

1/14/04

Must-be DVD

Don't blink. It's already on disc

By MICHAEL GILTZ

PARIS Hilton knows about instant gratification. So it's only fitting that she and Nicole Richie will barely have had time to unpack their bags before **"The Simple Life"** TV show comes to DVD on Jan. 20.

"It's the fastest release ever!" laughed one Fox Home Entertainment executive. "It's coming out on DVD just days after the final episode airs."

The reasoning is simple: If 15 million people watch the season finale of the hit reality series, why wait one year or even six months to put it out on DVD? The show will be in

danger of looking like yesterday's news (reality shows have a half life of about 10 minutes), and you'll just have to spend money reminding people about the show all over again.

"The Simple Life" is the most dramatic example of a growing trend for TV shows and movies. Studios eager to take advantage of the millions they spend promoting shows and movies — not to mention dipping into the DVD pot of gold right away — are releasing the sets faster and faster.

Season one of **"Alias"** came out just before season two debuted on ABC, and season two of **"24"** came out just before season three began on Fox. This lets hardcore fans start collecting and gives casual viewers a chance to catch up (especially important on serialized shows like **"24,"** which explains why they are leading the DVD pack, instead of stand-alone stalwarts like **"Law & Order"**).

This desire for instant pleasure has been building for awhile. Baseball fans get barraged with ads urging them to buy the World Series commemorative DVD before the final out has been scored.

Some TV miniseries air ads for the DVD and soundtrack before viewers find out how the story ends. And PBS was selling Ken Burns' epic **"Jazz"** even before the show had debuted.

Series head to DVD faster to cash in on popularity. Some recent releases:

"The Shield"

Second season ended:
April 1, 2003

DVD release date:
Jan. 6, 2004



"MTV Punk'd"

First season ended:
May 5, 2003

DVD release date:
Jan. 20, 2004



"The Simple Life"

Season ends:
January 14, 2004

DVD release date:
Jan. 20, 2004



"Alias"

Second season ended:
May 4, 2003

DVD release date:
Dec. 2, 2003



"24"

Second season ended:
May 20, 2003

DVD release date:
Sept. 9, 2003

