

The Avengers' caught the spirit of the sixties: humour, adventure, style, decadence: the lot. A total of 61 episodes turned Patrick Macnee (playing John Steed) into a national hero, envied by British men of all ages as he exchanged quips and adventure every week with an array of beautiful assistants - Honor Blackman, Diana Rigg and Linda Thorson.

In 1969, it came to an end; Avenger-
fever passed - a stage version lasted only six weeks. The whole wonderful fantasy was over, until in 1975, Macnee and Thorson appeared in character on French TV advertising champagne. Then, quickly, it was back in production, financed primarily from France.

For the 26 episodes of "The New Avengers", Steed took more of a back seat, dispatching agents Purdey and Gambit to solve the usual outrageous plots.

Purdey was a key acting break for Joanna Lumley, who had been out of work for six months and was preparing to emigrate. A number of small film parts and a brief spell on "Coronation Street" (as Ken Barlow's girlfriend) had not prepared the British public for her. As Purdey, she was very sexy, very assured, very fit and very competent. The combination of drop dead looks and athletic style was an instant winner.

Adding spice was Gareth Hunt (fresh from "Upstairs, Downstairs") as Gambit - fast, competent, deadly, but ultimately a shadow of Steed, the suave, elegant and traditional master of every episode.



Admirable AVENGERS

From W.H. Smith's Video Update Magazine: Issue 7.

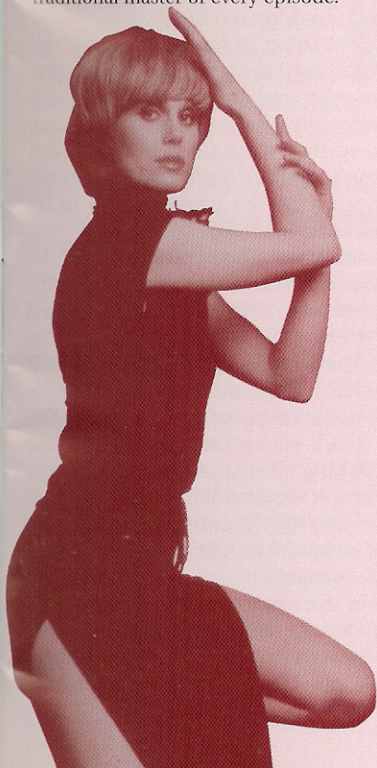
Recently, the original Avengers began its slow, but complete roll-out onto video but now avid fans can sample the companion series. Just released are two tapes, with two complete stories on each. Volume 1 has "The Eagle's Nest", with our team tackling the rebirth of Nazism on a secret island (great Peter Cushing Cameo) and "The Last Of The Cybernauts...?" with deadly half-men, half-machines stirring memories of Emma Peel's earlier battle with them.

Volume 2 offers more of the same: "Sleeper" pits Purdey in pyjamas against a ruthless gang who've put all of London to sleep and "Target" gives Gambit a chance to shine solo as he tackles deadly puppets.

The New Avengers is one old TV series that does last - it's humorous, stylish and expertly made. If you know it

already, then these two collections are indispensable; if you don't, then check them out.

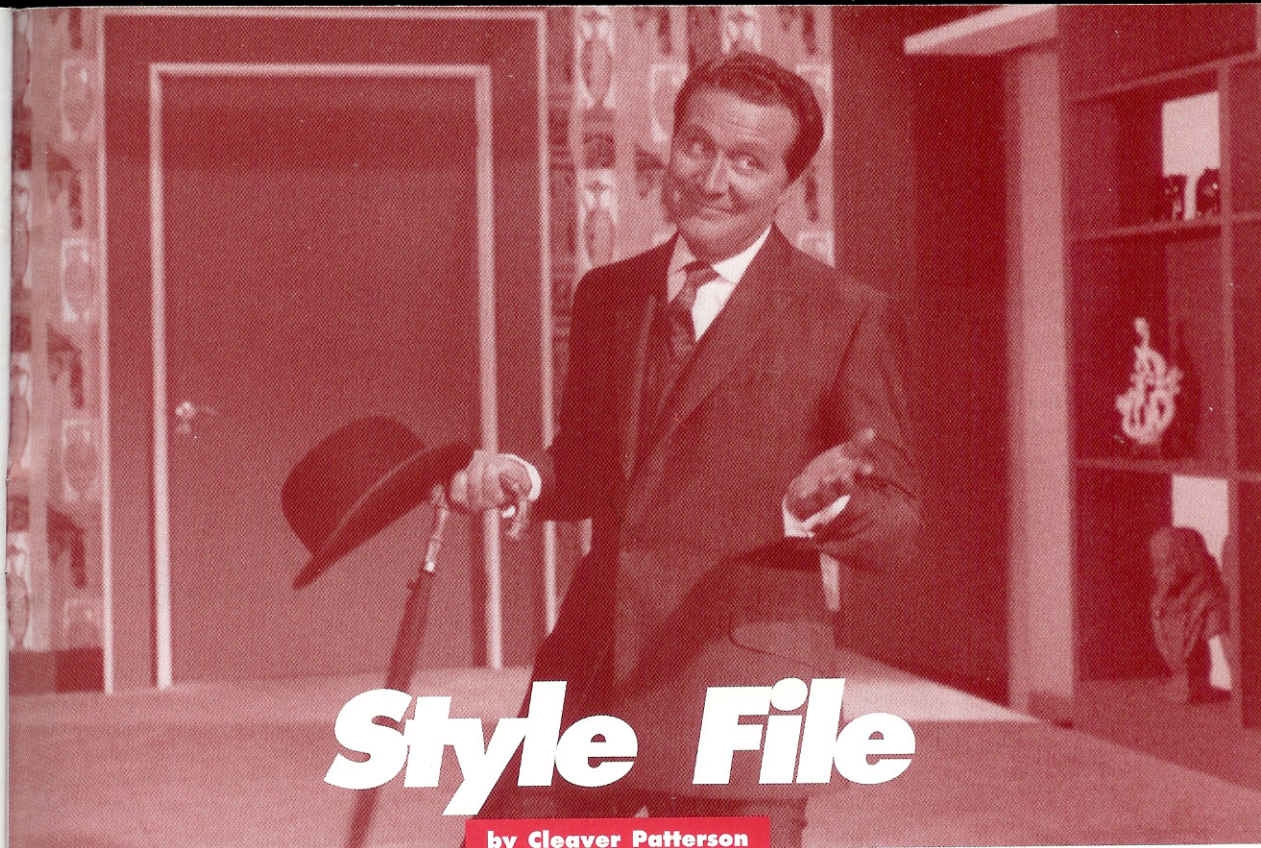
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Style File

by Cleaver Patterson

The Avengers, and later The New Avengers, were two of the most stylish TV series ever produced. The following A to Z reveals how they achieved the flair and panache that became their trademark.

A is for adaptable: a prerequisite for The Avengers' style was adaptability. From Steed's swordstick umbrella to Purdey's wraparound skirt (which, stripped off in "Complex" revealed more-liberating shorts and raised the temperature), their clothing did more than please the eye.

B is for John Bates: the English designer who formed the company Jean Varon in 1964. He supplied Emma Peel with some of her most eye-catching wardrobe components, including the black and white striped wool coat for the fourth series, and her stretch jersey catsuits which fuelled thousands of male fantasies from the UK to Timbucktoo.

C is for Pierre Cardin: the distinctive straight, sharp lines of the legendary French designer, who made costumes for Jean Cocteau's famous 1947 film "Beauty and the Beast," suited Steed's suave demeanour to a tee.

D is for dandy: Steed's wardrobe sometimes verged on the eccentric, never-more-so than his appearance as a nineteenth-century dandy in "A Touch of Brimstone." Fortunately for all concerned, he managed to carry it - and the bomb - off with aplomb.

E is for Edwardian: with his ornate waistcoats, sleek, velvet-collared suits and furled umbrellas, Steed was the epitome of the turn-of-the-century, Edwardian elegance. An example being "Fog," when

our hero donned a cravat and scarlet-lined evening cape to put an end to the dastardly Gaslight Ghoul!

F is for figure-hugging: Cathy's leather flying suit, Emma's Emmapeelers and Tara's waistcoats were the pinnacle of figure-hugging motifs. The clothing had to allow for freedom of movement of course, especially when fighting off unwanted advances. They did so, effortlessly.

G is for Gambit: From his fully-automated high-tech apartment, to his wardrobe of contemporary clothing, Gambit had style. Gareth Hunt has said that he would have liked a more casual approach to Gambit's appearance. Can't see why. His devil-may-care attitude exuded style in every situation.

H is for hats: Steed had his steel-lined bowler, Purdey her personalised motorcycle crash helmet, while Tara capped them all with a French beret! Where headgear was concerned The Avengers were always ahead of the fashion stakes - after all, where better to keep top secret information than under your hat!

I is for individual: every member of The Avengers, both old and new, left their own mark on the series. Steed with his vintage modes of transport, Cathy with her over-the-shoulder nonchalance, Emma with her Hampstead pied-a-terre,

Tara with her exuberant, jaunty approach and the simplicity of Purdey's name. Each an individual, happy to lead but never to be led.

J is for jaunty: airy and breezy, buoyant and high-spirited, always lively, never downbeat, The Avengers had a jauntness of style which always ended on a high note.

K is for Kilt: in "Castle De'ath" Steed, under the pseudonym Mc Steed, took to the highlands. And when in Rome ... Steed showed his mettle by wearing the obligatory kilt with definite panache.

L is for leather: Cathy Gale was the first to don the leather attire, chosen for its strength and durability. Steed's partners followed suit - from Emma to Purdey, all donned leather in some form or another, thereby keeping the blood pressure of the male viewer dangerously high!

M is for miniskirt: Steed's female partners liked nothing better to show a bit of leg, or thigh as season after season their hemlines rose. The point-of-no-return was reached when Purdey's skirt shrank to micro-mini size in "Emily," while going through the car-wash laundry cycle.

N is for naughty: Purdey was naughty (but nice) when spending most of the last half of "Target" in nothing but her slip and running through the London streets in her pyjamas in "Sleeper." Most definitely a case of the less said the better!

O is for On Target: the fore-runner to this magazine. Need I say more!

P is for pistol-packing: The Avenger's firearms always packed a punch - particularly Tara's pistol which doubled as a mirror with a hidden lipstick in the (rarely seen) USA Thorson credits.

Q is for quintessential: classically complete and ideally perfect, Steed was the supreme model of the quintessential English gentleman

R is for revealing: the current fad for sheer clothing revealing underwear underneath is nothing new. Just watch the closing minutes of "All Done With Mirrors" when Tara displays a lovely line in black brassieres, worn beneath the flimsiest of blouses - proof, perhaps, that The Avengers always put on a bold front!

S is for snake: Emma proves that accessories were as important as clothes when she visited the Hellfire Club. Her seductive snake bracelet

brought her admiring advances from club members - until Steed saves her from a brood of vipers.

T is for Twiggy: the sixties stick insect willingly modelled Avengers-inspired clothing for magazine spreads, including an 'Avengers-skin' coat, while sporting the essential accessory to finish off the look - John Steed!

U is for unfettered: totally independent, stylishly self-sufficient, Avengers women were in no need of men, except perhaps, John Steed - though being the perfect English gentleman 'nothing' ever passed between them! Due to their line of business, it was easier to be unfettered. But if one did perchance enter their lives, as in the case of Emma's long lost husband making an appearance, their own exit soon followed.

V is for Vogue: In August 1990, this bible of style featured an 'Avengers' fashion shoot in their UK edition. Shot by cult photographer Herb Ritts, and styled by fashion supremo Sarajane Hoare (who are quite obviously Avengers fans), 'The Avenging Spirit' featured an Emma Peel-style plastic jacket with matching jodhpurs by Thierry Mugler. The clothes appeared on the magazine's highly collectible 75th birthday poster the following year.

W is for watch: Avengers wrist watches were issued during the lifetime of the show, but at over £4 a time (in pre-decimal money) only the most avid fans could afford them. Always resourceful in times of danger Steed came up with a novel use for his companion's pocket watch in the episode "Faces" - he used it to protect himself from an assassin's bullet!

X is for X-rated: with TV regulations being what they were, it's a wonder that some of The Avengers episodes ever got screened. Shooting, murder and mayhem accompanied every outing as well as some distinctly 'kinky' methods of restraint - just see how the villains dealt with Emma in the forge in "The Town Of No return." Fortunately the tongue-in-cheek style with which it all took place saved it from the censor's axe.

Y is for youthful: the fresh and invigorating style of The Avengers has aged little since it first hit our screen. Its youthful air appeals to each successive generation - as witness the high sales of the Lumiere videos.

Z is for zenith: considered by many to be the most stylish TV series ever, The Avengers and The New Avengers marked the zenith of English TV production in the 60s and 70s.



The Bird who knew too much.



A little bird tells me that . . .

Bravo TV have acquired the rights to broadcast **The New Avengers**. FACT! Watch this space for updates (perhaps even a second Bravo Dossier supplement magazine!?)

The **TV TIMES** will be running the competition to win THE CORGI GIFT SET No 40 (see the "Eyes Front!" item, inside back cover of **The Bravo Dossier**), just as soon as they can find the space to do so (Wut? And throw away all those annoying yucky food recipes, how to keep you body in trim, "My husband loves another woman" targeted at the female readership features, not to mention the page after page of loadsamoney-making ads. Pull the other one TV Times.

(Ed: Er, and they did! In the issue dated: 11-17 Juneand Rogers is left with egg on his face! My excuse? The above was typed on 30 May)



WIN!

**GENUINE SIXTIES
AVENGERS
MEMORABILIA**

Plus Avengers videos

● The grooviest competitions are always in *TVTimes* and this week we're offering one lucky winner two fantastic rare collector's items - original 1966

Corgi models of the Lotus Elan and the 1927 Bentley convertible driven by Emma Peel and John Steed in *The Avengers*. Together they are valued at around £1500, and are a must-have for nostalgia fans. Our first prize winner will also receive the two

latest volumes in the *Lumiere Avengers* video series - one starring Diana Rigg as Emma Peel and one starring Linda Thorson as Tara King. Each video costs £10.99 and is available at the end of June. Ten runners up will also receive the videos. To enter, write the answer to the question in the space for competition number 3

on our multi-entry coupon on page 85.

QUESTION: In which Bond film did Honor Blackman, the first Avengers girl, appear?



Patrick Macnee was offered a role in the new ITV comedy sit-com series **The House of Windsor**. Patrick was unable to take the time out from his busy work schedule on the Hulk Hogan all-action American TV series **Thunder In Paradise**. Shame. It would have been nice to see Patrick working in England for a change.

Joanna Lumley and Gareth Hunt are considering appearing (as Purdey and Gambit) in a new TV movie. FACT! Laurie Johnson confirms that a script exists and negotiations between the artistes and the production company are "under discussion." You read it here first!

Linda Thorson plans to open the first **Avengers Studio Cafe** in London, on or before this time next year. Most likely location: Covent Garden. Watch this space.