

## Soapy!

Your weekly round-up of the *creme de la merde* of British acting

IT'S a tearjerker in **Coronation Street** (ITV1, **Mon, Wed and Fri 7.30pm and 8.30pm**) this week as soap royalty, Vera Duckworth, dies while in Blackpool. The green-eyed monster (aka Maria) is becoming increasingly aggravated by Carla and Liam's relationship, but things are set to get worst when Carla books a double hotel room for a business trip with Liam. That can only mean one thing! Ryan has Michelle worried as he goes missing and David is over the moon with the luck he's having with the ladies... well, Tina anyway.

Elsewhere, on a lighter note, the factory girls get ready for Vicki's knicker party.



It's all fun and games down Walford way this week (**Eastenders** BBC1 **Mon & Fri 8pm, and Tues & Thurs 7.30pm**) as

Ronnie breaks into the club to find Jack, only to find that he has disappeared through the fire exit. Exciting stuff! Phil's in trouble with his mother, after Peggy finds out that he sold the Car Lot to Jack. Dawn is tidying Jay's bedroom when she finds a flick knife. Shocked by her discovery, she tells Jase. Meanwhile, Hazel's worried that Minty doesn't want to get married now she's suggested a Country and Western theme (I wonder why?).



Over in **Hollyoaks** (Channel 4 **Mon-Fri 6.30pm**), Tina finds out she is pregnant with Jacqui and Tony's baby, but will there be another McQueen in Chester as Mercedes offers to arrange an abortion for her. The new psycho in soapland, Jake, takes Nancy on a romantic holiday to... the Peak District, but all is not well as Charlie ends

up in hospital. Carmel takes her fitness test to get into the police force but then is too scared to look at her results. And, Sarah gets a drink thrown over her after an argument with Nancy.



Finally, in **Neighbours** (BBC1 **Mon-Fri 1.45pm and 5.35pm**), everyone's fave teacher Susan gets arrested and even Toadie (is he the only lawyer in the world?) feels helpless. Declan is kidnapped this week but does anyone really care? Well, if you do, everything turns out fine except Oliver gives away his fortune to save Declan. The most disturbing storyline of the week goes to Valda, who gets a new recruit for her sexy online lingerie venture.

Jessica Earnshaw

## Golden Oldie... Sweet Valley High

REMEMBER *Sweet Valley High*? The television series (Josh Goldstein) was based on the books by Francine Pascal and was broadcasted from 1994 to 1998.

For four years, this light-hearted drama provided us with shallow entertainment that I am sure at the age of about ten, most of us devoted thirty minutes every Saturday morning to.



The high school comedy/drama, which was set in sunny California, revolved around the lives of twins,

Jessica and Elizabeth Wakefield played by Brittany and Cynthia Daniel. The sisters always were getting into some kind of emotional and moral turmoil with Elizabeth taking a considerate, heartfelt view and in contrast Jessica displaying deviance, the stereotypical twin distinction.

Their equally popular and beautiful friends Lila Fowler, Enid Rollins, Todd Wilkins and Michael Perl, display the stereotypical perfect Hollywood cast of the blond cheerleaders, the athletic boyfriend, the studious brunette, the stupid surfer dude and the annoying nerd. Many of us grew up reading the books, and naturally became addicted to the show.

Similar to other programmes of the genre such as *Heart Break High* and *Saved by the Bell*, *Sweet Valley High* is not to be taken seriously. The plot lines were terribly cheesy, yet at the same time awesome to watch and seemed so meaningful at the time. Often depicting a moralistic message such as Jessica's

obsession with appearance and social status and inconsideration for others is always met with a comeuppance and depiction of her wickedness, overall having an uplifting message.

I am sure the series had no major effects on anybody's pre-teen life and most of us would not relate to this satirical, superficial show, yet the extreme stereotypical characters may have implanted the belief that we inhabit a shallow world and would grow up to be such artificial characters.

Unfortunately the show only ran for 56 episodes. Since *Sweet Valley High*, one twin since went on to star in a perfume advert, and not much else. But for nothing else, let's rejoice the time once spent on Saturday mornings with the Wakefield twins and their gang and all that moralistic advice from the fantastic world of *Sweet Valley High*.

Madeleine Carroll

## Videogames - 2008 Preview



**Super Smash Brothers Brawl**  
Wii

CONSIDERING *Melee* was the most popular GameCube title, there is no argument as to why this is so eagerly awaited. A surprisingly deep take on the fighting genre featuring Nintendo's finest, as well as the third party offerings of Sonic and Solid Snake. Who wouldn't want to landmine Pikachu? New characters, online play and the ability to make your own levels is getting fans sweeter than obese users of Wii Fit. Out in March in the US, and most likely summer here.



**Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots**  
PS3

THE only thing stopping gamers purchasing a PS3 right now is because this game is not yet out. A bizarrely aged and even more bizarrely moustachioed Solid Snake returns to claim his pension and finish the series once and for all.

Realistic shootouts, physics and stupidly stunning visuals provide more than reasons enough to be excited. Unless they pull another Raiden on us. Be ready to drop 300 notes on a PS3 this Spring to and bathe in Kojima genius.



**World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King**  
PC

IF Mr T and William Shatner can't get you excited for Blizzard Entertainment's ridiculous cash cow, nothing will. The last expansion was packed to the brim with new content, and *Wrath of the Lich King* promises to add even more stuff for high level WoW addicts, including a rise in the level cap, a whole new continent to explore and the introduction of hero classes. Expect *WoW* subscription numbers to hit at least ten million when this ships in the second half of the year.



**Rock Band**  
Xbox 360, PS3, PS2

THE *Guitar Hero* series has seen an amazing amount of success over the last couple of years, but what happens when you add drums, bass and singing to the mix? The answer is, unsurprisingly, hilarity. With an impressive track list and the ability to download whole albums from the online song store, *Rock band* looks to be an improvement on the original *Guitar Hero* in almost every way. The game has been melting faces in the US since last November and should arrive on our shores before the summer.



**Little Big Planet**  
PS3

LITTLE Big Planet is visually striking, but this is not all the game has going for it; behind its colourful graphics, lively animation and great music is an incredibly powerful creative tool. You see, LBP is all about 'emergent gameplay' - Sony's fancy new buzzword for what is essentially a cooperative level editor. Meet your friends online, upload your levels and share the experience. With potentially unlimited replay value, *Little Big Planet* is one of the most exciting looking games for PS3 in 2008.



**Grand Theft Auto IV**  
Xbox 360, PS3

The game that defined the last generation returns, ditching the comical stylings for a brutal new perspective on the New York underworld. Sorry, Liberty City. Obviously. Rockstar claim this is a reinvention of the series, and as long as they fix the aiming and keep the sandbox gameplay intact expect next-gen hardware sales to jump a trillion fold when this is released sometime this year. Let's just hope Rockstar take a leaf out of Crackdown's book and include cooperative online play.