

Next wave: bad kids, brave wives

By MICHAEL GILTZ

THINK reality shows have gone as far as they can? Think again.

Wife swapping and boot camp for back-talking teens are just the latest outrageous reality shows from overseas that are coming soon to America.

Because Britain is the home of smashes like "American Idol" and "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," most British hits are instantly snapped up by the major networks looking for a new reality genre.

Up first? "Wife Swap."

In this hit show — re-named simply "The Swap" by a prudish ABC for its a seven-part series in spring or summer — two women exchange families (but not bedrooms) for 10 days.

The debut episode in England caused a stir by pairing a white woman who is opposed to interracial marriages with a sexist black man and his family. The less incendiary US version has a California New Age-y vegetarian swapping lives with a sub-

urban Italian family from the Northeast. ABC's reality guru Andrea Wong told Variety: "We made the pilot and just loved it. It's funny; it's dramatic."

And back in the UK, they've come up with a spin-off: "Celebrity Wife Swap" is the No. 1 show on Britain's top commercial channel right now.

Another big UK hit? The deliciously titled "Brat Camp," which takes six misbehaving teenagers and sends them on an Outward Bound-type journey for 50 days in Utah where they face subzero temperatures

and no-nonsense instructors.

The kids are genuinely troubled: Dan, Tom and James are all drug addicts, Charlie and Fran (the show's breakout brat) have destructive rages and Rachael is a binge drinker.

Watching these kids who used to get away with murder paying their dues is terrific fun — with counselors devising punishments like making every kid who swears pick up a stone and put it in their backpack.

The finale airs tomorrow night in Britain, with viewers tuning in to see which

kids "graduate" and which have more growing up to do.

According to the show's producers, they've held off until the final ratings are in before deciding which overseas offer they'll take.

Another batch of episodes is already in the works and James — the 16-year-old drug abuser — says the show has helped him, and even his friends. Sort of.

"One of my mates is like, 'You're my idol; I'm only smoking [pot] once a week now,'" James told a British magazine.



"Brat Camp" heads to U.S.

309/04