



let the GOOD TIMES ROLL

These summer movies will have you on the edge of your seat and in the company of some long-lost friends
By Kim Hughes

There are endless ways to enjoy a movie, but it doesn't get much better than a balmy night with a bucket of popcorn. Whether it's under the stars at the drive-in or in a darkened air-conditioned theatre, the cinematic memories we make in the summer stay with us forever. And this season promises no less.

Things kick off with the hotly anticipated actioner **Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga** (May 24). The franchise has come a long way since Mel Gibson and Tina Turner ruled the Thunderdome. In this fifth instalment, director George Miller continues to hone his vision of the bleakly ominous realm – at once futuristic yet savagely retro – with Anya Taylor-Joy from *The Queen's Gambit* taking on the role of young Imperator Furiosa alongside Chris Hemsworth (a.k.a. Thor) as the fabulously named warlord Dementus.

Another dazzling pairing is found in **Deadpool & Wolverine** (July 26), which tees up two of the Marvel Cinematic Universe's most bankable leads. Hugh Jackman brings Wolverine back to pal around with everyone's favourite smartass anti-hero, Deadpool, brought to life by Canada's "other Ryan" – or Mr. Blake Lively – Ryan Reynolds.

Sticking with mutants, Swedish actor Bill Skarsgård of the family dynasty that includes father Stellan (*Good Will Hunting*; *Dune*) and brother Alexander (billionaire tech bro from *Succession*), stars in a remake of **The Crow** (Aug. 23), in which a reconstituted man/beast avenges his murder and that of his lover. The original '94 film also starred the son of



a famous actor – but ended in tragedy. Twenty-eight-year-old Brandon Lee died on set from a firearm malfunction two decades after his father, action star Bruce, never woke up from a nap while filming *Game of Death* at age 32.

That's not the only nostalgic franchise being, ahem, resurrected this season – Eddie Murphy is set to wisecrack again as a fish-out-of-water officer in **Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F** (July 3); and **Bad Boys: Ride or Die** (June 7) brings the buddy comedy genre back with Martin Lawrence and Will Smith. The latter, who showed up at the Coachella music festival as his *Men In Black* alter ego, is revisiting all his greatest hits in an attempt to engender the kind of mainstream love his notorious Oscar-slapping freakout suspended.

It wouldn't be summer without an epic disaster film piled with eye-popping special effects. The 1996 smash *Twister* gets a climate-change-ified update in **Twisters** (July 19) with leads Glen Powell (noted scene-stealer in *Top Gun: Maverick*) and Daisy Edgar-Jones (*Where the Crawdads Sing*) stepping in for original storm chasers Bill Paxton and Helen Hunt.

Powell's versatility is also showcased in one of the smaller but buzzy niche titles of the year. In Richard Linklater's loosely fact-based comedy-thriller **Hit Man** (May 24), Powell – who co-wrote the script with the indie darling director of *Dazed and Confused* and the *Before* trilogy – plays a philosophy-prof-cum-fake-assassin working for the police.

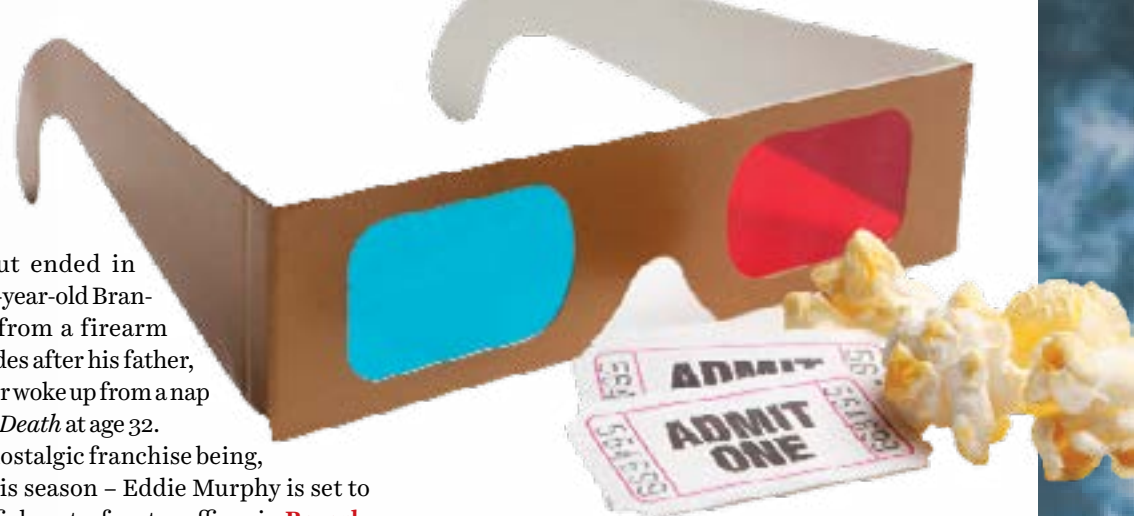
Meanwhile, creative kindred spirits Emma Stone and director Yorgos Lanthimos (*Poor Things*) hope to weave Oscar magic again with **Kinds of Kindness** (June 21), an inventive three-short-films-in-one creation, in which the actors (including Stone, Willem Dafoe, Jesse Plemons and Margaret Qualley) play different characters in each vignette.

Expect more award-worthy performances in **Treasure** (June 14), as wry British comedian Stephen Fry (*Jeeves and*

Wooster) plays a Holocaust survivor exploring his past on a trip to Poland, circa 1990. *Girls* creator and "Voice of a Generation" Lena Dunham tags along as his journalist daughter in an all-grown-up role that doesn't hinge on her reputation as a millennial lightning rod and body positivity icon. Meanwhile, two-time Oscar-winner (but-still-Spicoli-in-our-hearts) Sean Penn stars as a seen-it-all New York cab driver counselling his unhappy fare (Dakota Johnson) on life and love in the two-hander **Daddio** (June 28).

Giving us *Sons of Anarchy* – more than *Easy Rider* – vibes, **The Bikeriders** (June 21) is the latest addition to the canon of edgy biker movies. Inspired by photojournalist Danny Lyon's 1968 book and set in that decade, the film traces the rise of a fictional American motorcycle club, which starts agreeably enough but detours down sinister paths. Austin Butler, Tom Hardy and Michael Shannon feature in a strong ensemble cast.

And while its Sept. 6 release date comes after Labour Day, **Beetlejuice Beetlejuice**, Tim Burton's epically awaited sequel to his 1988 comedy, screams end-of-summer laughs. In a nifty feat of casting, Jenny Ortega – so funny and creepy as Wednesday Addams in the eponymous Netflix series – plays the daughter of Lydia Deetz, cinema's favourite goth, conjured in the original film by gen-X poster child Winona Ryder. Of course, Ryder's back, along with Michael Keaton and Canadian Catherine O'Hara, who promises to delight once again with a new interpretation of *Day-O*. How do you like them bananas! 🍌



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