

Rise OF THE REBELS

The hosts of *Westworld* turned the theme park on its head in a jaw-dropping first season finale. Now actresses Evan Rachel Wood and Thandie Newton are back, with their characters set to run the show

WESTWORLD (s2) EXPRESS Mondays from April 23 at 11am, **ENCORE** at 8.30pm on **showcase** [114] available in the **DRAMA** pack

Drive just one hour north of Los Angeles, towards the rural area of Placerita Canyon, and you'll find cryptic signs posted along the way to 'Delos Inc' – the name of the fictitious corporation that owns the theme park in HBO's *Westworld*. This is the first clue you're about to time travel.

"Welcome to *Westworld*," declares series co-creator Lisa Joy a few minutes later, standing at the end of the dusty main street of Sweetwater as *Foxtel* magazine exclusively visits the production's incredible set. "Let me show you around town!"

The Golden Globe-nominated sci-fi drama is completing its second season, largely here at Melody Ranch Motion Picture Studio – though they've also shot exterior red rock formations in Utah. There are sound stages for the interior sets – including the Lab and Body Shop – tucked behind the parking lot, hidden by large green screen walls that are used to create background scenery with the Utah footage in post-production.

"I think most of us feel very at home in Sweetwater because this is where it all started. I've been around this loop in and out of town a hundred times now," confides

Evan Rachel Wood, who portrays the park's original android host Dolores Abernathy.

Wood sits inside the Mariposa Saloon, which doubles as a brothel. She hasn't yet changed into her character's costume for the upcoming night shoot and looks a little out of place with her short blonde hair, jeans and a black-and-white-striped shirt under a leather jacket.

"I love Melody Ranch, because usually on a set like this, you film in front of buildings and have to go somewhere else to shoot the inside," the actress says. "But here you can walk in and out of every building and they're beautifully dressed and completely immersive, so it's like walking right into an alternate reality."

Melody Ranch was once owned by the beloved 'singing cowboy' Gene Autry and hosted many Westerns in the first half of the 20th century, including the classic television series *Gunsmoke*. More recently, it was home for the movies *Django Unchained* and *The Magnificent Seven*. The latter production left behind its Mexican village set, which was taken over by *Westworld* producers.

While Joy is protective about upcoming plotlines, she does confirm the show picks ▶





Bernard/Arnold's
(Jeffrey Wright)
self-awareness
changes everything



The Man in Black
(Ed Harris) has
become the hunted

up shortly after last season's shocking finale. Dolores finally came to understand that her 'damsel in distress' life-on-a-loop was a lie and she killed the theme park's inventor, Dr Robert Ford (Sir Anthony Hopkins). Joy adds mysteriously: "Let's just say that once Dolores shoots Ford, that is the opening salvo to a game that you can't turn off."

What Joy can reveal is *Westworld*'s fantastic ability to successfully balance the female and male storylines will shine through once again. Key to that is the incredible performances of the cast, especially that of Wood and her co-star Thandie Newton – who plays android brothel madam Maeve Millay. Once again, Dolores and Maeve will be at the centre of the action, and Joy explains she feels extremely proud of the upcoming female-driven plots.

"For me, the first outing was the story of these women finding their voices and their identities," she explains. "This has a new thematic bend to it because once you've found your voice, once you understand what the world is and you've seen the bits of evil inside it, what do you do now and who do you become?"

Joy continues: "The first season was about coming of age and the second is

a war story that marks the birth of more than one leader, frankly. They're all exploring the moral choices and sacrifices they must face in order to do what they need to do, and create the world they believe they must."

Newton says portraying a fierce, brave and highly-intelligent woman in *Westworld* has been one of the many joys of being involved in the acclaimed production.

"She is easily the smartest character I've ever played and, when I started the project, I had no idea how fascinating she would be," the *Line of Duty* star says. "The premise is where I started and then it just unravelled into this extraordinary gift, for the narrative, for women everywhere, for men by extension and for me as an actress."

The actress is careful not to give much away about the motivations of Maeve, but Wood hints that the moral choices Dolores faces this time around are going to throw up a great challenge for her character.

"She's in a place where she knows what she has to do, but it doesn't mean it doesn't pain her to do it," she says. "In *Westworld*, you walk a fine line between being powerful and being free, and those are going to be interesting dynamics to play with."

There's also a fine line to navigate between using nudity to better serve the storyline or for the sake of being gratuitous. Fans know seeing flesh is the norm in *Westworld*, with many of the actors who play androids stripped for Body Shop work. Wood says she's made her peace with taking off her clothes.

"My first day working with Anthony Hopkins, I was completely nude doing a scene with him and I wanted to pretend it was a dream I had about being a robot in the future and Anthony Hopkins was there – but that was actually my job that day!" she laughs.

While she can freely crack jokes at her predicament, the feminist insists that nobody on *Westworld* feels exploited.

"It was explained to us at the beginning that the nudity was never gratuitous but very sterile and not even the most flattering all the time," she adds. "Everyone is so professional and respectful and wonderful that you feel ▶

"[Maeve] is easily the smartest character I've ever played... I had no idea how fascinating she would be" – Thandie Newton



Fans can't wait to see how the relationship between William (Jimmie Simpson) and Dolores (Wood) plays out



safe. So often when I'm doing those scenes, I forget I'm naked. I was having a conversation with Jeffrey [Wright] once, forgetting I was naked, and someone came up to ask me if I wanted a robe and I said, 'Oh, yes please!'

Wright, who plays Bernard, says he also tries to have fun with awkward situations when he's the only one clothed on set.

"How can you not have a laugh when a couple of weeks ago I was standing right here and the camera is in my face, and suddenly there's a scrotum staring up at me. The poor guy says, 'Hi, how are you?' and they shout 'action' and there it is," he chuckles.

A huge revelation in last season's climax was the fact that Ford's right-hand man, Bernard, was really an android created by Ford to resemble his former human business partner, Arnold. The actor admits he was just as in the dark as viewers were about the surprising story arc.

"I remember I was filming episode two or three, when Lisa pulled me aside and looked nervous as she stumbled around

saying, 'How do I tell you this?' Eventually she just blurted out, 'Bernard's not real!', Wright recalls with a grin. "I thought that really amped up the possibilities of where we could go because much of *Westworld* is mirrors reflecting mirrors. When I discovered I was playing this entity trying to recreate humanness, I realised that's what I'm doing as an actor and it's a great way to move the conversation forward for the audience, too."

Just as cool as the 'Man in Black' he plays, veteran actor Ed Harris is nonchalant about the ambitious role and the equally driven schedule he endured during record-high temperatures in an LA heatwave.

"I just show up when I'm told to and do what I'm told to do," Harris shrugs, before conceding: "But I did end up with a paper towel wrapped inside my cowboy hat to stop the sweat dripping down my face."

The Golden Globe-winner's character also had revelations uncovered during the first outing's huge cliffhanger finale. It turned out the events of *Westworld* had been playing

out across multiple time periods and the Man in Black was an older version of William (Jimmie Simpson), who loved Dolores.

Sworn to secrecy about what we can expect from the unconventional romance, Harris teases, "I know specifically what my guy is after and where he's going. There is much more danger and the stakes are much higher now because he can get killed, too."

Much like *Game of Thrones*, it appears no-one is safe from meeting their maker. But Wood tries to not give it much thought, preferring to live in the moment and then retreat to her safe haven above the saloon bar floor to bring her back down to reality after a long day.

"Sometimes after work I'll sneak up to the top, go over to the balcony and just sit there by myself. The stars are out and the moon is out and no-one is on the street, and I'll take in what my life is and how lucky I am," she says, adding sadly: "I know one day this is going to be over and they're going to have to sedate me because I love it so much!"

Inside Westworld

We uncover the secrets that make this sci-fi series a unique and thrilling TV experience

THE COSTUMES

More than 100 copies of some costumes, especially for the androids who wear the same outfit every day, are made by designer Ane Crabtree (*The Handmaid's Tale*) and 35 crew. Since Dolores (Wood) is wearing her blue dress in tatters this season, more fabric was sourced to start over. "We had to find weavers in upstate New York to create the fabric so it seemed authentic," Crabtree says.



The incredible detail of the grand sets is what brings *Westworld* to life

REAL SCIENCE

Production brought in a brain trust to invent the new technology that created the rotating Westworld map shown in the series. It was synchronised with a system that projected the map onto a three-dimensional plaster topographic satellite image of the Utah area. Co-creator Lisa Joy brags, "We had people from the gaming industry and architects come to see what it looked like because word spread."

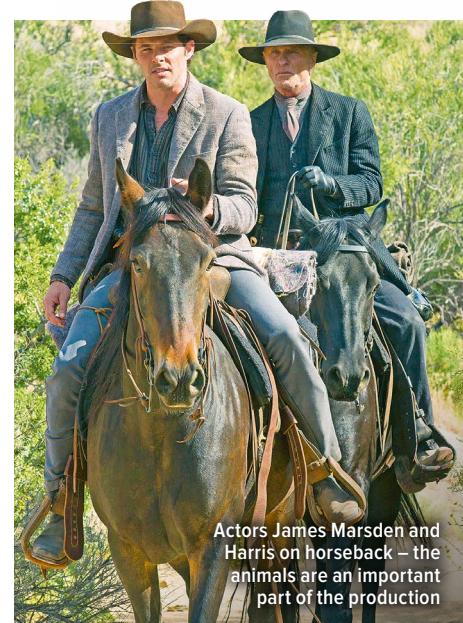
WESTWORLD DIET

Crew worked through LA's worst heatwave in history while shooting – threatening a shutdown under union rules if the mercury hit more than 46 degrees Celsius. "I think it got to [46] and I was directing in the Mexican village set

where there was no shade," Joy recalls. "It was so hot that I lost weight just in time to fit into my Emmys dress. We called it the 'Westworld Diet'!"

NO HORSES ALLOWED

Co-creator Jonathan Nolan (brother of director Christopher) encountered a problem filming at the futuristic Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood when they refused to let him bring in a horse. "He told them, 'It'll be fine, the horse won't hurt anything' and they were like, 'Absolutely not!'" Joy says. "So we built a copy at Melody Ranch!"



Actors James Marsden and Harris on horseback – the animals are an important part of the production

THE LONE TRAIN

Filmmakers salvaged a Fillmore & Western train built for *The Lone Ranger* and restored the dining car and interiors to their original glory, even getting a few hundred feet of track and a pusher vehicle to propel it onto set. "We surprised the cast on their first day by having the train pull into town with smoke going – it got everyone excited," Joy reveals.

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