

Come sail away.

these people wouldn't drink a soft drink because the formula is secret. It's complete rubbish. Why can't these people face the facts that there are some things they can't do and we can? The models that [conventional meteorologists] use aren't public either, so what the hell are they talking about?"

He's clearly a passionate man—probably too much so for the largely dry meteorological community. If one merely follows the crowd, it's easy to listen to Corbyn and dismiss him as a mad scientist, particularly when he explains the non-secret parts of his techniques, which involve earth/sun magnetic connections, lunar influences and a dependence on past weather patterns repeating in the future.

As crazy as it all sounds (and he does all of this without a computer), somehow, his predictions keep coming true—so much so that large companies like agrochemical giants Monsanto and Hydro Agri and film studios like Polygram rely heavily on his forecasts.

If Corbyn's work is indeed authentic, his long-range system can greatly add to conventional meteorology, which is only reliable in short-term forecasts. 'Their accuracy beyond a week or so is very low,' he says. 'Their long-range forecasts, for example, for this summer in the British Isles were utterly useless. They said we were going to have a warm summer possibly with temperatures reaching one-hundred degrees and there was no indication that it would be particularly wet. As you know, there were floods everywhere—eleven specific periods of flooding—and we predicted every single one of them in a published statement in December.'

As for Corbyn's 'super-storm' next weekend with winds of 200 km/h, he says people are misquoting him and that he's never used the term 'super-storm'. 'These other forecasters, mostly they're just liars. They find something we're saying, exaggerate it, and then say it won't happen. The fact is, the storm we just predicted [around the British Isles] was absolutely spot on. But they won't admit that. They're envious bastards.'

His actual prediction was 85 per cent risk for winds over 120 km/h; 33 per cent for over 160 km/h; and 15 per cent for over 210 km/h. In total, a 133 per cent chance of windy weather. Like a lot of his work, it doesn't really add up. Still his high success-rate means you might want to bring the cat in anyway. **W**

www.lowefo.com

Project catfight at H&M

Primitive shopping for Cavalli's new collection.

By Karina Hof

'Mijn haaaar, schatje!' yelped a sarcastic teenager, her head being pulled along by the tall lad who had caught some blonde tresses on a hanger draped over his arm. It held a perfect blazer for the art-school ruffian look he had going.

Last Thursday morning at 9.45, I found myself in the basement of Kalvertoren, just one of hundreds waiting for H&M to open its doors for the debut of the Roberto Cavalli animal print collection. The three fashionistas I was with were smart to suggest the backdoor approach: surpassing some of the masses was more crucial than being served champagne at street level.

The mall's air was thick with girl. A sea of shiny blown-dry hair fell on trench-coated, purse-strapped shoulders. Women from 13 to 30-something trembled in their Uggs. Occasionally, there was the blip of a svelte male or an equivocally doe-like member of the press. And once the crowd had swelled nearly into the HEMA across the way, it was time.

Somehow, everyone knew exactly which racks to attack. Google Earth? The store's two escalators, programmed only to go down, gushed like wounds. Customers clawed and pawed. Staff trotted around like basketball court refs.

I watched ground zero from afar, blending into the prissy star-patterned hoodies of the permanent collection, there with police officers, obliging mothers and photographers mounted on display cubes. Mannequins stripped and delimbed. A young girl too adrenalised to bother with a dressing room, all braces and bra under the fluorescent lighting. Leather-skinned grannies poaching extra-small.

Nesting a nearly €4,000-worth pile of Cavalli—€2,700 of which was actually rung up at the counter—my companions were the barks of the ball. Two had gotten hold of limited-edition gold lamé maxi-dresses. Only 800 circulated worldwide, retailing at €300 a piece with an anticipated e-market inflation of 500%.



ANK DAAMEN

Zebra halter dress, check. Leopard corset, check. For the boyfriends, cobra-head cufflinks and tiger-striped boxer briefs. Females of all ages leered, some begged 'om te ruilen?', another murmured we were *asociaal*.

H&M can be seen as ready-to-wear democracy, allowing everyone—moneyed or not, sized 32 to 56—to dress in style. Like IKEA, the global chain is an exemplary model of Nordic egalitarianism exercised via mix-and-matchable design. Unlike its apple-pie equivalent, the Gap, H&M manages to put verve into mass production.

As a clotheshorse from Haarlem once explained the designer collections to me: Lagerfeld was revolutionary, McCartney—with her mauves and earth tones—was all wrong for the Dutch complexion and Victor & Rolf, well, they were national heroes, as sweet as their heart-shaped belt buckles. So what does the master of feral fabrics and acute-angled cuts bring to the Netherlands?

Cavalli has been quoted as saying: 'I use animal prints to help women find their inner magnetism.' But according to H&M's customer blog, a number of shoppers left their local retailers feeling demagnetised and dejected:

Sex kittens and cougars battle it out.

'We were here this morning in the Hague at 9 o'clock, 1 hour before the store opened. The collection was gone in 1 minute, we went home empty handed...'

'I saved for 6 months to buy one or two pieces from his extraordinary collection... I was sooo disappointed that in just 30 minutes EVERYTHING was sold out.'

'I HATE YOU H&M, I WAS WAITING SO LONG FOR THAT COLLECTION AND WE DIDNT EVEN GET THE HALF HERE...'

What the Cavalli collection seems to have brought to the Netherlands is a little sense of uncivilisation. No first-come, first-serve counter ticker like that of the *postkantoor*, and contrary to the socialised healthcare system, not everyone will get a piece of *appeltaart*.

Then again, a 'disco lioness line', as *The New York Times* referred to it, does not necessarily appeal to everyone. And in a country where ladies of the night pay taxes, how could streetwalker-chic be anything but already so last season? **W**

need a job?

xpatjobs.com

an apartment?

xpatrentals.com

a dentist, plumber, bank...?

xpatpages.com

we are dedicated to bringing you the best English-speaking jobs, housing and relocation services

