



The GIRLS are back in town

Four years later, the four best friends are reunited for the silver screen version of the beloved *Sex and the City*. Alexandria Gouveia gets to know the women behind the clothes

On February 22, 2004, 4.1 million viewers tuned in, and possibly shed a tear, during the poignant climax of *Sex and the City*. After six years, the show gathered a fan base so vast and loyal that Carrie Bradshaw (Sarah Jessica Parker), Samantha Jones (Kim Cattrall), Miranda Hobbes (Cynthia Nixon) and Charlotte York (Kristin Davis) were

like family. We laughed at their innuendoes, cringed at their choice of dates and cried when Samantha discovered she had cancer - they were our honorary sisters. Now, after four years, the dramas, Manolo Blaniks and, over-the-top outfits are back in the film version of one of the most popular US sitcoms since the *Cosby Show*.

Lauded for its frank dialogue and realistic portrayal of women and their romantic relationships, *Sex and the City* revolutionised the way single women viewed the world. Kim Cattrall tells *Oryx*: "It's a valentine to being single. Being single used to mean that nobody wanted you; now it means you're pretty sexy and you're taking your time deciding how you want your life to be and who you want to spend it with."

Based on author Candace Bushnell's eponymous best seller, the show focused on New York columnist Carrie, the protagonist, whose scintillating stories echoed the lives of her best buddies; nice-girl Charlotte, hard-edged workaholic Miranda and party-girl Samantha, not to mention Carrie's own turbulent love life in the Big Apple.

The eminent London premiere, featuring that hat, continues where the acclaimed HBO series left off, following the glamorous foursome as they embark on new stages in their designer-filled lives. ▶

Carrie Bradshaw

“Year after year, 20-something women come to New York in search of the two ‘Ls’ – labels and love. Having gotten the knack for labels early, I concentrated on love.”

With her famously sardonic wit in tact, Carrie continues to narrate her story in New York City.

A stable relationship with the dashing Mr Big (Chris Noth) reveals a less neurotic side to Carrie. Even her career is less wavering. “She’s a contributor to *Vogue*,” explains Parker, who returns not only as lead star, but also producer. “She’s working on her fourth book – the previous three were bestsellers. So she’s experiencing New York in a different way. It’s the first time she’s been wise enough and prudent enough to save money. She’s much more of an adult.”

Although the crazy outfits remain an important staple, they now reflect her maturity, ditching

her spray-on mini skirts along with her carefree, single attitude. “Carrie’s a person who’s older and different, whose tastes and palette have changed,” she reveals. “That’s what happens when you grow up.” The outfits may be less statement-making, but they’re still jaw-dropping with legendary designer Patricia Field, once again, taking the reigns as costume designer.

The first day of filming caused a media frenzy with hordes of fans and paparazzi jamming the streets of New York. “When we came back to shoot the movie, I was prepared for some level of interest,” says Parker “But I don’t think I had any understanding of the degree to which people’s interest would be.”

Despite living a seemingly normal, albeit uber fashionable life, Carrie’s story won’t necessarily have a fairytale ending. As Carrie aptly states: “Real-life always has a twist.”

Right Fans and press invade the film set
Right The foursome clad in designer gear
Below Sarah Jessica Parker, the ultimate fashion queen



Despite living a seemingly normal, albeit uber fashionable life, Carrie’s story won’t necessarily have a fairytale ending... Real-life always has a twist

Samantha Jones

“Until he says ‘I love you’, you’re a free agent.”

Samantha was the perfect urban dictionary definition of a cougar: “A 35-plus-year-old female on the ‘hunt’ for a much younger, energetic, willing-to-do-anything male.” Yet, as the tart with a heart, winning over a legion of fans for her honest and impulsive attitude, she helped bring out the inner vamp inside all women.

Cattrall’s convincing portrayal of the femme-fatale was highly praised by critics, winning her a Golden Globe and two Screen Actors Guild Awards along the way.

Following a long, liberated attitude toward relationships, Samantha who famously proclaimed in season four, “I think I have monogamy. I caught it from you people,” is in a committed relationship with toy-boy Smith Jerrod (Jason Lewis). Having battled breast cancer she follows her actor beau as he pursues his career in Malibu, she misses her girls. “They’re getting married and having babies,” Cattrall says. “She’s feeling left behind, not just distance wise.”

Although toned down, Samantha’s outfits remain flamboyant. “I find it such a creative process working with Patricia,” Cattrall says. “It’s so exciting going to a costume fitting where there’s at least 20 racks. It’s like going to a fabulous trunk show.”

The acclaimed film star admits to being unprepared for the media attention. “The first day I expected a group of fans or onlookers or some press,” she says. “But when I came to the film set, and stepped out of the car, I felt like I was at a premiere.”

Cattrall puts the show’s popularity down to its realistic relationships. She explains: “It’s about girlfriends sticking together through thick and thin.”

Miranda Hobbes

“I once was broken up with by a guy’s doorman: ‘I’m sorry, Ms Hobbes, Jonathan won’t be coming down. Ever.’”

Flame-haired Miranda is the witty, wise-talking lawyer who “wins men over with my personality”. Finally settled with the father of her son, Steve Brady (David Eigneberg), Miranda begrudgingly moved to Brooklyn where the big screen adaptation finds her. Away from the metropolis she feels isolated and finds the pressures of being a working mother overwhelming. “She’s just exhausted,” says Nixon. “Just like any other working mother, she is extended in five directions.”

For Nixon *Sex and the City’s* success lies in its script. “It’s really clever and heartfelt,” she says. “People watch the show over and over because it’s so jam-packed full of content. Not just jokes – ideas. And I think the actors are wonderful.”

The audience clearly find Nixon wonderful too as her performance in the sitcom has seen her





rewarded with a host of awards from Emmys and SAGS to Golden Globe nominations.

"It's surreal," Nixon says of her return to the set. "When you come back to the studio and there's your old dressing room, and you go into the wardrobe room and it's exactly as it was, you feel like you're stepping back in time."

Charlotte York

"I've been dating since I was 15. I'm exhausted. Where is he?"

The antics of Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte fast became water-cooler talk with female fans gossiping about the previous night's episode. Yet despite accolades and legendary hype, Davis is still shocked at its success. "It's not at all what we expected," she says. "I never expected it to go for as long as we got to go."

After years of serial dating and trying for a baby, Charlotte has found love and motherhood with her husband Harry Goldenblatt (Evan Handler). The couple are proud parents to Lily, a sweet girl they adopted from China. Newfound happiness sees a change to the previously prudish and somber Charlotte. "Because she has so much of what she wants, she's kind of focused on other people," Davis explains.

Spending five years filming with her co-stars, Davis jumped at the chance to be reunited. "We're like a family," she enthuses. "Sarah's always witty and funny. Cynthia can be very funny in a dry way. I'm famous for falling down - for real, not as a joke. Kim's funny when she messes up her lines. She'll crack us up more on the set."

With the movie cited as being more energetic than the series, the theatre actress hit the gym before filming. "I was told I was going to be running a lot and thought I'd better get back on that treadmill," she jokes. "I enjoy running as it's good emotionally. Weight-wise I don't pay much attention."

Although Davis reluctantly parted with the famous outfits, she couldn't remove her wedding ring. "I was so used to being married in the show and the movie that I wore a ring on this finger," she explains. "I'd get hollered at by so many people who'd say: 'You're jinxing yourself'. I stopped so people would stop hollering at me."

Davis attributes *Sex and the City's* success to its director. "Michael has some strange ability to be all the characters," she says. "Sometimes he'll come to direct a scene and he'll be choked up. It's adorable. He's written and lived it." ■

ARM CANDY DIRECTOR MICHAEL PATRICK KING DISCUSSES THE LADIES' LEADING MEN



CHRIS NOTH AKA MR BIG
"Mr Big was the Holy Grail. It's important that Carrie had somebody she couldn't figure out."



JASON LEWIS AKA SMITH JERROD
"What defines him is his openness, his willingness to accept somebody for who they are without judgment."



EVAN HANDLER AKA HARRY GOLDENBLATT
"Harry, to me, had to be literally all heart and all acceptances. He's like a peasant king, an easygoing, supportive husband."



DAVID EIGNEBERG AKA STEVE BRADY
"Steve is the one who got into Miranda's heart and was a grown-up with her. David Eigenberg is authentic. He is New York."

WORDS: ALEXANDRIA GOUVEIA IMAGES SUPPLIED AND GULF FILM

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