

DAILY SOUND

Garden Wise Guys finally getting what they deserve

By KRISTEN PETERS — Feb. 27, 2009

After four years on the air, the Garden Wise Guys are finally getting the attention they deserve. Well, self-proclaimed recognition, anyway. In their latest episode, "The Big Picture", stars Billy Goodnick and Owen Dell dawn their tuxedos in true Grammy style to relive the best moments of the show, offering wise words to supplement past clips. The special hour-long show premieres Sunday at 9 p.m. on City TV, Channel 18.



Producer, Christy Zwicke, said that fans can look forward to Goodnick and Dell dressed to the nines to host an exclusive viewing of their show at the refurbished Granada Theater. The atmosphere mimics that of the Academy Awards, but, underneath all the excitement, the hosts present real content and tips in an easy-to-understand manner.

According to Goodnick, the anticipation surrounding the latest episode has Santa Barbara natives "in a frenzy."

"We got some footage of adoring fans at the film festival to welcome us as we stroll down the red carpet," said Goodnick. "I think they were actually looking at Leonardo Di Caprio."

The series was created by executive producer, Alison Jordan, Conservation Coordinator of the City of Santa Barbara Water Resources Department. After seeing a similar show in San Diego, she thought that Santa Barbara residents would benefit from the eco-friendly landscaping advice. While any viewer could stumble upon gardening how-tos featured on other networks, the Garden Wise Guys take a unique approach to sustainability. Their blend of local landscaping expertise with a playful sense of humor culminates in an experience sure to delight any green-thumbed gardener.

"We like to have fun and make people laugh. Underneath that, though, is a serious mission," said Dell. "We are striving to get landscaping tuned up so it works better. At the present, it demands far too many resources."

When they are not behind the camera unveiling the mysteries of native shrubbery, these two Wise Guys are active in the local green scene. Dell owns County Landscape Design and lectures on behalf of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, and Goodnick is involved in the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department and teaches adult education classes at Santa Barbara City College. Despite their busy schedules, Goodnick and Dell say that their motivation lies strictly in the cause of sustainability, not in the perks of the job.

"Wait, we got a sandwich one time," Goodnick laughed. "And Christy sometimes even digs around the bottom of her purse and offers us the trail mix that just spilled out or something."

Both Goodnick and Dell agreed that most fall short when trying to incite change within a community, even when the cause is just, making their attempt all the more significant.

“You can’t always motivate someone strictly based on altruism,” Goodnick said. “Nor can you motivate someone strictly by fear, and those are the paths most activists take.”

So often, transforming a yard into something beautiful and low-maintenance can prove quite the daunting task. The Garden Wise Guys, however, seek to tame the weeds complicating sustainable landscaping. Specifically, the clips chosen for the premiere are broken down into three main ideas encompassing sustainable landscaping: design, construction, and maintenance.

“One of the things we pride ourselves on is that [sustainability] seems like this mysterious effort. They don’t now how to get their hands around it,” Goodnick said. “We try to demystify ‘greening’ and that’s what we strive after for each show.”

The Garden Wise Guys couldn’t have chosen a better time to intervene in the Santa Barbara community.

“We’re up against the wall. We know we’re supposed to change and we’re not going to do it until we reach the edge,” said Dell. “We’re playing a very dangerous game because we don’t know where the edge is. As light as this show is it’s also doing serious work of changing the world, hopefully, in the nick of time.”