

# Seven ate Nine, Ten



## MY SAY ROBERT FIDGEON

**L**AST week's unofficial ratings illustrated how fine a line separates top spot from third in a three-horse commercial race.

The extraordinary performance of Seven's two overseas hits, *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost*, each attracting almost 2.5 million viewers, raised plenty of eyebrows.

Coupled with the performance of *The Amazing Race* on Tuesday and Thursday and the satisfactory debut of the Dicko-hosted *My Restaurant Rules*, last year's basket case gave Nine and Ten an unholy thumping, which brought forth some of the broadest smiles seen along Seven corridors in years.

The pity of it all, from Seven's point of view, was that the slice of ratings magic was achieved in a non-ratings week.

Though it was a smart move by Seven to move the launch of a couple of its big guns forward a week in a bid to capitalise on the success of its Australian Open tennis coverage, it was achieved against an opposition that held back many of its big guns until this week.

Official ratings began on Sunday and Seven found itself suddenly back to third. But its programming, with two hours of circus acts, gave the opposition an easier ride than they expected.

Ten launched its twice-a-week *The X Factor*, slotted first-runs of *L&O: Criminal Intent* and *NCIS*, and tonight premieres its *Aussie Queer Eye* and new American drama *Medium*.

*StarStruck* was Nine's only biggie to start last week; this week it swings in proven heavyweights *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *CSI: Miami*, *Without a Trace* and *McLeod's Daughters*, along with several other favourites.

Nine also gets to finally dump the cricket which, despite rating well for the Sunday-night decider, has been something of a millstone around its neck all summer.

The next two weeks will show just how



**Generation X:** *The X Factor* judges (left to right) Mark Holden, Kate Ceberano and John Reid.

different the Australian television landscape will be this year.

Seven bolted out of the gates and frightened the hell out of Nine and Ten. But the opposition is looking to even things up in week one of ratings.

## Last year's basket case gave Nine and Ten an unholy thumping

Ten would be happy with the Daniel MacPherson-hosted *X Factor* making its debut at 1.45 million, and *Criminal Intent*'s 1.48 million.

Nine's cricket final attracted 1.58 million nationally, but the network was savaged in the ratings last Thursday, normally one of its

strongest nights. Its lacklustre performance saw CEO David Gyngell call a meeting of executives on Friday morning to assess the network's disappointing effort.

Seven, however, has very much front-loaded its schedule, pulling out most of its biggies for the start of the year.

Its second half will be softer, but there's no doubt Nine allowed Seven to slip under its guard last week, and for the first time in ages is forced to play catch-up. It will be interesting to see how *Dancing With the Stars* performs as an early-year offering. Summer weather and daylight saving inevitably combine to soften the figures for 7.30pm shows.

Conversely, Melbourne's unseasonal foul summer weather last week had more people sitting in front of their tellies, Seven being the beneficiary with its new shows.

Next Wednesday the *Guide* will bring you the result of the first week's OzTAM ratings for the year.

## ► quick quiz

How much do you know about television? Here are a few questions to test your knowledge



1. Karina Brown (above) is renowned for co-hosting which long-running quiz show?
2. Who is national sports presenter on the ABC's 7pm news bulletin?
3. Which Geelong-raised actor has a role in the Channel 7 comedy *Arrested Development*?
4. David Brent, played by Ricky Gervais, is a character in which sitcom?
5. Name the man best known to audiences as *Outback Jack*.
6. Which news reporter is taking over from Steve Liebmann as co-host of *Today*?
7. Name the *Friends* sitcom spin-off that stars Matt LeBlanc.
8. Who was MC at the wedding of variety host Rove McManus and actor Belinda Emmett?
9. Which couple became engaged on the finale of reality show *Survivor: All-Stars*?
10. *Newlyweds* star Jessica Simpson (below) has been filming a part in a movie inspired by which TV series?



## Answers

1. *Sale of the Century*; 2. Peter Wilkins;
3. Portia de Rossi; 4. *The Office*;
5. Vadim Dale; 6. Karl Stefanovic;
7. *Joey*; 8. Peter Helliar;
9. Rob Mariano and Amber Brkich;
10. *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

# Cheers, tears and a beer with the boy from Shep

**A**USTRALIAN golf may be unable to attract enough prizemoney to lure the big-name Americans, but a kid from Shepparton showed last weekend that a feel-good story is just as effective as an expensive foreign superstar.

Jarrold Lyle turned Sunday's final round of the Heineken Classic into compulsory viewing and there wouldn't have been too many dry eyes in Melbourne loungerooms when the 23-year-old embraced his

dad and then his mum after finishing one shot from the leaders.

The kid who has fought cancer gave viewers somebody to cheer and the extent of my own emotion reminded me of the way I felt when Greg Norman so tragically lost any one of those US Masters.

But this was different. Jarrold lost by driving into the trees on the 72nd hole, yet it almost didn't matter because he'd already won just by getting as far as he did.

Craig Parry and Nick O'Hern

## WHERE'S THE REMOTE?

STEVE PERKIN

went out and played their playoff, but we were already drained and the outcome was almost inconsequential.

Seven's coverage was appropriate for the occasion and mother Sally-Anne's admission near the

end that she needed a beer was a classic.

It rated well, too. Though the cricket attracted between 50,000 and 80,000 more viewers during the afternoon, the final stages pushed figures in Melbourne beyond 310,000 and gave Seven a strong lead-in to its Sunday-night news.

Not that it mattered. Nine's news, one of the more extraordinary success stories in television, again dominated, peaking at an incredible 498,000.

None of this is to say that Seven's golf coverage is perfect. It's Craig or it's Parry. It shouldn't be Paz. And it's Wayne or it's Wayne Riley. It shouldn't be Radar. Too blokey. And it assumes we know who they're talking about.

I also have a problem with every shot of the playoff not being live. If Parry had done what he did in the States last year when he holled a six-iron to win, we may not have seen it live because some of Sunday's action came off tape.