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HOT NEW SITE

Neither UrbanElle.com, the new website catering to lesbians of color, nor its creator, Michelle Mitchell, do things half-assed—as editor of the site, I should know. From day one, when Mitchell was still tossing around names and designing a logo, she envisioned a site that would be larger than life, with an international perspective. “Lesbians—especially lesbians of color—are not one dimensional. We are artists, party chicks, wives, mothers and working women,” she explains. Looking for a new club in your town? Want to debate the merits of pedicures on stud bois or read a personal account of insemination and childbirth? UrbanElle’s got you covered.

—Alison Peters

Vlogging Killed the TV Star

These vlogs are sure to cut in on your reality shows. | By Kyra Thomson

I remember my maiden voyage into the World Wide Web. It’s difficult now to imagine, but in 1997 the Internet didn’t have graphics and the term “blog” had yet to be coined. Yet, I was amazed by the new blogging technology that allowed me instant access to anonymous discussion groups and free guitar tabs. The digital revolution had only just begun. Over the next decade, the proliferation of personal commentary through text-based blogs would explode. These were followed quickly by vlogs, and many lesbian leapt on the new format.

Although YouTube is synonymous with the Internet’s vlog revolution, a more fruitful search for lesbian voices would be through AfterEllen, where the cornucopia of online video fare has been harvested into a unique collection of female vlogs.

From Kate Clinton to Mombian.com’s Dana and Helen, and with various weekly contributors in between, the vlogs at AfterEllen cover a multitude of topics. But one common interest among all the vloggers—even the girls who review video games—is providing commentary on the latest episode of *The L Word*. *L Word* fans can also satisfy their needs through OurChart, which features episode discussions, exclusive vlog footage and video contributions from cast members such as Leisha Hailey, who says OurChart is a way to “reach out from the alienation of modern life in order to make connections.”

Delivering content through video rather than text helps to

diminish the distance associated with blogging. For this reason, *Exes and Obs* actor Cathy DeBuono decided to use her degree in telecommunications to create the *What’s YOUR Problem?* vlog for AfterEllen. She has since moved the vlog to SheWired.com.

DeBuono’s background in acting has attracted an impressive list of guest stars, but it is her master’s degree in clinical psychology that gives her a unique credibility when offering advice to viewers. Her massage therapy credentials have yet to be used on the vlog, but her suave flirting with each guest and wine-induced silliness is undeniably entertaining.

DeBuono’s first crossover from actor to psychologist occurred while answering listeners’ questions as a guest host on *The Frank DeCaro Show*. “I liked the idea



DeBuono in *What’s YOUR Problem?*

of being able to ‘look’ at the people I was talking to, so to speak,” DeBuono explains. “There is a personal connection felt with video blogs that you can’t replicate with written blog or even on radio.”

The visual aspect is also rewarding for an actor because vlogs provide unlimited exposure and publicity. Rosie O’Donnell was one of the first celebrities to innovatively use Rosie.com to interact with fans and voice her opinions. Her stark blog entries are simple and honest, as are her answers to online questions. She uses vlogging to film her family, promote her books and record live answers to fan and hate mail.

Rather than fret that vlogs will kill the TV star, perhaps it’s time to embrace this digital revolution. ■

EIGHT PODCASTS FOR LESBIANS

2 Homos (2homos.com): Roxanne and Virginia are the smart, hilarious 2 Homos of the title. Short, sweet and to the point, these frequent podcasts run about 10 to 15 minutes apiece and range from discussions of what they would do if they ran *The L Word* to finding a stripper heel on the fence of their house.

The Lesbian Lounge (mylesbian-radio.com): The sultry intro voiceover declares, “Get ready to laugh your ass off.” Denise and Donna host this show on MyLesbianRadio.com. It has a good mix of celebrity interviews, sex tips, discussions with chatroom visitors (Lipstick and Dipstick and our editor in chief, Diane Anderson-Minshall, are frequent guests).

Girl Meets Girl (girlmeetsgirlpodcast.com): Siena Lee and Toast Tajiri, two young Hawaiian women who make up the acoustic duo MAKENA, offer quietly thoughtful yet fun weekly discussions about things that are important to them, ranging from being Asian American vegan lesbians, to the Hawaiian music scene, to current events and sports.

A Black and a Jew (ablackanda-jew.com): L.A.-based Action Jackson and Chin Chin shoot the, um, breeze about all manner of things. Check out their archive for their “*The L Word* Sucks” podcast, where they rant about the hit Showtime series (which, incidentally, they seem to watch religiously).

Dyke Drama (dykedrama.podcast.com): Podcasting from opposite sides of the country—rural Pennsylvania for Evangeline “Vangie” Martinez and the San Francisco Bay Area for Niki Hutson—these entertaining women talk about LGBT topics in the news, relationships, family and work. They also offer two monthly review segments, “Toys for Twats” (sex toys, duh) and “That One Time We Were Drunk” (beer and wine reviews).

here! with Josh and Sarah (heretv.com): Josh and Sarah’s weekly podcast from New York is a pop culture-fueled, newsy discussion of current events, ranging from *American Idol* to religion to literary interviews. They’ve been so successful, it’s now on TV.

The L Word (sho.com): Here’s a straight-up (oh, never mind) treat for *The L Word* junkies. Although each podcast is brief—about four minutes—you do get video interviews with your favorite cast members. And, as the show heads into its final season, this is a great way to relive the series.

The Planet (theplanetcast.blogspot.com.): This is a funny, smart, fan-o-rific discussion about *The L Word*—the show you love (or love to hate). Spoilers abound here, so log on after you’ve seen the show, then hang out for some laughs. You’ll also find podcasts of *The Chart*—a giggly call-in show akin to Alice’s *L Word* radio show. — Robin Miner-Swartz