



# Laguna Beach may be over... but *The OC* is finally back!

**Paige Bowman**  
Associate Editor

Fox's *The OC* captivated everyone from teenagers to the middle-aged when it premiered in 2003. Last season, fans cancelled all plans for Wednesday nights and became addicted to the hour long show about young adults living the life of luxury in Orange County. The show became a phenomenon by having characters deal with a fascinating mix of shallow and actual problems.

Season one was a success, and season two should match it in the ratings arena, even though the show is not currently in the top twenty of the Nielsens. Season two started in early November.

The first episode answered the question that the last season's finale had raised. Seth had sailed away and was living with Luke in Oregon. Summer had moved on with Zach, who was basically an athletic version of Seth. Marisa had been having a secret love affair with her gardener, DJ. Ryan was working at a construction site in Chino while living with Theresa and her mother.

However, in Orange County, things never stay the same for long. After visiting Seth and receiving a call from Theresa saying she lost the baby (she did not really), Ryan decided to return to Newport with Seth.

The boys return to school and things go back to normal, except that Seth and Summer are not on the best terms, and Ryan is mad at Marisa because he found out that she had lied about being single.

The second season promises intrigue and action, but creator Josh Schwartz said that there will most likely not be a fight in every episode this season.

depth to her character, and instead of seeming complex, the character of Marissa Cooper is just downright annoying. Adam Brody breathes life into the somewhat geeky character of Seth Cohen, making him a favorite among fans. Peter Gallagher also does a commendable job as Sandy Cohen, despite his distracting and incredibly untamed eyebrows.

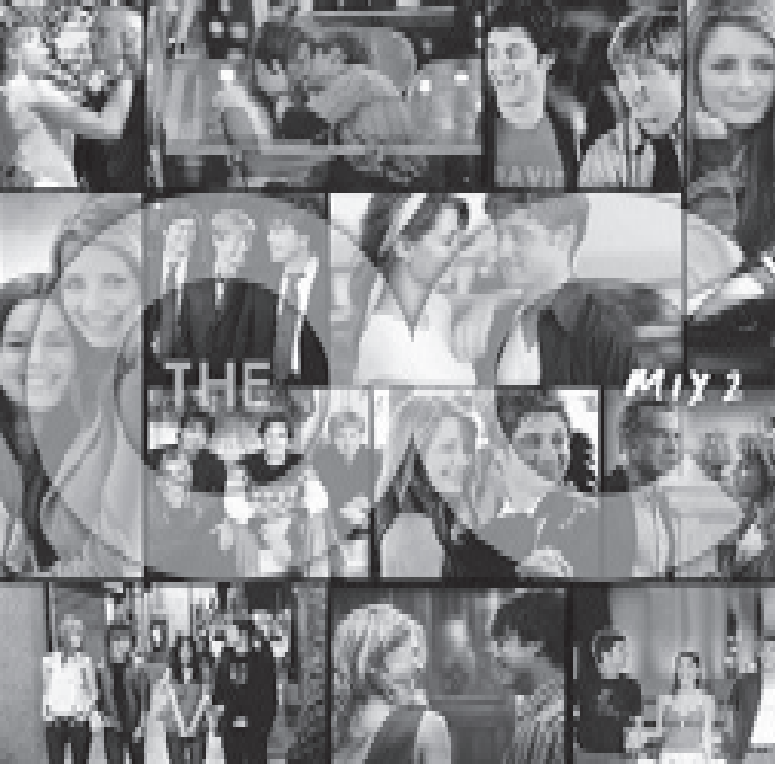
Some may say that *The OC* is superficial and a complete waste of time, but it is so wrong to enjoy a rapid hour of entertainment once a week?

In many ways, *The OC* is similar to a soap opera. The difference is, the adults on the show are interesting, and it does not air everyday. In fact, *The OC* often does not even air once a week, sometimes causing severe withdrawal for fans.

*The OC* is not just dominating Thursday nights at 7 p.m. (its new timeslot), it has spread into other arenas. The show is notorious for having good music, whether it is a band playing on the show or just the songs playing in the background. Whoever is in charge of the music is doing a great job, and the music is a mix of indie, alternative and emo.

Even though it was entertaining, it will be nice to see more story development and less flying fists. The show's entertainment factor relies heavily on the twisting storyline, and it seems that in the *OC*, someone is always mad, sad or dealing with a crisis like having an ex-boyfriend dating her mother.

With the exception of Mischa Barton, who plays Marissa Cooper, the actors tend to do an at least passable job. Mischa Barton, however, is unconvincing and flat. She brings no



**MEN IN SUITS -- Seth (Adam Brady), Ryan (Benjamin McKenzie) and Sandy (Peter Gallagher) share a laugh in Vegas.** Photo courtesy of ocfiles.com.

**Jonathan McNabb**  
Charger Staff

The most anticipated game release of the year is *Halo 2*. Three years in the making, this game's release was highly advertised and much talked about, even outside the gaming community. Although many thought making a successful sequel to the XBOX's best selling game *Halo* would be difficult, *Halo 2* has lived up to much of the hype. The game was released on Nov. 9 to *Halo*'s abundant fan base around the world. Here in Cookeville one Game Crazy employee said, "I sold

over two hundred copies of *Halo 2* the morning it came out. A line was



stretched out the door and around the store waiting to purchase the game."

The new game offers an improved set of weapons and levels for new challenges to old pros and a great start for new players to the game. The graphics have vastly improved from the already superb graphics of its predecessor showing even more detail in all levels of play. The once repetitive stages of *Halo* have been replaced with more diverse stages including exotic new settings. Although greatly improved, the campaign has a poor ending and a short story line.

Over all, I would say *Halo 2*'s positives far outweigh the negatives and is a must buy for any XBOX owner.

# The Oscar race begins in earnest

**By Jack Mathews**  
New York Daily News (KRT)

As the weather turns cold, Oscar season heats up.

"'Twas always thus and always thus will be" to quote poet-philosopher Robin Williams in "Dead Poets Society."

But it heats up particularly quickly in December. In the next four weeks, no fewer than a dozen movies with high Academy Awards aspirations will open.

And in just two weeks, the prematurely coronating critics groups will announce their choices for the best films of the year, even though no paying customers will have seen them all. The general feeling among Oscar pundits is that 2004 has been a good year for good movies, but not a great one for great ones.

In other words, they have no clue which five films will fill out Oscar's Best Picture ballot. But thanks to the decision made two years ago by the Academy Awards promoters to move the nominations from mid-February to late January and the telecast from late March to late February, we're seeing the contenders earlier.

In fact, we have already seen some. For Best Picture, there are plenty of advocates out there for such current releases as Alexander Payne's "Sideways," Bill Condon's "Kinsey," Taylor Hackford's "Ray," and Marc Forster's "Finding Neverland." There are also ardent supporters of Michel Gondry's spring release "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

Though Michael Moore will be campaigning hard to get his documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11" on the Best Picture ballot, I think most people now realize that the film did more to mobilize the red states than the blue. And Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" is counting on an evangelical contingent in the Academy that may not exist.

It's possible that all five eventual Best Picture nominees will come from December's marquee.

First name up is Mike Nichols' "Closer," which opens Friday. Star-

ring Jude Law, Julia Roberts, Clive Owen and Natalie Portman, it's adapted from Patrick Marber's tight four-character drama about the sexual intrigue between two mix-and-match couples.

If that combination sounds familiar, you may be thinking all the way back to Nichols' 1966 adaptation of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

That emotional roller coaster received 13 nominations, including Best Picture.

Also opening Friday is Zhang Yimou's "House of Flying Daggers," which is being favorably compared to Ang Lee's 2000 Best Picture nominee "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." It's one of four foreign-language films that will be campaigning for a spot on the big ballot.

Spanish maestro Pedro Almodovar's "Bad Education" and Walter Salles' "Motorcycle Diaries," both starring Gael Garcia Bernal, have already opened and been tipped for nominations. Alejandro Amenabar's "The Sea Inside" arrives Dec. 17.

Having seen all four of these films, I'd say the surest bet among them is a Best Actor nomination for Javier Bardem, who plays a quadriplegic fighting for his right to die in "The Sea Inside."

Other coming features getting Best Picture buzz are Clint Eastwood's "Million Dollar Baby," Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator," Joel Schumacher's "The Phantom of the Opera" and Michael Radford's adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice."

If the Academy hadn't wisely created a Best Feature Animation category, I'd be naming three animated pictures as contenders "The Incredibles," "The Polar Express" and "Shrek 2." DreamWorks is still teasing itself with hopes for the ogle. But not enough people will vote that way.

There are Best Picture wild cards coming. James L. Brooks' "Spanglish" could be just another Adam Sandler comedy, but Brooks has scored Best Picture nods on three of his four previous films in the last 20 years. He doesn't make many

movies, but what he does make are choice.

Kevin Spacey's direction of "Beyond the Sea," a biopic about seminal pop-rock crooner Bobby Darin, is clumsy. But as Darin, Spacey gives one of the all-time great voice performances, and voters may get carried away.

If they do, Spacey will also land on the Best Actor ballot, which is the most competitive in the race.

Jamie Foxx, who plays Ray Charles in "Ray," is a shoo-in for his lip-synching but soulful portrayal.

Besides Spacey and Bardem, the field of Best Actor contenders includes: Eastwood ("Million Dollar Baby"); Kevin Bacon ("The Woodsman"); Don Cheadle ("Hotel Rwanda"); Al Pacino ("The Merchant of Venice"); Liam Neeson ("Kinsey"); Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Aviator"); Sean Penn ("The Assassination of Richard Nixon"); Johnny Depp ("Finding Neverland"), and Gerard Butler ("The Phantom of the Opera").

Annette Bening's performance as a stage diva in "Being Julia" should guarantee her a Best Actress nod, and she's sure to be joined by British actress Imelda Staunton from "Vera Drake," Mike Leigh's abortion drama.

It's anybody's guess beyond that. Once again, there were not many great roles for women. There will be support for Hilary Swank ("Million Dollar Baby"), Sigourney Weaver ("Imaginary Heroes"), Julia Roberts ("Closer"), Scarlett Johansson ("A Love Song for Bobby Long") and Kate Winslet ("Finding Neverland," though it should be for "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind").

If the Academy members watch the Spanish-language film "Maria Full of Grace," they might nominate Catalina Sandino Moreno, who is brilliant as a young Colombian woman caught in a drug-smuggling scheme that brings her to New York. A groundswell for "The Phantom of the Opera" might carry Emmy Rossum, who plays Christine, onto the ballot as well.

(c) 2004, New York Daily News.

**The Broad Street Dance Center**

124 East Broad Street  
Cookeville, TN 38501  
(931) 528-0116

Susan Rank  
Owner & Instructor

**Inquire \* Volunteer \* Donate**

**Help Us Help Others.**

**united way**

*One Way We Care.*  
**Community by Community.**

United Way Regional Office  
122 S. Madison Avenue, Cookeville, TN 38501  
Phone: 326-2723

**Smith Pharmacy**

Clarence Smith, Dph  
100 W. 3rd St. Suite A  
(Corner 3rd & Cedar)

Phone (931) 528-4812 Fax (931) 372-8093  
Emergency Phone  
(931) 528-5454

*We deliver to home or office  
(± within city limits)*