

FRENCH DRESSING- WITH A VENGEANCE!

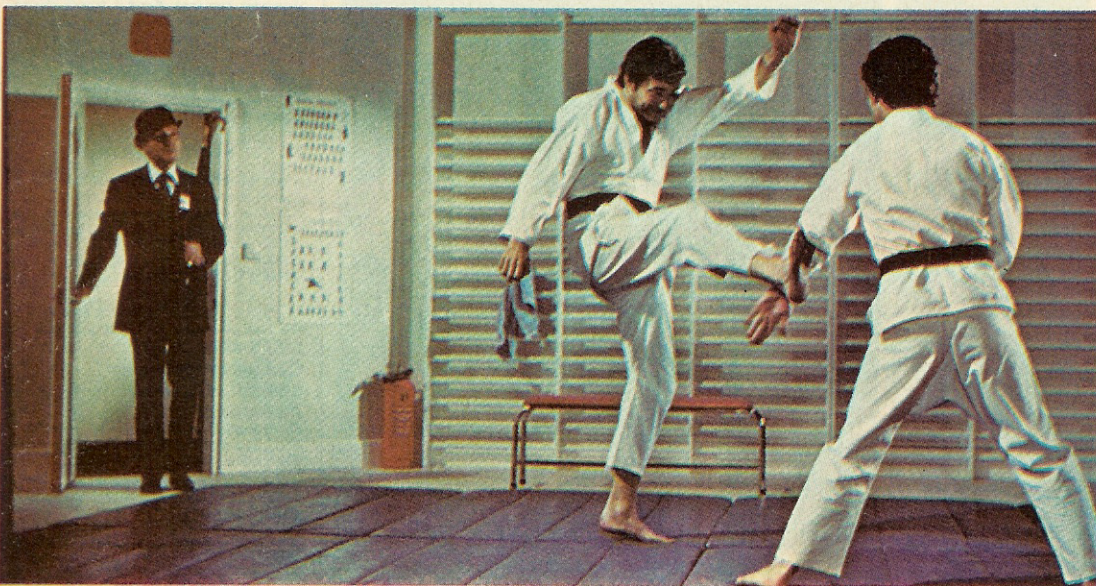
If the second New Avengers series — it begins on ABC-TV this week — seems a bit racier than the first series, there's a reason for it. The French have a hand in it. The French? Yes. A French company put up more than \$6 million towards the cost of the New Avengers, just about the show's total budget, and now they say they want a more Gallic touch for their money.

And, being French, they've naturally looked at the woman in the case first, the high-kicking, karate-chopping Purdey (English actress Joanna Lumley). The French think Purdey is rather dull. So they insisted she consult a top French couturier about her clothes for the new series. As a result, you'll be seeing more of Purdey.

The French weren't too pleased with Mike Gambit (Gareth Hunt) either. His single-minded pursuit of Purdey wouldn't suit French viewers' tastes, they said. So in the new series Gambit has a string of girlfriends.

The French didn't dare tamper with John Steed, however. Still played by Patrick Macnee, he is still bowler-hatted, brolied, and British as ever. □

The New Avengers screens on ABC-TV at 8.30pm on Monday, January 23.



Top: The New Avengers . . . l to r, Gambit (Gareth Hunt), Purdey (Joanna Lumley) and Steed (Patrick Macnee). Above: Pursued by Gambit, a villain jumps for it . . . there's a lot more action in the new series.

Left: Steed drops in on Gambit's karate lesson . . . at French insistence, the show has run hotter.