

# Flashback favorites

Now that the country has decided to turn back time, why not enjoy the ride?

## The Golden Girls: The Complete First Season

The *Golden Girls*' debut on network television in 1985 was a gamble. Conventional wisdom said nobody would watch a comedy featuring a group of women, particularly older women. But audiences proved that wrong, and the show ran for seven successful seasons, garnering plenty of awards and moving quickly into the stratosphere of sitcoms, right up there with *I Love Lucy*.

What made the show so special? Maybe it was the hilarious banter between caustic Dorothy (Bea Arthur) and her salty mom, Sophia (Estelle Getty). Maybe it was Sophia's witty "Picture it..." anecdotes about life in Old Sicily. Or naive Rose's (Betty White) demented tales of growing up in that bastion of idiocy, St. Olaf, Minn. Or perhaps the endless attempts by Southern belle Blanche (Rue McClanahan) to get laid. Or, for that matter, by all the girls' attempts to get laid, or at least to date.

These were complex women—sophisticated, larger than life but also vulnerable, coping

with the aging process and its attendant woes with humor and style. The shows were more like playlets than typical sitcoms, expertly juggling comedy and serious

themes that ranged from HIV and interracial marriage to dykedom and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Fans of the show who've suffered through the edited versions on TV will cheer the DVD release of the first season. All 25 episodes are here on three discs—pristine, uncut and commercial-free.



Of special interest is the pilot, which featured live-in cook Coco, a queen who fussed over the girls. He was gone by the second episode, but no matter. *Golden Girls*' special queer appeal never lagged, from the girls' unconventional family to Bea Arthur's campy double-takes and glares inspired by her best friend, the late drag queen Charles Pierce. Joan and Melissa Rivers add to the fun on this set with 10 minutes of dishy fashion commentary on the girls' trashy '80s outfits: "Could be a towel, could be a rug, could be a shirt...."

—Gary Morris

## The Kids in the Hall: Complete Season 1 (1989-1990) The Kids in the Hall: Complete Season 2 (1990-1991)

It takes Canadians to start a revolution in sketch comedy. Debuting in 1989, *The Kids in the Hall* featured five very talented male

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