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PARADISE HOTEL RETURNS

After a 4 and a 1/2 year wait, PARADISE HOTEL 2, sequel to the semi-legendary 2003 reality series Paradise Hotel, premieres February 4/08. Paradise Hotel 2 will air at 9 p.m. ET on My Network TV. A Mature Adult version, exposing "even more steamy exclusive footage" will air at 1 a.m. ET on Fox Reality.

Casting for Paradise Hotel 2 was low-key, with a single casting notice appearing on Craigslist in early June/07 for "fun, adventurous, outspoken, and competitive individuals between the ages of 21-30."

The first Paradise Hotel was a 2003 Fox summer series about an odd-numbered group of young (twenties), heterosexual, single, men and women competing to stay in a luxurious hotel resort. The show was a big hit and got renewed for an additional 15 episodes (making 30 in total) while still filming, meaning the contestants had to be convinced to extend their stays. The single season continues in re-runs on Fox Reality and has built up a bit of a cult following.

Each week co-ed couples paired up and shared a room. The person left without a partner had to leave, and was sometimes replaced by a new person. The series famously ended when the male and female winners (from different couples) were given the choice of splitting their \$250,000 prize money with their partners or keeping it all for themselves. The guy split it with his partner, the girl stiffed long suffering Dave Kerpen.

There's no doubt part of the lasting appeal of the original Paradise Hotel is its promotion of casual, promiscuous sex. There's also no doubt that it was this that limited the show's appeal to advertisers. After season 1 Fox found it hard to sell advertising for a second season. The producers, UK production company Mentorn ("which has produced various versions of the show around the world," according to Wikipedia), essentially re-did the same show with a blander cast and setting. Forever Eden premiered on Fox in 2004 and was pulled after 7 episodes, creating the famous Missing 18 - the number of Forever Eden episodes that are still out there - somewhere. With a 1 a.m. airtime for the Fox Reality version, you can't help but think the producers (and the two broadcasters) have asked themselves, why deny the people what they want? Instead of trying to soften the show's hard edges, embrace them. They seem to be courting titillation this time. Maybe they figure crossing over to soft-core isn't that bad of a career choice. Lyle Burwell President, VPTV, The Directory of Viewer Participation TeleVision. VPTV tracks application information for all North American, English, viewer participation programming.