

When I was little I had an unusual obsession with entertainment – television, radio, even our Beta video recorder – I loved it all. As a self-confessed entertainment nerd, I used to cut out magazine clippings about all my favourite celebrities, bands, shows and movies, and meticulously create a collage of the media covering interviews and gossip. I'd also try to tape what I could onto cassette or video, and watch or listen repeatedly; heartbroken when the tape would inevitably wither or tear. My scrapbooks and small amount of recorded memorabilia were cherished, because this is all I had on the things I loved as a kid. There was no internet, Blu-ray or YouTube; I couldn't share my passion with fellow Twitter fans, and if you loved a television series you only saw it once – after it had aired, it was gone. If there was a storm and the power went out just as you wanted to catch the new exciting season of *The Sopranos* bad luck, you'll never know what went down. Ah, the good old days.

I started to wonder what happened to that tangible love of all things showbiz. My scrapbooks have disappeared, tapes stuck in old walkmans, and even my prized and very large CD collection is gathering dust. Following bouts of laughter as I watched Ally McBeal bend over in the street to 'sniff' the backside of Jon Bon Jovi's character during a marathon of my new season 5 DVDs it hit me – everything is now boxed up and digital. It's all still there, but in pretty packages with special bonuses and extra features.

No longer do I have to sit by the radio wishing the announcer would stop talking over the beginning of my new-favourite song that I'm trying to tape (yes I'm a child of the 80s)! Never again do I have to wish I had a copy of my beloved television shows in crystal clear quality. It all exists, here and now... and by now, I mean instantly!

It's actually become a brand new obsession – hear a song, download it on iTunes. Love *Grey's Anatomy*? What do you know, it's out now on DVD. Or go a step further and buy the downloadable version for your computer. Instant gratification and we all love it.

As I grow older and arguably wiser, it occurs to me that nothing is 'as good as it used to be' (and there it was, I just heard the echo of my parents' voices). Television, movies and music, they just ain't the same. I gaze adoringly upon my boxed sets of *The X-Files*, *24*, *Ally McBeal*, *Twin Peaks*, *Dawson's Creek* and *Sex and the City*, and especially my prized little-known series' *Press Gang* and *La Femme Nikita*. If my house was burning down I would actually try to save them all! These discs contain old friends after all – Scully, Mulder, Jack Bauer, Patsy and Eddie... It's amazing to me that we are now able to collect our very favourite productions and keep them in pristine condition, sometimes even digitally re-mastered. It's something I would have wished for when I was 7, and now it exists.

The beauty of this whole fabulous boxed-up digital concept is that not only can you re-live amazing moments from years gone by, but in sweet succession. Is the truth really out there... and did Scully see it? Has Marissa truly died, gone forever from *The O.C.*? Wait until next year for the new season – God no! I'm already impatiently tapping the 'next' button on my DVD controller as the 'To Be Continued' message rolls on by.



Charmed by boxed sets

Written by Sarah Blinco

We have so many terrific DVDs in our collection now, sometimes it is hard to choose what to watch. Of late there have been a few on high rotation at my place. I think 2009 must have been a bit of a downer for everyone, because we certainly turned to the brighter shows in our collection – *The Nanny* is a hands down favourite in our household. My brother tends to turn to either very new and funny like *Family Guy*, or delves into classics like *Quantum Leap* and *Married With Children*. Cooper my fab fiancé flicks between dreaming he's working at *The White House* in *Commander and Chief*, or hanging out with his mates at extravagant parties in *Entourage*. Mum on the other hand just loves the fact she can watch *I Love Lucy* over and over, with colour and sound totally re-mastered from the original version.

Then of course we eagerly settled in to watch the little 'gifts' I'd order for myself from Amazon.com – new *Weeds* and *Ugly Betty* direct from the States to our door. There's something so satisfying about watching a series sourced from abroad when sometimes it hasn't even aired here yet! New episodes equal more excitement, romance, adventure and a weekend's worth of entertainment in the air-conditioned comfort of home.

Not to mention reliving classic memories from years gone by – we've even hosted *Melrose* parties, just like in the 90s, except this time it's more than just a one-hour event on a Tuesday night. Despite tired eyes there exists the innate need to flick to the next episode just to see what happens. We know it will still be there tomorrow, but why wait? Let's face it, their lives are more exciting than 'work, eat, sleep' and around again. I mean, have you ever seen grown women clawing at each other outside only to crash into the pool, cat-fighting over the hot neighbour? No! Or do you know of anyone in your street who can solve murder mysteries through psychic ability? Me either, but Alison Dubois sure is pretty savvy in that department. It is inexpensive and fun to invite people over for a BBQ and marathon of a classic series, or even host a party to premiere the brand new season boxed-set of *Desperate Housewives* or *Dexter*. Why watch week by week waiting desperately to find out what happens? I want to know now, and it's not just me. Many in my circle don't watch shows as they air on television, but indeed wait until the DVD collection is out, so it becomes a weekend event to cosy up in the lounge or media room, surround-sound on the ready, to spend some hours with *Friends* from beginning to end.

Tragic as it may be, I can relive the memories of my scrapbooks in the digital age, and I must admit they look and sound terrific. What's on the menu tonight? I'm tossing up between spending my time with Johnny Depp of the *21 Jump Street* era (remember that hair!), or I might just have to be on stand-by as Brenda weeps over her break-up with Dylan. It doesn't really matter that the most drama in our own personal lives revolves around the fight for the remote control because we're now able to plug into numerous colourful, glamorous and exciting worlds filled with beautiful people and new friends at the click of a button (or mouse if you're so inclined). If you'll excuse me, I have a sudden urge to impulse buy online – I believe *Glee* has just been released on DVD!