

TV Review: USA Network Finds Another Potential Gem in ‘Royal Pains’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on June 3, 2009 - 7:43pm

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CHICAGO – Premiere episodes of new series really only have to pass one test - will you return for the second week? The jury is still out on the health of a whole season, but the premiere of USA’s new “Royal Pains” is clever, witty, and promising enough that most viewers are very likely to return to see the good doctor in week two.



Television Rating: **3.5/5.0**

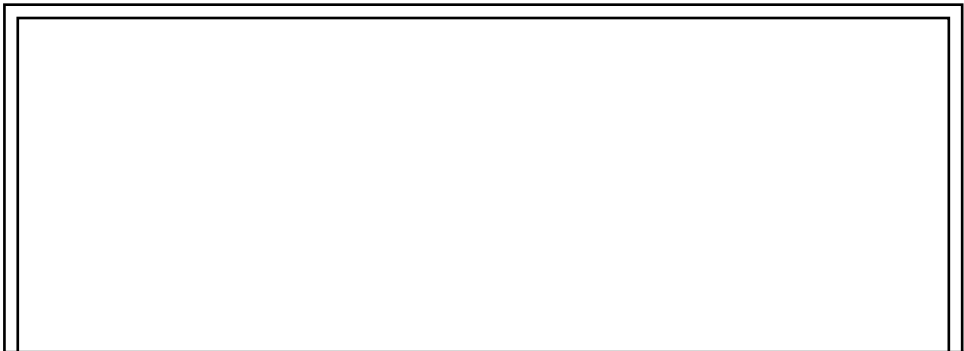
The USA Network has become one of the most successful on cable with an interesting formula - mix a charismatic lead who happens to be an expert at what he does, a partner to provide comedic relief, a mystery of the week, and maybe an overarching plotline to tie it all together. Serve it all in a unique setting.



“[Monk](#) [13],” “[In Plain Sight](#) [14],” the leads on “[Psych](#) [15],” “[Burn Notice](#) [16],” and now “Royal Pains” - there’s a definite character-driven through-line for all these shows. It may not break the mold, but if you like USA’s programming, “Royal Pains” should be quality TV medicine that agrees with you.

When “Royal Pains” opens, young doctor Hank Lawson (Mark Feuerstein) appears to have it all. He’s got a sexy girlfriend, swanky apartment in the Big Apple, and a thriving career. When one decision goes very wrong, he ends up unemployed, single, and blacklisted from the medical community.

Hank’s brother (Paulo Costanzo) whisks his sibling off for a wild weekend in the Hamptons and things get very unusual for the good doctor. The two crash a mega-mansion to go to a party and Hank jumps into action when a guest requires medical attention. Word travels fast among the rich and famous and Hank is quickly the go-to guy when the mega-rich need medical care. He’s a “concierge doctor,” whether he likes it or not.





Royal Pains
Photo credit: Justin Stephens

Jill Flint, Reshma Shetty, and the great [Campbell Scott](#) [3] co-star in the first episode. The cast is uniformly good although Costanzo’s wacky brother routine is a bit over-played in the pilot. Hopefully, this character will get some added depth and they’ll tone down the slightly strained attempts at comic relief.

“Royal Pains” is a deceptively simple show that masks how clever something like that is to pull off. There’s no overall mystery in the first episode, one that runs nearly 90 minutes without commercials. It plays much more like a feature film than a typical TV show. Feuerstein’s Hank has a complete character arc, falling from the top of his game and finding new friends and a new life in the Hamptons.

It’s an excellent script with tight, clever dialogue that doesn’t overplay the “playground of the rich” element. My biggest concern going in was that the wealthy patients of Dr. Lawson would be caricatures but that is far from the case, especially with the multi-faceted Scott playing the richest man in town.

Where will “Royal Pains” go from here? There’s a promising romance blooming, several supporting characters to keep things interesting, and a fantastic central performance from the immensely likable Feuerstein. With the super-cool Michael Westen on “Burn Notice” as his partner, these two gentlemen should make up one of the best blocks of television all summer long.

‘Royal Pains,’ which airs on USA, stars Mark Feuerstein, Paulo Costanzo, Jill Flint, Reshma Shetty, and Campbell Scott. The premiere airs on June 4th, 2009 at 9PM CST.



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