

## Here's Jay! Jay Leno is America's Favorite Television Personality

*Cantankerous Dr. House, Hugh Laurie, comes in second*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. – January 28, 2009** – Maybe it's his new 10 pm nightly show, but whatever it is, Jay Leno has become America's favorite TV personality for the first time, moving up from number 3 last year. TV's crankiest doctor, or rather Hugh Laurie, the man who plays Doctor House, is number 2 on the list, up from number 4 last year and last year's number one, Ellen DeGeneres, is now at number 3. Rounding out the top 5 television personalities are two talk show hosts, Oprah Winfrey at number 4 and David Letterman at number 5.

These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll*® of 2,388 U.S. adults surveyed online between December 9 and 15, 2008 by Harris Interactive.

### **More than *Two and a Half Men***

Next on the top ten list of America's favorite television personalities is Jon Stewart, of *The Daily Show*, at number 6, down from number 5 last year. Then there are two newcomers to the list – Charlie Sheen of *Two and a Half Men*, and Steve Carrell of *The Office*, debuting at number 7 and 8 respectively. Finally, rounding out the list and tied at number 9 are Stephen Colbert, down from number 6 last year, and Mark Harmon of *NCIS* who is new to the list this year.

### **Some actors are just *Lost***

As there are three new stars on our top ten list this year that means three people have dropped off of the list, including *Fox News*' Bill O'Reilly, who was number 8 last year. Also, it seems everyone does not love Ray as Ray Romano; who was tied for number 9 last year. Homer Simpson, who was also tied for number 9, has also fallen from the list.

### **Different Groups have their own *Greatest American Hero*, or rather Favorite TV Star**

Different groups have different favorites. Men, for example, choose Jay Leno as their favorite television star while women say their favorite is Ellen DeGeneres. Women are also divided among themselves. For single women, their number one is Hugh Laurie, while Ellen is tops for married women.

Different age groups also make different choices. Among Echo Boomers (those aged 18-31) Hugh Laurie is number one, and for Generation Xers (those aged 32-43) it's a tie between Hugh Laurie and Ellen DeGeneres. Jay Leno is tops among both Baby Boomers (those aged 44-62) and Matures (those aged 63 and older).

Forget candidates, there are also partisan and ideological differences for favorite television star. Republicans and Independents say Jay Leno is their favorite while Democrats prefer Ellen DeGeneres. Liberals go for the dry political humor of Jon Stewart and Moderates say Jay Leno is their favorite. Conservatives stray from the talk show genre; their favorite is Hugh Laurie.

**Just the Ten of Us Broken Down**

In this year’s top ten, there is one predominant group of television stars – talk show hosts. Six of the ten are talk show hosts, two daytime and four nighttime hosts. There are also two sitcom stars and two drama stars.

**TABLE 1  
FAVORITE TV PERSONALITY**

"Who is your favorite TV personality?"

Base: All adults

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Jay Leno	*	8	10	=10	8	=6	*
Hugh Laurie	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ellen DeGeneres	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oprah Winfrey	2	2	3	3	3	1	2
David Letterman	6	6	4	5	7	*	*
Jon Stewart	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charlie Sheen	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Steve Carrell	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Stephen Colbert	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mark Harmon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

"=" means there was a tie for that position

**TABLE 1 (continued)  
FAVORITE TV PERSONALITY**

"Who is your favorite TV personality?"

Base: All adults

	2000	2001	2002*	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Jay Leno	=7	6	9	5	5	=4	6	3	1
Hugh Laurie	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	4	2
Ellen DeGeneres	*	*	*	=10	7	6	=8	1	3
Oprah Winfrey	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	4
David Letterman	6	4	3	2	=2	3	5	=6	5
Jon Stewart	*	*	*	=6	=2	2	2	5	6
Charlie Sheen	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	7
Steve Carrell	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8
Stephen Colbert	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	=6	=9
Mark Harmon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	=9

\* The 2002 survey was conducted in January 2003.

"=" means there was a tie for that position

**DROPPED OFF OF LIST IN 2008**

Bill O'Reilly (was No. 8), Ray Romano (was tied for No. 9), and Homer Simpson (was tied for No. 9)

**TABLE 2  
FAVORITE TV PERSONALITY AMONG DIFFERENT GROUPS**

<b>AMONG:</b>	<b>2008</b>
Men	Jay Leno
Women	Ellen DeGeneres
Echo Boomers (18-31)	Hugh Laurie
Gen X (32-43)	Hugh Laurie/Ellen DeGeneres
Baby Boomers (44-62)	Jay Leno
Matures (63+)	Jay Leno
Republicans	Jay Leno
Democrats	Ellen DeGeneres
Independents	Jay Leno
Conservatives	Hugh Laurie
Moderates	Jay Leno
Liberals	Jon Stewart
Single women	Hugh Laurie
Married women	Ellen DeGeneres
East	Ellen DeGeneres
Midwest	Hugh Laurie
South	Jay Leno
West	Jay Leno

**Methodology**

This Harris Poll was conducted online within the United States December 9 and 15, among 2,388 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different

probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.***

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### **About Harris Interactive**

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