finesse with which Nithya navigates her response.


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"It is a reflection of what people are going through and all this shows you, is how unhappy and frustrated people are and what a bad state of mind a very large number of people are in. That bothers me. The trolling is a byproduct of that. Anyone who is happy and is in a good state of mind can NEVER put out anything negative out there and I know this from experience. When you are really happy, only happiness and love will pour out from you. So if people are just dying to put out so much hate towards people they don't even know, that reflects on how much hate they have inside of them. That is a deeper issue than simple social networks and trolling, which are all small words to me. All I can say is, figure out what is making you so unhappy. Fix it and try to move towards happiness and positivity."

ACTUALLY I HAD SEVERAL INTERESTS. I WANTED TO BE A PILOT AND JOIN THE AIR FORCE. I DEFINITELY WANTED TO MAKE WILDLIFE FILMS AND WORK WITH ANIMALS. THAT WAS SOMETHING I WAS RATHER PASSIONATE ABOUT

**"I would change the fact that human beings are able to harm another human in such a drastic way"**

Reaching into a deeper crevice, we pose this question: 'If there is one thing you would change about the world, what would it be?' to which she replies without a second thought, "I would change the fact that human beings are able to harm another human in such a drastic way. I can't believe that people can't empathise even to the degree of "if someone did the same to me, imagine the pain I would feel." I wish that I could change that."

**"I hope to go on to bring out an album and tour and perform on stage"**

As versatile as she is, Nithya has a lovely voice and has done playback for some of her own songs too. When prodded about doing anything independently on that front, she animatedly says, "I have just started working on it and am collaborating with a music composer from London who is a sarod player, to bring out a single, sometime next year. I want this to be a really nice debut of me as a singer, as I've never actually released a single as an independent artist and I am really looking forward to it. I hope to go on to bring out an album and tour and perform on stage because music makes me really happy. I love to do fusion where Indian sounds are mixed with very western notes and am very fond of jazz and blues."

**"I wanted to be a pilot and join the Air Force."**

Had it not been for movies, what would we find Nithya Menen pursuing today? "Actually I had several interests. I wanted to be a pilot and join the Air Force. I definitely wanted to make wildlife films and work with animals. That was something I was rather passionate about."

**"It is a happy tale about love, food and Christmas time in London"**

With so much in the pipeline, what can we look forward to next from Nithya? "I start shooting a Telugu film in December, directed by a close friend, Ani Sashi and it is going to be his first film. I am very excited about this project because he is so talented and has so much spark in him. The entire group has basically been friends for decades. I am really excited to play this fresh role; people are going to love her. In fact, the entire story and approach is very novel and it is a happy tale about love, food and Christmas time in London."

With that, she signs off: Nithya Menen, woman of effervescent personality and plucky mind. ■


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# Moving Mountains by Herself

While most injuries leave behind a mark, a few leave behind a legacy. The story of ***Malvika Iyer***, a 30-year-old amputee is defined by the latter. A social worker, a PhD scholar, an international motivational speaker, a disability rights activist, a Global Shaper and so much more, giving up was never an option for this braveheart, writes ***Sruthi Ravinder.***





At the age of thirteen, she lost both her arms and greatly injured her legs in a bomb blast. She was bedridden for eighteen months, but that didn't stop her from advancing in life. She emerged as a state topper in her tenth grade which was a shock to many considering she was in the hospital the entire time of preparation. This was just the beginning of a long, successful and inspiring journey of Malvika Iyer. Travelling across the globe to give motivational speeches today, she is a spark to a million flames.

"I feel very strongly that this accident was just meant to happen. I personally suffered a lot of loss, in terms of physical disability, heavily set me back at first. I think I would have grown up to be a dancer. I was a trained Kathak dancer and loved to dance. I still can't stop my body from moving when there is good music," Malvika looks back at times.

But not all her hobbies were lost. "I used to love watching my mum cook when I was young. I love cooking and I'm proud to say that today I have started cooking. It is a new found independence for me, to be able to cook for myself and others. I don't take help either, everything

from cutting the vegetables to serving I can do it all myself," says Malvika. "My food pictures went viral and I also got a personal letter from Michelin star Chef Vikas Khanna on how he was so impressed.

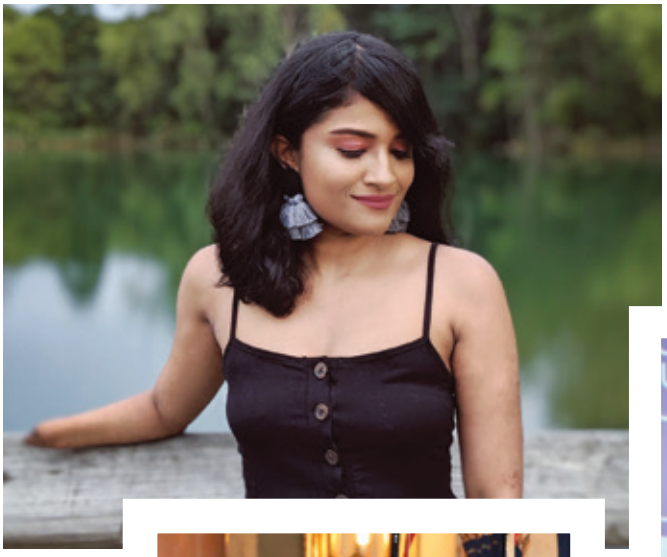
Malvika is currently working on an inclusive curriculum that speaks about equality and that can be incorporated into schools and colleges. "My PhD research paper was on studying the attitude of young people towards disability. Even today, what hurts more than my physical disability is sympathetic glances. This unequal attitude towards the differently-abled is a barrier and that continues to affect me." Being asked if she thinks India is disabled-friendly, she believes that our country is progressing but at a very slow rate. "In terms of accessibility, I really wish our country progressed better. Commute through public transport should be made possible; it's expensive to catch a taxi every time. A universal design in recreational spots like the beach, or even at schools, offices, public spaces and so on to ensure accessibility is very important and has to be done," she insists.

Constantly thinking of her next endeavour, Malvika has several accreditations in her bag. She received Nari Shakti Puraskar award 2018 from our Prime Minister, and she has spoken at various global platforms like the UN. Malvika was also featured in "50 inspiring women of India" a book of collective stories. A graphic novel called Mia by Sriram Jaganathan narrates her story. "Mia was my nick name when I was a young girl. The book talks about my life before the accident, during and after. I get a lot of love from young teens who could relate to the book – how I couldn't join schools, how I was studying despite it."

Malvika does not only campaign on inclusive society for disability but also works on many causes giving it all she has, to make a difference. "I'm currently promoting women entrepreneurship and small local businesses. I use social media and also carry bags, shoes that are made by local artisans to big events."

"I want my society to value women for all their strengths and knowledge they hold, whether those fit into the stereotypical gender roles we hold or not." Feminism to Malvika is about choice. "Whatever you choose, it is you and you only that makes that choice and we need to work as a society to not pressure women into pre-defined roles."

"First, it was whether I'd survive or not, then if they'd be able to save my leg or not, then it was whether I'd be able to walk or not. I've been in situations where it was almost life or death. Ever since I've healed and started getting back on my feet, every achievement big or small is precious to me. When I look back I always feel proud that I took the right path in life. Every experience in my life is special to me and I take joy out of smallest of things," ends Malvika on an inspiring note. ■








**"EVEN TODAY, WHAT HURTS MORE THAN MY PHYSICAL DISABILITY IS SYMPATHETIC GLANCES. THIS UNEQUAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE DIFFERENTLY-ABLED IS A BARRIER AND THAT CONTINUES TO AFFECT ME."**



# Paris De Boutique

## DREAM COUTURE

Born out of a vision to give fashion a new perspective in Kerala, ***Paris De Boutique*** has always catered to women who value quality and style.





## A ONE-OF-A-KIND COUTURE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE THAT OFFERS AN AMAZING COLLECTION OF HIGH-END DESIGNER WEAR BY ANIL MUHAMMED AND JAMAL MUHAMMED, PARIS DE BOUTIQUE HAS LAUNCHED ITS LATEST COLLECTION. 'THEA AMORA'.

A romantic affair between the flawless silhouettes and sun-kissed hues, the collection is a dreamy, dressy desire!

Showcasing their love towards nature and its wondrous aesthetic detailing with a 'look-at-me' style, the collection revolves around the streamlined flairs and drapes, elegantly embedded into the dash of bright pastels.

For Paris De Boutique, customers always come first. What one can count on whilst shopping here is the best quality garments with flawless fittings, along with the most unique and intricate detailing in a milieu of exuberance.

Each garment is a perfect amalgamation of geometric elements into the very structural designs of the patterns, including luxurious, bold cuts and pleats worked into the layers. Complete with the lush texture of perfectly shaded fabrics, accentuated by the use of unique and beautiful accessories, these are handcrafted with crystal drops, gems and stones.

For women who have an eye for finesse and style, the hunt for elegance ends here. With a perfect blend of sophistication, ease and style, a dress from Paris De Boutique is sure to bring out your right personality in all its mighty and beautiful ways. ■

# DECOR TRENDS 2019 #rewind

As 2019 draws to a close, ***Gazala*** takes a look back at some great design trends in the world of decor that promise to stick around a little longer.



Interior Design: Emily Henderson | Photography: Sara Tramp for Emily Henderson Design

With lives getting busier, and homes getting more tech savvy and compact, 2019 saw a lot of trends especially for compact homes. Apart from that, it was interesting to note that many decor ideas of yesteryear came back in style too. Some old trends revived, some new trends paving way for more developments, and a great mix of a bit of this and that was witnessed this year.

## STATEMENT CEILINGS

From mirrored ceilings to wallpapers, a lot of designers have also experimented with using stone cladding to adorn ceilings. This is certainly a trend that we will be seeing a lot more of in the coming year. Get your creative juices going and make sure that when someone looks up within your home, they have something to be in awe of.

Overstock Corbett Lighting Vertigo Pendant



Fos Lighting Etched Metal Golden Bird Pendant

Home Artisan Kenobi Table Lamp

## LIGHTING FIXTURES

From stunning vintage pieces to artisanal ones, there were so many amazing lights that left us in awe. Depending on your budget and aesthetic preference, you can choose from a wide variety of lighting fixtures that you can either customize or buy from a local market in your city. Floor mounted lights, pendants and almost all other chunky types of lighting fixtures were used to add an element of drama and elegance to a space. From homes to offices to restaurants, we are sure that you have noticed some really beautiful lights in 2019. This is another trend that you can watch out for in 2020.



## ECO-FRIENDLY

More and more designers and home owners are choosing to design spaces enriched with natural beauty. Green walls, potted plants, lush and large indoor plants have been a massive trend in 2019 and may continue in the coming year as well. The need to relax amidst greenery indoors was quite evident in many designs that we saw this year.

D'Decor Wallpaper



India Circus The Aesthetic Yield Wallpaper



## PRINTS

Prints came back in style with wallpapers in home decor a couple of years ago. 2019 saw a lot of geometric prints along with tribal prints like Aztec. From delicate flowers adorning your walls to bold geometric patterns on your rugs - there is so much you could experiment with. When done right, prints can really enhance your decor and take it to another level with little investment and design intervention.



**MULTIPURPOSE FURNISHING**

With homes getting compact, the need of the hour was multipurpose furniture that served more than one function. A chair doubling up as a bookshelf, a trunk used as a seat, or an ottoman with ample storage, there are so many creative multi-purpose pieces of furniture that you could choose for your home. What's more, they are stunning to look and you can even splurge on one from your favourite designer, where utilitarian meets with brilliant strokes of aesthetics as well.

GREEN WALLS, POTTED PLANTS, LUSH AND LARGE INDOOR PLANTS HAVE BEEN A MASSIVE TREND IN 2019 AND MAY CONTINUE IN THE COMING YEAR AS WELL.

## BOHO

Along with flamboyant aesthetics, boho is back and how! A mix and match of different styles of seating, contrasting mix of colours and bold combinations of patterns are making a statement while minimalism has its own niche audience. Team this with some lively potted plants and you are sure to have a warm and inviting space in your home. It screams you, so if you are someone who has a vivid personality, opt for a boho decor aesthetic for your home, you won't regret it.

JemInDesigns, California



John Lewis, London



BOHO HAS ALMOST ALWAYS BEEN A PREFERENCE THAT NEVER ENTIRELY WENT OUT OF STYLE. IT IS ALL ABOUT YOUR TASTE, YOUR AESTHETIC AND YOUR DESIGN INTUITION.




## BRASS

Move over stainless steel, brass is back in business. Yes, we are certainly going back in time. Brass was used extensively in home fittings until stainless steel and chrome finishes stole the show. However, 2019 saw a lot of brass in the decor sector. From large pots for your plant babies to classy brass fittings for your bathrooms, we saw brass becoming a large part of home decor.



## WARM COLOUR PALETTES

While pastels had their day, warmer colours are now in trend. You may have noticed a slow transition in this decor trend from deep shades of red to burnt yellow and lush greens. There is quite the colour wheel that you can play with if you wish to do up your home in darker shades.

These are just a few of the many trends that were observed in 2019. You could combine two or more of the above to truly make your home ready for the next year. Whatever you do, make sure that your home is a reflection ofwho you are and that your spaces exude a welcoming and positive aura for the well being of its occupants. After all, we all love a stylish home, but what we love more, is a home that's a snug haven for its residents. ■

# YULETIDE IS SERVED!

*Engulf your kitchen with the delicious scents of Christmas - cakes, cookies, biscuits, and other treats to fill you with seasonal cheer. Take your baking projects to sweet new levels with these creative baking and serving supplies to make your culinary conquests look as pretty as a picture.*



Snowflake pancake pan by **Nordicware**



Fiore ceramic cake stand with wooden base by **Ellementry**



Vinterfest stencil - set of 7 by **Ikea**



Ivory marble art deco rectangle board by **The Label Life**

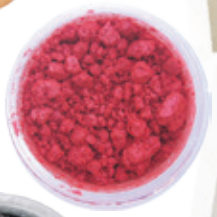


Toy's delight bread and butter plate by **Villeroy and Boch**



Animal farm measuring spoon set by **Chumbak**





Luster dust - red and silver by **Cake Craft**




Silicone snowman cookie cutter set by **Marks & Spencer**



Ivory studded cake serving set by **The Label Life**



Star and Christmas tree cake mould by **Wonderchef**




Silicone snowflake mini treat mould by **Wilton**



# AN INDULGING CELEBRATION OF THE NEW YEAR

31st Dec, 2019 | 8 PM Onwards

NEW YEAR EVE BUFFET

Residential Pack

Package with food only - INR 8250 Al
Package with beverages - INR 11500 Al
Kids below 12 - INR 2399 Al

Non Residential Pack

Package with food only - INR 2399 Al
Package with beverages - INR 3399 Al
Kids below 12 - INR 1199 Al

**Highlights:**

Global Buffet, Live counters & Dessert studio
3 Piece Live Band, to power you through in to 2020
Kids entertainment corner with close-up Magician, Tattoo & Balloon Artist
Surprise takeaway gifts

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COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
Chennai

Paprika Café

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# Warmth for the Voiceless

An elderly woman alights from an auto with her walking stick. The auto is filled with empty food packets, and bottles of milk. ***Yagna Prabha*** has just finished feeding hundreds of street dogs over a stretch of 28 kms (from Thoraipakkam to T Nagar in Chennai) and has reached home for her chat with ***Sruthi Ravinder***



**“AFTER FINISHING MY CHORES, I HEAD OUT. FROM MY HOME AT THORAIPAKKAM TO PERUNGUDI AND T NAGAR TO ADYAR, I WOULD DRIVE NO LESS THAN 70 KILOMETERS EACH DAY FEEDING MY CHILDREN ON THE ROAD.**

Daughter of veteran actress Sowcar Janaki, Yagna Prabha has taken the standard of humanity to a special level, dedicating 45 years of her life to the care of four-legged furry friends on the street. She turned 70 this year, and continues her work, inspiring the world around her to push a little closer to kindness. A typical day in her life begins early in the morning in her kitchen, where she cooks for herself and the 300 street dogs that await her eagerly. “Since we are all strict vegetarians, I have a separate fridge and utensils for the dog feed. After finishing my chores, I head out. From my home at Thoraipakkam to Perungudi and T Nagar to Adyar, I would drive no less than 70 kilometers each day feeding my children on the road.”

Compassion was a virtue she had grown up with; Yagna has always had a kind heart and was very sensitive to suffering. She never had pets growing up. It was when she moved from Gujarat to Chennai that her quest for life began. “I was going through a very rough phase in my life. I was depressed. That’s when Manasa, my first pet walked into my life.”

It was when she was driving down T Nagar one day Yagna spotted a small stray pup on the street. From the nearby tea shop, she bought her a packet of milk. The second day too she did the same. The third day, when she reached the place, there was a road being laid. When she started looking for the pup the workers told her that the little pup had gotten herself stuck in the hot tar, and was probably dead by now. “She was









stuck in tar and we threw her away," is what they told me. I refused to believe that and went looking for her. Suddenly I heard a noise and then I stopped to see her covered in tar, crying for help. We rushed her to the nearby veterinary hospital and saved the poor soul." The puppy was covered in one-inch layer of tar. She began recovering after clean up and medical help. Yagna decided to bring her home and laid her down on a banana leaf. "We named her Manasa and she was the first pup that I adopted."

It was after Manasa was adopted that Yagna started feeding all the dogs in her street, then slowly all the street dogs in T Nagar. Over time she realized that this was helping her too; she was healing from her emotional pain. She had risen with a new purpose in life. And since then she has adopted more than 300 dogs over her 45 years of service.

**"I FEED 350 DOGS IN THE CITY TODAY. 40 KILOS OF FOOD IS MADE EVERY DAY. EVERY DAY, THE FOOD IS DISTRIBUTED BY LUNCH TIME.**

After Manasa, she rescued and adopted 15 more dogs from the streets and continued feeding the strays. However, the apartment she lived in was getting crowded and the residents of the place started complaining. She knew she had to look for a bigger and better home for her babies. She then bought a piece of land out of her savings on East Coast Road and began setting up her shelter. Maneka Gandhi offered her the grant and also funded a setup to run as a shelter. A Maruti Omni animal ambulance van with a blue light was also arranged. "I would drive the ambulance myself. We rescued many dogs from the East Coast Road of Chennai. The shelter that opened had 40 rooms, 100 square feet each and none of the pets are tied. They are all vaccinated and dewormed."

When Sri Sathya Sai Prani Seva shelters opened, it had about 112 dogs. Today a new shelter is opened at Kovalam that houses 22 dogs. "It went up to 112 dogs. But today I have only 22, because there is always the question of who will take care of them after me. No matter how much I push myself, my age and health has limited me. "

Yagna Prabha has been avoiding a knee operation because she is worried that hundreds of her babies in the street will starve if she has to be in bed, resting. "I feed 350 dogs in the city today. 40 kilos of food is made every day. There are three places where we cook the food - 8 kilos at the shelter, 12 kilos at my residence and 20 kilos at a rented place in T Nagar. The food is rice with liver, and for weaker dogs we increase the portion of liver for their betterment. Every day, the food is distributed by lunch time."

"Kindness costs nothing. The plight of these animals is miserable. You see cattle chewing on garbage, consuming plastic and other toxic substances. They are left to the streets uncared for. Although one person cannot change it all single-handedly, I do all I can in the hope that someday, somewhere, someone else will also shoulder a similar weight upon themselves," she concludes. ■

# GOODIES THAT ~~slay~~ Sleigh

The most divine Christmas bakes by ***Novotel Chennai***, Chamiers Road. May each batch from your oven spread the joy and aroma of the season!





## LEMON & CINNAMON COOKIES

*Yields: 25 Cookies (10gms each)*

### WHAT YOU NEED

| | |
|---|---|
| **100 gms** | Almond powder |
| **100 gms** | Castor sugar |
| **20 gms** | Marzipan |
| **1** | Egg white |
| **2 gms** | Cinnamon powder |
| **2 gms** | Cocoa powder |
| **1 each** | Lemon skin and juice |
| **25 gms** | Flour |

### HOW TO MAKE

**1.** Beat the egg white and sugar together in a bowl.
**2.** Add lemon juice and skin.
**3.** Add all the dry ingredients.
**4.** Fold it till it all mixes together.
**5.** Sheet the dough and cut into star shapes.
**6.** Line a baking tray and bake the cookies at 180° C for 15 to 18 minutes.
**7.** Decorate with marzipan of your desired colour.



## WHITE CHOCOLATE PLUM BROWNIE

*Serves: 20 pieces (150gms each)*

### WHAT YOU NEED

| | |
|---|---|
| **320 gms** | Butter |
| **1 kg** | White chocolate |
| **1 kg** | Sugar |
| **13 gms** | Eggs |
| **370 gms** | All purpose flour |
| **5 gms** | Baking powder |
| **150 gms** | Rum soaked dry fruits & nuts |

### HOW TO MAKE

**1.** Melt the white chocolate and butter.
**2.** Mix the sugar and the egg, then add mixture from previous step and combine.
**3.** Add all the dry ingredients and fold well.
**4.** Bake at 180°C for 30 minutes.

## CHRISTMAS PLUM CAKE

*Serves: 2 pieces (250 gms each)*

### WHAT YOU NEED

| | |
|---|---|
| **90 gms** | Butter |
| **100 gms** | Brown sugar |
| **3** | Egg |
| **300 gms** | Rum soaked fruits and nuts |
| **70 gms** | Flour |
| **10 gms** | Cocoa powder |
| **4 gms** | Baking powder |
| **5 gms** | Mixed spice powder |

### HOW TO MAKE

**1.** Beat butter, sugar till soft.
**2.** Add egg.
**3.** Add all the dry ingredients and fold well.
**4.** Bake at 180°C for 45 minutes.











## EGGLESS DATES AND WALNUT CAKE

*Serves: 6 pieces (250gms each)*

### WHAT YOU NEED

| | |
|---|---|
| **250 gms** | Dates, chopped |
| **180 ml** | Clarified butter |
| **250 gms** | Castor sugar |
| **180 ml** | Milk |
| **500 gms** | Flour |
| **8 gms** | Cooking soda |
| **100 gms** | Walnuts, crushed |

### HOW TO MAKE

**1.** Soak the dates and sugar in butter for 7 hours.
**2.** Mix all the dry ingredients with milk.
**3.** Mash the soaked dates mixture and then fold the dry ingredients to the date mix.
**4.** Bake at 180°C for 25 minutes.

## GINGER AND NUTS COOKIES

*Yields: 40 Cookies (15gms each)*

### WHAT YOU NEED

| | |
|---|---|
| **100 gms** | Flour |
| **200 gms** | Sugar |
| **7** | Eggs |
| **4 tsp** | Baking soda |
| **2 gms** | Cinnamon powder |
| **1 gm** | Salt |
| **100 gms** | Butter |
| **2 tsp** | Golden syrup |
| **2 tsp** | Ginger powder |

### HOW TO MAKE

**1.** Sift the flour, sugar, soda, cinnamon, salt and ginger in a large mixing bowl.
**2.** Rub in butter until mixture has a very fine crumb consistency.
**3.** Beat eggs with golden syrup add this to the dry ingredients.
**4.** Work into firm dough with hands by rolling each teaspoonful into a small ball. Bake at 180°C for 15 minutes. ■

# What's the App-eal?

Since it often appears in folklore and in 14th century paintings, I have often wondered if apple was always regarded as The Fruit.As we now know, there are probably other super fruits that are as good if not better for you; but apples are everywhere and thanks to our colonial legacy, the first word that we learn to read and write in English is A for?

> APPLES HAVE BEEN IN INDIA FOR CENTURIES. MENTION OF APPLES POPS UP IN TRADITIONAL AYURVEDIC MEDICINE, DATING BACK NEARLY 1500 YEARS.

So, what's the story? How did this term come to be? Why are apples good for you? Being a western fruit, how did they come to India? I recently picked up a whole lot of interesting apple facts when preparing to teach a food and nutrition class to a bunch of middle school students. My topic was 'Eat Local, Eat Seasonal' and I chose apples, since our markets are filled with apple carts!

If we think about it, do we really need those imported apples that have flown thousands of miles from the USA, New Zealand, Chile, Italy and where not, to get to our tables, clothed in wax and layers of packaging, offloading nutrients en route? Right now, let's just eat the apples from Shimla and Kashmir that are in season, enjoying our fill just as we do of mangoes each year.

### A WALK DOWN THE ORCHARD

Apples have been in India for centuries. Mention of apples pops up in traditional ayurvedic medicine, dating back nearly 1500 years. Although the British like to take credit for their introduction to India, historical records show that the Muslim ruler Firoz Tughlaq grew apple trees throughout Delhi in the 14th century. When the British came centuries later, and planted apple trees there, they were not appreciated by the locals, due to their sour crab apple taste. It was only when Samuel Evans Stokes of Philadelphia came to India in the early 1900s, bringing with him seeds from sweet apple variants from the US, that the farmers of Himachal Pradesh took note and the country's apple industry began.





**In India, the apple season starts in August and goes until December or January.** However, we can buy apples all year-round, because India imports them during the off-season from the USA, China, Chile, New Zealand and Italy.



**ABOUT THE WRITER:**
SHARMILA RIBEIRO IS AN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIST AND MOTHER OF 3 EVER-HUNGRY BOYS. SHE IS THE AUTHOR OF AN AWARD-WINNING FAMILY COOKBOOK– EVERYDAY LOVE – A MOTHER'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY COOKING FOR KIDS.

## The Varieties

There are over 7500 apple varieties in the world but only around 10-15 common varieties are cultivated commercially and sold, chosen for form, crunch, sweetness and shelf life. These include *Red delicious, Royal Gala, Fuji, Granny Smith, Honey crisp and Pink Lady.* In India, we only grow 5-6 apple varieties:



**Red Delicious and its variant Royal Delicious:** A mid-season apple grown in Himachal Pradesh.



**Golden Delicious:** A late-season variety grown in Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh.



**McIntosh:** A reddish pink apple with a golden blush grown in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.



**Chaubattia Anupam:** A red and yellow-striped apple grown in Uttarakhand.



**Lal Ambri:** reddish yellow apple grown in Jammu and Kashmir.

## "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"

The original Welsh proverb from 1866 was reportedly "Eat an apple on going to bed, and you'll keep the doctor from earning his bread" which later evolved to "An apple a day no doctor to pay" and "An apple a day keeps the doctor away". The now popular phrase sure has its own grand history.



**Extremely rich in antioxidants and flavanoids, Apple infused detox water** can also be the simplest way to achieving that glowing skin you've been craving by flushing out all the toxins in your system.

# Apple is Ample

## So why are apples so popular?

Apples are widely popular, despite the fact that there is no scientific evidence that an apple a day actually keeps the doctor away (I would argue that an amla a day would be better suited to that adage)?

They are a hugely convenient healthy snack to carry around. They don't have to be cut or boxed and they won't get soft and squishy like many other fruits. Apples turn brown when cut and exposed to air because they contain enzymes that react with oxygen and an iron or copper factor in the fruit. The skin of the apple protects it from this process. Cut apple stored in the fridge will take longer to turn brown.

Given the apple's high fibre content, it has been a long-standing remedy for constipation and stomach or colon ailments. Fibre also helps in reducing cholesterol, protects against cancer and heart disease. The potassium in apples also help with reducing high blood pressure.

There are so many ways you can consume an apple (besides raw) - apple juice, cooked apple sauce, in baked goods – apple pie, apple tart, apple cake, muffins and of course, in the famous Waldorf salad. Apples can also be dehydrated into apples chips and apple cider can be made into apple cider vinegar. Apples also go well with peanut butter and cheese.

Cooked apples are also highly beneficial and easy to digest. Apple sauce is a sugar substitute in cooking and baking, and apple cider vinegar (made by adding yeast to fresh apple juice) has numerous health properties.

So, do remember to eat local, eat seasonal, eat sustainable. Apples are at their best when in season in India and you support local growers and farmer markets that way too.

**APPLE FACTS**

## THE CORE OF THE MATTER



**FOOD FACT #1**

Apples are a low calorie, nutrient filled fruit. A 100g of apple has 52 Kcal plus fibre, and is high in Vitamin A, C, E, K, calcium, iron, phosphorus and potassium.

**FOOD FACT #2**

Apples have a low glycemic index and can be eaten by diabetics in moderation.

**FOOD FACT #3**

Apple juice does not have the fibre that a whole apple does, and a good part of the beneficial nutrients (fibre and antioxidants) are in the skin. So, eat your apples whole, with the skin!

# Easier Than Pie – The Locavore Apple Spice Cake

(Adapted from Yottam Ottolenghi's Apple Spice Cake)

When I had to make a cake for a vegetarian ladies pot luck tea party last week, I went with apples. I chose a popular recipe by famous chef, Yottam Ottolenghi – Apple Spice Cake, which is also in his cookbook 'Simple'. Reflecting on my locavore obsession, I wondered just how local could I go? So, I replaced the sugar with palm sugar, the brown sugar with palm jaggery, the butter with local organic cow ghee, the eggs with milk and the sour cream with hung curd. With all of these subtle ingredients, the local apples truly became the hero of the cake. I am so thrilled with how light and delicious it turned out and it's so much healthier too. And this cake is truly super SIMPLE to put together. So, when you are entertaining this festive season, do make this spiced apple cake, and serve it with vanilla ice cream or custard or sweetened whipped cream. Happy Holidays!



**INGREDIENTS**

**For Cake:**

- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp (125g) ghee
- 1 cup (200g) palm sugar (this is fine powdered sugar and light in colour. If unavailable, use 150g of regular white sugar)
- 9 tbsp milk (or 3 eggs)
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- 2 ½ cups (300g) refined flour/maida
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp or a large pinch of salt
- 1 cup (200g) thick hung curd

**For Topping:**

- 500g apples (after removing peel and core)
- ½ cup (100g) palm jaggery or brown sugar
- 1 tbsp mixed spices (I used cinnamon powder, grated nutmeg and a little ginger powder)

**METHOD**

**1.** Preheat your oven to 160°C and line the bottom of a round 10" spring form pan with baking paper. Grease the sides of the cake pan.

**2.** Using a cake beater/ mixer, mix the ghee and sugar together until well blended. Add in the milk and vanilla essence and mix well.

**3.** Sift the flour with baking powder and add in the large pinch of salt.

**4.** Slowly add the flour a little by little to the ghee-sugar-milk mix and once it thickens, blend in the hung curd.

**5.** Pour this thick cake mixture into the cake pan and spread it evenly across the pan.

**6.** Now start on the apples – peel and remove the core. Weigh up to 500g and cut each one into slices, not too thick, not too thin. Quickly mix the apple slices with the powdered spices and palm jaggery. Work quickly because the jaggery melts into the apples and they start to release water.

**7.** Gently arrange the apples, row by row on top of the cake.

**8.** Place in the oven and bake for 60 minutes or until the cake test is done. Insert a wooden skewer and it should come out clean. Take care not to burn the apple topping.

**9.** Serve warm with vanilla icecream. ■

Follow her blog at *www.sharmilacooksforkids.com*

# Georgia Has It All

***Megha Paul*** takes in the views and the wine at this gorgeous locale. Learn more about this country and all the exquisite experiences within its domain.



1.



"Everyone knows the Russians will drink anything," Amran, my travel guide in Georgia, who is also a trained ballet dancer, cites a common refrain. It is said that when Russians wanted to drink some more wine, all they did was absorb some more territory from Georgia. Rumour has it and now Georgia has me, too. Like, literally.

This beautiful country in the shadow of the Caucasus Mountains is located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. Bounded in the west by the Black Sea, in the north by Russia, in the south by Turkey and Armenia, and in the southeast by Azerbaijan, Georgia is one of the oldest wine regions in the world. The fertile valleys and protective slopes were home to grapevine cultivation and neolithic wine production for at least 8000 years. UNESCO also has acknowledged and added the ancient traditional Georgian winemaking method using the Kvevri clay jars to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists.

As I set to explore this stunning post-Soviet country, I realised beyond the Georgian grapes, there are stories weaved in its ramshackle red roofs, fairytale castles and Disneyland-esque architecture.



*Below:* Batumi skyline as seen from the Black Sea

My first pit stop here is Batumi, which is also known as the Pearl of the Black Sea. Laid out like the silkiest blue blanket, I get the first glimpse of the shimmering waters of the Black Sea here.

The biggest port and resort city and the capital of Georgia's autonomous Adjara region, this town is almost a mini Vegas. Full of casinos and quirky buildings and ghosts of buildings awaiting their fate, Batumi is known for its off-beat architecture. Many of the structures are relics of Batumi's past, when the city was a prosperous harbour along the Caspian oil route.

## BOULEVARD DREAMS

My favourite is the modern Statue of Ali and Nino in the Boulevard of Batumi Bay which symbolises eternal love. Made by Georgian artist Tamara Kvesitadze, the figures move towards each other, merge into one piece and then move away from each other every 10 minutes. Just like love and loss co-exist, so do Ali and Nino's folklore in the form of this statue.

The Alphabetic Tower expresses the uniqueness of the Georgian alphabet and people. Situated near the Ali and Nino statue, the tower is another main landmark of the city. The 130-metre (426.5 feet) building combines the design of a DNA strand holding 33 letters of the Georgian alphabet, with each aluminium letter being four metres (13.1 feet) tall. You can also take the elevator to the top of the structure, for panoramic views.

The Argo Cable Car is another favourite. It takes you on a 2.5-kilometre ride. At the end



of the journey, there's a viewing platform for sweeping views over the city. You can also walk up to the nearby church for some peaceful moments.

Founded by a Russian botanist and opened in 1912, the Batumi Botanical Garden, lies in Mtsvane Kontskhi, a small town 10 kilometres away from the city. One of the largest botanical gardens in the former Soviet Union, the garden offers some great views over the coastline along with beautiful fauna. My favourite and nostalgic zone here was the one with the rows of marigold, reminding me that home was just one thought away.

Batumi has some gorgeous facades, too. The Belle Époque-style architecture on Europe Square is a highlight and a welcome antidote to the modern buildings along the waterfront.

MADE BY GEORGIAN ARTIST TAMARA KVESITADZE, THE FIGURES MOVE TOWARDS EACH OTHER, MERGE INTO ONE PIECE AND THEN MOVE AWAY FROM EACH OTHER EVERY 10 MINUTES.





## ON THE ROAD

Do use the marshrutkas for some adventure. These minibuses dash from one destination to the next and cost next to nothing. You can flag them down almost anywhere, and a sign on the dashboard indicates their destination. You are always sorted.

*Clockwise from Top:* Walk in the old town with a view on the Narikala Fortress; Ali and Nino statue; The traditional Georgian Khachapuri.

## GEORGIA ON MY PLATE

Georgians love to eat and drink. And hence, the search for good food is not that tough here. The cuisine of the country is generous. The national favourite and my favourite hands down is Khachapuri, which is flat bread filled with cheese, and usually eaten piping hot from the oven.

Do not miss trying the Khinkali, a sort of dumpling usually with a spiced meat filling. There are several sorts of soup, particularly Chikhirtma, a chicken broth with egg yolks and sautéed onion. And these people love to raise toasts. And why not! Georgian wine is irresistible. So, we raised toasts to pretty much everything -- humanity, world peace, friendship, family and pretty women.

History lovers, there is plenty to make you stop and stare as Batumi has a way of leading you back into a world brimming with magic. So all my fellow travellers with big appetite and big hearts, let's raise a toast to Georgia! ■

# Faux Passé

While we might have come to terms with cycling shorts thanks to blazers, there are still a couple of fashion trends we are trying to wrap our heads around. We picked out 6 - from the most impractical, tacky to a few that just didn't work in 2019 and are thankfully abandoned. Uh, mostly.



**DENIM BOOTS**

**While the idea of it sounds good, this was a little too tricky to style.** Thus sprang out the "pants are falling" meme frenzy. Worn along a shirt dress, these boots looked like your pants were off mid-way.



## MICRO-MINI BAGS

Let's start with the year's smallest accessory that created the biggest wave. Tied to your wrist, ankle or even carried, this tiny bag can hardly fit a coin; it can fit into your pocket though. Placed at a whopping twenty to fifty thousand, the Le Petit Chiquito Mini Leather from Jacquemus has to be the most impractical fashion trend this year.

## NEON LEOPARDS

The highlighter hues had their high-game this year and so did leopard prints. What didn't work was the mix of two. Neon leopard print leggings are tacky. Period.

## TECH-INSPIRED

From Louis Vuitton's digitalised flexi-screen bags to Salvatore Ferragamo and Fendi belts that included pockets in the exact shape of your iPhone, there was quite a push for tech-inspired fashion this year that didn't take off very well.

## LINGERIE DRESSING

Can we please nip this one in the bud? The runways and unfortunately street styles that followed had innerwear worn as... well, not as innerwear. From delicate lace bras and slips, corsets to even thongs, layering lingerie became fashion's newest fetish.

## DAD SANDALS

The rise of ugly footwear rode out its painfully long moment this year, shifting from chunky sneakers to unsightly sandals. From Gucci, Channel, Dior to Prada, every luxury house had their variations of the "dad sandals" bringing back the late 19th century closet to present times. ■

# Fashion fundamental

Pavitra Sagar, the co-founder of FunkyFish designer pop-up has ventured into fashion styling and is also creating a niche of luxury fashion blogging in South India.

Scroll through her Instagram feed 'stylemuze' to find Judith Leiber, Gucci, Dior and Prada along the sides of high street brands like Zara, H&M, Indian designers like Dhruv Kapoor, Raw Mango, to happening 'IT' girl brands like Cult Gaia. When it comes to fashion she's got a wardrobe a million girls would kill for! In a quick one-on-one with JFW, she lists down a few of her fashion favorites!



Your go-to brand: *Zara and Zimmermann*

Your favourite designer at the moment: *Alexandre Vauthier*

A must-have wardrobe Staple: *Well fitted black blazer*

The first luxury brand you shopped from: *Louis Vuitton*



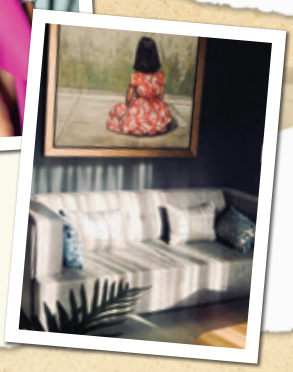




Favourite accessory of the year: *Square toe heels and utility belt bags*

Fashion to you is: *Fashion is what is offered to you but style is what you choose to do with it*





Favourite destination you traveled: *Mykonos Greece*

Priceless classic you own: *A portrait of my daughter*

The next edition of Funkyfish pop-up called ***'Hello Spring' is in Chennai on January 29th at Hyatt Regency Chennai***, showcasing the spring-summer 2020 collection by fashion week and upcoming Indian designers. Don't miss!

# FUZZY & FLUFFY

*Fight the chills and get your cozy game on! This season, let your accessories vibe the warmth you need. From Karl Lagerfeld's iconic Fendi keychain to feather-trimmed sandals from Dolce and Gabbana, here are all the fluffs you'll need to stock up this winter.*



Shearling fur monogram logo headband by **Fendi**



Black fox fur super karlito karl pom pom bag charm by **Fendi**



Eco faux fur slides by **Joshua Sanders**







Rendezvous mink hoop earring by **Wild & Woolly**



Pusheen pom pen by **Claire's**



Mini estelle faux-shearling bag by **Cult Gaia**



Caticorn fur phone case by **Claire's**



Liz faux fur tote bag by **Staud**





Princetown GG diamond slippers by **Gucci**

Shiny shearling sheepskin & gold tone metal flap bag by **Chanel**

# When Luxury Meets Comfort

Conveniently located in the middle of B-town's action, ***Hyatt Centric MG Road, Bengaluru*** is your gateway to the high-octane life of the city.









Unwind and let loose with pleasant weather that goes perfectly well with craft beer served at the city's many micro-breweries. To top it off, enjoy delectable signatures from some of the best restaurants and call it a day with exceptional nightlife indulgences.

**The Bengaluru Brasserie**

Serving modern global cuisine in tranquil ambience, it is located in the alluringly calm setting of Bangalore. Featuring classy décor, breezy interiors and a captivating pool, guests can either choose to de-stress by the pool or enjoy the peace indoors.

**Liquid Bar**

Inspired by the buzz of the city nightlife, the Liquid Bar is always bustling with good music, glitzy events and great vibes. It features an exclusive menu with curated drinks and dishes that are sure leave one in good spirits. Whether it's a reunion with friends or a romantic rendezvous, this classy, open air lounge setup is ideal to relish their signature cocktails and multi-cuisine menu against upbeat music.

**Christmas Eve Dinner: December 24th**

This Christmas, make it count with an elaborate dinner spread as eclectic as the holiday season. Featuring exclusive delicacies for a splendid time made even more special with good company, fine taste, and a festive vibe.

**Christmas Lunch:**

Christmas lunch at The Bengaluru Brasserie is an experience wherein great taste meets the cheerful mood of winter's festive season. The Christmas lunch is a must-try for a magical end-of-year moment.

**New Year's Eve at Liquid Bar:**

With a DJ to keep you grooving to your favorite tracks, the top-notch bar will let you hang loose with an outdoor and indoor dance floor. Finest drinks, flavourful dishes and spirited vibes are all you need to ring off 2020!! ■

# what's trending @ jfW digital

## STORIES OF THE WEEK *jfwonline.com*



**Unforgivable: How this Doctor's Rape And Murder Has Gotten Parents Worked Up Is Scary!**



**Well Done: Actress Parvathy Trashes Arjun Reddy In Front Of Vijay Deverakonda For All The Right Reasons!**



**The toxic Twitter Soup: The Disadvantages Of Social Media!**

## LATEST VIDEOS *youtube.com/jfw*




**At home with Bigg Boss Sakshi Agarwal | My mom takes care of my Apartment | Part 1 | JFW Exclusive**




**Types of Latecomers | RJ Saru | Being Saru | JFW Originals**

## TOP QUIZ ON FACEBOOK *@jfw*



Among all the celebrities who married non-actors, who is your favourite?
**A.** Vijay - Sangeetha
**B.** Simran - Deepak Bagga
**C.** Dulquer Salmaan - Amal Sufiyaa
**D.** Madhavan - Sarita

## LATEST TWEETS *@jfwmagofficial*

I Wanted To Do Super Deluxe For Free: **#VijaySethupathi's Dedication Is Unbelievable; WATCH!**

**Happy Birthday Soulmate:** Mugen Rao Has The Sweetest Wish For Girlfriend Nadiah! #BiggBossTamil3 #mugenrao

**10 Home Essentials That Are Worth An Investment!** @NipponIndia

## INSTA-BEAT *@jfwdigital*

**#1** The kind of love we need @nazriyafahadh
**#2** A HUGE THANK YOU to all our followers!






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Hilton
CHENNAI

# Christmas just got merrier
WITH HILTON CHENNAI

## Kickstart the festive season with a host of celebrations at Hilton Chennai

### Advent Sunday Brunch
All Sundays of Dec 2019 at Vasco's
12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

### À La Carte Turkey Sale
December 16th - 25th at EST
10 AM to 10 PM

### Christmas Goodies Sale
December 2nd - 31st at EST
10 AM to 10 PM

### Teddy's Tea Party
December 20th at EST
3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

### Chocolate Making Class
December 21st at EST
12:00 PM to 2:00 PM

### Christmas Day Brunch
December 25th at Vasco's
12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

# New Year's just got happier
WITH HILTON CHENNAI

### NYE Party Zone (3rd Floor)
December 31st, 2019
7:30 PM onwards

### Electric NYE Party at QBar
December 31st, 2019
9:00 PM onwards

### Sunset to Sunrise NYE Party at EST
December 31st, 2019
7:00 PM onwards

### World of Hilton Brunch - 101 at Vasco's
January 1st, 2020
12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

### Gala Room Package for Two
Room + NYE Dinner at Party Zone +
Breakfast + Late Check-Out

For reservations and queries, please call **+91 95000 11940 | +91 95000 26055**
Email: dining.chennai@hilton.com
HILTON CHENNAI, 124/1, J.N.Salai, Guindy - 600032

• EXCLUSIVE PREMIERE •

# 2019 HIGHLIGHT REEL

## A LOOK BACK AT THE YEAR'S BEST FLICKS

Experimental, progressive, mystical, genius - just few of many great ways to describe movie entertainment this year. Let's take a walk down the crème de la crème of each branch of cinema, because you might just find the motherload of movie-marathon ideas this holiday!

By ***Radhika Ramesh***






## GAME OVER

The **TAAPSEE PANNU** starrer thriller-drama is easily one of the best this year. This unique storyline takes us through the journey of a disabled woman who is emotionally traumatised, believing that there is absolutely nothing she can achieve anymore, when a twist in events changes her perspective towards life, that she can in fact, do anything and bodily obstacles can be worked around with a gritty mind. Taapsee delivered a seamless performance and the film was a large success in all the languages it was released in.



## KAIDHI

Similar to Super Deluxe, Kaidhi is a film with four different stories, a man convicted for no reason, the story of a little girl in an orphanage, a drug mafia case being investigated by the police and a group of college students getting entangled in the place where the drugs have been hidden.
The stories come together in the end beautifully and unexpectedly and that is the signature mark of **LOKESH KANAGARAJ'S** direction. He knows how to nurture his story. Amidst all the thrill and action, the director embeds a serene emotion between father and daughter which makes the film a blockbuster and a must-watch.



## PERANBU

A realistic portrayal of a father and a daughter's relationship over the years, this film was directed by **RAM**. The narration was not sugar-coated and that revealed the reality of a single father with a daughter. He learns so much about women as she grows, when puberty hits, when sexual needs are crucial and most of all, as a father with a disabled child, it is an adventure every day. The way the director enigmatically adds the essence of nature to every chapter of the feature film can be creatively disturbing, because of its realism.



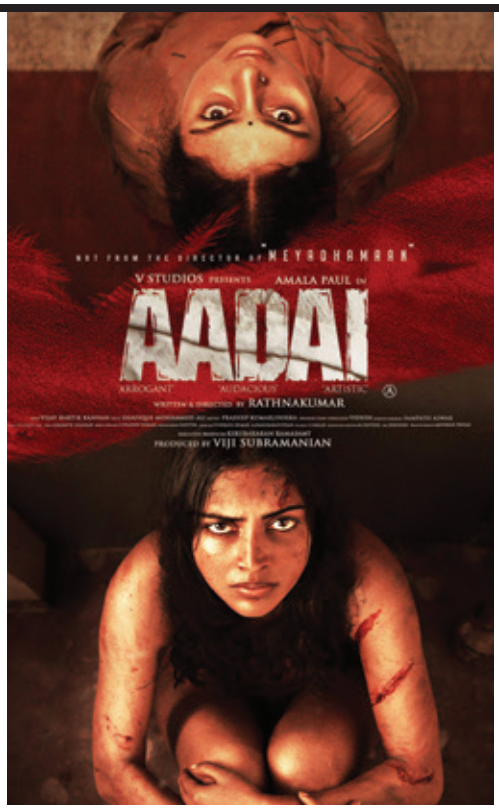

## Nerkonda Parvai

Even with a few commercial add-ons that its original did not have, Nerkonda Parvai, remake of PINK, managed to deliver the message of "'No' means 'No'" with the same force. Starring **AJITH KUMAR, SHRADDHA SRINATH** and **ABHIRAMI VENKATACHALAM** in the lead, the film did not lose sight of its premise, yielding a well-written, well-conceived and spectacularly performed feature. Fittingly, its reception in the south was massive, especially given Ajith's exceptional screen presence.



## ASURAN

Set in the 80s, the entire film tells the survival story of a "lower-caste" farmer and his family situated in the region of Kovilpatti, South Tamil Nadu. Sivasamy (**DHANUSH**) is a marginal farmer, a father of three and a rather doting husband. He loves his kids and his wife unconditionally and would possibly do anything to keep them safe. All hell breaks loose when Sivasamy's elder son Murugan (Teejay) gets into a tiff with a rich landlord of upper caste, Narasimhan (**ADUKALAM NAREN**). By now, director **VETRIMAARAN** knows Dhanush's strength quite well and the way he has brought in a whirlwind of emotions through every frame is truly unbeatable.




## AADAI

Sudhandhira Kodi (**AMALA PAUL**) changes her name to Kamini because she believes that Sudhandhiram (Freedom) should be at heart and in the mind. She works for a television channel and runs her own candid-cam-prank show. Her life choices seem to constantly challenge societal norms. As a rebellious, adventure-loving young woman with a sense of humour, she is thrown into an eerie situation with no way to cry for help. Director Rathna Kumar may not have a explored the depth of the character but he has surely taken his first big step with Aadai. The writer-director used the crucial mirror scene to convey the struggle and awkwardness women face; the struggle of self-protection in society is far too real for a woman and the writer portrays that with due respect.

## Super Deluxe

Directed by **THIYAGARAJA KUMARARAJA**, the film stars **VIJAY SETHUPATHI, SAMANTHA AKKINENI, FAHADH FAASIL, MYSSKIN** among others. Four different tales need not necessarily get intertwined and yet they all can make sense when they are a part of the film - that was the sole premise of this hit. Vijay Sethupathi as a transgender individual identifying as female, Samantha and Fahadh's eccentric chemistry, Ramya Krishnan's terrific personality, and the story of the four adolescent boys just blend beautifully together, keeping the audience engrossed. This was not just a box-office success, but its progressiveness was largely welcomed by the audience with an open mind.





## JERSEY

Starring actor **NANI** and **SHRADDHA SRINATH** in the lead, this is the story of a talented yet failed cricketer Arjun who decides to return to the Indian cricket team in his late thirties to take it to the next level and of course, win a jersey for his son. The film was very well-written. But, Nani was the star of the show as was Shraddha Srinath. Their unique rapport with each other and their waves of emotions made the film a family entertainer with a positive message.




## OH! BABY

**SAMANTHA AKKINENI** was yet again seen in a never-seen-before role of a 70-year-old trapped in the body of a 24-year-old. Samantha effortlessly carried the film on her shoulders. Adapted from the Korean classic Miss Granny, director Nandhini unearths a treasure of a story for Tollywood. Baby (**LAKSHMI**) decides to not be a burden to her son and one day decides to just move on. As she visits a photo studio at her family event, life changes for her and she becomes a 24-year-old all over again. She begins to live the life she had always wanted to and follows her passion. The story is a tribute to our elders and what they lost in the process of "building a family".



## Majili

A hardcore cricket fan (**NAGA CHAITANYA**), falls in love with a woman (**DIVYANSHA KAUSHIK**). The two seem to be made for each other and are deeply in love, when parents forcefully separate them. After a few years, it is revealed that he married his neighbour (**SAMANTHA AKKINENI**) who was in love with him from a very long time. The way he falls in love with his wife over time is the storyline. Naga Chaitanya and Samantha being real-life husband and wife shared a special partnership onscreen and were a treat to watch. Director **SHIVA NIRVANA** knew how to use this to create a story out of it.

## MALLESHAM





Against the backdrop of the Andhra Pradesh government constantly encouraging its people to buy hand-woven clothes, this film fit the times to a T. A young, self-trained inventor decides to risk his rather well-built reputation to invent a new weaving process for his mother after he sees the grueling labour she goes through. Director **RAJ RACHAKONDA** ditched the usual heroic biopic to concentrate upon something crucial. Mallesham is the story for each and every one of us who have huge dreams and aspirations and how the society can attempt to stifle it all.

REGIONAL TELUGU



## AGENT SAI SRINIVASA ATHREYA

Adding a comical spin on a mysterious detective story, director Swaroop made this one an entertainer. Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya (**NAVEEN**) is a detective based out of Nellore who has a very different approach to curiosity. In a genre of its own, this film deserves all the applause for its artistic direction and execution.

REGIONAL MALAYALAM

## UYARE

This film is the life story of an acid attack survivor Pallavi (**PARVATHY**) who is career-driven. She is focused, she knows what she wants out of life from the very beginning and her foremost aim is to become a successful pilot. That being said about her professional life, her personal life leaves her cramped for any kind of space. Her insecure, egomaniacal and controlling boyfriend is shown to be the reason. The story takes the issue of toxic relationships head on and achieves an effect of awe, particularly at Parvathy, who can emote fires of passion just through her eyes. Tovino Thomas also makes a compelling show of talent, making this an eye-opener of a story.







## Kumbalangi Nights

Yet another need-of-the-hour concept which lays emphasis on the truth that the so-called perfect man is not necessarily a good person. Four brothers who have no money or a proper place to live, also have a very strained relationship with one another. However, when they understand the importance of life and people, things take a beautiful turn. **FAHADH FAASIL** may truly be the star of this film but so is the narration. The subtlety with which the societal norms were shattered through the narrative only goes to show how well-researched the director has been about this. Embracing imperfection as its core theme, this was an engaging watch in 2019.

## AMBILI

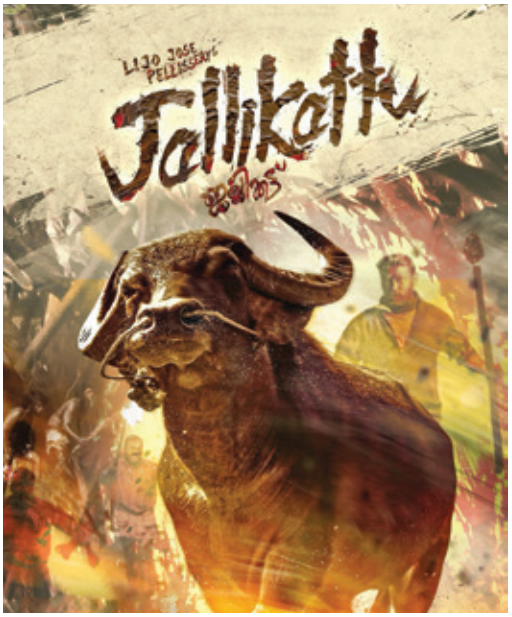
Malayalam films like Ambili are one-of-a-kind love stories. Ambili is a quirky, fun man who spreads warmth wherever he goes. He is loved by the entire village but his one true love is his childhood friend Tina. The journey of Ambili is portrayed through an innocence that oozes out positivity. It's a genuinely feel-good movie which will in fact make you wonder if you could ever have a life like that. An endearing character at its hub, this story takes on a whole new perspective of love and acceptance.






## VIRUS

Multi-starrers can meet with any kind of fate at the box office. In Virus, the striking cast works as its strength, with every actor working in tandem with the story and not attempting to outshine each other. Every character portrayed therefore feels convincing and their meaty roles are executed with perfection. Based on real incidents during the Nipah virus attack in Kozhikode and other districts in 2018, the film traces the story of the hard reality that follows the various stages of the epidemic outbreak. A special mention must be made of **KUNCHACKO BOBAN, SREENATH, PARVATHY** and **TOVINO** for their impeccable portrayal. Needless to say, a senior actress like **REVATHI**, with her nuanced performance is one to remember.




## JALLIKATTU

The Malayalam film industry continued to deliver some grand successes this year as Jallikattu hit the screens. Just the immaculate packaging of the entire film as such will blow your mind. A buffalo escapes in the fear of being butchered. The butcher, his gang and his helper are on the lookout for the animal. The buffalo is then chased by many villagers whose crops the animal destroyed. This is the gist of the rustic, honest film but the depth of every character is sure to leave you spellbound. The film's symbolic reach portrays humans as the actual beasts.

## Premier Padmini





With a dead-end job and a mid-life crisis, Vinayak (**JAGGESH**) is about to be divorced. Life is just not treating Vinayak well and that is being noticed by his driver Nanjundi. The film traverses the winding journey of a middle-aged man with a rather mundane life. Riding on a genius screenplay and a focused narrative technique, the story finds its way to its audience, and despite its multiple characters, leaves a light feeling. The emotional graph of the film works alongside its momentum and both together create entertainment gold. Depiction of a normal life never looked so good.

REGIONAL
KANNADA




## DEVAKI

Devaki (**PRIYANKA UPENDRA**) is in search of her 10-year-old daughter who has been missing for a while now, amidst the grimy streets of Kolkata. This single mother is frantic and the entire narration makes the film a gripping one. One of the finest Kannada thrillers this year, Devaki digs deep into the unfathomable maternal love, as Priyanka leads the narrative with remarkable elan. Although, the entire story was set in a different state, director **LOHITH** manages to bring in the native essence impeccably. The film is a wonderful dedication to all mothers in a distinctive way.



## STRIKER

This psychological-thriller introduces us to Siddhu (**PRAVEEN TEJ**) who has a disorder that clouds his discernment between dream and reality. He finds it challenging to fall in love with a girl and marry her, considering his condition. This novel attempt by director **PAWAN TRIVIKRAM** has been quite successful given its curious storyline, and checks all the boxes of a well made thriller.

HINDI



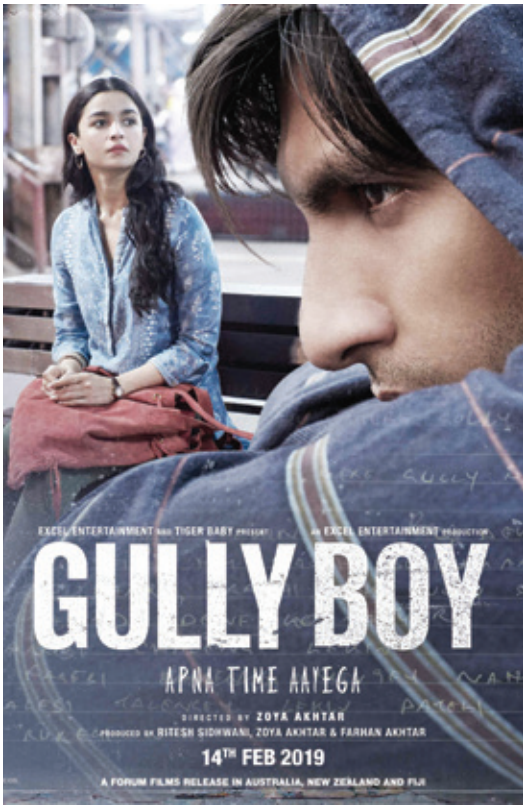

## ARTICLE 15

Starring **AYUSHMANN KHURANA** and **ISHA TALWAR** in the lead, Article 15 had us abandon the popcorn and grab the edge of our seats instead. What worked for the film was the hard-hitting filmmaking and narration. Ayan Ranjan (Ayushmann) is an IAS officer who is relocated to the fictional village of Lalgaon where caste disparity and crimes against women make him want to strive for a better society. But, evading the hero-to-the-rescue gimmick, this film details actual happenings in our country. Sure, director **ABHINAV SINHA** designed it as a crime thriller, but really, it is a thought-provoking feature which audaciously brings to light the monstrosities we live amidst.




## Mission Mangal

How the Maangalyaan turned out to be a success is a world-known story, but the emotions these five women scientists and the three male scientists faced is altogether a different story. Starring **VIDYA BALAN, SHARMAN JOSHI, AKSHAY KUMAR, TAAPSEE PANNU, NITHYA MENEN, KRITI KULHARI** and **SONAKSHI SINHA** in the lead, the film portrays the other side of these efficient scientists who used simple home science to send a PSLV rocket into Mars, a first in the world done exclusively by India. More than a well-made film, it is the angle that works. We know these women are intelligent, but how has their struggle been throughout? With its tear-jerker and exhilarating moments, this rollercoaster sure was out of this world!




## GULLY BOY

A young college boy (**RANVEER SINGH**) from Dharavi learns that no obstacles including class, money or oppression will ever stand in the way of true talent. Gully Boy showcases ambition of a youth amidst all his everyday chaos. The variegated emotions find expression through rap lyrics and song-writing for Murad, who is a sucker for love and happiness and dreams of keeping his mother happy no matter what. It's amazing how a simple storyline could leave an impact as tremendous as this. Gully Boy has successfully been nominated for the Oscars for its unpretentious yet remarkable narrative.




## Chhichhore

Remember those carefree hostel and college days? The film revolves completely around these wonderful memories. Every student in India battles stress and anxiety pretty much on an everyday basis. This intimidating reality marks the focus of the film's narrative but it also aims to show that college life is so much more than just competition; it accounts for a memorable phase in the life of youth.



## URI: THE SURGICAL STRIKE

2019 saw the rise of the patriotic genre, but nothing like URI. The film stars **VICKY KAUSHAL** in the lead, with a base narrative that focuses on the surgical strike India conducted on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) against the militants. From playing a Pakistani Army officer to the Indian Para Cammando, Vicky Kaushal puts on a winning show by himself. The story and the actor somehow stir a strong national spirit from within in earnest. Its technicality is the strength of the film: clearly a product of detailed background study, military training and cinematographic precison.



## DE DE PYAAR DE

For once, a commercial film like De De Pyaar De does not limit its female characters to mere props. Two strong women lead the show, resolute in their very own ways and means. Starring **RAKUL PREET SINGH, AJAY DEVGN** and **TABU** in the lead, the film manages some major depth. We are shown a 50-year-old falling in love with a 26-year-old. The complication is that he already has a wife and two wonderful kids. Due to differences, the couple has been divorced for a long time now. The husband admits to not being a great father and learns about the nitty-gritties of a relationship through the women and men in his family.

ENGLISH

## JOKER

They say behind every madman is a misunderstood genius! Directed by **TODD PHILLIPS**, the overdue origin story of DC's beloved villain finally hit the big screens to reveal just that. The psychological thriller/drama follows the life of a mentally-ill, failed comedian Arthur Fleck who struggles to find his place in the society. He makes his living as a clown, which only earns him further abandonment, attacks and humiliation until he finds himself an outcast. **JOAQUIN PHOENIX** sets the new mark as The Joker. What makes the film a mammoth hit is the way it skillfully contemplates the subject of mental health. On a side note, is this the start of a trend? Now can we expect more movies for super villains in the future?






## Ford v Ferrari

Ford vs Ferrari is a motorsport film that accomplishes the rare feat of enthralling both the average movie-goer and the petrolhead alike; similar to Rush, but perhaps even better. The film captivates the grandeur of the great Euro-American racing and motor industry scene in the early 1960s, through incredible cinematography and arguably a career best performance from Christian Bale, portraying the legendary talented, but troubled driver Ken Miles. This isn't to say that the movie is saturated with motorsport technicalities: James Marigold expertly manages to craft what is definitely the complete cinematic experience, inspiring moments of joy, passion, thrill and agony through mesmerising camera work and dramatic storytelling. The picture is a legitimate candidate for the best film of the year, something not usually associated with the sports drama. ■

## CAPTAIN MARVEL



The last time a superwoman blew our mind was when Wonder Woman deflected bullets with her arm shield and it was bliss. After a long time now, **BRIE LARSON** blessed our eyes and mind with the character Carol Danvers in Captain Marvel. She was suave, powerful and put up a tough fight. We can see Carol Danvers coming to terms with her superpowers and that command is what we all needed to light up our dull lives. Captain Marvel may be in an alien galaxy in an alien planet but she is till date the most worthwhile.



## AVENGERS: ENDGAME

10 years and 20 films later, one would think Marvel will probably lose its magic sometime but yet again we are proven wrong by a larger-than-life successful film. The Avengers, the popular league of guerilla soldiers must confront their nemesis Thanos whose mission is to retrieve all the 6 infinity stones for himself and destroy about half the universe. Moments such as Doctor Strange multiplying by the hundreds and Thor's entry into Wakanda made for palpable awe in the audience. There's romance and there are lessons on virtue, so Marvel has indeed experimented.




# ENAI NOKKI PAAYUM THOTTA

STRIKING MUSIC AND CINEMATOGRAPHY INTENSIFY THE GAUTHAM MENON EFFECT.

**DIRECTOR:** Gautham Vasudev Menon
**CAST:** Dhanush, Megha Akash, M.Sasikumar

The story begins where it ends. A mid-plot narration set amidst a bullet hurling towards the protagonist. The frame freezes with the bullet just inches away from Dhanush - who plays Ragu - as the title reads "Enai Nokki Paayum Thotta". Right from the start of the movie the brilliant cinematography, soul-stirring music, and Dhanush's remarkable performance will play the perfect muse, enhancing a genre that has now come to be recognised as "Gautham Menon movie."

The film is an action-thriller that is set against the backdrop of a grippingly dark, almost fictitious romance. A Gautham Menon movie is sure to have two things: a strong connection to family emotion and storybook romance. The family thread here is that of Ragu's brother, who chooses to leave him and his family at a young age.

The love story revolves around Lekha, played by Megha Akash. A college boy meets - wait for it... an actress shooting at his university! What unfolds is a not-so-extraordinary love story that still manages to deliver waves of emotions only with music that even after being played for over two years now, hits completely new, grabbing our hearts and making us feeling nostalgic. And like most of the time, the actress, Lekha comes from a troubled background that only pulls Ragu into a whirlpool of trouble that would involve guns, police, gangsters, and a trail that could take him to his long lost brother.

Two stories run parallel, the narration of the past and the current crime scene, and both arrive at a significant pause at the interval. Why sit through only one melodrama when you can watch two for the same price? However, the second half of the movie carries the same flaw as the director's previous ones, it gets nagging, losing the grip the first half had on the audience. You find yourself in an action film with a series of gunfights, and gangster chase, complete with corrupt cops.

The movie plays out more like a novel, with both the actor and actress doing their part perfectly. And it's a delight how beautifully Dhanush has pulled off a role so different from his usual ones. It has all of the director's signature elements; a Kaaka Kaaka style voiceover, a Vinnaithaandi Varuvaaya gate, a Varanam Aiyram tragedy, and a vulnerable girl to protect.

**VERDICT:** watch the movie for its music and romance. If you are a fan of Gautham Menon's genre, you won't be too disappointed, at least with the first half.
**RATING:** ★★½☆☆




# BALA

SOCIALLY RELEVANT MESSAGE MASKED UNDER A CHEESY BOLLYWOOD NUMBER.

**DIRECTOR:** Amar Kaushik
**CAST:** Ayushmann Khurana, Yami Gautham, Bhumi Pednekar and others

An inhibited salesman, a small-town progressive lawyer and your stereotypical TikTok-er, Bala has all the ingredients required to make a great family entertainer. The movie discusses the very relevant social issue of the traditional idea of beauty and the stigma surrounding it even to this day.

Bala played by Ayushmann Khurana, goes around town marketing a fairness cream targeting dark-skinned women and their insecurities. One of his selling points is: "You can't change the views of the society but you sure can change the colour of your skin." He does this all while facing premature balding himself, which he doesn't quite seem to accept after being the popular kid in school. He goes on to try everything under the sun, from using cow dung to hair transplant but nothing seems to work, after which he finally settles for a hair patch gifted to him by his dad. The story follows Bala and his 'baal', brilliantly narrated by his receding hair as they take a journey toward self-acceptance and self-love.

Although this remains a widely discussed topic on social media platforms, there aren't many mainstream media banners giving it the due attention. This film does exactly that, it talks about the undue amounts of pressure faced not only by women but also by men. It reflects upon the emotional trauma that is inflicted by bullying and the marketing tricks used by companies to get "under the skin" of people quite literally.

The quick-witted dialogues and well-written screenplay has the audience rumbling with laughter throughout the film and needless to say the star cast led by Ayushmann was a definite high. Thanks to diabetes and balding, Ayushmann's Bala looks much older than he is, and while this makes for some empathy with the character, the screenplay ensures you never pity him. Yami Gautham's Pari is a self absorbed TikTok sensation who is also the face of the fairness brand (rings a bell?). Bhumi Pednekar's Latika is a strong-headed lawyer who has been bullied and taunted for her complexion from a very young age. The character stands as the epitome of modern day feminism which is brilliantly portrayed in the film. But casting someone fair-skinned to portray the character raises questions and challenges its purpose. Regardless, the movie's strong storyline, powerful performances and of course the cheesy Bollywood references make it quite the entertainer.

Amar Kaushik's smooth direction, Niren Bhatt's screenplay, dialogue and Ayushmann's stellar performance manage to engage the audience in this 2-hour comedy fest that is sure to leave you thinking.

**VERDICT:** A family entertainer with some food for thought.
**RATING:** ★★★★☆

AVA

50

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