
Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Stumpy Pepys - 13-06-2008 12:56

I'm writing this after flicking through TV Crunch's 25 Worst Sitcoms Ever. Although it's US-based, the 'winner' was the not-fondly remembered Small Wonder. They ran this on ITV in the late 80s I think and I remember at the time, even as my less-discerning younger self, how indescribably shit it was.

(Annoyingly, the site also lists at #13 a sitcom starring George Foreman called George, which UK viewers were sadly never given the chance to see.)

The other one that sprang to mind was All About Me, which starred Jasper Carrot and Meera Syal. Presumably trying to tackle issues such as disability, mixed marriages and step-children, the writers completely forgot to write any jokes. Simply jaw-droppingly bad.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:01

Ever-Decreasing Circles?

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:04

Ever-Decreasing Circles was brilliant.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Stumpy Pepys - 13-06-2008 13:04

What??? That was ace.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by cheeptic - 13-06-2008 13:06

Home to Roost? what the fuck was John Thaw thinking of? and to a lesser extent Reese Dinsdale.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:09

well, I'm sorry but Richard Briars as a vicar doesn't even come close to a good idea in my opinion.

he was only good in the Good Life.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:11

He wasn't a vicar in that, though, was he?

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 13-06-2008 13:11

Terry and June must be up there or thereabouts.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:12

Whaaaat??11!!1

There's about a thousand wanky US sitcoms ahead of that in a 'shit list'. They're the ones that really entirely on Jewish and/or gay jokes.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:13

Except Seinfeld, of course.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by The Horse - 13-06-2008 13:13

Baddiel's Syndrome.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:13

of course he wasn't a vicar in The Good Life.
He was a ex fire-extinguisher salesman turned self-sufficient suburbanite

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:14

No, Ever-Decreasing Circles.

I thought he was some pseudo-annoying "health and safety" type?

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:17

oh!

I must be confused then. Sorry.

Thought EDC was the vicar one. The shit vicar one.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by The Horse - 13-06-2008 13:17

All In Good Faith is the Briers vicarcom.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:20

ah-ha!!

there we go!

All In Good Faith.

That was shit. wasn't it??

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 13-06-2008 13:21

Ah, All About Me, where Meera Syal turned into Nina Wadia without so much as a by your leave. All these Asians look the same, don't they...

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by cheeptric - 13-06-2008 13:28

Up the elephant and round the castle, they made 23 episodes of this shite! No wonder Jim Davidson was always smiling back in the 80's, took the money and fucked off.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mr Beast - 13-06-2008 13:33

If you don't find old men in a bathtub rolling downhill funny then the near 30 year run of Last Of The Summer Wine is rather curious

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 13-06-2008 13:35

It's way over 30 years.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Nuno Gomes Loves Lyra - 13-06-2008 13:37

There are billions of episodes of LOTSW.

Currently at work we are on series 8 of Terry and June and series about 400 of LOTSW.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:38

Mr Beast wrote:

If you don't find old men in a bathtub rolling downhill funny then the near 30 year run of Last Of The Summer Wine is rather curious

that show is a fucking embarrassment to all right-minded west yorkshire folk

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Rinoceronte Mentaverde - 13-06-2008 13:41

The thread's onto its second page and nobody's mentioned Two Pints Of Lager?

Going way back, ITV used to have a Brits-abroad sitcom called Duty Free which I remember as being bafflingly bad. It was the sort of thing which convinces you that Huxleyan epsilons walk among us (the writers, the audience, or both).

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mr Beast - 13-06-2008 13:42

The most disconcerting thing about Last Of The Summer Wine is the canned laughter which never goes below hysterical.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by bovril - 13-06-2008 13:43

oh yes. Starring Keith Baron.

Dreadful

Went on for years too.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 13:54

Mr Beast wrote:

The most disconcerting thing about Last Of The Summer Wine is the canned laughter which never goes below hysterical.

I always thought that was ironic?

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Nuno Gomes Loves Lyra - 13-06-2008 13:56

Oh! Doctor Beeching was really shite, I remember.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by J1s - 13-06-2008 14:03

I remember one from the early 80s called "Dead Earnest". It starred Andrew Sachs as a guy who was killed immediately after winning the football pools (by a flying champagne cork!) and ended up in Heaven. The afterlife turned out to be the kind of regulated, bureaucratic organisation Sachs' character (called Ernest, of course) thought he'd left behind. I'm amazed how much I remember of this.

Probably the worst of recent sitcoms have been "Orrible", the one where Johnny Vaughan tried to show us that he's a real geezer (he's been in prison, you know), and that Frank Skinner one whose name escapes me.

I seem to recall "Evening Shade" starring Burt Reynolds being pretty depressing.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by The Horse - 13-06-2008 14:05

Roman's Empire, that was a recent shocker. Inexplicably ABC have bought the rights and have cast Kelsey Grammer in the Neil Dudgeon role.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mitch - 13-06-2008 14:18

It always used to be that 8:30 on ITV was the slot for terrible, terrible sitcoms.

"French Fields" or "Faith In The Future", seemed to run for years there. Or that one with Liza Tarbuck & the little annoying scouse woman.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sempronio Carpentiere - 13-06-2008 14:47

'Watching'? I remember quite liking that but I tend to find that my minimum quality requirements for a sitcom are lower than for any other genre.

It was late on a Sunday which is a really wierd time for a sitcom.

' Game on' was shit, wasn't it?

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 13-06-2008 14:52

Sempronio Carpentiere wrote:

' Game on' was shit, wasn't it?

No. No no no no no no no. No. No!

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 13-06-2008 14:59

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It was good, Game On ... at least while Neil Stuke was in it.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sempronio Carpentiere - 13-06-2008 15:28

erwin wrote:

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It was good, Game On ... at least while Neil Stuke was in it.

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Was he the one who replaced Ben Chaplin? I remember thinking it got worse after that, if anything.

Do not remember a single funny thing in the show, theme tune by Catatonia wasn't it?

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 13-06-2008 15:50

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I thought it was the other way round - could well be mistaken.

Well, it used to make me giggle. And the tensions between the 3 characters was well drawn, I thought.

But at the very least, 'really bad', surely not.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mr Beast - 13-06-2008 16:06

Bit harsh to have Game On when Love Thy Neighbour and Robin's Nest seem to have escaped

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Nishlord - 13-06-2008 16:30

The Frank Skinner one was called Blue Heaven, I think.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by twohundredpercent - 13-06-2008 17:16

"Brighton Belles" is the first one that springs to mind, as a jaw-droppingly bad, terrible sitcom. It was a brief, British remake of "The Golden Girls" that ITV put on in about 1993.

Other than that, a good deal of the sitcoms of the 70s are difficult to top. "Love Thy Neighbour" and "Curry & Chips", for their assumption that the way to deal with racial tension in Britain in the early 1970s was to laugh at the darkie, as it were (see also "Mind our Language", though this cast its net wider by laughing at all foreigners). Trivia fact: "Mind Your Language" and "Love Thy Neighbour" were written by the same man.

Also, "On The Buses", upon recent viewing, is staggeringly, mind-bendingly bad - a 55 year-old Reg Varney playing a character that is clearly supposed to be thirty years younger than the actor playing him is. The film of it was on ITV the other week, and it's amazing - six or seven main characters, and none of them are in the slightest bit likeable.

I also have, in my private stash, a short-lived 1973 sitcom called "Thick As Thieves", starring John Thaw and Bob Hoskins, which is also very light on laughs. It's not actually objectionable, though. Just not funny.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by rowandraper - 13-06-2008 20:17

I would like to offer up Will and Grace. Just do`nt find that funny (for same reasons as Love Thy Neighbour laughs at the 'darkies' it peddles gay stereotypes).

Just Shoot Me. American sitcom about a magazine. Crap.

Funny how most of these are American, is`nt it?

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Purves Grundy - 13-06-2008 23:05

We've done this before.

And every time we've done this before I've maintained (correctly) that Johnny Speight's last gasp The Nineteenth Hole is the winner.

Set in a Home Counties golf club which was the last outpost of The Third Reich this vehicle for Eric Sykes started off syndicated across the whole ITV network and was dropped by Central after the second edition, in favour of reruns of Survival. Gradually each of the regions dropped it until by episode 5 only the programme makers Southern were sticking by it, but then even they realised that it was irredeemable shit and pulled it.

The sixth and last edition never got broadcast anywhere. Ever. Not even alongside Big Breadwinner Hogg and Mainly for Men on one of those occasional "Worst programmes ever" theme nights.

Worthless meretricious rubbish that it was, even ITV are ashamed of it, and considering that at the same time they were transmitting Bottle Boys and Up The Elephant & Round The Castle that really ought to be enough to close the case.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 14-06-2008 00:23

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The way you put it, PG, I'm desperate to see the blinkin' thing.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Purves Grundy - 14-06-2008 00:50

Don't say I didn't warn you.

As it goes, even youtube doesn't have any room for it. Considering the sort of shit that gets on there that ought to be enough to warn you off.

As it goes, TV Cream reckons that I've got it arse about face and that far from being the first to take it off air Central actually stuck it out through the entire run, even showing the fabled 6th episode. From TISWAS to that in less than ten years. What must it have been like living in Birmingham in the 80s?

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Pan Tau - 14-06-2008 10:06

I seem to recall "Evening Shade" starring Burt Reynolds being pretty depressing.

It wasn't bad. It had a fine cast rising above middling material.

Just Shoot Me was OK, too. Not a sitcom classic, but entertaining and occasionally even subverting sitcom clichés.

I think the list that started the thread is fairly comprehensive. It features two out of my three immediate answers: My Two Dads and Perfect Strangers. I do find the omission of Full House puzzling, however.

And that show about the waitresses was playing on South African TV when my wife started going into (premature) labour. At first we thought the contractions were caused by her uncontrollable laughter. After that, we put on a video. Something equally awful called Mo' Money. At that point Baby Tau decided to have mercy on us and really started pushing.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Guy Potger - 14-06-2008 11:23

You really are leaning on an open door here you know.

(Apologies to anyone who's already tagged these, but I'm not reading three pages of this dross.)

UK sitcoms only, and the main, but by no means only culprit is London Weekend Television

On the Buses
You Rang M'Lord
My Family
Oh Doctor Beeching
Never Mind the Comedy, Spot the Stereotype
Chapatti and Chips
Roll over Beethoven
My Family
Birds of a Feather
The Entire "Doctor" inspired series
Any anything else with Robin Nedwell in it
Especially the Shillingbury Fucking Blowers
Constant Hot Water
Yus My Dear
My Family
Never the Twain
Full House
So Haunt Me
Don't Drink the Water

Oh yeah.

And My Family

(And I didn't even mention "Foreigners, eh? Haven't they got Funny Accents", and "Lawks! I've Moved Next Door to a Darkie!")

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Kowalski - 14-06-2008 12:08

I would like to offer up Will and Grace. Just do`nt find that funny (for same reasons as Love Thy Neighbour laughs at the 'darkies' it peddles gay stereotypes).

Just Shoot Me. American sitcom about a magazine. Crap.

Hear hear

Oh yeah.

And My Family

Hurrah!!!

Plus

King of Queens, king of crap
Everybody Loves Raymond, except me
Only when I laugh, never never never
May to September, Five months too long
Bread, damp and mouldy

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Jon - 15-06-2008 09:43

What annoys me is that sitcom writers recently have just fallen back on the tired nuclear family format. There have been loads of them.

The Robert Lindsay one - My Family (wasn't it written by a bloke who wrote Seinfeld?)

The new Nicholas Lyndhurst one. Don't know what it's called though.

The new Ade Edmundson one - I can now no longer wear my Ramones t-shirt because of it, for fear of being identified in any way like that twat.

The Newish Frank Skinner. Not Blue Heaven but Shane. They made a second series but it's never been shown.

That Jasper Carrot one. Just terrible.

Are there no original ideas left in sit com land? After this lot, I quite fancy the sound of a dead Andrew Sachs in heaven or Eric Sykes at a golf club.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 16-06-2008 00:37

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Nicholas Lyndhurst is grotesque these days. He's like Bette Davis in Whatever Happened to Baby Jane - time has moved on, he's aged but he plays the same character and has the same haircut as 20 years ago or more.

I find it very disturbing.

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=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by gerontofiel van Basten - 16-06-2008 07:44

Billy Sitcom spin off (Head of the Class?) starring Billy Connolly who marries someone with lots of kids, to get a Green Card. Yawn.

Is It Legal? Imelda Staunton should hang her head in shame for this one. Set in a solicitors office where lots of inept legal types get into scrapes and mishaps with seriously unfunny consequences.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ykikamoocow - 16-06-2008 14:28

Chance in a Million - featuring the combined talents of Brenda Blethyn and Simon Callow, probably the most unfeasible couple in the history of TV.

In Loving Memory - Thora Hird and Christopher Beeny trying to get laughs in a undertakers. No corpses on set, plenty to be found in the audience though.

Split Ends - vehicles for established stars are usually pretty poor, and this was no exception. This was the programme that killed Anita Dobson's TV career.

Allo Allo - revels in its all round crapness just a bit too much.

Up The Garden Path - a bittersweet comedy that was just bitter.

Mother's Ruin - Just too bad for words. Dora Bryan playing Roy Barraclough's domineering mother. I kid you not.

As much as I love Gwen Taylor she has appeared in a few dogs in her time (Duty Free, Screaming, Conjugal Rites,

Barbara etc.)

More to come after this break....

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sir Fartle - 16-06-2008 14:43

Birds of a Feather.

Soul crushing tedium...

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by blameless - 16-06-2008 16:00

I find it hard to believe that no-ones mentioned "Sorry!" yet. Utter dross, and yet it managed seven series.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by King Mob - 16-06-2008 16:01

Ah yes, but that theme tune. Classic.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by gerontofiel van Basten - 16-06-2008 16:04

I thought Barbara Lott was fantastic in 'Sorry'.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Nico Rijnders - 16-06-2008 16:17

Sempronio Carpentiere wrote:
theme tune by Catatonia wasn't it?

It was Where I Find My Heaven by the Gigolo Aunts.

I really liked 'Orrible, the Johnny Vaughan one.

I second The Horse's Baddiel Syndrome nomination.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Purves Grundy - 16-06-2008 16:17

Chance in a Million was pretty good.

Oh, and we should frame that post of Fartle's. For once he's saying something sensible. There really was no excuse for Birds of a Feather.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sempronio Carpentiere - 16-06-2008 16:23

Jon wrote:

The Robert Lindsay one - My Family (wasn't it written by a bloke who wrote Seinfeld?)

He wasn't a writer but a show-runner, exec producer I think.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Auntie Beryl - 16-06-2008 19:01

Did anyone else catch Stacked, the Pamela Anderson vehicle set in a bookshop? Unforgivable.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mighty Mudhsuden - 16-06-2008 19:34

blameless wrote:

I find it hard to believe that no-ones mentioned "Sorry!" yet. Utter dross, and yet it managed seven series.

I really like "Sorry". So, er, sorry.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sir Fartle - 16-06-2008 20:04

King of Queens is ace.

What are you on about? Madness.

Sheer lunacy.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 16-06-2008 21:32

I'm sure it has been mentioned already, but that BBC show about the guy who's normal but really a superhero... my goodness, worse than Mork!

And then there was a really bad series with the annoying girlfriend from Men Behaving Badly and the dude who did extensive research into child porn for a book he is writing (and who isn't Pete Townsend). That was excruciating. And probably has been mentioned as well. But I don't know its name.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by wingco - 16-06-2008 21:42

Everybody Loves Raymond is very good indeed. It might feel cosy, reactionary, Seinfeld lite - indeed, it is all of those things. But the sense of familial suffocation and dysfunction is so well realised it's almost cruel, and the dialogue is always dead on and diamond sharp. Indeed, that for me is a redeeming aspect of even pretty average American sitcoms, which I think compare very well in this respect with even the more highly regarded UK ones.

I agree with most of the other selections here, mind. Birds Of A Feather is just being re-shown on Paramount. It's mystifyingly awful. It's as if the people who commissioned it and re-commissioned it, who watched it, then watched it again the next week did so in some sort of docile trance as opposed to actively seeking out chucklesome entertainment. I mean, what the fuck?

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Il Visionario Tecnico - 17-06-2008 03:04

bovril wrote:

oh yes. Starring Keith Baron.

Dreadful

Went on for years too.

Duty Free wasn't his worst. Just as Home To Roost wasn't Reece Dinsdale's worst. They worked together in Haggard. Based in the 16th Century. Not the show (I think that was Victorian), just the jokes.

Mitch wrote:

It always used to be that 8:30 on ITV was the slot for terrible, terrible sitcoms.

"French Fields" or "Faith In The Future", seemed to run for years there. Or that one with Liza Tarbuck & the little annoying scouse woman.

Watching? That was ace.

Purves Grundy wrote:

Worthless meretricious rubbish that it was, even ITV are ashamed of it, and considering that at the same time they were transmitting Bottle Boys and Up The Elephant & Round The Castle that really ought to be enough to close the case.

Conclusive proof that God does not exist, isn't the fact that those shows exist, it's that Purves Grundy has sent me to bed with an earworm in the shape of the Bottle Boys theme tune.

Both if which pre-dated The Nineteenth Hole.

Guy Potger wrote:

You Rang M'Lord

It's like Jimski's taste in music has married Hobbes' taste buds and had spawned offspring. You Rang M'Lord is fucking awesome. I caught come of it on UK Drama a few months ago, and it's a really dark, black comedy, and nothing like Hi-De-Hi, Dr Beeching or anything else they did together.

ykikamoocow wrote:

Chance in a Million - featuring the combined talents of Brenda Blethyn and Simon Callow, probably the most unfeasible couple in the history of TV.

Even wronger. An early Channel 4 attempt at comedy, which is a minor classic. The Kit Curran Radio show in the same slot wasn't quite as good, and then Relative Strangers, with Matthew Kelly and Mark Farmer, predating Home To Roost should have killed the Monday evening comedy slot for years to come, but it didn't.

Allo Allo - revels in its all round crapness just a bit too much.

It should have been shit, but it worked, for me.

As it goes, TV Cream reckons that I've got it arse about face and that far from being the first to take it off air Central

actually stuck it out through the entire run, even showing the fabled 6th episode. From TISWAS to that in less than ten years. What must it have been like living in Birmingham in the 80s?

The Nineteenth Hole was one of the most promoted shows on Central that I can ever remember. Southern may have made it, but I'm guessing that Central funded it, or managed to sell some serious advertising revenue off it.

And yes, Central showed six episodes. They didn't show the seventh.

Finally, I'd like to nominate The Two Of Us. Janet Dibley and Nicholas Lyndhurst as, well, the sit was that they were living in sin. Which, given this was late 80s, wasn't a novel concept, and on a station where the Nineteenth Hole was being plugged left, right and centre - they wouldn't even use clips to advertise The Two Of Us. It was that bad.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 17-06-2008 07:24

Has that show with Dawn French as a priest been mentioned yet? And Chef with Lenny Henry? I watch those shows as a masterclass in ill-advised sitcom-making. Who are those people who watch it for entertainment?

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ian.64 - 17-06-2008 07:47

The Nineteenth Hole was one of the most promoted shows on Central that I can ever remember. Southern may have made it, but I'm guessing that Central funded it, or managed to sell some serious advertising revenue off it.

It was that well promoted that I can't really remember it. As for Watching, I can't remember that either, but then it may have been Lisa Tarbuck's painful yodelling over the title theme that drove me, almost immediately, to watch something else.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by gerontofiel van Basten - 17-06-2008 08:34

Yogi Lurve wrote:

Has that show with Dawn French as a priest been mentioned yet? And Chef with Lenny Henry? I watch those shows as a masterclass in ill-advised sitcom-making. Who are those people who watch it for entertainment?

Chef was bad. I liked The Vicar of Dibley which had some good one-liners in it, and the jokes at the end were always good, thanks to Alice's reactions.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 17-06-2008 10:13

Il Visionario Tecnico wrote:

Purves Grundy wrote:

Worthless meretricious rubbish that it was, even ITV are ashamed of it, and considering that at the same time they were transmitting Bottle Boys and Up The Elephant & Round The Castle that really ought to be enough to close the case.

Conclusive proof that God does not exist, isn't the fact that those shows exist, it's that Purves Grundy has sent me to bed with an earworm in the shape of the Bottle Boys theme tune.

Rubbish. It just proves what all good offers know: Purves Grundy is Beezlebub...

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sir Bert Millichip - 17-06-2008 10:49

ah god, the old ITV 8.30pm sitcom slot. the horror..

at which point, perhaps worth giving Just A Gigolo a mention too. not the worst, but comfortably up there.

I seem to recall a very poor early 90s BBC1 effort by the name of Bonjour La Class too, though even the internet seems to want to deny all but the vaguest traces of its existance, so it must've been even worse than I recall..

wingco's bewilderment re: Birds of a Feather nearly caused me a giggle-induced dangerous tea/computer monitor moment there too. which was more than that godawful show ever even aproached in the aeons it seemd to run for..

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ykikamoocow - 17-06-2008 11:39

Amazed that I'm not the only one that remembered Chance in A Million; even more surprised that people liked it. But there you are.

To pick up where I left off;

Two Pints of Lager...a programme so shit that I can't even bring myself to write the full title of the worst programme this side of the millennium. Not funny. Not plausible. And it keeps Will Mellor in gainful employment.

Tripper's Day – even the great Leonard Rossiter couldn't raise this from the depths of horrendousness. Supermarkets are not funny; period. I mean, did you see those Sainsbury's ads with John Cleese?

Babes in The Wood – it was just painful to watch; absolutely excruciating in fact.

Mike Bassett – this was nowhere near as funny as the film. And the film was shit.

That's My Boy – an interesting premise; until they decided to cast Mollie Sugden in the lead role. Then it was all about her acting the goat for a few cheap laughs instead of focusing on what could have been a bitter sweet relationship between her character and her long lost son.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Stumpy Pepys - 17-06-2008 11:57

Ykikamoocow has nailed down the spirit of the thread with that post. I can't personally summon up much righteous indignation over Robin's Nest and On The Buses, but Babes In The Wood ... bloody hell.

Tripper's Day became Slinger's Day with Bruce Forsyth didn't it? It might possibly have got even worse.

Supermarkets are not funny; period

Might have to disagree there – there were some fine moments on Coronation Street with Reg and Curly in Bettabuys.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 17-06-2008 12:07

Has anyone mentioned The Brittias Empire yet? If not, consider it mentioned.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 17-06-2008 12:10

I quite liked Chance in a Million as well, though normally I draw the line at Simon Callow doing comedy.

We must surely give honourable mention to the current wave of US kiddiecoms on cable? I mean your That's So Wizards Of Hannah Montana line of dreck. All, without exception, excruciatingly dire.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by King Mob - 17-06-2008 12:36

I wish I could add a few shit-coms to the list but it seems pretty comprehensive already - sterling work. Perhaps a vote is in order?

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sir Fartle - 17-06-2008 12:50

Gangster Octopus wrote:

Has anyone mentioned The Brittias Empire yet? If not, consider it mentioned.

Madness.

I used to watch it every week. Colin reminded me of a mate of mine who was always sick.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 17-06-2008 13:06

Figures.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Eggchaser - 17-06-2008 14:41

I hereby exempt My Family on the grounds that Zoe Wanamaker gives me the horn, despite being old enough to be a contemporary of my mother. But I still don't watch it.

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Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 17-06-2008 14:58

Wanamaker by name...

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 17-06-2008 15:33

Here's one to ask Mrs Earp about at dinner tonight, but which most of the overseas crowd will thankfully never have heard of.

The Trouble With Tracy.

This was a daily sitcom, produced in Toronto in the early '70s.

From Wiki: "the economic and time pressures of producing 130 episodes in a single season (seven shows were filmed in five days) meant cheap, wobbly sets, no outdoor filming, a laugh track instead of a studio audience, the use of single takes, the reuse of 25-year-old radio scripts (The Easy Aces, 1930-1945) and other shortcuts that ensured a poor quality product. Even flubbed lines and bloopers sometimes ended up airing, because the show couldn't afford retakes."

I remember watching reruns of this as a kid, and thinking that it was obviously supposed to be funny, but was just plain awful.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Lucy Waterman - 17-06-2008 16:26

Some stuff here that's bang-on-the-money for me here, some that's crazily wrong. I'm going to halfheartedly stick up for My Family, The Brittas Empire and You Rang M'Lord, all of which are well-written, well-acted ensemble pieces that work brilliantly for a mainstream audience without pandering to their prejudices.

But as for anyone who doesn't find Last of the Summer Wine funny...I'm sorry, but I'm going to find it very difficult to imagine that you're not a cat's-bum-mouthed pseud.

My top 5 worst:

- * My Hero
- * Two Pints of Shit and a Packet of Shit
- * Will and Grace
- * Extras
- * A Bear's Tail

Even if you boil down LOTSW to one representative joke, and have that joke be 'three men going downhill in a bath', I'll do the same thing with Extras, and come up with "Ricky says something embarrassing about a disabled person in front of them, it's embarrassing". The former is funnier.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by tratorello - 17-06-2008 16:55

Eggchaser wrote:

I hereby exempt My Family on the grounds that Zoe Wanamaker gives me the horn, despite being old enough to be a contemporary of my mother. But I still don't watch it.

I'm so glad that I'm not the only one.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by rowandraper - 17-06-2008 17:04

You can find the myriad of badly-written U.S. sitcoms on Channel 4 in the morning. I watched the new one with Kelsey Grammer and Raymond's wife. The canned laughter is too much and kills it.

As for Mr. Lyndhurst, most of the sitcoms he has been in since he did Only Fools and Horses have been dire. Goodnight Sweetheart. Aptly named, because it sent me to sleep.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 17-06-2008 17:08

I think I read that the Grammer one, Back To You, has been put out of its misery.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by rowandraper - 17-06-2008 17:08

Supermarkets are not funny; period

And what about the YouTube sensation, Chad Vader, Day Shift Manager? that's not bad...

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 17-06-2008 23:00

.

- The BBC's 'Two Point Four Children' - very lame.

- The American sitcom 'Still Standing', with Mark Addy (the fat friend from 'Full Monty') ... although I'm prejudiced against that one from the outset because it has an English bloke putting on what sounds to me like a very dodgy American accent.

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=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ioannis nojorakis - 18-06-2008 11:40

Anything with Geoffrey Palmer in it.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 18-06-2008 11:48

Well, wait a minute. We surely need an "Except The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin" clause in that one.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by twohundredpercent - 18-06-2008 11:51

Was "Hot Metal" any good? I downloaded it but haven't got around to watching it yet.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Stumpy Pepys - 18-06-2008 12:00

twohundredpercent wrote:

Was "Hot Metal" any good? I downloaded it but haven't got around to watching it yet.

Really nothing special (and that was my opinion at the time). I'd really like to watch Colin's Sandwich with Mel Smith again – I thought it was pretty good when I saw it first time around.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ioannis nojorakis - 18-06-2008 12:08

Well, wait a minute. We surely need an "Except The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin" clause in that one.

Ah, good call. Forgot about that.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by King Mob - 18-06-2008 13:01

From what I can remember of 'Hot Metal', and from the couple of clips I've seen over the last few years, it was sharply observed and certainly went for the jugular. Whether or not the jokes were actually funny is another matter.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by treibeis - 18-06-2008 15:44

(Bearing in mind my knowledge of British sitcoms was effectively put to bed in 1990)

- Only When I Laugh (apologies if it's already been mentioned)
- Going Straight, which, as a sequel to Porridge, would have failed even if it had been any good to start with.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sempronio Carpentiere - 18-06-2008 16:49

ioannis nojorakis wrote:
Anything with Geoffrey Palmer in it.

You must die for that.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Juallaterpe - 18-06-2008 16:54

treibeis wrote:
(Bearing in mind my knowledge of British sitcoms was effectively put to bed in 1990)

- Only When I Laugh (apologies if it's already been mentioned)
- Going Straight, which, as a sequel to Porridge, would have failed even if it had been any good to start with.

No, they both had their moments.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Alderman Barnes - 18-06-2008 17:18

"I'm H.A.P.P.Y, I'm H.A.P.P.Y.
I know I am, I'm sure I am
I'm H.A.P.P.Y."

I'm going straight I am, straight as an arrow
I've paid the price and done my time
I'm going straight I am, along the straight and narrow
And I won't go straight back to crime

I've now got the most appalling dual-attack earworm from two shows that I haven't even thought about in twenty years.
Fucking cheers, Treibeis.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by delicatemoth - 18-06-2008 22:22

Bread.

Exercised this weird hypnotic effect that kept my family watching even though it was not remotely funny and was also uncomfortably weird. Urgh! That china chicken they shoved money under...

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Ant van Oviedo - 19-06-2008 07:26

"Birds ov a Fevvah" was absolutely awful, and simply played on the fact that Pauline Quirke had a horrible, rasping voice, which we were invited to believe was "homely". I suppose it was -if you lived in some public toilets in Plaistow.

"Bread" was unfathomably depressing, assuming we'd aspire to living near people like that.

As for LOTSW, someone said: "that show is a fucking embarrassment to all right-minded west yorkshire folk."
Yes, both of you must have been very embarrassed.

Here's my earth-shattering nomination: "Only Fools and Horses". I really, really HATED it. I always saw it as a kind of poor man's Minder, and the "jokes" rarely went above the standard, admittedly vertiginous, of "Rodney, you plonkaaahh!" (Cue hysterical audience laughter). It of course had the insufferably smug David Jason in it, who was never, ever, funny. In fact, he was, possibly, very slightly less hateful in "Open All Hours". That says it all, really.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Lucy Waterman - 19-06-2008 09:37

Here's my earth-shattering nomination: "Only Fools and Horses". I really, really HATED it. I always saw it as a kind of poor man's Minder, and the "jokes" rarely went above the standard, admittedly vertiginous, of "Rodney, you plonkaaahh!" (Cue hysterical audience laughter).

Aw man. So wrong, it's barely worth getting on a high horse about it. Clearly your life is bad enough. Suffice it to say, as far as I'm concerned, OFAH is one of the best sitcoms of all time, and its best jokes are BRILLIANTLY written.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081912/quotes>

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Ant van Oviedo - 19-06-2008 10:02

(Gasp)

Clearly your life is bad enough.

My life is in absolutely brilliant shape, thank you. I seem to have hit on a raw nerve, though.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Lucy Waterman - 19-06-2008 11:27

No, no. Didn't mean to too harsh. Just that a life without an appreciation of such things is a life without joy!

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ioannis nojorakis - 19-06-2008 13:38

You must die for that.

Lordy.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 19-06-2008 14:18

Ha, looks like the Carpenter went to the Robert Mugabe School of TV Critique.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sempronio Carpentiere - 19-06-2008 16:32

Come on, he was asking for it. You can't slag Palmer. He's a great comic actor even when he's in rubbish just like Briers. As well as Perrin there was the extention of the the character in 'Fairly Secret Army' and , I'm sorry, he was great in 'Butterflies. You can also look at his cameos in 'Fawlty Towers' and 'Blackadder'.

Yes, yes, yes, there's 'As Time Goes By' but a man's got to eat.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Ginger Yellow - 19-06-2008 17:06

I used to love Bread when I was very little. It was one of the first TV programmes I ever saw, in my defence. I can scarcely remember anything about it now.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Nuno Gomes Loves Lyra - 19-06-2008 18:11

We did a couple of series not that long ago at work. It didn't age well. Green mould all round the crusts.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Andy C - 20-06-2008 14:07

It of course had the insufferably smug David Jason in it, who was never, ever, funny.
Oh yes he was, in Do Not Adjust Your Set. Very funny indeed.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by KimCasey - 20-06-2008 14:40

I know that its already been briefly alluded to, but a vote here for So Haunt me.

Oy, oy, oy - there's a Jewish ghost in our family's house. The "comic" "potential" is "endless".

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 20-06-2008 14:49

.

QUOTE:

It of course had the insufferably smug David Jason in it, who was never, ever, funny.

Oh yes he was, in Do Not Adjust Your Set. Very funny indeed.

And he was in that brilliant episode (and at least one other) of Porridge where the snidey con ends up digging for loot in the centre circle at Elland Road.

.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Eggchaser - 20-06-2008 15:54

The one where he's the old lag (Blanco?) getting pardoned for the murder of his wife is very, very good.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by ioannis nojorakis - 20-06-2008 16:31

I fully stand by my comments.

'Butterflies' was crap, as was the awful 'As Time Goes By'. Cameos don't wash for me.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by The Prodigal - 20-06-2008 17:44

It's strange. I grew up loving OFAH, it was an inherent part of my life. The more time passes, perhaps precisely for this

reason, the more I think I detest it - though it's also partially because Sullivan clearly doesn't know when to let it lie.

The Nineteenth Hole (which may have been an atrocious series but was hardly inaccurate in its basic starting point that most golf clubs are, or at the very least were, full of people to the right of Genghis Khan) was made by Central (or, to be pedantic, Regent Productions for Central, those being the early days of independent productions on ITV). Southern would have had a hard job making it seeing how they went off air seven years earlier.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Kiwi40 - 20-06-2008 17:44

Don't think anyone has mentioned the pathetic 'No Place Like Home' (apologies if I've missed it in earlier posts).

It starred William Gaunt and a young Martin Clunes. All I can remember is the dad shouting "Bery!!!" a lot - and his neighbours, the Bottings (ha ha).

43 episodes were made - amazing.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Il Visionario Tecnico - 21-06-2008 05:13

delicatemoth wrote:
Bread.

Exercised this weird hypnotic effect that kept my family watching even though it was not remotely funny and was also uncomfortably weird. Urgh! That china chicken they shoved money under...

It's one of only two programmes I can recall that ever consistantly knocked the soaps off the TV charts (the other being Only Fools and Horses). At one point over 20m people a week were watching it, yet it never, ever gets repeated. I don't even recall it being shown on the likes of UK Gold, which is staggering considering the ratings.

I do remember towards the end, that Carla Lane decided to use it as a vehicle to raise issues close to her heart, and she did this a the expense of keeping it funny, which probably tarnished the serial for a lot of people. It also didn't help that the actors that portrayed two of the most recognisable characters, left and were replaced by actors who couldn't retain the style of the character.

It's strange that for a series that successful, none of the major characters's actors went on to other successful projects. Even the younger actors didn't find it launched their careers. The most famous regulars in Bread were Melanie Hill (Aveline 2, but she was already famous before she got the part), and the two thugs who were acquaintances of Joey's - who went on to play Jim McDonald in Corrie, and DCI Meadows in The Bill.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Purves Grundy - 21-06-2008 06:33

It's strange that for a series that successful, none of the major characters's actors went on to other successful projects.

I dunno, that "going to the shop to buy a lottery ticket" project of Jean Boht's worked out pretty well.

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by gerontofiel van Basten - 21-06-2008 08:01

Do not fuck with Geoffrey Palmer. EVER.

'As Time Goes By' has some of the most ill-timed, ill-informed attempts at jokes ever, but fuck right off, its Judi Dench and Geoffrey Palmer, so its funny, right?

Only Fools and Horses is the bane of my life. Him indoors loves it, I think its fucking woeful... almost as bad as Fawlty Towers (where I can at least see the value of putting John Cleese alongside Prunella Scales, and letting them bitchslap each other... Ms Scales will always win)

Are we talking about shite sitcoms or ones we dont like?

I admit to laughing at Kris Marshall in My Family, which makes it the former, but not the latter. Robert Lindsay has a track record for being in shite generally. Citizen Smith was appalling.

I nominate Agony Again (or whatever it was called), because it wasnt brilliant to begin with, although Maureen Lipman is always god, but bringing it back was an ill advised move by ITV (as always).

Can we have a best sitcom thread? (I cant be arsed)

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Guy Potger - 21-06-2008 10:21

Have we covered all of Mollie Sugden's oeuvre?

Notably "Come Back, Mrs Noah", and that shit she "starred" in where she was the HR director, and her husband, the appalling William "Language Timothy" Moore as the concierge of her HQ?

And if American sitcoms are included, how on Earth has the execrable "Dharma and Gregg" not really troubled the scorer here?

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by J1s - 21-06-2008 18:02

Re: post-'Bread' careers.

Jean Boht went on to star in the already-mentioned 'Brighton Belles'.

Victor Maguire (who played Jack) was a regular in the already-mentioned 'Goodnight Sweetheart'.

However, Peter Howett (the original Joey) became a film director and enjoyed considerable success with 'Sliding Doors' and, er, 'Johnny English'.

Anyone remember the theme song? B-b-bread!

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Sir Fartle - 23-06-2008 02:47

Ginger Yellow wrote:

I used to love Bread when I was very little. It was one of the first TV programmes I ever saw, in my defence. I can scarcely remember anything about it now.

Ugh.

It was more of a reality show than a comedy.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by delicatemoth - 23-06-2008 09:59

The only thing I remember about Bread is that chicken. Yet I watched probably two series despite not even enjoying it. Could this creepy phenomenon be where the viewing figures came from?

Other massively popular sitcoms I could never see the point of:-

Are You being Served is fucking rank. What's the joke? John Inman is grotesquely camp. What else? Erm...

Hi-De-Hi. Probably didn't help that I had no idea what a holiday camp was. It didn't look fun.

Absolutely Fabulous - mum acts like a teenager while daughter acts like a mum. Hilarious!

Men Behaving Badly - a bunch of insufferable cunts have very mild and uninteresting 'battle of the sexes'

I think that's it. Oh, another vote for My Family being not too bad.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by King Mob - 23-06-2008 10:15

delicatemoth, there was no 'battle of the sexes' in Men Behaving Badly. The whole point of the show was that the battle had already been comprehensively lost.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Andy C - 23-06-2008 10:28

delicatemouth, that's not a very useful mode of argument. The "situation" of a situation comedy is just a framework to hang the (intended) comedy on. Some situations are intrinsically funny, others are mundane. Some are tightly defined, others are loose and extensible.

Two friends, one workshy and one socially aspirational, in the urban North-East? An irritable man owns a hotel? When you reduce the shows to the basic premise like that you lose the essence of the things. The quality of a sitcom depends on the actual lines the actors are given to perform and the way in which the actors perform them, and it depends hardly at all on the underlying situation.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by delicatemoth - 23-06-2008 10:53

I take your point, although I think 'An irritable man owns a hotel' does in fact sound like a situation ripe with promise, as indeed it proved. However, I stand by what I said re Are You Being Served and Hi De Hi - there seems no point to them whatsoever.

As for Men Behaving Badly, I guess I found it so obnoxious that I didn't watch it long enough to get the point...

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Andy C - 23-06-2008 11:15

although I think 'An irritable man owns a hotel' does in fact sound like a situation ripe with promise

But not significantly more or less so than "mum acts like a teenager while daughter acts like a mum", I'd suggest.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mitch - 23-06-2008 11:18

Did you ever see Payne, the woeful US remake of Fawlty Towers?

It had the same premise, but by changing the personalities of the characters to be more likable, it proved the point that the genius of Fawlty Towers was in the 'com', and not the 'sit'.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Il Visionario Tecnico - 25-06-2008 07:38

J1s wrote:

Re: post-'Bread' careers.

Jean Boht went on to star in the already-mentioned 'Brighton Belles'.

Victor Maguire (who played Jack) was a regular in the already-mentioned 'Goodnight Sweetheart'.

However, Peter Howett (the original Joey) became a film director and enjoyed considerable success with 'Sliding Doors' and, er, 'Johnny English'.

Anyone remember the theme song? B-b-bread!

Remember it? I've had it as a fucking earworm ever since delicatemoth brought it up.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Rabbitoh - 25-06-2008 16:44

And those of us living north of the border in the late 80's must have fond memories of City Lights????

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by muzo1234 - 28-06-2008 18:42

Thanks to everybody who nominated Two Pints of Piss and a Packet of Wank- lowest common denominator drivel with pisspoor comic acting. My Family is arse-paralysingly bad and I also hated Goodnight Sweetheart and Birds of a Feather. There are a lot of terrible sitcoms which seem to go on and on and on...

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by dogbeak - 02-07-2008 09:55

Seven pages and no Keeping up Appearances?

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Mitch - 02-07-2008 10:22

Keeping Up Appearances is pretty good for what it is really; we're just not the target audience.

It's the equivalent of Alan Partridge for people like my Mum.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by erwin - 02-07-2008 13:39

I think the central idea of KUA is quite good, and the performance of the main actress is great, but the stories are very thin.

.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by wingco - 02-07-2008 18:51

Oh, Keeping Up Appearances is terrible. Roy Clarke rubbish for Middle England social fantasists. And a great waste of Patricia Routledge's talent. (And Geoffrey Hughes, for that matter).

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Cavalry Trouser Tips - 02-07-2008 20:25

I only like Keeping Up Appearances because it's filmed in Northampton and I like spotting places that I know in sitcoms.

It really is the perfect shithole location.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by PaxtonLee - 03-07-2008 16:15

Hated Absolutely Fabulous too. Also hate Friends...ooh it's the one where Ross is wet and Chandler wise-cracks. I find that Benidorm is so bad that I actually quite like it.

New nomination...Porkpie anyone?

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 03-07-2008 16:53

I can see how one might not like friends, but I can't see how the show qualifies for even a cursory mention on this thread.

I don't like Tom Waits much, but I would not bring him up on a thread called "Really bad music".

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Harri Saer - 04-07-2008 11:36

"I find that Benidorm is so bad that I actually quite like it."

How does that work then? People often say it but it never makes sense.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by PaxtonLee - 04-07-2008 13:14

Re the Friends thing, appreciate and agree with the point made but as soon as Only Fools & Horses were mentioned in this thread that makes everything else fair game imho. It's always still on as well. I reckon you can find an episode of Friends being transmitted on some channel somewhere in the world at any time.

With "Benidorm being so bad I like it", I don't know how to explain it without there being gaping holes in my argument! I think it doesn't pretend to be any good like, say, My Family does so you can watch it without that level of irritation. The storylines are crap, lots of stereotypes and unimaginative characters, not an ounce of cleverness in the jokes - all these points make it really bad but it is because of the combination of these points, playing up to them and the simplicity of the Brits-abroad idea that make it quite watchable and raise the odd chuckle. I really don't expect anyone to agree but hey ho.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 04-07-2008 14:04

I'm on a very slow connection so I can't check but has Bottle Boys been mentioned? It's supposed to be really bad. I can't remember much except a clip from it about Mrs So and So having a problem with her tits. They kept pecking holes in the milk bottle tops.

Even that's preferable to "teams of writers" stuff.

=====

Re:Really bad sitcoms

Posted by Guy Potger - 04-07-2008 18:33

PaxtonLee wrote:
Hated Absolutely Fabulous too.

Hurrah!

=====