

TV 'Magnum' to hit the road this fall

By JERRY BUCK

CBS' "Magnum, P.I." which has featured the exotic locales of Hawaii, is going to do some traveling this season as it struggles against the ratings tidal wave known as "The Cosby Show."

The series' sixth season will kick off in the fall with Thomas Magnum and his pals in London. He will also travel to his boyhood home in Virginia to see his mother.

Other shows will take "Magnum" star Tom Selleck to some of the other islands in the Hawaiian chain. In one show, Magnum and company will take a cruise to all the islands. That show will call for Magnum to unravel a murder mystery with guest stars in cameo roles in the manner of Agatha Christie. On the big island of Hawaii he will take part in a cowboy adventure.

In addition, Magnum will become involved in international intrigue in London and will have a romance with a character played by Francesca Annis. His former wife will also return, with a son that could be Magnum's.

THESE AND OTHER changes were outlined by Charles Floyd Johnson and Chris Abbott-Fish, the Hawaii-based producers. The two-hour London series opener was written by Mrs. Abbott-Fish.

"The changes are not substantial in format, but more of a growing and re-evaluating," said Johnson. "In our sixth year we've got to look for what we can do to interest the audience.

And Magnum and the other characters have changed and matured."

Not the least consideration is the competition from NBC's "The Cosby Show," which knocked "Magnum" out of the Top 10 last season.

"I THINK WE probably had as many thoughts in mind for changes before Cosby," said Johnson. "The London trip was two years in the making. We are aware of Cosby, but he is what he is. We have to be aware of Tom's strong points and build on those."

"We finished in 15th place last season," added Mrs. Abbott-Fish, "and that's nothing to be ashamed of."

The London show was filmed last spring. "Magnum gets involved in a case and Higgins (John Hillerman) goes home to see his family," Johnson said. "John Hillerman will play his father. We're also going to get off Oahu and go to the Big Island to do a Western. Tom looks great on a horse."

"We'll also see Magnum's ex-wife Michelle, played by Marta DuBois. Michelle returns with a child and we don't know whether it's Tom's or her husband's. In another show, he returns to his boyhood home in Virginia for his grandfather's funeral and goes on to Washington to visit the Vietnam Wall where he comes to terms with a friend's death." (Magnum is a Vietnam vet.)

Also, a TV satellite dish will be installed at Robin's Nest (the estate where Magnum and Higgins live), which will allow Higgins to watch such British shows as the snooker

championships and the "Flower of the Month" show.

"One thing we want to do is not let the relationships become pat," Johnson said. "For instance, Higgins' champagne tastes and Magnum's beer tastes will overlap a bit."

One thing you will not see is Jack Lord in a reprise of his role as Steve McGarrett from "Hawaii Five-0." McGarrett and "Five-0," a fictional elite state police force, are occasionally mentioned on the show.

"We had heard via the grapevine that Jack was interested," said Johnson. "We'd always wanted to use Jack... We made a few phone calls and word came back that he wasn't interested. I don't know if he will change his mind or not."



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