

ET WEEK EXCLUSIVE:

**First Look: Salem's Lot
Stars Prepare For the Scares**
By: Iris Weiner



Samantha Mathis

Buffy and Angel have seen their last days on primetime, thus giving way to a vampirish void harshly felt by millions of bloodsucker fans. Fortunately, if you happen to be one of them, your wait for a fulfilling replacement won't be long or painful. This summer brings a startlingly refreshed, rejuvenated and modernized version of the Stephen King adapted flick Salem's Lot, in a two-part, four-hour thriller set to premiere on TNT June 20 and 21. With it come enough screams and thrills to tide you over for months to come. Leading lady Samantha Mathis and acclaimed actor Andre Braugher go behind the scenes of Salem's Lot with ETW, as they reveal what it's like to take on horror, and the 'King' of scares himself.

Mathis and Braugher come to Salem with no background in this genre. Mostly known for her more endearing roles in 90's faves *The Thing Called Love* and *This is My Life*, Salem came as an exciting opportunity for Mathis.

"It's interesting how much you attribute the physical activity of being scared, and how your mind sort of follows," she happily reflects. "Like if you start screaming for your life, part of you gets really scared and makes you think you're really screaming for your life. You just go for it, and it's amazing how your body just follows suit in what it thinks it's supposed to be doing!"

Homicide star Braugher brings years of experience to his role as Matt Burke, the town's school-teacher, but the terrifying genre still managed to teach him a thing or two. "It's a question of belief beyond the ordinary realm," he says intensely. "Usually in dramas, you have to believe the person is the killer, or believe the person is your wife, or believe this is a dangerous situation. But when you talk about horror, you have to essentially believe the unbelievable. This town is being taken over by spooky tales!"

Salem's Lot may appear to be the perfect town, but buried beneath the surface something horrifying is developing. "One aspect that

Stephen King has made most interesting and humane in his piece, is that these vampire hunters are just like we are, they are a motley crew, they are a high school student, a drunken priest, a blackmailed doctor, a scandalous writer, a waitress, a high school teacher- I mean this is not Van Helsing. We're just a bunch of misfits taking on real supernatural evil," Braugher says with great admiration. "Nobody knows what's going on, we're all scared. And that's what makes Stephen King's novels really, really frightening- it's us."

One thing is certain- you'll have trouble sleeping after taking in this shockingly gruesome treat. Mathis winks as she prepares viewers, "It's like a rollercoaster ride, people will get those adrenaline rushes, and I think they'll be rather surprised at some of those twists and turns." According to Braugher, surprises are only the beginning. "People can look forward to fear. Sheer terror!" You can consider yourself fairly warned...



Andre Braugher