

The Donna Reed Show

US TV sitcom : 1958-65 : dir. : ABC / Screen Gems / Todon-Briskin : 275 x 25 min
 prod: Tony Owen : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Paul Petersen](#)
 Donna Reed; Carl Betz; Shelley Fabares

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Source: *How Sweet it Was*



Halliwell's *Television Companion* review:

"Standard star domestic comedy. A long-runner, nimbly presented; it showed the ideal American house and family, in this case those of a pediatrician."

The History of Television comment:

"Television comedy was still thriving despite the onslaught of action shows... There was Groucho Marx, who held forth on **"You Bet Your Life"**, a seemingly spontaneous but well-rehearsed game show; **"The Ann Sothern Show"**; **"The Eve Arden Show"**; and **"The Donna Reed Show"**, another entry in the homogenised-suburban sitcom sweepstakes. Reed, a former Oscar winner, starred with Carl Betz as her husband Dr Alex Stone and, as her children, Shelley Fabares and Paul Petersen. After the fashion of Ricky Nelson, who must have lived in the same neighbourhood, the teenagers each became recording stars apart from the show."

How Sweet it Was - Television: A Pictorial Commentary caption:

"A motion-picture actress (**"FROM HERE TO ETERNITY"**), Miss Reed starred in this extra-wholesome situation comedy from 1958 to 1966."



[no listing in "Television's Greatest Hits" or "25 Years of ITV - 1955-1980"]

Just your average suburban housewife

No further information currently available. Some hint would have been useful for non-American readers to account for the longevity of this particular sitcom, Donna Reed not being especially noted as a comedienne. Paul Petersen was 13 when the show opened, so it spanned his teen years very neatly. But he was devastated when the series ended and with it – practically overnight - his celebrity status. No further acting work was offered and he hit the skids, like many another child star before and since. His experience led him to co-found the action group “A Minor Consideration”, which sets out to champion the interests of the child-player, and counsel those who flounder in the cold glare of fame’s spotlight. Petersen’s only known film role was in “**HOUSEBOAT**” (58) with Cary Grant and Sophia Loren. Shelley Fabares was 16 at the start of the show, and had more success in the cinema (Paul should have worn a skirt, evidently). Her earliest known film was “**NEVER SAY GOODBYE**” (56), and in 1958 she also made “**SUMMER LOVE**”.

See subject index under **SITCOMS & SOAPS**.