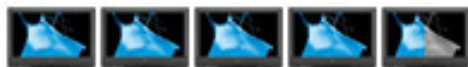


TV Review: Season Two Proves That ‘Bates Motel’ is Still the Place to Check In

Submitted by [DaveHC](#) [1] on March 3, 2014 - 4:25pm

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CHICAGO – The theme of Season Two is ‘unraveling’. Lies unravel, best laid plans unravel, loyalties unravel and most of all Norma and Norman Bates unravel in increasingly spectacular fashion. This pulpy re-imagining of the Bates family history is easily one of the best things on TV and the premiere episode of Season two isn’t afraid to take advantage of how attached audiences have become to the Twitchy pair and their assorted and very troubled friends and neighbors.



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

Of course that what’s always made Norman Bates such a magnificent character to hang a story on. He’s survived through three novels, several films and a made for TV movie because he’s a symbol of exactly what can go wrong with supposedly blissful small town America. If the show was less interested in mining it’s genre for simple thrills it might be enough to spark much needed debate on the shrinking availability of mental health resources. But the performances of Freddie Highmore and Vera Farmiga as Norman and Norma are so evocative they may do that anyway, Ah heck, wishful thinking.

Still there’s no denying this is more than entertainment. Highmore has done the impossible. He’s resurrected a character and is starting to own it. His Norman is not only believable it’s devastatingly so. Norma, who has never really taken on much of a life of her own is even more heartbreaking to watch. These are two characters who simply get more complex and interesting with every episode. Most people watching “Bates Motel” have seen mental illness up close enough to recognize people they’ve actually known in this pair and it’s downright painful to watch the downward spiral.



Bates Motel

Photo credit: Universal

“Gone But Not Forgotten” picks up right where last season left off. Norma gets wind the bypass road is going in after all and sets out to challenge the town council all while trying to juggle the revelation that Norman was last person to see Miss Watson alive the night before she was viciously murdered, Brandy does something you won’t likely see coming that may mark her as the craziest one of all and Norman and Norma’s co-dependent relationship is set up to take a seriously twisted turn.

I’m not a huge fan of the drug economy subplot the show has used as a setup. It’s a little too on the sleeve and seems a tiny bit outdated since noone has yet referred to the likely legalization of pot across the US. But “Bates Motel” is really just painting a picture of corruption under small town america where everyone has something they desperately want to keep hidden and will kill to protect. Like Hannibal, this is must watch TV for any horror fan.

Also must watch is the Walking Dead styled after live show talk event, “Bates Motel: After Hours.” being launched to showcase some on air interactivity between cast, creators and fans. That premieres 11 PM ET/PT.

For those who have waited, the Blu-ray edition of “Bates Motel Season One” is ready to help you catch up and contains

? Deleted Scenes

? Paley Center Panel Discussion with the Cast and Creative Team

“Bates Motel” stars Freddie Highmore, Vera Farmiga, Laurence Fishburne , and Caroline Dhavernas. It returns to A&E on March 3, 2014 at 9pm CST. “Bates Motel: Season One” was released by Universal Studios on September 17, 2013.



[10]

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