



# Monsoon Mania

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The rains are here and it is time to give your wardrobe a monsoon makeover. **Bindu Gopal Rao** tells you which fabrics work well in this season and how to make the best use of them. Read on...

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**T**he monsoon comes with its own set of challenges, with the weather being both wet and humid. So, it is very important to select the right fabric for the season. “Though cottons are mostly the answer, one can also wear georgettes as they tend to dry quickly and do not stick to the body. Other quick-dry fabrics like polyester work,” says Meena Bindra, Chairperson and Head of Design, Biba. Light weight and easy-to-dry fabrics like cottons, cotton blends, chiffons, georgettes and light silk are the best choice this season. Using natural dyes can help to ward off monsoon related infections as well. “Lightweight cottons, silks, cotton blends, gabardine, chiffons, georgettes, crepes, silicone washed and water resistant fabrics which dry easily are good for the monsoon season. Strictly avoid linens, knits, suede, leather, velvets and heavy weight fabrics,” says Harsh Gupta, Founder & Creative director, Harsh Harsh. Lightweight fabrics, which dry easily, are the common favourites of the season, while those that have high water absorbent qualities are an absolute stay away.



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Gini and Jony

“FOR THE MONSOONS, ONE SHOULD SELECT LIGHT MATERIALS WHICH CAN EASILY SOAK WATER.”

“High quality cotton, natural fabrics like bamboo fibre make for good monsoon clothes. Short dresses in water-proof fabrics can be show-stoppers. White too, is my favorite. It is a translucent fabric and can look divine during rains, provided you wear it carefully,” advises Monica Oswal, Executive Director, Monte Carlo Fashions Ltd.

Nidhi Gupta, Head, BYSI India adds, “fabrics which are silicone washed for the monsoon season can be stain proof to resist a mud splash during a rainy day. Crepe silk can be considered too, as it can bounce off water, however, one must keep away from fabrics like linen, which have a

tendency to shrink when in contact with water. Polyester is also another alternative in the monsoons as it is highly water resistant.” Woodland has also launched specialised products in this space including the Woodland Super Charged Cotton Collection where normal cotton fabric is infused with a high performance material. Also, the Woodland Wet Wick Collection is made up of high-tech continuous filament yarn that helps to pull out sweat into a larger space. These yarns have a special cross-section with a larger surface area that pick up the moisture and carry it away from your skin, spreading it out, to evaporate easily on the outside of the fabric. Harkirat Singh, MD, Woodland says, “While buying clothes for the monsoons, ensure they are not see-through or too tight fitting and also full length denims should be avoided as they get heavy when wet.” Suman Bharti, designer says, “For the monsoons, one should always select light materials, which can easily soak water. Fabrics like blended cotton and polynylon are ideal for this season. Avoid fabrics that have a tendency to fuse to the skin during the rains.”

### WATERPROOF TECHNOLOGY

Waterproof fabrics prevent water from penetrating into clothes and keep them dry. They are treated with special material such as, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyurethane (PU), rubber, silicone



Monte Carlo

Crafusion.com. “In recent years, some, but not all, sporting goods manufacturers have begun including this information on their product labels. Typical mid-range fabrics tend to have values of 5,000 millimetres of water resistance and 5,000 grams of breathability, the best materials have 20,000 millimetres and 20,000 grams,” says Oswal.

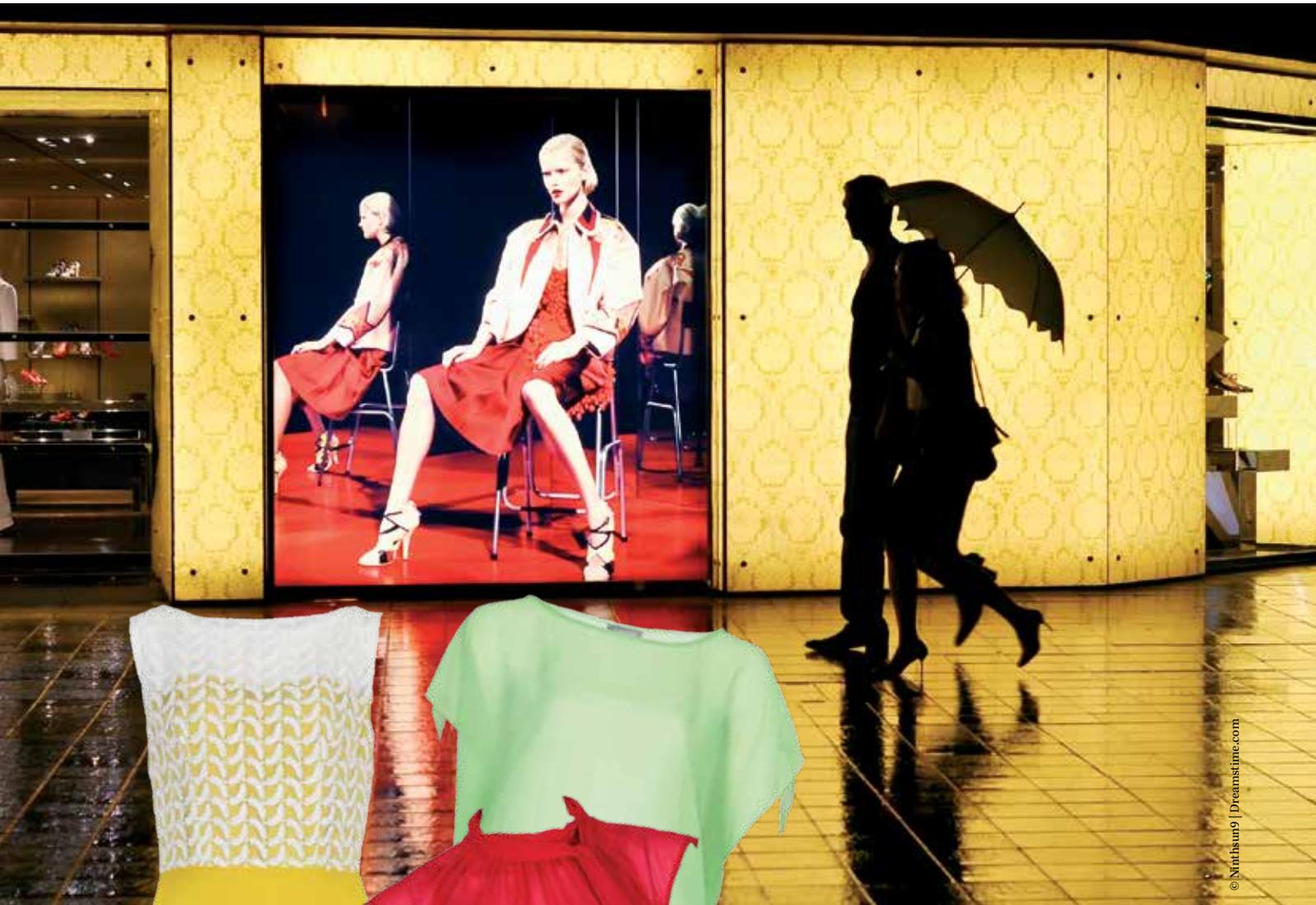
Fabrics can also be waterproofed by a spray, although this might alter the properties of the fabric. Garments that combine waterproofing with some thermal insulation, such as those manufactured by FurTech and Nikwax Analogy, resist cold bridging, heat transferred through layers of poor thermally-insulating materials in close contact, that would be prevented by a small airspace. “When yarns are highly twisted and weaved closely, they retain a tendency to deflect water; these are commercially called high twisted

yarns and can be used as waterproof fabrics. Unlike natural yarns, filament yarns can be best created as waterproof fabrics,” adds Vijayanta, Designer, Haaris Collection. Research & development is ongoing in the textile field to create newer and more potent waterproofing techniques. Waterproofing innovations like making the fabric air permeable, Hydronaute, Nanotechnology & Microfluidic technologies are gaining prominence. Polyester has polymers which contain ‘ester’ as the functional group and is called so due to the presence of special material, commonly referred to as polythene. This is an economical product with water absorbency, wind resistivity, water repellence and quick dry function. “Since BYSI deals in apparels that are made of polyester, these have been perceived by many as having a less natural feel compared to fabrics woven from natural fibres (such as cotton and wool). Polyester fabrics can provide

elastomeric, wax or fluoropolymers. Some of them are natural or synthetic and are either placed on the top layer on a piece of clothing through lamination or coating, for them to become waterproof. These waterproof fabrics resist water but allow water vapour to pass through. Waterproof fabrics are usually created by laminating natural or synthetic fabrics to waterproof material such as rubber, PVC, PU, silicon or wax. “These fabrics are tested in a laboratory and standard lab testing protocols define the performance of these fabrics. Water resistance is measured by the amount of water, in millimetres, which can be suspended above the fabric before water seeps through. Breathability or moisture /vapour transmission rate is measured by the rate at which water vapour passes through,” explains Poonam Bajaj, CEO,



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Vinegar

specific advantages over natural fabrics, such as improved wrinkle resistance, durability and high colour retention. As a result, polyester fibres are sometimes spun together with natural fibres to produce a cloth with blended properties," says Gupta. Varsha Bhawnani, Owner and Managing Director, Vinegar adds, "The purpose of the face fabric is to protect and look stylish

and it is not waterproof but is treated with a solution called DWR (Durable Water Repellent) so it doesn't soak up water. The job of keeping the water out is left to the membrane, which has tiny holes, too small to let the water enter but large enough to allow water vapour to escape."

**IN VOGUE**

The latest fabric which is doing the

rounds of international fashion buying is a transparent plastic-like material in bright neon colours, being styled for outer wear or protective raincoat ensembles. Coral, turmeric, *mehendi* green and colours in fluorescent shades will be in and the neon colour can be achieved specially in Polyblend fabrics. Says Harsh, "A range of innovative all-over and placement prints on raincoats, hoods on garments, colour-blocked ensembles and neon coloured accessories like gumboots, water-resistant watches, glasses and umbrellas should set the fashion trends this monsoon." Classy colours for men are burgundy, bottle green, slate grey, gold, copper and a rich shade of brown as in old furniture and the fabrics range can be from organza, silks and chiffons to shiny lycra. "In terms of clothes, *kaftans* are the new trend this season. They look chic and are very comfortable to wear at the same time," says Bindra. A Yebhi.com spokesperson's opinion is, "If you are not comfortable with sporting bright shades, stick to



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shades of brown and grey as they tend to camouflage minor mud and water stains and make them less prominent. Please avoid white, black, beige and the likes.” Fun silhouettes and embroideries are in, wear short and easy to carry dresses. For office, try knee length skirts and for a party or while hanging out with friends, wear skirts above knee length. If not in office, wear short sleeves or sleeveless dresses. Avoid light colours, shades of white, beige and pastels this season.

Monsoon is the season to flaunt rich vibrant colors like green, blue, and pink, orange, purple. “The monochromatic look does not only make you look slimmer, but also, trendy. You can carry this off without looking too loud or over dramatic. One of the easiest looks to put together for the rainy season, a single-tone dress, is ideal for both day and night. For a casual look, you can pair up your dress with a summer blazer or a light cardigan and for the night, you can accessorise your outfit with some chunky jewellery or a printed scarf. Layering is in, so try to mix and match your stuff. You can experiment a lot with that. Try wearing a white top with a sleeveless coral top, it is the kind of look that is in right now,” advises Gupta. For a casual look, one can pair up coloured pants with a trendy jacket/ pullover

and pull it off with a printed scarf. Anil Lakhani, Executive Director, Gini & Jony Ltd. explains how children can be kept comfortable saying, “you have to choose what dress and shoes to use for your kid and how to remain dry and stylish as well. Take out bright colour clothes. The basic monochrome combination is back this season. Candy Jelly bags and footwear made of silica gel are also in vogue this season. Not to forget about footwear, you can complete your look by grabbing our stylish waterproof boots.” “Self cleaning fabrics that help your skin breathe, are not only hydrophobic but also oleophobic (oil repellent). Those self cleaning fabrics which are free from any hazardous chemicals like fluoro-polymers are in demand. Anti-bacterial or mosquito repellent (anti-malaria or dengue) could be another added feature of interest in monsoon fabrics; opines Dr. Swapan Ghosh, Director, Nova Surface-Care Centre Pvt. Ltd.

The rains have their own unique charm and with the correct wardrobe and style quotient, they are enjoyable than ever before. Go ahead, play with the splash of colours and get your monsoon wardrobe ready. ♣



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