

DVD Review: 'Cougar Town' With Courteney Cox Deserves Another Chance

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 24, 2010 - 10:16am

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CHICAGO – If you're like most people, you probably wrote off "Cougar Town" after hearing the overly simplified concept or watching the incredibly sporadic first few months of the ABC series. You should take another look. The Courteney Cox vehicle, now on DVD, changed gears so radically that there's a special feature about the mid-season shift in tone on the DVD and I have a feeling this series could improve even more in season two, finding a rhythm that it could maintain for years to come.



DVD Rating: **3.5/5.0**

"Cougar Town" stars the very gifted Cox as a single mom named Jules dealing with the pitfalls of being a 40-year-old woman in Florida in 2010. After being recently divorced, she manages weekly issues of motherhood, friendship, career, and dating. From the very-talented Bill Lawrence ("Scrubs"), "Cougar Town" started off a weak partner to ABC's brilliant "Modern Family" but ended strongly enough that I would be sorry to see it go from the ABC Wednesday night lineup.

When the show began, the emphasis was too squarely on Jules' attempts to bag a younger man and the jokes about the double-standard between women and men in their forties were hit a little too hard. Cox and her supporting cast didn't look comfortable and the show couldn't find a rhythm. Even then, there were hints of what could be, largely because Lawrence is a very talented TV writer and this cast is remarkably strong overall. But the show clearly needed a few revisions before mid-season.

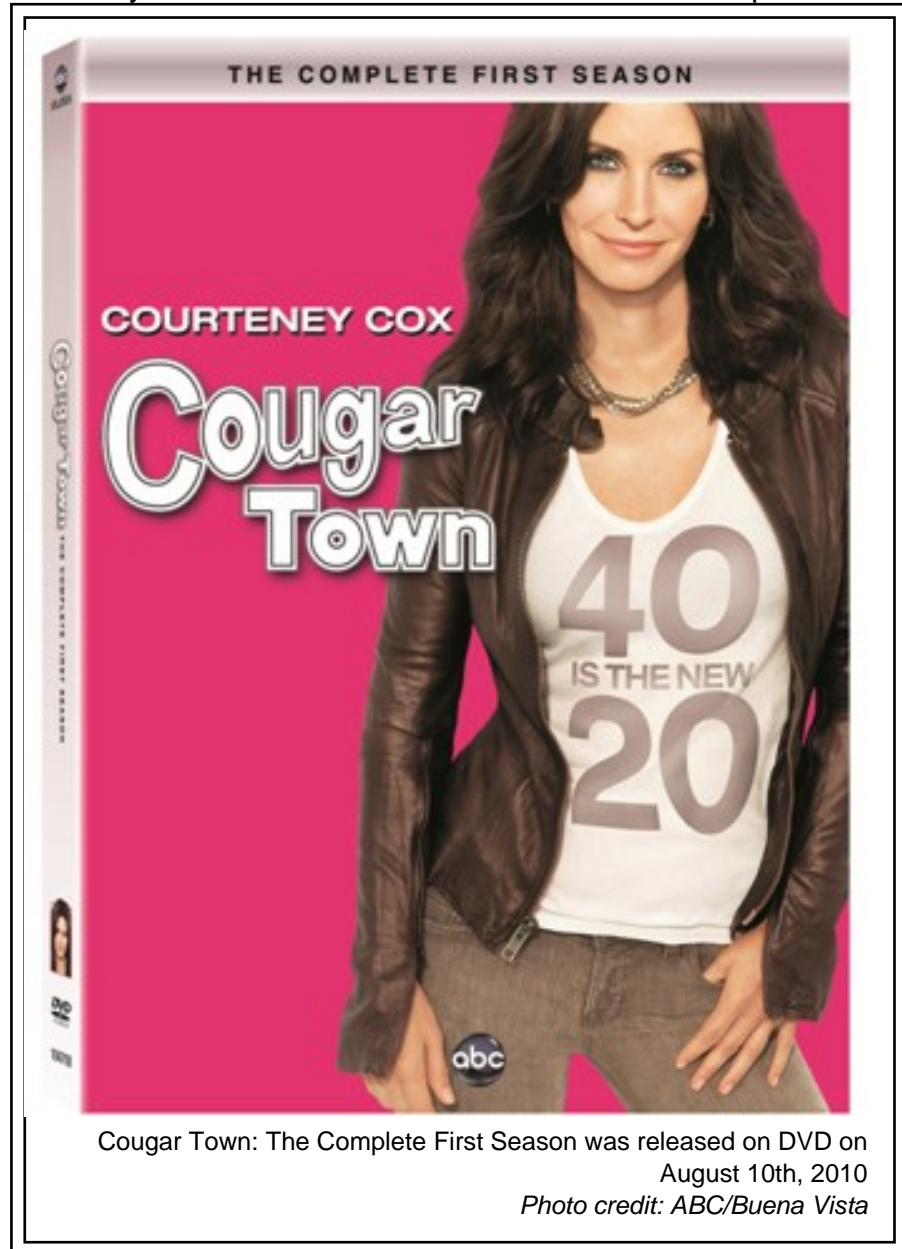


Cougar Town: The Complete First Season was released on DVD on August 10th, 2010

Photo credit: ABC/Buena Vista

As you'll learn on the refreshingly honest DVD feature "Taming Cougar Town," the show got those revisions and ditched most of the plotlines about Jules feeling her age and trolling Florida for attractive young men. It became much more of an ensemble comedy and the featurette goes as far as to compare it to "*Friends twenty years later*," which may be a bit of an overstatement but clearly states the switch in comedic style that turned the show around.

The show is still too inconsistent to stand with the best comedies on television and it really paled in comparison to its freshman classmates of the form last year in "Glee," "Modern Family," and "Community," but there's a lot to like here. First and foremost, Courteney Cox is giving one of the strongest lead female performances in a comedy currently on television. Her comic timing is perfect and it's a shame that the Academy didn't notice. A nomination would have helped draw viewers to a show that could use the help.



But Cox is not alone. The ensemble on "Cougar Town," particularly Dan Byrd, Busy Philipps, and Brian Van Holt, took about half of a season but they developed a great rapport. Sadly, I think the weak link is Christa Miller. She's talented but she seems to still be playing a slightly different show, choosing broad stereotypical comedy while the rest of the cast has toned it down and are delivering something more subtle. But Miller has great comic timing and could easily get on the same page by the time the second season premieres.

The writing on "Cougar Town" still fluctuates a bit but there's something redeeming about every episode in the entire second half of the season. In the last few years, several great comedies have taken time to find their feet, including "30 Rock" and "Community." It almost seems more common for a program to take time to find its rhythm than to see it jump out of the gate in perfect form. So it took "Cougar Town" longer than average. The important thing is that it got there.

The DVD release for the first season of "Cougar Town" is a bit lackluster. The show looks beautiful in its original HD broadcast, so why do fans who are willing to buy it have to visually downgrade to a merely average standard widescreen transfer? The show should be available on Blu-ray or at least look better than this standard release. The special features have a fun spirit but are all amazingly brief and the set includes no commentary tracks. The aforementioned featurette, while interesting, runs less than five minutes. It says something that the most entertaining featurette is a spoof of the now-gone sexual focus of "Cougar Town" from "Jimmy Kimmel Live" called "Saber-Tooth Tiger Town" featuring Cloris Leachman and Shirley Jones. You can probably guess how that goes, but you should still see it.

Special Features:

- o Bloopers
- o Deleted Scenes
- o "Taming Cougar Town"
- o "Jimmy Kimmel Live: Saber-Tooth Tiger Town"
- o "Ask Barb"
- o "Stroking It With Bobby Cobb"

"Cougar Town: The Complete First Season" stars Courteney Cox, Christa Miller, Busy Philipps, Dan Byrd, Josh Hopkins, Ian Gomez, and Brian Van Holt. It was released on DVD on August 17th, 2010 and is not rated. It runs 520 minutes.



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