

## TV Review: TBS Finds Modest Success with 'Sullivan & Son'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on July 19, 2012 - 2:13pm

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CHICAGO – TBS has been an unusual network over the last couple years, building a lot of comedy success off of repeats of hits like “The Big Bang Theory” and “Family Guy” while also satisfying a loyal audience for comedians like Tyler Perry and his line of sitcoms and Conan O’Brien and his talk show. However, an expected slate of original sitcoms never really surfaced until this year when “Men at Work” was a surprising hit that they hope to build on with tonight’s premiere of “Sullivan & Son,” another old-fashioned laughfest built on cliches but with a confidence that gives it moments that work.



TV Rating: **3.0/5.0**

“Sullivan & Son” was built around comedian Steve Byrne, who stars as Steve Sullivan, the son of an Irish-American bartender named Jack (Dan Lauria) and a Korean mother named Ok Cha (Jodi Long). In the series premiere (two episodes air tonight back-to-back), Steve comes home for a visit with his gorgeous girlfriend and a high-profile law firm job to brag about. Of course, it’s not long before he realizes that his girlfriend is materialistic and he’s too attached to his Blackberry. He leaves it all behind and decides to run the bar with his family, reconnecting with his friend Owen (Owen Benjamin), rekindling a lost love (Valerie Azlynn), sparring with his sister (Vivian Bang), and dealing with the mostly-drunk clientele (including Brian Doyle Murray and Christine Ebersole).



Sullivan and Son  
Photo credit: TBS

To say “Sullivan & Son” is cliched would be an understatement. Steve’s mother is a walking cliché and a lot of the drunken, blue-collar humor

feels like it was pulled directly from the "Cheers"-inspired bar sitcoms from the '80s and '90s. We've seen this before over and over and over again. There's a sometimes depressing lack of originality here.

However, not all sitcoms need to break the mold. Sometimes it's nice to have a solid sitcom that fits within the genre. There's a reason we have a new bar-set sitcom every few years. It's a tried-and-true setting for a comedy. And while the characters here are cliched, the cast often finds ways to make it fresh, especially Lauria, Bang, and Murray. It's also nice to see a lead like Byrne who doesn't mug to the camera. He plays the straight man, going for natural with his humor and that's refreshing on its own.

Ultimately, "Sullivan & Son" is a cliched sitcom that could have been significantly worse. It's a cheap beer at a local bar, something easy to digest on a Thursday night that doesn't challenge you and isn't overly memorable but won't give you a hangover either.

*"Sullivan & Son" stars Steve Byrne, Dan Lauria, Jodi Long, Owen Benjamin, Valerie Azlynn, Vivian Bang, Brian Doyle Murray, and Christine Ebersole. It was executive produced by Vince Vaughn, Peter Billingsley, and Rob Long. It premieres on TBS on Thursday, July 19, 2012 at 9pm CST.*



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