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Movies

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Look what films are coming this fall

DEBORAH NICOL • THE DESERT SUN • SEPTEMBER 21, 2007

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It's official. The summer blockbusters are being repackaged as holiday DVDs while fall's lush dramas race toward the theaters, Oscars dangling before them.

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But there's more to the bill than costume dramas (Cate Blanchett's regal sequel, **"Elizabeth: The Golden Age,"** has that covered), as some of the most visually creative filmmakers fill up the marquees.

Wes Anderson weaves a mesmerizing tale in **"The Darjeeling Limited,"** the journey of spiritually lost brothers (Owen Wilson, Jason Schwartzman and Adrien Brody) seeking answers aboard an Indian train. With an emphasis of bright colors and captivating characters directed in skillfully crafted scenes, it should be a highlight of the season.

The films of Joel and Ethan Coen fit into one of two categories: absurd yet intelligent comedies, or devilishly dark morality tales.

The brothers' latest, **"No Country for Old Men,"** fits into the latter - a return to "Blood Simple" territory. Javier Bardem portrays evil incarnate attempting to recover misplaced millions from an unlucky hunter (played by Josh Brolin). This suspenseful chronicle is not likely to disappoint.

Tim Burton falls further down the rabbit hole as he abandons kid-friendly fare for Stephen Sondheim's blood-stained musical, **"Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."** Guaranteed to be as meaty as the pies that appear after Todd's clients vanish, Burton should have no trouble delivering the sinister goods with his six-time golden boy Johnny Depp.

Quirky fun

Small, quirky dramas also have a place this autumn in theaters. Often dialogue-heavy and thought-provoking, these films invite discussion.

For example, how many actors does it take to embody folk legend Bob Dylan? Apparently six, and who says they all have to be white or even male? "Far From Heaven" director Todd Haynes lays down the tracks to a decidedly unique melody in **"I'm Not There."**

Noah Baumbach ("The Squid and the Whale") remains introspective with his tale of squabbling sisters (Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Jason Leigh) and a questionable fiancé (Jack Black) in **"Margot at the Wedding."** In the same vein runs the acerbic **"The Savages,"** with the incomparable Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney portraying clashing sibs.

This season's forever-the-bridesmaid film is Goran Dukic's **"Wristcutters: A Love Story."** Showered with festival accolades, the film about an imperfect afterlife for successful suicides took its time receiving wide release, but will finally bring Patrick Fugit ("Almost Famous") back into the spotlight.

Early kudos

A string of tough films are already receiving awards buzz. Terry George's ("Hotel Rwanda") **"Reservation Road"** finds Mark Ruffalo in the middle of a hit-and-run with Joaquin Phoenix and Jennifer Connelly left to suffer.

Joe Wright's ("Pride & Prejudice") **"Atonement"** probes a crime where the wrongfully accused becomes tragically altered (starring hot commodities James McAvoy and Keira Knightley).

This season's films are not without their big names, as Robert Redford and Mike Nichols stir up politics while Woody Allen and Francis Ford Coppola produce hard-hitting thrillers.

George Clooney acts as a law firm's fixer in **"Michael Clayton,"** while Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal question CIA interrogation methods in **"Rendition."**

With no shortage of intriguing films this fall, the projection booth will burn brightly as it ushers in the best films of the year.

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"Elizabeth: The Golden Age"



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OCT. 12
"Elizabeth: The Golden Age"
"Michael Clayton"
"Sleuth"

OCT. 19
"The Darjeeling Limited"
"Gone, Baby, Gone"
"Rendition"
"Reservation Road"
"Wristcutters: A Love Story"

OCT. 26
"Dan in Real Life"

NOV. 2
"American Gangster"

NOV. 9
"Lions for Lambs"
"No Country for Old Men"
"Southland Tales"

NOV. 16
"Beowulf"

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