

**GOSSIP GIRL**

Serena (Blake Lively) and Blair (Leighton Meester) step up at the Metropolitan Museum of Art



# NEW YORK, NEW YORK

For the cast and crews that film in New York, this is the city where dreams—and TV shows—are made



**BLUE BLOODS**

Frank Reagan (Tom Selleck) heads to county court

**W**HEN THE STARS of the hit drama *Blue Bloods* need to describe a crime on the streets of New York, the scene requires a little less acting than usual. That's because, at the head of a growing Gotham trend, *Blue Bloods* has eschewed the typical L.A. soundstage, preferring instead to capture New York's rich ethnic mosaic by shooting in real Brooklyn neighborhoods.

This season an unprecedented 17 TV shows both are set and are filming within New York's city limits, including all three of CBS' new dramas, *Unforgettable*, *A Gifted Man* and *Person of Interest*—plus an upcoming midseason police drama executive produced by Robert De Niro. These shows join an already burgeoning hometown crop. Showtime's *Nurse Jackie* is set in Manhattan, where the show captures exterior shots when not on its soundstage in Queens. And while CBS' *The Good Wife* and Showtime's *The Big C* may take place in cities in the Midwest, the shows are filmed, respectively, in Brooklyn and nearby Stamford, Conn.



**PERSON OF INTEREST**

John Reese (Jim Caviezel) stakes out Grand Central Station

Until recently, conventional wisdom has held that it's too expensive, unwieldy or just plain cold to shoot a show in New York. But with Albany sponsoring a 30 percent tax credit for in-state productions, and new soundstage facilities popping up all over New York City, many of prime time's most popular programs are back, taking advantage of a fresh and colorful backdrop that changes with the seasons, but never sleeps.

**THE CITY THAT NEVER SAYS NO**

Ironically, the oldest show that may have started today's new wave of Gotham-based production is The CW's *Gossip Girl*; executive producer Stephanie Savage remembers having to fight with executives to shoot the show back East. Shooting the frothy teen drama on the steps of the real Metropolitan Museum of Art or inside the actual bar at the Palace Hotel, instead of faking it in Burbank, gives the show richness and an elevated level of artistry.

"So much of the look and feel of *Gossip Girl* is tied to the architecture of New York—a scene at Bendel's department store contrasted with the streets of Brooklyn," Savage explains. "We felt like we needed to be in the place where these things are really happening."

*Person of Interest* co-creator Jonathan Nolan agrees. "New York is a city filled with wonders, and things you could never dream of sitting in a writers' room," he says. "Rather than expending creative energy pretending you're there, you can just point a camera in any direction, and it's New York. You don't have to fake it."

That's why Katherine Oliver, who heads the city's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting, says that one of her top priorities is to ensure producers easy access to the city. "We want to work with producers to make their cinematic dreams come true."



### BIG APPLE, BIG TALENT

New York's TV and film business employs more than 100,000 workers and supports more than 4,000 ancillary businesses. That adds up to more than \$5 billion per year, not counting the dollars from tourists who come to stay in Chuck Bass' Empire. With such high stakes, it's not just New York that's offering big rebates to Tinseltown.

But as Oliver is quick to point out, the Big Apple has a unique additional allure: "Its crew base is the finest in the world." That's why *Big C* showrunner Jenny Bicks says she was so happy her show ended up in

New York's metro area, where she was able to hire back crew members with whom she had previously worked on *Sex and the City*.

In addition, New York is a city where great actors love to live and work. *Good Wife* executive producer Michelle King says that with Broadway stars at the show's disposal "we've benefited tremendously, because of the magnificent acting talent based here."

### CHANNELING THE ENERGY

For an actor, just being in New York can enable a performance. "The city gives off a different energy that can't be replicated anywhere else," says *Unforgettable* star Poppy Montgomery. "You can feel it when you're shooting on the streets." And like her *Gossip Girl* character Lily van der Woodsen, Kelly Rutherford actually lives on New York's Upper East Side. "So I get to people-watch and character study all day long," she says.



#### UNFORGETTABLE

Carrie Wells (Poppy Montgomery) and Al Burns (Dylan Wash) outside Little Italy's hottest restaurant

But on the downside, as *The Good Wife*'s Christine Baranski notes with a laugh, on the real-life city streets "you have to be ready for anything." Often, the paparazzi are the problem, calling

out actors' real names during takes, their camera flashes reflecting in windows. As *Gossip Girl*'s Savage admits, "it can make

it difficult for the cast to concentrate. Sometimes we even have to dub the dialogue later, so that you can't hear the clicking of cameras."

And then, of course, there are the occasional overzealous fans. *Blue Bloods* star Tom Selleck has found location shoots to have "a rougher, improvisational quality. If you set up a rope line in L.A., everybody behaves. But in New York, they'll step over the rope and keep walking—that's how we get what we call 'bandits' in our shots all the time.

"My goal," the actor adds with a laugh, "is to get them to start calling me 'Frank' instead of 'Tommy' or 'Magnum.' Because then, if we get a bandit, at least they're saying the right name." — *Jim Colucci*

## SOUND OFF

### SOME OF THE FUNNIEST LINES AREN'T SCRIPTED

Quotes from celebs across the Web  
— Kim Donohue



**Jon Cryer**  
(*Two and a Half Men*):

"The chance to appear shirtless more often."

on aol.tv.com, about what he's looking forward to in the next season



**Ashton Kutcher**  
(*Two and a Half Men*):

"I'm looking forward to playing the underwater scenes."

in answer to the same question



**Jessica Lowndes** (*90210*):

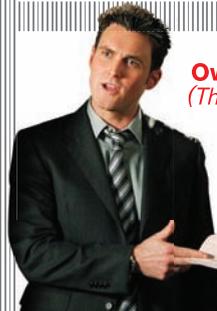
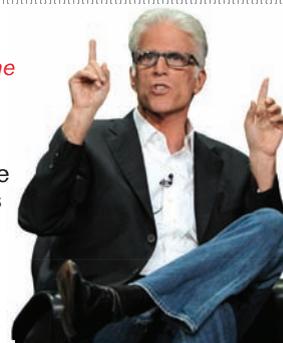
"It's a problem. I tell everyone I love cupcakes and I kept getting them delivered to my room."

on The Crush, discussing her off-screen "addiction" issues

**Ted Danson**  
(*CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*):

"To be held in low esteem by Larry David is like being on Nixon's enemies list."

on esquire.com, about his personal relationships



**Owain Yeoman**  
(*The Mentalist*):

"Simon [Baker] stole Columbo's trench coat right out from under him."

on E! Online, about how the show pokes fun at character elements