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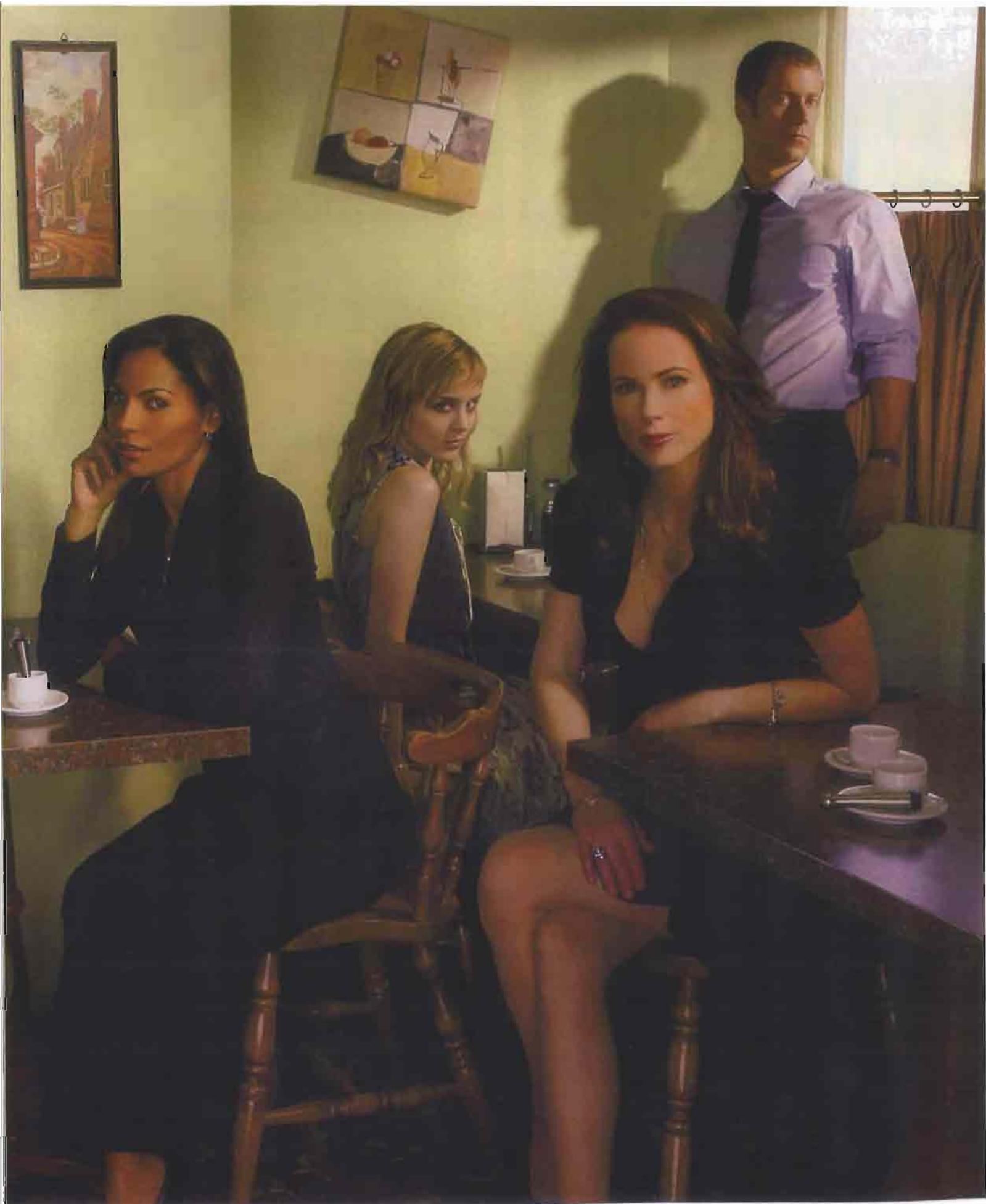
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OUR KIND OF TOWN

SCI FI'S HIT SERIES *EUREKA* RETURNS TO A SMALL TOWN OF BIG GENIUSES FOR A SECOND EXPLOSIVE SEASON. BY CINDY WHITE

"IT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN walking across virgin snow for the first time and then walking through that same meadow the following winter, if you see what I mean," says *Eureka* star Joe Morton, who plays the eccentric genius-mechanic Henry Deacon, as he describes going into the show's second season.

After a successful 12-episode run, the SCI FI Channel original series returns to the network this July for 13 more episodes of scientific mayhem in a small town with big secrets. The series is set in the small Pacific Northwestern town of Eureka,

a place that doesn't appear on any map, thanks to the proximity of a classified research facility called Global Dynamics. In a community made up of the world's foremost scientific minds and eccentrics, who routinely tinker with the laws of nature, anything can happen, and it often does. Keeping the peace in Eureka is Sheriff Jack Carter (Colin Ferguson), a former U.S. Marshal who has relocated to the town along with his teenage daughter, Zoe (Jordan Hinson). The second season promises a new direction for many of the characters, especially Morton's, who was last seen coping with the fallout of a time experiment that went wrong and propelled the town four years into the future. To keep

the universe from splitting apart under the strain of two competing timelines, Deacon and Carter had to travel back and reset the clock, knowing that it might put their contented future lives in jeopardy. Though the season may start out on a traumatic note for some of the characters, it was a happy reunion for the cast and crew.

"It was great when we all came back," Morton recalls in an interview on the phone from the show's location in Vancouver, B.C. "There was a read-through at the Sutton Place Hotel. No one had seen each other for however many months we were away. So it really was wonderful to see everybody back. As a friend of mine once said [when] I did a series many years ago, 'Everybody starts out loving each other; we'll see six years down the line what everybody's like.' But at the moment, it's a lovefest. And that's terrific."

There was one fewer face at the table this year, though. Andy Cosby, who co-created the series with writing partner Jaime Paglia and served as an executive producer last year, is stepping back to concentrate on the team's other work in development, though he'll still be on board as a consulting producer. Although Paglia won't be running the show alone—several new producers were brought in this year—he admits that the new structure took some getting used to.

"Part of what was very difficult this season was adjusting to [that]," Paglia says. "Andy and I are such a sort of a yin-yang kind of partnership. We have very complementary skill sets. And strengths, I think. And not having that partner here took some adjustment and bringing in new people and trying to find ways that



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they're going to fit in. There were definitely growing pains. But now I think everybody's sort of found our stride. It's really working very well."

Creatively, the second season has been a bit easier for Paglia and his writing staff. After spending the first year establishing the characters, getting to know the actors and turning what was just an idea for a show into a reality, they now have a full sandbox in which to play.

"Coming into the second season, you have the advantage of having built the world," Paglia says. "Everybody can see it now, and they know what the characters look like and act like and sound like. And certainly from a writer's perspective, it's much easier to write those characters now. And a lot more fun to write them now." It also helps that the writers have become familiar with the voices of the actors over the past 12 episodes. Paglia adds, "I know now what Colin Ferguson or Salli Richardson or Ed Quinn or Joe Morton is going to do with a line. I know

"EVERYBODY WANTS TO MAKE SURE THAT THE SECOND SEASON IS AS GOOD, OR STRONGER ... AND SO FAR I THINK IT REALLY IS." —CO-CREATOR AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JAIME PAGLIA

what sounds the best coming out of their mouths. It's so much easier now, because they've embodied those characters, and it just makes it all the more fun. I mean, last season, when I would be writing or rewriting a scene, I have an idea in my head of what it should sound like, and now I know what it's going to sound like. I know that if I write something a specific way for those character voices, that they are immediately going to get it."

On the other side of the script, Morton feels that he's also come to understand his character better as the series has progressed, and that experience has only helped his performance. "Having done it once, we kind of know the characters a lot better," he says. "We kind of know the circumstances a lot better. We understand how the town functions a lot better. We have all the experiences that we had from the last season sort of being part of the baggage, good and bad, of what we would be carrying into the second season. So I think what we learned is what will improve the show the second season."

But the new season doesn't come without pressure. There are certain expectations, from both the audience and the network, to match the success of the previous season. And no one sets the bar higher than Paglia himself.

"Everybody wants to make sure that the second season is as good, or stronger," he says. "For me, it has to be stronger than the first season, and so far I think it really is. I'm really encouraged by the level of the writing, and our production team has really stepped up and been doing even an greater job than they did last season, which is almost impossible."

As there are with any show in its first year, there have been some surprises along the way. When Paglia and Cosby originally conceived the show, they had in mind a hybrid of sorts, incorporating the quirky, small-town elements of *Northern Exposure* and *Twin Peaks* with the darker science fiction of *The X-Files*. None of these would necessarily be described as family shows, but to the astonishment of its creators, that's just what *Eureka* has become.

"I think what we've come up with now is more of a family show than I think we ever intended it to be," Paglia says. "We've been very surprised by how many people we've had who have either written or e-mailed or you bump into who say, 'This is a show that I watch with my 11-year-old son or my 11-year-old daughter, or with my grandmother. And we have multiple generations of families actually all finding something in there that they can enjoy. And I think part of that is ultimately that they're just characters that you like, and you want to spend time with them. And it doesn't take itself too seriously. It's funny, which was something that was important to us in the beginning. So yeah, I think I've been surprised by just how broad-reaching the show has been so far."

Morton had his share of surprises in the first season as well. "To be honest, until we kind of got there, I didn't know where we were going. I didn't realize quite how spectacular, if I can use that word, they wanted to make the cliffhanger at the end with Carter and Henry and Kim, which was pretty spectacular. So that was a nice surprise at the end of the season."

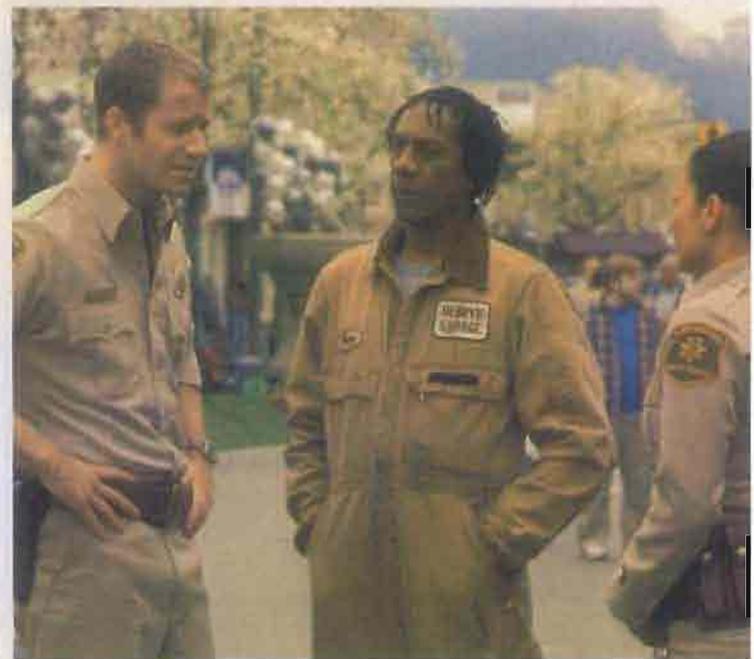
And what surprises lie in store for the audience in season two? Paglia has big plans for the town and its inhabitants. He's looking forward to tackling some of the big story ideas that couldn't be squeezed into the first 12 episodes.

"There are certainly a number of places that I feel that we fell short first season, and as one of the creators of the show, I'm our biggest critic," Paglia says. "I wanted to spend more time with the relationship with Allison and her son, Kevin. I wanted to spend more time on Beverly's character and exactly who she's working for and who the consortium is and what the artifact is, and sort of illuminating more of the mythology of the show and the conspiracy aspects of the show.

So those are things that I was really committed to delivering on this half of the second season. And there are going to be some major shifts. ... Last season we had always wanted to bring in Abby Carter, Carter's wife and Zoe's mom. As much as we wanted to do it last season, we were at least cognizant enough of the fact that it would have helped us to spend more time with these characters before you bring in somebody like that."

Specifically, the season premiere will address the events of last year's season finale and the consequences of the shift in the timeline, Paglia says.

"There's so much that we did with the season finale in terms of now Carter and Henry have all of this baggage of this alternate timeline that they've lived in, and they're the only ones that have any recollection of it," he says. "You have to sort of wrap that up in a way that's going to feel gratifying and also beg bigger ques-



ALTERNATE-REALITY TV: FERGUSON AND MORTON (WITH ERICA CERRA) ADJUST TO A NEW TIMELINE IN THE SEASON-PREMIERE EPISODE "PHOENIX RISING."

tions, I think, for the season as a whole. ... It has a huge impact on Henry's character for the entire season. That's part of his arc this season. And we're having the fallout from the accident with the artifact in the season finale from last season. It's going to change almost everybody's role in this town, starting from the season premiere. So everybody's sort of taking a 90-degree shift from where they were, which is interesting, because now they're all presented with new challenges. Just when you started to get to know somebody in one role, they're now being thrust into another one that makes them uncomfortable, and we're going to start learning more about them as they try to adjust."

Though they're coy on the details when talking to the press, the producers have let the actors in on their plans for the characters this season, and Morton couldn't be more pleased with the arc laid out in front of him. "Where they would like to take Henry between where we started and where I'll end up at the end of the season will turn out to be something really exciting," he says. "As a matter of fact, where all of us are going, we'll all end up in very different places by the end of this season, so I'm really looking forward to seeing how that develops."