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The Cosby Show (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

Nominated for 29 Emmys, and winner of six including Outstanding Comedy Series, The Cosby

Show dominated prime-time TV from the mid- to late-eighties. The brainchild of popular comedian Bill Cosby, the series followed the life and times of a normal upper-middle class African-American family. One of the most successful sitcoms in network television history, The Cosby Show earned the #1 Nielsen rating for five consecutive years (1985-1990), and in its eight seasons it never dropped out of the Top 20. Coupled with the hit comedy series Cheers, the two shows made Thursday nights a weekly ratings sweep for NBC...

The Cosby Show is set in a New York brownstone where Heathcliff "Cliff" Huxtable (Bill Cosby) and his wife Clair (Phylicia Rashad) live with their five children – Sondra (Sabrina Le Beauf), Denise (Lisa Bonet), Theo (Malcolm-Jamal Warner), Vanessa (Tempestt Bledsoe), and Rudy (Keshia Knight Pulliam). Cliff is a popular obstetrician/gynecologist who runs his practice out of the home's basement (which has its own street entrance), while Clair is a successful attorney with a local law firm. In the first season, Sondra is not seen because she's attending Princeton, but she and her boyfriend (and later husband) Elvin (Geoffrey Owens) become major characters in subsequent seasons. Most of the comic relief derives from Cliff and Clair's struggles with their children and the often stupid things they do, but in general, the family gets along very well. If The Simpsons are the quintessential dysfunctional TV family, then The Cosby Show is illustrative of the ideal real-life family. Bad language is non-existent in the series, and it showcases a plethora of African-American role models such as Stevie Wonder, Lena Horne, and Sammy Davis Jr. One of the best written sitcoms since I Love Lucy, The Cosby Show holds its own in the hallowed halls of the TV elite...

The Cosby Show DVD features a number of hilarious episodes including the season premiere in which Theo returns from school sporting a report card with 4 D's. Believing he doesn't need to go to college, Theo is given a memorable lesson (using Monopoly money) by Cliff – prompting him to vow to do his best from now on. This episode is especially interesting given the various aspects of the family and home that are different from the rest of the series. Since this was the pilot, the characters and their lives had yet to be firmly established... Other notable episodes from Season 1 include "Mr. Fish" in which the family participates in a formal toilet funeral for Rudy's dead goldfish, and "Father's Day" in which Cliff rebels against the oddball Father's Day presents he's received over the years, such as a

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giant polka-dot tie with twinkling lights...

Below is a list of episodes included on The Cosby Show (Season 1) DVD:

Episode 1 (The Pilot) Air Date: 09-20-1984 Episode 2 (Mr. Fish) Air Date: 09-27-1984 Episode 3 (Bad Dreams) Air Date: 10-04-1984 Episode 4 (Is That My Boy?) Air Date: 10-11-1984 Episode 5 (A Shirt Story) Air Date: 10-18-1984 Episode 6 (Breaking With Tradition) Air Date: 10-25-1984 Episode 7 (One More Time) Air Date: 11-01-1984 Episode 8 (Play It Again, Vanessa) Air Date: 11-08-1984 Episode 9 (How Ugly Is He?) Air Date: 11-15-1984 Episode 10 (Bon Jour Sondra) Air Date: 11-22-1984 Episode 11 (You're Not a Mother Night) Air Date: 12-06-1984 Episode 12 (Rudy's Sick) Air Date: 12-13-1984 Episode 13 (Father's Day) Air Date: 12-20-1984 Episode 14 (Independence Day) Air Date: 01-10-1985 Episode 15 (Physician of the Year) Air Date: 01-17-1985 Episode 16 (Jitterbug Break) Air Date: 01-31-1985 Episode 17 (Theo and the Joint) Air Date: 02-07-1985 Episode 18 (Vanessa's New Class) Air Date: 02-14-1985 Episode 19 (Clair's Case) Air Date: 02-21-1985

Episode 20 (Back to the Track, Jack) Air Date: 02-28-1985 Episode 21 (The Younger Woman) Air Date: 03-14-1985 Episode 22 (Slumber Party) Air Date: 03-28-1985 Episode 23 (Mr. Quiet) Air Date: 05-02-1985 Episode 24 (Cliff's Birthday) Air Date: 05-09-1985

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

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), a blog where you can find

more reviews like this one.

Recordable DVD formats explained

By Kenny Hemphill

Recordable DVD formats explained by Kenny Hemphill

Picking your way through the ton of information available on recordable DVD formats can be a nightmare. To help you out, we've done our best to distill it into this summary.

There are five recordable versions of DVD; DVD-R for General, DVD-R for Authoring, DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW. None of the formats is fully compatible with the other although there are drives which will read, and in some cases write to more than one format.

DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring are essentially DVD versions of CD-R. And DVD-RW is a DVD version of CD-RW. All three formats can be read in standard DVD-ROM drives and in most DVD video players. The difference between DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring is that DVD-R for General is a format intended for widespread consumer use and doesn't support 'professional'

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features such as piracy protection or duplication in mass duplicators. The Pioneer DVD–RW drive which is the most popular PC device for writing to DVD uses the DVD for General format. And as as the case with CD, DVD–RW is essentially the same as DVD–R except that it can be erased and written to again and again.

DVD–RAM is slightly different as it is a sector based disc which mounts on the desktop of a PC when inserted into a drive. Files can then be copied to it in the same way as any other mounted media. Some single–sided DVD–RAM discs can be removed from their caddy and inserted in a DVD–ROM drive which will then be able to read the content of the disc.

There are DVD video recorders which use the DVD–RAM format. This enables themn to pull off clever tricks like timeshifting - where you can watch the beginning of a programme you have recorded while you are still recording the end on the same disc.

DVD+RW is the newest format and not supported by the DVD Forum, the body which sets the standards for DVD. However, it is supported by some of the biggest electronics and computer manufacturers, and is therefore likely to stick around.

It is also the format used by Philips in its DVD video recorders. Despite not being authorised by the DVD Forum, DVD+RW is claimed by its supporter to be compatible with more DVD video players than DVD–R and DVD+RW writers are found in PCs from quite a few manufacturers.

Kenny Hemphill is the editor and publisher of

The HDTV Tuner



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