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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Blu-ray Review: *Portlandia* - Season One

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Author: David R Perry — Published: Dec 13, 2011 at 12:32 pm

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Portlandia is a sketch comedy show conceived by, written by and starring Fred Armisen (*Saturday Night Live*) and Carrie Brownstein (vocalist/guitarist for Sleater Kinney and Wild Flag). Based in Portland, Oregon, the show creates its own world of characters who are only slightly more fringe than the actual characters who already inhabit Portland.

The Season

It should be noted that the humor of *Portlandia* isn't going to be for everyone. Although that could truthfully be said about any comedy, it's generally especially true of humor that veers toward the dry and random variety. Fred Armisen brings some of the more offbeat humor from *Saturday Night Live* over to this show, and finds a soul-mate with the very funny Carrie Brownstein. The two tag-team and character swap for most of the show's segments, with extra bit players brought in to populate the rest of the world.

Most of the humor is found in exaggerated caricatures of more fringe personalities. Militant bike messengers, organic farm communes and adult play groups are all gently taken down a peg. But it's not a mean-spirited show, and often highlights how even the "normals" can be just as obsessive in their own way. But if the idea of a couple leaving a restaurant to go make sure the chicken they're about to order comes from an ethically-conscious farm isn't appealing to you, you could be in for a bumpy ride with the show. Because that might bode poorly for your enjoyment of the theme song for Portland which is forbidden from sounding like it could have been made in Seattle.

Some of the sketches are more immediately appealing than others, but the abbreviated six-episode season helps ensure that fluff is kept to a minimum. For every adventurous sex couple who wear out their welcome, there are more than enough over-excited mayor sketches and [Aimee Mann](#) housecleaning segments to make up for it. Even the bits that laborously milk a bad sight gag ("You gotta get out of there!") are brief enough to offer a palette cleanser for the next thing. Recurring

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characters also help build a sense of community for the show so that it becomes much more than just a playground for random humor.

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Article Author: [David R Perry](#)

Lost somewhere in the rolling hills of Tennessee, David R Perry can occasionally be found doing dark, unspeakable things to words. Printed words, spoken words, electronically mangled words... really any kind but twittered words.

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Portlandia Blu-ray/DVD

Release date: 2011-12-06

Running time: 132 minutes

Publisher: VIDEO SERV

Portlandia is IFC's hit sketch comedy series created, written by, and starring Fred Armisen (SNL) and Carrie Brownstein (WILD FLAG, Sleater-Kinney vocalist/guitarist). The show is driven by a series of ...

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