

The GAYEST MOMENTS in TV HISTORY

IS IT JUST US, OR DOES TELEVISION KEEP GETTING GAYER ALL THE TIME? 25 MOMENTS BARELY BEGIN TO TELL THE STORY.
— ERIN DEJESUS

How did we pick these moments? First, we weren't going to limit ourselves to a narrow meaning of "gay" — everything was up for consideration, from enthusiastic use of rhinestones to same-sex smooching. Second, a show full of gay characters did not alone qualify it for the list (nor was a show full of straight people disqualified). Third, only one entry was allowed per show (to prevent an entire list full of *Will & Grace*). Did we miss your favorite moment? Let us know by emailing letters@metrosource.com!

25 DANCING WITH THE STARS THE GAYEST "STRAIGHT" SHOW ON TV

The moves! The sparkles! The sequins! As the perfect combination of camp and choreography, *Dancing with the Stars*, a show that on paper seemed tailor-made for 40-something housewives in Idaho, has become must-see-TV for gay audiences, as well.



MARIE OSMOND ON DANCING



of daytime soap operas, was often satirically over the top, but the groundbreaking Jodie character managed to offend “public interest groups” anyway — oh, how times have (thankfully) changed.

20 • HOMER’S PHOBIA TAKES OVER THE SIMPSONS

Jokes about Waylon Smithers never fail to incite laughter, but *The Simpsons* tackles gay humor best in this season eight gem guest-starring John Waters. “Homer’s Phobia,” in which Homer fears Bart might be gay, is one of the most consistently funny episodes in the series’ history, with a trip to a gay steel mill, a store called Cockamamies, a Lupe Vélez reference, Bart lip-synching to “The Shoop Shoop Song” and Homer’s telling statement, “I like my beer cold, my TV loud and my homosexuals fa-lay-ming.” Brilliant.

19 • DYNASTY’S DIVAS STEVEN CARRINGTON WHO? JOAN COLLINS STEALS THE SHOW

The 1981 soap opera *Dynasty* featured one of television’s first gay characters, heir-to-the-Carrington-fortune Steven Carrington. Though the Aaron Spelling series broke ground by dealing with themes about homosexuality (Steven had several boyfriends on the show), *Dynasty* makes the list of gay moments due to two other series mainstays — Linda Evans and Joan Collins. The simple thought of the two sequin-clad divas bitch-fighting in the mansion’s pool is as gay as the series was long.

18 • “HAPPY DAYS” FUN WITH BABS AND JUDY

The *Judy Garland Show*, which lasted only one season in the early 1960s, featured its share of

24 • ENTOURAGE ARI SAVES LLOYD’S VIRTUE

Though super-agent Ari Gold (Jeremy Piven) was always a blockbuster, it’s his gay assistant Lloyd (Rex Lee) who let us see Ari’s heart. When Ari sent Lloyd to do “anything it took” (read: offer sex) to sign a TV writer, it seemed like the ultimate betrayal. But by episode’s end, when Ari rushes to the rescue (in a gay club, no less), we saw that there’s at least one thing Ari won’t give up to close the deal. Aw.

23 • THE L WORD I WANT YOUR [PRISON] SEX

Lesbian prison sex may be a cliché loved by straight men, but at least *The L Word* knows how to do it correctly. As Bette Porter (Jennifer Beals) curates a controversial art show, she ends up in the clink, sharing a cell with

Candace (Ion Overman), a contractor-for-hire. Despite *The L Word*’s penchant for a sex scene seemingly every five seconds, this one remains one of the series’ most memorable.

22 • SOUTH PARK PUTS TOM CRUISE IN THE CLOSET

The now-legendary “Trapped in

the Closet” episode of *South Park* skewered Scientology so viciously that Tom Cruise demanded it be pulled from the airwaves. Or maybe Cruise was more offended at the in-jokes that he’s Hollywood’s favorite closet-case. In the episode, Cruise, worried that his acting is not up to par with Scientology standards, locks himself in a closet, refusing to “come out”

despite the prodding of famous friends and family. It’s a simple joke, yes, but one that demanded attention — and garnered endless laughs.

21 • SOAP BILLY CRYSTAL BREAKS BOUNDARIES

Television met its first prime-time gay character in 1977, when Billy Crystal stepped into the role of Jodie Dallas on the comedy *Soap*. The show, a parody





DANTE'S COVE TURNS UP THE HEAT

special moments from the legendary gay icon. But nothing gets gayer than Judy teaming with Ms. Barbra Streisand for a duet of "Happy Days Are Here Again." Not only is Barbra clad in a sailor's outfit, the song's fourth line contains the lyric, "Howdy gay, times" — and 40 years before *Brokeback*, to boot.

17 • DANTE'S COVE
DEBUTS ON HERE!

(Because we never said gay TV had



CHER'S "TIME" OUTFIT

to be *redeeming*, right?) The "gothic soap opera" *Dante's Cove*, a true guilty pleasure, is ostensibly about a beachside hotel with its own weird, supernatural aura. But the "mysterious" plot is secondary to the constantly changing gay relationships and tons of shirtless men (and now, the addition of Reichen Lemkuhl to the cast only ups the gay factor).

16 • CHER AS VIDEO VIXEN
"IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME" TURNS HEADS

If she should reach the stars, she'd give them all to you. Cher cements her position as the ultimate gay icon with her 1989 video for "If I Could Turn Back Time." With her revealing fishnet outfit, exposed butt tattoos and a ship full of cheering, cannon-straddling sailors, Cher proved she was the ultimate comeback queen — to the delight of queens everywhere.

15 • PEDRO'S WEDDING
MOST TOUCHING GAY TV MOMENT



Pedro Zamora wouldn't be the last gay cast member on MTV's *The Real World*, but he certainly left the most lasting impression. In a landmark television moment, the HIV-positive Pedro married his boyfriend, fellow AIDS educator Sean Sasser, in a 1992 ceremony that exposed the world to the pair's touching love story. Sadly, Zamora died from



XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS

complications of AIDS on November 11, 1994, the day after the final episode of *Real World: San Francisco* aired. His untimely death at the age of 22 made the televised nuptials even more touching — and tragic.

14 • DAWSON'S GREEK
JACK GETS "POETIC"

Dawson's Creek may have featured

the first gay makeout in prime time, but an even gayer moment occurred in a season two episode in which Jack McPhee (played by Kerr Smith) reads a poem about his sexuality to his English class. How gay is it? Text as follows: "I grew more afraid. Not of what I am, but of what I could be. I loosen my collar to take a breath. My eyes fade. And I see... Him. The image of perfection. His frame



THE CAST OF BOY MEETS BOY

strong, his lips smooth. And I keep thinking, what am I so afraid of?" Shakespeare, he isn't.

13 • XENA WARRIOR PRINCESS LIKE, ALL OF IT.

No one really bought that Xena and her sidekick Gabrielle were "just friends," right? For years, fans debated the lesbian subtext in Lucy Lawless' campy *Xena: Warrior Princess*, without any direct confirmation from the series' creators. But the show managed to push that line between BFFs and lovers (with many a bathing-together-in-a-hot-tub scene and kisses attributed to "reviving properties" and "men-stuck-in-Xena's body" plotlines), eventually settling on the vague-but-telling admission that Xena and Gabrielle were soulmates. Enough said.

12 • GEORGE MICHAEL "WAKES UP," WEARS EYELINER

Jitter-bug. Looking back, it's hard



TIM GUNN AND SJP ON PROJECT RUNWAY

to believe that for so many years, the world thought George Michael was straight. Pro-life messages aside, Wham's video for "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" features George rocking out in

short shorts, fingerless gloves, a hot pink sweatshirt, eyeliner... all for a song with the word "go-go" in the title.

11 • SEX & THE CITY THE "REAL ME" EPISODE

Mario Cantone and Willie Garson's characters (a wedding planner and talent agent, natch) go on a horrific blind date. Heidi Klum and Kevin Aucoin both appear as themselves. Alan Cumming and Margaret Cho play fashion-industry archetypes. For a show so open and accepting of the community (not to mention provider of visual fashion porn), no installment of *Sex and the City* gets gayer than this season four episode that also happened to coin the term, "fashion roadkill."

10 • BOY MEETS BOY THE WORST GAY TV MOMENT

It's a bit surprising that Bravo of all networks would debut this "gay dating show" in which half the contestants were actually straight men. Though the network defended the series as a break in

social stereotypes, many considered the twist a cruel joke, with the "Guess the Gay" concept more insulting than groundbreaking. **Honorable mention:** *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila*. Ew.

9 • PROJECT RUNWAY GAYEST MOMENT? CAN YOU PICK JUST ONE?

With more than their fair share of queer designers, this series practically deserves its own category. It was hard to choose, but *Project Runway's* gayest moment occurred when adorably animated season two designer Nick Verreos freaked out upon meeting "THE Sasha Cohen." Not the *Borat* guy, mind you, but the pint-sized figure skater. **Honorable mentions:** 1. Sarah Jessica Parker's mere presence reduces grown men to tears. 2. Santino's Red Lobster date between Tim Gunn and Andraé. 3. Where the hell is Andraé's chiffon?

8 • QUEER EYE DEBUTS ON BRAVO, TAKES OVER WORLD

Take five fabulous homosexuals —



THE QUEER EYE GUYS GO WEST



MICHAEL URIE AS UGLY BETTY'S MARC

more than 30 years, did inspire the smash Broadway show *Avenue Q*. **Honorable mentions:** 1. Ace and Gary, *Saturday Night Live*. 2. Batman and Robin, *Batman*.

5 • QUEER AS FOLK
OPENING CREDITS — SEASON 1

It starts off with a rapid-fire countdown: "One, two, three, four... one, two [something intelligible]," then explodes into an orgy of rainbows, gyrating go-go dancers and swirling colors. Though the opener of *Queer As Folk's* first season neglected to show any characters, plotlines or anything even remotely about the show, it got the message across: What you are about to watch is extremely,

ridiculously gay.

4 • MICHAEL URIE
GAYS UP UGLY BETTY

As the most fabulous character currently on network television,

grooming guide Kyan Douglas, fashion "expert" Carson Kressley, food aficionado Ted Allen, decorating diva Thom Filicia and culture critic Jai Rodriguez — throw them in a black SUV, send them to the home of a clueless hetero and watch the magic happen. When *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* debuted in 2003, it catapulted gay culture into the mainstream and launched Bravo's current reputation as the unofficial gay network.

7 • IN THE LIFE
DOCUMENTS THE GAYS

For a stunning 16 years, public television's *In the Life* has exposed the world to real, human gay stories. The LGBT newsmagazine, which faced opposition from the likes of Bob Dole in its early years, has focused on positive portrayals of LGBTs and has aired stories about issues ranging from immigration to gay marriage to

Judy Garland. All give viewers a well-rounded look at the gay experience — no punchlines or fictional characters necessary.

6 • BERT & ERNIE
TV'S MOST AMBIGUOUSLY GAY COUPLE

Ernie may sing of his fondness for

his rubber ducky, but it's pretty obvious that the feeling extends to his longtime "roommate," the furrow-browed Bert. Though we'll never know for sure, the are-they-or-aren't-they couple, who have been living together in an impeccably-styled apartment for



BERT & ERNIE

This page: Michael Urie photo courtesy of ABC/Karen Neal. Opposite page: Will & Grace photo by Chris Haston, courtesy of NBC.



THE "CAST" OF RICK AND STEVE



JACK AND CHER FACE OFF ON WILL & GRACE

Ugly Betty's Marc St. James (perfectly embodied by the hysterical Michael Urie) gets the show's best one-liners and

wardrobe. Nearly every Marc moment would be worthy of a spot on our list, so we'd like to simply toast his existence — on a

show (and network) so deliciously gay, Urie and Marc still manage to rise above the crowd.

3 • THE LAUNCH OF LOGO FINALLY, A NETWORK ALL OUR OWN

As gay TV has made its presence known on the airwaves, it's hard to believe that until two scant years



ago, there wasn't a network that spoke exclusively to the community. With MTV and Viacom's launch of the Logo network, LGBT viewers finally had a channel that catered to their needs, proving that the market was a viable — not to mention profitable — one. That aside, it's simply hard to deny a channel that provides great gay shows like *Rick and Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple in All the World*.

2 • JACK MEETS CHER THE LEGENDARY MEETING ON WILL & GRACE

Over the course of the show's seven seasons, *Will & Grace* featured its fair share of one-liners ("Don't you know that a Queen always beats a Straight?"), gay relationships and tongue-in-cheek jokes. But the show's gayest moment, naturally, also features the world's gayest icon. In an episode from season three, Jack finally comes face-to-face with his idol, Cher... and mistakes her for a Cher-impersonating drag queen. When the dust settles from their Cher-off, Ms. Sarkisian orders Jack to "Snap out of it!"

Moonstruck-style, and a moment is born.

1 • ELLEN COMES OUT... SURPRISES NO ONE

In what will probably go down in history as pop culture's biggest gay moment, Ellen DeGeneres' character on her show *Ellen* also comes out as a lesbian... over an airport loudspeaker. Though the show's run ended soon after Ellen exited the closet, DeGeneres still remains one of TV's most high-profile gay characters, and the moment became a cultural landmark.



ELLEN DEGENERES