

## Blu-Ray Review: First Season of HBO's 'The Sopranos' Comes to HD

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 9, 2009 - 9:43pm

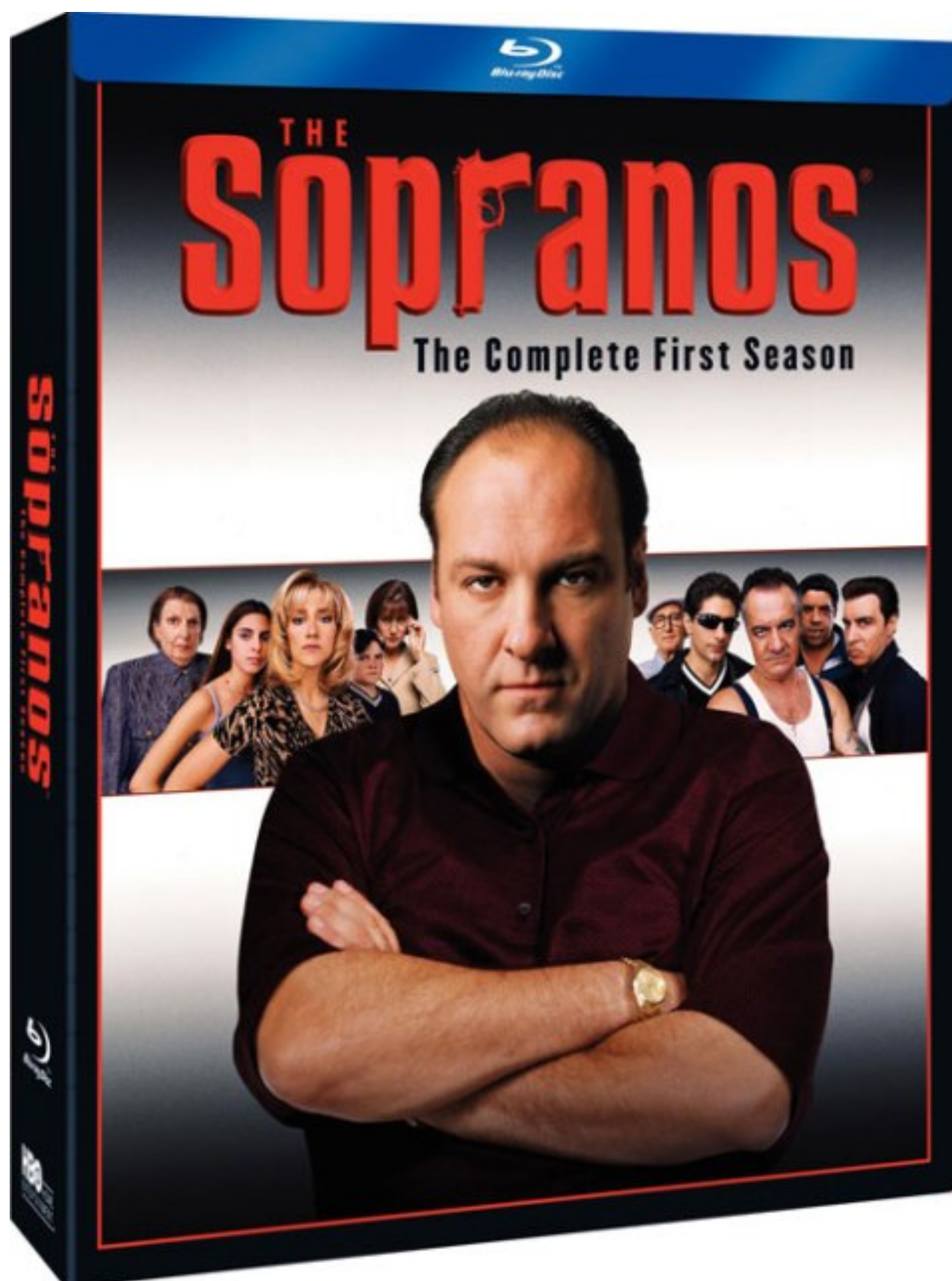
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CHICAGO – The network that redefined TV on DVD has some catching up to do when it comes to Blu-Ray. When you buy a Blu-Ray player for that TV-loving viewer in your family, they can buy all five seasons of “Lost,” the complete series of “Battlestar Galactica,” and even the original “Star Trek” on Blu-Ray, but most HBO series are just catching up. With an excellent recent release for “Rome,” the studio/network now turns its gaze to the best program of the '00s with the first season of “The Sopranos”.



Blu-Ray Rating: **4.0/5.0**

What more is there to say about “The Sopranos”? It changed television more than any program in decades, setting a new standard for the kind of complex, character-driven storytelling that could be accomplished in the hour-long format. With uniformly remarkable performances from the entire cast and iconic characters, “The Sopranos” transcended just being another TV show to become a true cultural phenomenon. Even if you’ve never seen the program, you’ve felt its influence on the shows that followed.



The Sopranos: The Complete First Season was released on Blu-Ray on November 24th, 2009.

Photo credit: HBO Home Video

I've seen the entirety of the first season of "The Sopranos" two times now (and most of it a third time) and will undoubtedly watch it again in the future. It is such rich, layered storytelling that (with the exception of season two) I personally believe that "The Sopranos" peaked early. TV simply doesn't get better than the first two seasons of "The Sopranos," an arc that could have almost served as an entire series in just two seasons. Imagine if that had been it. Would the legend of "The Sopranos" be even greater? It's not that they went too far downhill after one and two but there really wasn't any other direction to go when you start out so clearly at the top.

Now for the tough part? Should fans of "The Sopranos" who already own season one on DVD open the wallet for the upgrade? Sadly, even with my love for the program clear, I have to refuse that offer. The HD picture quality is striking (as is how young everyone looked in season one) and the audio is what you'd expect, but the special features are minimal without a single new piece of extra material. Don't ditch that old set looking for a commentary track, a deleted scene, or a retrospective featurette. Maybe HBO will pull those out for an upcoming season of "The Sopranos," but it's surprising that they didn't do so from the first release.

"The Sopranos" has diehard, episode-quoting fans. Trust me. I've been writing about the show for the last decade and I've heard from more than a few of them. With such a loyal following, it's surprising that HBO didn't do more to usher Tony, Carmela, Chris, and the rest of the gang into the world of HD. The first season of "The Sopranos" is essentially the bare minimum - what was already available but now in HD. For a show that never felt like anything else on television, it's a surprisingly average release.

*'The Sopranos: The Complete First Season' is released by HBO Home Video and stars James Gandolfini, Edie Falco, Michael Imperioli, Jamie-Lynn Sigler, Lorraine Bracco, Nancy Marchand, Aida Turturro, Vincent Pastore, Tony Sirico, Robert Iler, Steven Van Zandt, and Dominic Chianese. It was created by David Chase. It was released on Blu-Ray on November 24th, 2009.*

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