

# Funny business

CBC's new **Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show** brings the laughs and lunacy of Mark Breslin's comedy clubs to late-night television

**D**on't say you weren't warned: *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show* begins with a foul, noxious flurry of profanity that would send decent men like, say, Andrew Dice Clay and Sam Kinison, into spasms of moral outrage.

As co-hosts Tim Conlon and Carolyn Dunn exchange ribald quips underneath a persistent track of censored bleeps (this is CBC, after all), one senses that *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show* might not be all that different from its nightclub cousin.

*Penis!* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

You're acquainted, surely, with Mark Breslin's sprawling fiefdom of funnydom? Of course you are.

## Sexual ingredients

With more than 20 locations across Canada serving 1.5 million chuckleheads a year, Yuk Yuk's has become the McDonald's of Canadian comedy.

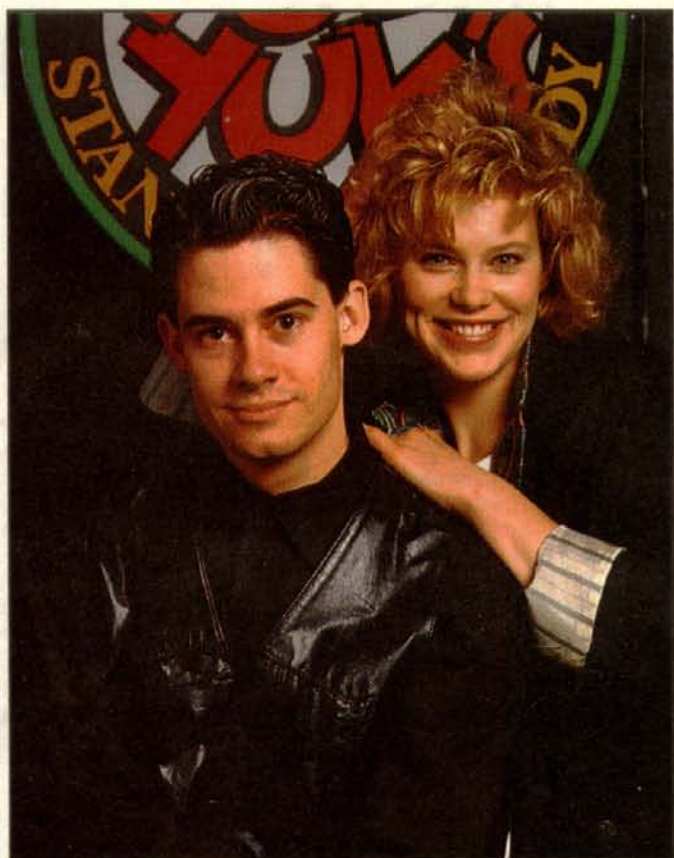
Except, in place of special sauce and sesame seed buns, owner and sous chef Breslin has concocted a verbal recipe heavy on the F-word and other tart sexual ingredients.

So who can be surprised that *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show* is no less randy or roisterous? Surely its *raison d'être* is to seduce the sun-stroked minds of summer-softened Canadians as they search fruitlessly for old *Newhart* reruns after the 11 o'clock news. Heh, heh.

"I bought this girlie magazine," comic Mike Cliff gleefully confides in the opening half-hour instalment. "I got excited just looking at it."

Cliff's humor — sinister, abstruse, incongruent — resembles Stephen Wright's mad observations insofar as both comics know how to geometrically alter our planes of consciousness without appearing to even know what they're doing.

Yes, Cliff is an idiot savant,



Hosts Tim Conlon and Carolyn Dunn showcase comedy talent on *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show*, Wed., 11:30 p.m., chs. 3, 5, 12

even if he doesn't know what the term means.

Then there's Sherry O'Brien, a bright, attractive agit-popster whose sole comic aim is to inflict abuse on macho dullards who score cheap sexual points at the expense of women.

Selflessly describing herself as the "designated estrogen anti-Christ", O'Brien launches into a hilarious harangue against male-type persons, challenging the time-honored assumption that women should be seen and not heard.

"You can say what you want and I can't?" she asks indignantly. "And why is that again? Because you can urinate out of a moving car and I can't."

A lot of *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show* goes like that. Taped at a

dozen different Yuk Yuk's clubs, each half-hour episode will feature four homegrown standups from the Yuk Yuk's stable (100 per cent Canadian, eh?) and various bits of filmed mayhem to leaven the mixture, including a mock-Andy Rooney piece called *Critic At Large* and a weekly Breslin feature, *Your Hometown*.

In his segment on Vancouver, the diminutive Yuk Yuk's boss gussies himself up as a Davie St. hooker and flirts with passing motorists. Funny? Sick? Silly? Sensationalist?

All of the above.

"There are a lot of standup shows on TV, but the idea was to get one that was very non-antiseptic," says CBC producer Doug Syrota.

So *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show* is cheeky and true to Breslin's vision.

Co-producer Brian Ainsworth of Yuk Yuk's, working hand-in-hand with Syrota, made sure the 13-part series would summon the spirit of a typical comedy nightclub experience.

"We very much wanted to achieve a balance," says Ainsworth, mindful that not all of CBC's viewers reside on the hip side of middle-age.

So the profanity and modernism of acts like Cliff and O'Brien are dutifully balanced by chummy, mainstream performers who wouldn't be out of place in a Catskills resort.

Herb Dixon is one of these. His jokes on beach culture and summer boating, are, to be charitable, seasonally appropriate. You will not likely die laughing at any of it.

## Wincing at bad bits

For instance, Dixon makes great outboard-motor noises with his lips — "vrrrrrr, vrrrrrr, vrrrrrr" — but we've checked into this summer camp too many times before.

"You know you've overdone it when a fly goes to land on you and it vaporizes," he says about the perils of tanning.

But that's the beauty of *Yuk Yuk's — The TV Show*. Part of the fun is wincing at the bad bits as you wait for the good stuff.

"We're trying to do really fast paced programming here," says Ainsworth, who never lets any one comic linger longer than four minutes.

So let's let Mike Cliff close the show:

"I like walkin' in the doughnut shop: You got any day-old doughnuts?"

"Nope, sorry, we're all out. I'll wait."

— Craig MacInnis