

# Soapy and Steamy

A heartwarming indie and the final *L Word* dramarama. **By Candace Moore**

DVD Debate



**SHE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU**

In *He's Just Not That Into You*, Drew Barrymore is a straight girl and the lone woman working at a gay men's magazine. I love Barrymore, a brilliant, openly bisexual actor who has been one of Hollywood's most vocal supporters of same-sex marriage rights. So I wanted to support her by buying the DVD, which deserves a special lesbian reading. Despite a number of really talented actors (Scarlett Johansson, Jennifer Aniston and *Big Love's* Ginnifer Goodwin), the movie is a meandering look at some bewildering behavior in male-female relationships, and besides Goodwin—the real star of the movie—most of these actors get too little screen time, have one-dimensional characters and only one of the men is even remotely likeable. Worst yet? Barrymore makes rare appearances in the film it feels like she was tacked in for her famous name more than her quirky comic relief. The heterosexual relationships in this movie, which is based on a badly written dating advice book, are so dreadful that if being gay really were a choice, this movie would lead me to wonder why some women chose to remain straight. (*newline.com*)

[DAM]

**We Still ♥ Drew!**

For our recap of Drew Barrymore's greatest films, check out [curvemag.com](http://curvemag.com)



Scenes from *Steam*

These new DVD releases heat things up in complex, melodramatic ways.

**Steam (Wolfe):** Three women of different generations gather to therapeutically sweat it out at their local spa in Kyle Schickner's new film. Together the strangers process (often wordlessly) the complexity of life's troubles and their own shifting romances. Nineteen-year-old college newbie Elizabeth's (Kate Siegel) narrative plays as a coming-of-age and coming-out tale: She breaks away from rigid, conservative parents and finds her first lesbian love and heart-break. Ally Sheedy also excels in this indie, showing off the same acting chops she wowed us with in *High Art*. Her divorcée character, Laurie, goes ga-ga for her son's charismatic football coach—who happens to be 15 years her junior—but ultimately asserts her independence from all the men in her life (sour and sweet). Spike Lee vet Ruby Dee plays a pitch-perfect Doris, a crotchety shut-in who's ceased taking comfort in simple pleasures since her husband died. When a dashing widower invites himself to dinner—and dessert—Doris' courage and heart are rekindled, and she manages to face down the specter of loss. This drama's unassuming, conversational style extracts its strengths—fine performances—and encourages them to warm and condense. (*wolfevideo.com*)

**The L Word, Season Six (Showtime/Paramount):** The final helping of our yummy-yet-lovingly-ridiculed lesbian soap is a send-up of itself. Not surprising, given that the Showtime serial got steadily more reflexive with each turn, nearly to the point of self-implosion. In fact, perhaps narrative destruction is what the producers coyly and openly staged (much like a Jenny's suicide attempt) in the last few episodes. Season six relies on the genre expectations of the whodunit, providing us a corpse of the character fans most loved to hate and then proceeding to paint every other character as a potential suspect.



Helena and Kit looking hot

DARREN MICHAELS (HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU), JON KOPALOFF/ FILMMAGIC (BARRYMORE), PAUL MICHAEL/SHOWTIME (LWORD)

Of course, the murder mystery trope falls away—it is, after all, just a gimmick used to memorialize the characters and the show. The writers don't insult our intelligence (much).

The last episode features fragments of an interrogation of *The L Word's* "tight knit" group (administered by Xena dykecon, Lucy Lawless), during which Alice points out that the nostalgic line of questioning

is absurd, asking outright, "What does this have to do with who killed Jenny?" Funny, we were wondering the same thing!

The final season is full of fishtails and distractions (most of the dance-off episode, for instance, plays like unnecessary, arbitrary filler). Unlike an Agatha Christie mystery, *The L Word* crashes to an end on an unresolved note, allowing fans to solve the puzzle for themselves. ([sho.com/paramount.com](http://sho.com/paramount.com)) ■

## DVD Picks By Diane Anderson-Minshall



**Pedro**  
(Wolfe Video)

When MTV cast Pedro Zamora, an openly gay, HIV-positive Cuban American activist, on *The Real World: San Francisco* in 1994, they probably had no idea what an impact he'd have. He was the first to put a young (and very attractive) face on the AIDS crisis, using his new celebrity to educate Americans in a simple, compassionate way that even President Bill Clinton lauded at the time. When Zamora died at 22, just a day after the final episode aired, the world responded with an outpouring of grief. This biopic tenderly covers Zamora's life and his relationship with Sean Sasser, though it leaves viewers wanting to see even more of this young changemaker's life. ([wolfevideo.com](http://wolfevideo.com))



**The Education of Shelby Knox**  
(Incite Pictures)

The first thing you'll think after watching *Shelby Knox* is, "Damn, I wish my parents were that supportive." As a 15-year-old in Lubbock, Texas, she's pledged to be abstinent until marriage, but when she discovers that her town has some of the highest rates of teen pregnancy and STDs, she becomes an advocate for real sex education, and her views change on everything from sexual orientation to abortion. After she advocates for LGBT students (who fight the Lubbock School District for the right to form a gay-straight alliance), she ends up being shunned by her Southern Baptist church members, but over the three years of filming, her determination never wavers. Inspirational, but never smarmy. ([incite-pictures.com](http://incite-pictures.com))



**Helen West Casebook**  
(Acorn Media)

If you missed it on A&E, you can still catch Amanda Burton playing Helen West, a workaholic prosecutor with a delightful disdain for her boss's directions. Each piece of the puzzle gets laid out simply but you don't know how to assemble them until West does in these three suspenseful but thoughtful feature-length procedurals based on the award-winning novels by Frances Fyfield, a former prosecutor. Burton will be familiar to Brit mystery lovers as the star of *Silent Witness* and *The Commander*. While you have to sift through her romantic situations, and the bonuses are scant, it's worth it to see a strong, powerful feminist who cares more about justice than she does about any ol' man. ([acorn-online.com](http://acorn-online.com))



**Family Guy Vol. Seven**  
(Fox)

Nobody has a modest reaction to this Fox animated sitcom: You either love it or you hate it. I love it, especially its constant send-up of political iconography, its gay banter over the queer baby and Mila Kunis' character, Meg (a baby dyke who doesn't know it). Best yet, its constant allusions to queers. In one episode this season, the guys end up at a lesbian bar. Their reaction is so classic, it's hard to find someone who wasn't amused. In the "Family Gay" episode, Peter participates in some medical experiments to pay off his debts, and he gets injected with the "gay gene," which leads to a gay relationship, crazy ex-gay camp and a wife who supports his coming out. Acceptance and hilarity in the same episode! ([fox-store.com](http://fox-store.com))

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