

coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

The award-winning ABC comedy
"Modern Family" airs its series
finale Wednesday.



'Modern Family' bids farewell with award-winning ABC comedy's finale

Family time is special, but in one case, it's about to end.

After 11 seasons and numerous awards including Emmys for outstanding comedy series for each of its first five years plus separate Emmy wins for co-stars Julie Bowen, Ty Burrell and Eric Stonestreet, "Modern Family" closes up shop with its last ABC episode Wednesday, April 8. Though it's been long known that the finale for the intertwined Pritchett and Dunphy clans was coming, that doesn't make the actual ending any easier for cast and crew members who have been together for, in many cases, over a decade.

"Had we ended it last season, I think it would have probably revolved around the birth of the new babies," reflects "Modern Family" executive producer and co-creator Steven Levitan, "but since we went past that point, we were in uncharted territory. It's

something that we had been thinking about for about a year-and-a-half, once we knew we were going into Season 11. We talked about it all the time, potential places that we could end it so that we could build some things in that led to that nicely." (One such "thing" was the characters' recent trip to Paris.)

Looking back on the history of "Modern Family," co-star Jesse Tyler Ferguson – alias the show's Mitchell Pritchett – cites making the 2009 pilot episode as forever special.

"I will always remember meeting this group of people for the first time," he says. "We all auditioned at separate times, and we were put together in separate rooms ... but the first time we all came together in preparation for the big network table read for the pilot, it was an immediate connection. I remember Sofia (Vergara) giving everyone

hugs. I was like, 'This is the nicest, most beautiful woman I've ever met in my entire life, and she gets to play my stepmother. This is going to be so exciting.' It all felt very natural very early on."

Cast regular Vergara has relished bringing the glamorous, comically word-mangling Gloria Ramirez-Pritchett to life. "It was a gift to land a show like 'Modern Family,'" she notes, "because I never thought that sounding like this, I was going to be able to get a job that was so successful, being seen all over the world with a cast so amazing.

"To be able to get all the opportunities that I got, to be able to expand my brand and do all the business things that I wanted, it was all a gift to me. I am super-sad that it's ending, but of course, I'm looking for the next thing (which, for Vergara, is this summer's season of NBC's 'America's Got Talent') like everybody else."

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