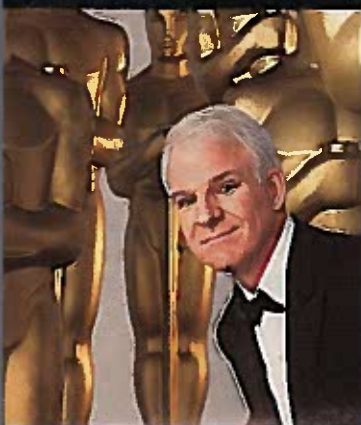


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## PREVIEWS



## OSCAR BUZZ IN THE AIR

The 75th annual Academy Awards ceremony, which is also the 50th anniversary telecast, will be presented Sunday evening on ABC live from Hollywood, hosted by Steve Martin, above. The show, which airs in about 150 countries, last year posted a 25.4 rating/42 share average in U.S. households with 41.78 million total viewers. For more Oscar coverage, including plans for the first HDTV broadcast, see Page 8. And for a sweet look at what viewers at the New York Oscar party will be having for dessert, see Blink on Page 2.

## MIP TV GEARING UP

Although attendance may be dampened by the prospects of a war, the 40th annual MIP TV takes place on the French Riviera for five days beginning March 24. Located in the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, MIP started as a market for broadcasters to buy and sell TV shows and movie packages. It now also includes cable, satellite, online, home video and advertising, as well as buying and selling show formats.

## DOWNSTREAM TO YAHOO!

This week Yahoo! announces a new subscription service that will stream live TV shows, news, sports and more under the brand name Yahoo! Platinum. Among the first events to reach cyberspace will be 56 games from the NCAA men's basketball tournament known as March Madness, up to, but not including, the Final Eight. Subscribers can also pay to get extra content from *Survivor* and *American Idol*, as well as programming from ABC News, CBS MarketWatch, CNBC, Discovery and others. The video images are "VHS quality," said Yahoo! Senior VP Jim Moloshok. ■

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## Black Caucus Demands Cable Networks Diversify

### House Lawmakers Threaten Hearings, Legislation Unless Minority Ownership Increases

By Doug Halonen

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are turning up the heat on the cable TV industry, demanding more opportunities for minorities, particularly when it comes to owning cable TV networks.

"We want more minority-owned networks on the air," said Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., who is leading the charge on the cable industry for the caucus.

Cable's minority profile is of sufficient concern that 37 of the caucus's 38 members recently signed a

letter that threatens severe regulatory consequences and the possibility of new legislative initiatives if cable's prospects for minorities don't improve significantly.

In an interview, Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., said the caucus decided not to release the letter officially

because cable TV industry representatives agreed to discuss possible solutions to the diversity issues behind the scenes.

But the letter was being circulated in industry circles last week.

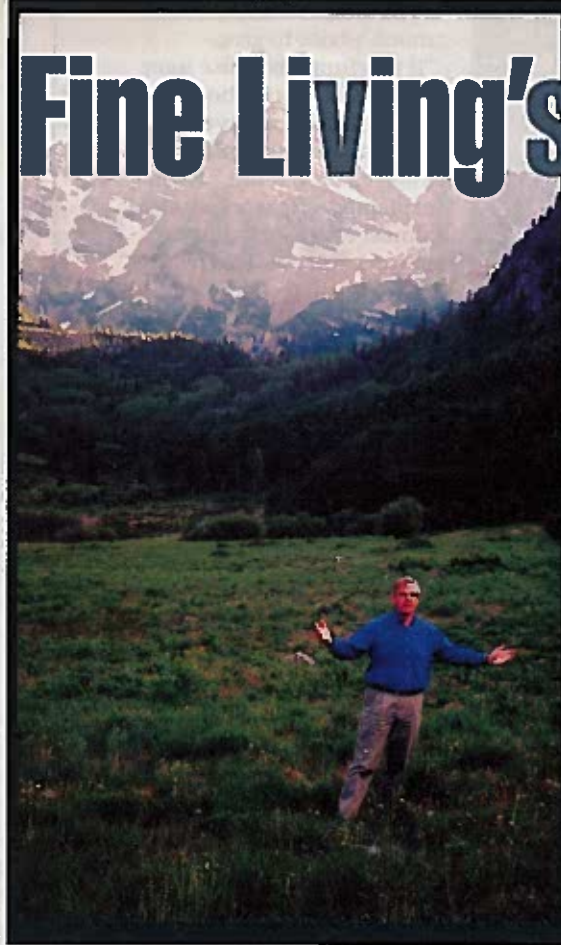
"Since we have not seen ample  
*continued on page 26*

## Fine Living's Fast Start

### New Shows Target Fine Wine, Architecture and Lifestyle

By Chris Pursell

Despite a difficult advertising and economic environment, the Fine Living Network has gotten off to a faster start than expected in its first 12 months, putting it on track to reach 20 million viewers by the end of this year.

*continued on page 24*

**THE FINER THINGS** Sheila Bridges: *Designer Living*, above, and *Food & Wine Magazine Classics*, at left, exemplify Fine Living's celebration of the good life.

## Tense Time For 'Bubble' Shows

### Ratings, Timing and Creativity Factor in Networks' Renewal Decisions

By Leslie Ryan

When *7th Heaven* debuted in 1996, it was one of The WB's low-

est-rated shows that fall and anything but a slam dunk to be renewed. Then in the first quarter of the next year, its female teen ratings showed growth. And network executives liked where it was headed creatively.

Although it averaged only 3.2 million total viewers that first season, The WB took a chance and brought it back for a second season. That patience paid off. Today it is in its seventh season and is one of the network's high-

est-rated shows in young demos, averaging 7.2 million total viewers a week.

Knowing when to have patience and when to pull the plug is a tricky business. Going into the final stretch of this season, executives at every broadcast network face similar decisions about shows on the ratings bubble—  
*continued on page 26*

## SPECIAL REPORT



## HISPANIC TELEVISION

Univision is the dominant Spanish-language network and the fifth-largest network overall, ahead of both The WB and UPN. Telemundo is taking aim at No. 1 with locally oriented newscasts, and other challengers are on the horizon, such as La Familia Network and mun2.

See Page 14

**TOM SHALES**  
Hating the Rich  
Is Healthy

Page 27



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