



Marty and wife Wendy are back – but is their luck about to run out?

BYRDE *watching*

How much worse can things get for Marty and his family in the second season of Ozark?

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Winter eventually came to *Game Of Thrones* and now it's *Ozark's* turn. The first season of the critically acclaimed Netflix series was set in the Lake Of The Ozarks resort community in Missouri during a blistering summer season full of bikinis, boats and beer. This time, though, things are very different.

"Now it's going into winter, we have rain and snow and a darkness that really reflects the story, too," producer, director and star Jason Bateman, 49, tells TV WEEK Close Up.

In the 10-episode first season – of which Jason directed the first and last two episodes – we met Chicago-based Marty Byrde (Jason). He's a mild-mannered financial advisor who's forced to move his family – wife Wendy (Laura Linney) and two children – to Ozark after his partner's money-laundering scheme goes wrong. Then, he ends up on the hook to wash millions of dollars for Mexico's second-biggest drug cartel.

After a bloody and dramatic finale, where to now for the show's second season?

WHAT'S NEXT

Season two picks up shortly after Jacob (Peter Mullan) and Darlene Snell (Lisa Emery) have murdered cartel bad guy Del Rio (Esai Morales). This creates one of many problems for Marty when the syndicate sends their ruthless attorney

Helen Pierce (Janet McTeer) to find out what happened to Del Rio and to monitor his plans to build a local casino on the lake so they can all keep laundering money. "It's going to get a lot worse before it gets better," Jason reveals.

Marty goes up against the cartel, the Snells and the crooked Langmore family while trying to keep his own children safe.

"He has a lot of hubris thinking he's this big-city guy who can go down to the Ozarks and dominate these small-town people," Jason says. "As he discovers, that was a pretty foolish way to think."

BREAKING GOOD

Soon after its release, *Ozark* immediately began to draw comparisons with *Breaking Bad* – and Jason can understand why.

"*Breaking Bad* was about a normal family that tries to grab their piece of the American dream, but surrender to their temptations and start cutting corners," he explains.

"The Byrdes are just another family susceptible to all that. Marty certainly doesn't go through a Walter White metamorphosis and he never will, but the audience will enjoy watching him stand up to mobsters and act like one, pretending he's calm and confident when we know he's terrified." ▶



“It’s going to get a lot worse for Marty before it gets better”

ONE FOR THE MONEY

The money-laundering schemes Marty cooks up on the series are based on reality – and are so complicated, Jason admits he’s often lost with the financial jargon.

“I’m almost embarrassed to say I think I know even less about money now than I did before I started,” he jokes. “The depth of my knowledge is where to find the local ATM!”

Co-star Laura, 54, adds with a chuckle: “I knew nothing about money laundering before and I know maybe two per cent more now. But I do know that whenever I go into a business and it’s all cash, my head goes, ‘Oh, really? Why is it cash?’ It’s a fascinating thing to explore.”

WOMEN OF OZARK

The series showcases powerful performances by the women in Marty’s life, especially Wendy, Ruth Langmore (Julia Garner) and Helen.

“Between myself and Janet and Julia, I can certainly say that we’re profoundly influential and very much on the front foot this season,” Laura says. “The women in this show are not hesitant.”

English actress Janet divides her time this season between *Ozark* and *Jessica Jones* and describes her character as “the voice of the cartel – and it’s a very scary voice”.

Julia jokes that her character has some “serious daddy issues” after she electrocuted her Langmore uncles on the lake to prevent them from killing Marty.

“Marty always listened to her, but that may be changing,” the 24-year-old hints.

Behind the camera, women are also making their impact felt. The season finale is directed by Amanda Marsalis (she’s helmed a few episodes of drama series *Queen Sugar*), who describes the final moments as “insanely entertaining and smart”.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES



Ozark co-stars (from left) Laura, Julia and Jason say big changes are coming in season two.



Jason and Julia filming a scene on location.



Tales from THE SET

Initially, *Ozark* shot on location in Georgia around Atlanta and nearby Lake Lanier, which doubled as the Lake Of The Ozarks.

For season two, three major sets were constructed on a large soundstage. Here, Julia Garner takes TV WEEK Close Up on a tour to visit the Snell house, some rooms of the Byrde home and their backyard trampoline, and the Lickety Splitz strip bar, where Julia’s character, Ruth, spends most of her time managing that lucrative money-laundering business for Marty. “A lot has happened in this house,” Julia tells us.

And she’s not kidding! We walk up the steps to the kitchen, where Del Rio was murdered, and later sit on the porch in the rocking chairs facing the spot where the Snells stabbed and killed original Lickety Splitz owner Bobby Dean.

The Byrde house interiors are inspired

by a real home with stunning views of Lake Lanier that’s still used for external filming. “The local owner lived next door in his childhood home, but built the additional home on his property for family and grandchildren to come visit,” Julia explains. “Now it’s just a man cave, so his friends stay there or he has poker nights when we aren’t filming.”

Julia’s favourite set is Lickety Splitz, a strip club with a backroom office, bar, stage and private rooms for lap dances.

“I didn’t need to do any research about that world, as 95 per cent of my days I spend with the strippers,” she says. “We hire actors if it’s a regular speaking role for a girl who works in the club, but for the extras, we hire strippers. The girls you see pole-dancing in the background are the real thing.”

SHOW TRIVIA

■ The series only filmed a handful of scenes on the real Lake Of The Ozarks in Missouri for the pilot. “We hear that tourists ask where the Blue Cat and the Lickety Splitz are and are disappointed when they find out,” producer Patrick Markey says. “But someone did open up a restaurant down there called Marty Byrde’s Chicken Palace and I hear it’s doing well.”

■ Production commandeered a shuttered bar and grill on Georgia’s Lake Allatoona and created The Blue Cat

Lodge (left). It’s never opened to the public, but attracts a lot of tourists taking selfies out the front.

■ *Ozark* writer Bill Dubuque was inspired

after spending one summer while he was at college in Missouri working as a dockhand at the Alhonna Resort & Marina on the Lake Of The Ozarks. A replica of that retreat was reconstructed on Lake Allatoona, an artificial reservoir 45 minutes outside Atlanta.

■ Every episode’s credits feature four symbols inside an “O” that are arranged to spell out “Ozark”. If you watch carefully, these symbols represent key themes and moments of each episode.



Below and right: Jason has directed several episodes of Ozark, including the action-packed finale of season one.



OZARK
Netflix

