

# Bazaar

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THE BRIDAL  
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THE  
ULTIMATE  
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# K

“SALMAN WILL ALWAYS BE IMPORTANT IN MY LIFE, NO MATTER WHAT”

Katrina Kaif is busy, busy, busy. The alabaster-skinned actress is just back from Egypt where she's been filming Zoya Akhtar's latest, *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara*, where she plays a diving instructor. Now, she's shooting a qawwali song with Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan in Farah Khan's *Tees Maar Khan*, and she's already off to Patna to film a rom-com with Generation-Y heartthrob Imran Khan. So what gives this former ramp and jewellery model her boundless energy, and irrepressible, radiant smile? "You have to love being on a film set; you have to know if (the film industry) is the right place for you. Every time they call 'action', you have to want to give it a 100 percent. Even if you're sick, tired, shooting for 16 hours straight and at the point of tears, you just have to find it in you and do it." She's affable and easy to talk to, her American-accented voice a gentle sing-song, despite the cold and jet-lag she's fighting.

Designer Tarun Tahiliani describes her as "clean, sophisticated, and no-fuss". He says that with her straight hair and beautiful skin, she's never trying to be something she's not, when she's not acting in a role. "It comes from being centred and rooted," says Tahiliani. Director Farah Khan describes Katrina as a "very hard-working girl, in terms of her attitude. If there is a dance, she will rehearse for 10 days, and then she's done her best". That pretty much sums up her determination. She now sports washboard abs, just for the *Sheela ki Jawani* song sequence in *Tees Maar Khan* where Farah Khan wanted her to wear a midriff-revealing outfit. "She's worked towards it, and this is the sexiest and fittest she's ever been," says Khan. "When I was 15, I saw Britney Spears's *Satisfaction* video, with her wearing a small top, abs showing. I said to myself, one day, I'm going to wear something short, and I want my abs to look this good," says Katrina. So she trained with Mumbai-based fitness instructor Yasmin Karachiwala, and in just 18 days prior to shooting the song, transformed her body, although she admits she's happier being just a "little curvy", and healthier.

From growing up in Hawaii, to shifting to London with her mum and siblings (her parents are divorced), she shifted base to Mumbai, post-*Boom* (Kaizad Gustad's 2003 film that launched her career). "I felt like I was coming home. It's been a spiritual connection, the way I've been accepted here. Now, when I go to London, I get homesick for

India. The only thing I miss is having my sisters around; I wish my sisters had their careers in Mumbai."

But she's glad to be back in London for our cover shoot, since she's very close to her siblings—six of them are girls—and her mum. She just loves her temporary home, the 51 Buckingham Gate Taj Suites and Residences. "They've renovated it, and it's unbelievable. My two-bedroom suite is probably the nicest set of rooms I've seen in a London hotel. I wish I could have it as my own apartment." She says it's the first time in her life that she's woken up at 5am for a photoshoot, but shooting the *Bazaar* cover (her second) is important to her.

So how is the Katrina of today different from the ingénue who once needed Hindi diction classes? "We don't even realise that she's a foreigner (Katrina is half Kashmiri, and half English). She's learnt the language, and does her own dubbing. She's a normal Mumbai girl," says Farah Khan. She wasn't always a superstar. Back in the day when she was a top model, she was always very poised, but a bit "coltish", feels ad guru Prahlad Kakkar, who shot an ad campaign with Katrina for a Pakistani voile company around five years ago. Because she looked so good, it was easy to write parts for her that didn't need much dialogue. "She's got loads of expression, and while she communicates with her eyes, she looks very 'edible'," says Kakkar.

Tarun Tahiliani says that so much has been written about her accent and mannerisms, that Katrina's gone out of her way to prove that she is Indian. This is reflected in her style. "She's fantastic in saris. She wears the sari as she would wear a gown. She's great in dresses too." Overstyling and bling just don't work for her, he feels, and what suits her are strong, bold outfits. "I go with what looks good and feels comfortable on my body. I need to feel feminine, and I need to feel that my outfit's designer loves his fabric," says Katrina.

Asked how she maintains her porcelain skin, she retorts, "My skin's not perfect! I go through my bad phases. You just have to use good products, eat sensibly, and take care of yourself. The rest is genetic." Stylist Arjun Bhasin, who's spent time with her in Spain and Egypt, shooting for *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara*, says that off-screen, he's never seen Katrina wear any makeup. "Her skin seems to be lit from ▶



Pretty in pink. Dress, price upon request. Dior. Necklace and ring, all prices upon request. Dior Joaillerie.

within." In the film, she plays a scuba-diving instructor, who's outdoorsy, no-nonsense, and bohemian, with a relaxed sense of style. So Bhasin and director Zoya Akhtar mixed up long dresses with tough boots, leather bracelets, and denim jackets, that he calls the 'biker ballerina' look.

Katrina is a sport. She's insisted on doing a lot of the stunts for the movie herself—from motorcycle riding to scuba diving. "I love the water, but this (her new role) was tough. I was pushing my mental endurance. Even after taking diving training for 5-6 days, there we were, in the middle of the Red Sea, jumping off 600 metres in the water, with currents and rough, choppy water. It was mental!" Farah Khan says, "She's actually one of the boys, a real tomboy. Alshay (Kumar) tells me she hits him all the time; she's always punching his arm and knocking him around."

For an actress who's delivered commercial hit after hit, from *Singh is Kinng* and *Race*, to *Namaste London* and *New York*, to *Ajab Prem ki Ghazab Kahani* and *Rajneeti*, she's also picked up a slew of awards along the way. But she's honest enough to admit that most of them have been popular-choice awards, based on audience polls. "I have not received a lot of critical awards. But I can say that I am genuinely happy with where I am now, and I want to work harder and better in every film. I've been happy with the support I've got so far," she says.

Katrina remains guarded about her personal life. Farah Khan says, "She is a very private person. I've never heard her bitch about any other heroine." Says Katrina, "I get very affected by personal comments, and what the papers have written. I did not grow up here, in the industry. So I have to protect my space. Everyone knows the heartaches, pains, and joys in a relationship. Now if you have to go through that same pain with the opinion of millions of people reading about it in the paper and then passing judgement on it, then you multiply it. That is why I always try to limit that information for public consumption. I have a hard enough time dealing with my personal issues."

**M**uch has been written about her relationship with Salman Khan, and her recent 'break-up'. "Whatever has been said, has been said. Beyond that, there's my private space. I don't want to talk about that," says Katrina. "Of course, we are friends. Salman will always be an extremely important person in my life, no matter what happens. He is one of the kindest souls anyone can ever have the privilege of meeting."

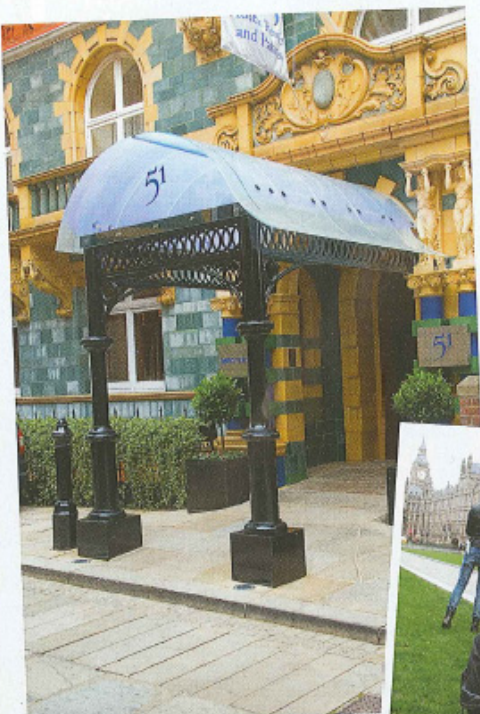
And what about rumours about Ranbir Kapoor being The One? "Right now, I am single. You never know who you're going to be with. If I had the answer, that would be lovely, but I just have to wait... I'll know when the time is right." Katrina has been quoted as saying that she wants to wear green at her wedding. "There was this shoot I was at, and here was this beautiful outfit, and I remember thinking it was a lovely colour." Gown or ghagra? "I don't know if it'll be a gown on an Indian outfit!"

A lot has been written about the icy vibes between Katrina and her female co-stars, such as Aishwarya and Priyanka. "There's so few films that get made with two heroines. The last six films I have done have been just me, and then guys and guys! I don't get to interact much with the other actresses, besides at awards functions and parties. But do I know any of them enough to call up and have chats regularly? No." She calls a recent article about Aishwarya not allowing hubby Abhishek to act with her, "a figment of people's imagination. (Ash) is a great artiste, iconic in her own right. Where does the question arise of a rivalry? It's beyond foolish!"

And now, she's looking forward to shooting *Dostana 2* when the script is ready. "It will be an important film, in terms of style and fashion," says Katrina. Audiences can soon look forward to seeing her as a 'wannabe item girl' in *Tees Maar Khan*. Says Farah Khan, "After this, the debate about 'if' Katrina is the next big star won't exist. She's nailed it. She is it." ■



Perfect pose. Jacket, dress, and boots, prices upon request; Dior. Necklace, price upon request; Dior. Jewellery: Makera; Ahmed Chami; hair: Craig Marsden; fashion stylist: Lakshmi Behr; consulting fashion stylist: Ashumi Sanghvi. POA style: www.poa-style.com; fashion bookings manager: Aastha Sharma. Location: Courtesy 51, Buckingham Gate, Taj Suites and Residences, London; digital imaging: Amit Jha, onelab@gmail.com.



# Behind the Scenes

Capturing the spirit of fall's glamorous mood, **KATRINA KAIF** posed pretty on the streets of London in Dior's fine creations



Clockwise from top: The iconic 51 Buckingham Gate, Taj Suites and Residences, London; Katrina's grand suite at 51 Buckingham Gate; Dior's fall favourite, The Lady Dior bag; Katrina striking a pose for the cover; Hard at work, the hair and makeup team work their magic; London's iconic Big Ben in the background.

October is always a good time to pull out your finery, for it marks the start of the party season. So for a shoot that had to embody all things festive and celebratory, we couldn't have found more befitting ingredients than Bollywood superstar and it girl, Katrina Kaif, the luxurious 51 Buckingham Gate, Taj Suites and Residences, and fashion from the house of Dior. Since it opened its doors in 2000, 51 Buckingham Gate has played host to dignitaries and celebrities alike, which explains its contemporary yet striking interiors that make for a plush and grand refuge. Catching the eye of trigger-happy tourists or anyone strolling past it, 51 Buckingham Gate sure left a memorable impression on the *Bazaar* team. And who better to capture the essence of London, than its native belle, Katrina Kaif. Not only is she gracious and years ahead of her time, but her doe-eyed face demands the camera's attention. The shoot began in Katrina's lavish suite where she looked her regal self, nestled in a space that harmoniously combined modernism with an old-world aesthetic. Adding to the luxe factor were clothes from Dior's fall collection, defining the epitome of luxury and femininity. The *Bazaar* team was then let loose on London's iconic landmarks like the London Eye, the Big Ben, and the cobbled city streets that one has so often read about in books. Working tirelessly and with explorer-like zest, the team put together a spectacular fashion extravaganza with only five hours to pack in all they could.

