

# The Young and the Restless

## Encyclopedia Article

### The Young and the Restless

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# The Young and the Restless

When *The Young and the Restless* premiered on March 26, 1973, it revolutionized the entire concept of the "soap opera." Historically, the format reflected its roots in radio and, despite its jump to television, was still an aural medium with its primary emphasis on dialogue and story content. *The Young and the Restless*, however, placed a premium on shadowy, sensuous lighting, intriguing camera angles, and production values that provided a lavish romanticism that appealed to female viewers and, by eroticizing the genre, changed forever the way that "soaps" were photographed. But the series did not rely on style alone. Building from the typical soap opera structure of two intertwining families—one rich (The Brooks, who owned the city newspaper) and one poor (the Fosters)—the show featured the inevitable star-crossed romance. But the show ventured into new areas, providing the first soap opera treatment of an extended rape sequence and the aftermath of a trial. It also dealt with such issues as euthanasia, drugs, obesity, eating disorders, mental illness, and problems of the handicapped.

In the 1980s, the show once again revolutionized the genre by shifting its focus away from its original core families to an entirely new set of younger characters. During the 1990s it continued to introduce mysterious new characters while maintaining the consistency of its vision and of its storylines, a remarkable feat for the genre, which allowed it to keep pace with its traditional competitors and the new programs that debuted during the decade.

## Further Reading:

La Guardia, Robert. *Soap World*. New York, Arbor House, 1983.

Schemening, Christopher. *The Soap Opera Encyclopedia*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1985.