



Michael C. Hall in Dexter. - PHOTO: Courtesy



For the people on your holiday list who collect DVDs of popular and classic TV shows, there's plenty to choose from this season.

Behind The Candelabra, the Liberace biopic directed by Steven Soderbergh, won 10 Emmy Awards, including Michael Douglas' award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie. The stellar cast includes Matt Damon (as Liberace's alternately scantily clad and overdressed paramour Scott Thorson), Debbie Reynolds (as Liberace's mother), Rob Lowe and Scott Thorson.

Finally "liberated from the vaults," Here's Edie, singer/actress Edie Adams' groundbreaking early 1960s variety show (later known as The Edie Adams Show), is available for the first time in a four-DVD set, with a wealth of bonus footage. During the run of the show, Adams' guests included Johnny Mathis, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Duke Ellington, Allan Sherman, Nancy Wilson and Bobby Darin, among others. The accompanying booklet features words of praise for Adams from Sandra Bernhard, Pee-Wee Herman (Paul Reubens), Shirley MacLaine and others.

Michael C. Hall, who played gay mortician David Fisher in the acclaimed HBO series Six Feet Under, went on to star as Miami forensics expert/vigilante Dexter Morgan, in the Showtime series Dexter. The 12 episodes of Dexter's eighth and final season, in which his dualities begin to unravel (his police officer sister is on to him), promises and delivers a "bloody amazing send-off."

Speaking of "bloody amazing," the HBO Select edition of True Blood:

The Complete Fifth Season gives viewers choices in how they can watch the sexy/scary vampire series — six Blu-rays, two double-sided DVDs or digital. The fifth season of supernatural life in the fictional town of Bon Temps, La., not only included an abundance of scenes featuring Jason (Ryan Kwanten), Alcide (Joe Manganello) and Eric (Alexander Skarsgård) in various states of undress, but also queer relationships, including the one between Russell (Denis O'Hare) and Steve (Michael McMillan).

Complex gay characters continue to be featured in prime time network TV series, such as *Scandal* as well. The ABC series (presented in five DVDs), about political crisis manager Olivia (Kerry Washington), includes openly gay White House Chief of Staff Cyrus (Jeff Perry, who also played a gay character on *My So-Called Life*) and his journalist husband James (out actor Dan Bucatinsky). Gay actor Guillermo Diaz also is part of the main cast, as a former CIA op turned techie.

Actor/filmmaker Christopher Guest has often included queer characters in his work (such as *Best In Show*). Guest's HBO mockumentary series *Family Tree*, starring Chris Dowd as lead character Tom (a man researching his lineage), is no exception. Fred Willard, who has appeared in a number of Guest's films, plays Mike, the gay neighbor of Tom's uncle Al (Ed Begley, Jr.).

The seven-part series *North America*, hosted by Tom Selleck (*In & Out*, *Magnum PI*) has made its way onto a double disc Blu-ray set. The gorgeously filmed program takes us "where civilization collides with untamed wilderness, just feet beyond our own backyards." Moving from the upper reaches of the continent through mountains, forests and deserts to the water's edge, the wildlife, ecological diversity and wonders of North America are on glorious display. Bonus material includes a colorful booklet and filmmakers' commentary.

It may have only been on TV for four seasons, but the Vietnam War-set series *China Beach* made an impression on viewers. In addition to launching actress Dana Delaney into stardom, it co-starred Michael Boatman, who would later play a gay character in the Michael J. Fox series *Spin City*. The 21-DVD, 62-episode complete series box set includes 10 hours of bonus features, an exclusive 32-page collector's booklet and *China Beach* dog tags.

Created to compete with NBC's NYC-based *Saturday Night Live*, ABC's late-night comedy sketch and music show *Fridays* premiered in 1980 and ended in 1982. The five-DVD set *The Best of Fridays* features 16 episodes of the cult comedy series. In addition to showcasing performances by an amazing assortment of musical guests, including *The Clash*, *Devo*, *Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers*, *The Cars* and *Dire Straits*, the show was a launching pad for cast members Larry David, Michael Richards and Melanie Chartoff. The compilation also includes the legendary "Andy Kaufman incident" and special features, such as a cast and writers reunion, a discussion of the Kaufman incident and more.

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