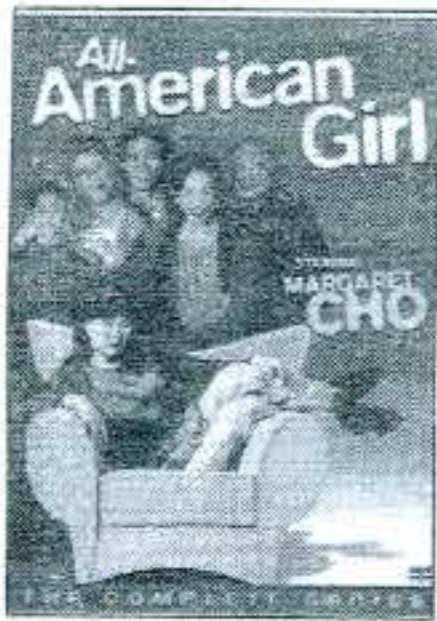


Shopping for Christmas

There's no such thing as an *actual* Christmas in July — but if there was, I know what would be on my list: Lots and lots of TV shows on DVD.

It's one of my favorite aspects of this whole digital video disc thing, the fact that many old shows receive re-birth, and new series can be followed the way everyone prefers — at your own pace.

There's been a bunch released since the *real* Christmas season; here's the best of the best.



"All-American Girl" *The Complete Series* (Shout! Factory)

Margaret Cho went on to do much greater things than this 1994 series, but the tone and concepts of her stand-up routines, an Asian girl trying to adapt to American culture, was the main story of "All-American Girl." Cho's material imitating her mom is legendary.

"American Dad" *Season One* (Fox)

Following the resurrected success of "Family Guy," creator Seth MacFarlane revealed another sitcom cartoon following the madcap life of CIA operative Stan Smith. Similar in feel to "Family Guy" but not as smart, "American Dad" will satisfy.

"The Brak Show" *Volume One* (Cartoon Network)

A spin-off of "Space Ghost: Coast to Coast," this gem of a series offers classic family drama in the dry, zany humor Cartoon Network is famous for — the result: Brak Magic. Keep an eye on Brak's dad, everything he says is hysterical.

"Dr Katz: Professional Therapist" *Season One* (Comedy Central)

Make an appointment and sit on his couch, and laughs are surely on the way — after all, Dr. Katz is deadpan humor at its best. Its squiggly line animation, along with an array of guest voices, made this one of Comedy Central's early winners.

"The Dick Cavett Show" *Comic Legends* (Shout! Factory)

Cavett, one of TV history's greatest talk-show hosts, had a gift for letting his guests shine while appearing on his stage. This four DVD box includes sets from Groucho Marx, George Burns, Woody Allen and Bill Cosby. Includes bonus bits, like Cavett's appearance on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

"The Electric Company" *The Best of* (Shout! Factory)

Perhaps the pioneer of a program that was educational, yet entertaining, "The Electric Company" is a memory for most Gen-X kids. The 20 selected episodes on this set feature cameos by Bill Cosby, Morgan Freeman, Rita Moreno and more.

"Golden Girls" *Season Five* (Buena Vista Home Video)

etched into the history of anyone who grew up having to watch TV with their grandma. But really, it's a charming show and, let's face it, Bea Arthur rules.

"Night Stalker" *The Complete Series* (Buena Vista Home Entertainment)

A remake based on the 70's suspense drama, "Night Stalker" was recently resurrected. Though it only lasted six episodes, the scary, haunting feel of "The X-Files" and "CSI" is a fair comparison. Not for everyone.

"Home Movies" *Season Four* (Shout! Factory)

The final season of the trials of Brandon Small, a confused 8-year old kid who makes direct home-made films, are captured in this box. Using squiggle animation and the smart, dry timing-based humor of "Curb Your Enthusiasm," this is one of Adult Swim's true triumphs.

"Harvey Birdman Attorney at Law" *Volume One* (Cartoon Network)

What can a super hero possibly do after retiring? Is there life after hanging up the cape? For Harvey Birdman, the law was calling, and "Attorney at Law" follows Harvey's attempt at breaking into *real* life via the courtroom. Well, as real as a cartoon gets, that is.



"Inspector Gadget" *The Original Series* (Shout! Factory)

Featuring Penny, Brain, the evil Claw and, of course, the legendary voice of Don Adams, "Inspector Gadget" was a huge part of many Gen-Y upbringings. This set includes the entire 22 shows of the original series, so go-go gadget wallet.

"Mystery Science Theater 3000" *Collection Volume Nine* (Rhino)

An innovative and influential show, "Mystery Science Theater" turned mocking old B-movies into an art form, and, in turn, a successful run of 198 episodes. Sure, it's a gumball machine, a bowling pin/hockey mask and other characters — but darn it, it's funny: Very funny. Contains moments with both Joel Robinson and Mike Nelson as series' host.

"Puppets Who Kill" *Season Two* (Video Service Corp.)

This zany series uses classic Canadian comedy techniques to follow the story of, well, a few lovable puppet friends (such as a stuffed doggy and a ventriloquist doll) who are complete degenerates. If it sounds weird, it is; if it sounds amusing, it is.

"Robot Chicken" *Season One* (Cartoon Network)

Seth Green's brainchild of stop-motion animation (using toys, dolls, and claymation), "Robot Chicken" follows the story of a chicken killed while crossing the road, but returning to life as a cyborg. One of Cartoon Network's new winners, the 11

"Scrubs" *The Vista Home Vid*

One of NBC's even if a little d shows on TV, batiations in film l question, which valuable.

"Sealab 2021

Turning the fo Barbera cartoon "Sealab 2021" a the idea, as well with most serie: second-to-last s

"Significant (Factory)

Thanks to the issue of romanc ever on TV serie mied in 2004. marriage couns improvisational

"Space Ghos (Cartoon Netw

How's this for cartoon charact and now washe which, again, is Cartoon Netwo ducer Moltar an and Harvey Birc episodes.

"Strangers W (Paramount)

Underrated ar it's fitting that "S full series set. M ence with its str show could find ting: A Trapper I

"That Girl" S

Starring the le ning from 1966- of Ann Marie, ar City. The previo one of the show Includes some c the original pilo

"The Venture Network)

Not quite as p "Sealab," this sh The inept Dr. Ve and Dean, get th thing that's alwa