

Twenty five new series for M-Net

M-Net has lined up over 25 new series filled with action, comedy and drama to fill its airwaves in 2008. Advertisers were recently given a close-up of the new programming in closed screenings held in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

“M-Net’s channel offerings have expanded so much in the past years that we had to create a platform to showcase content to agencies and clients to assist their planning and buying decisions in an increasingly fragmented media environment,” says Chris Hitchings, director: sales at Oracle Airtime Sales.

The teasers and full episodes of the 25 new series included: the legal drama *Damages* starring Academy Award nominee Glen Close; the disasters of the wealthy New York Darling family in *Dirty Sexy Money* with Peter Krause and Emmy winner Donald Sutherland; *Samantha Who?* starring Christina Applegate who discovers what a horrible person she was after she loses her memory in a hit-and-run accident; and *Frasier*’s star Kelsey Grammer as a TV journalist trying to rebuild his career after an embarrassing on-air tirade that ended up on the internet in *Back to You*

“M-Net’s programming schedule generally mirrors the most successful US series as we use US network ratings to make informed buying decisions,” says Jan du Plessis, director of channels: M-Net.

2008 will bring four more locally produced shows in three genres: *Feast of the Uninvited* and *Ella Blue* in the drama category with a local A-list cast, *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader* in the game show category and a sitcom, *The Coconuts*.

The pilot episode of *The Coconuts* had the audience in stitches and dispelled many reservations the advertising industry may have had regarding the suggestive storyline. In *The Coconuts*, a white family becomes trapped in black bodies after a holiday experience and have to rebuild their lives with new looks in their white neighbourhood, with a black family as neighbours.

“It beats having to guess what the series is about when you can actually see a couple of minutes. Whilst the showcase takes a chunk out of diaries, it’s well worth it!” says Trish Guilford of The Media Shop.