

BRAND NEW TASKMASTER CONTESTANTS ANNOUNCED

IAIN STIRLING – JOE THOMAS – LOU SANDERS – PAUL SINHA – SIAN GIBSON

★★★★★ Daily Mail Weekend ★★★★★ TV & Satellite Week ★★★★★ TV Times Magazine ★★★★★ Mail On Sunday
EVENT ★★★★★ TV Times Magazine ★★★★★ Daily Star ★★★★★ Daily Express Saturday Magazine

Taskmaster is one of the most consistently innovative and funny series on telly
Joe Clay, The Times, T2

The most reliable source for laughs on television
Gabriel Tate, The Times Saturday Review

The double BAFTA nominated and Broadcast Award winning UKTV Original series *Taskmaster* returns to Dave and welcomes a new group of candidates placing themselves at the mercy of *Taskmaster* tyrant **Greg Davies**, and the scrutiny of stats keeper and skivvy **Little Alex Horne**. Dave's eighth series of the most competitive and fierce comedy game show on television will air in May.

Risking life, limb, and dignity in the hope of making the *Taskmaster* proud are: BAFTA winning comedian **Iain Stirling** (*Love Island*, Host of *Dog Ate My Homework*), actor and writer **Joe Thomas** (*Inbetweeners*, *Fresh Meat*), acclaimed stand-up **Lou Sanders** (*8 Out of 10 Cats*, *Sick of It*), comedian and champion quizzier **Paul Sinha** (*The Chase*, *Tonight At The Palladium*), and BAFTA winning actor **Sian Gibson** (*Peter Kay's Car Share*, *Murder On the Blackpool Express*). Unaware of what awaits them in each wax sealed envelope, only one competitor can become the victorious owner of His Royal Task-ness' golden head and be crowned the next *Taskmaster* Champion.

Produced by Avalon, *Taskmaster*'s viewing figures have increased series on series. The seventh series of the Dave show starring **James Acaster**, **Jessica Knappett**, **Kerry Godliman**, **Phil Wang**, and **Rhod Gilbert** was the most successful to date with an average of 1.5 million viewers per episode, increasing by 7% compared to the last series and remains the most watched show on UKTV Play with over 7.4 million views.

Taskmaster was crowned Best Entertainment Programme at the Broadcast Awards 2018 (beating *Strictly Come Dancing*, *I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here!*, *Love Island*, *The Voice UK*, and *All Round To Mrs. Brown's*). Nominations for the show include an International Emmy for Best Non-Scripted Entertainment, two BAFTA nominations for Best Comedy Entertainment Programme, RTS Award, Broadcasting Press Guild Award consecutively for the past three years, and two further nominations at the Broadcast Awards 2019 for Best Entertainment Programme and Best Multichannel Programme.

An international hit, *Taskmaster* has been sold into 17 countries including original versions of the show being developed for Comedy Central in the U.S. (starring **Reggie Watts** as the *Taskmaster*), TV 2 in Denmark, VTM in Belgium, TVE in Spain, and two series on Sweden's SVT channel.

Away from the screen, the launch of the *Taskmaster* Book *200 Extraordinary Tasks for Ordinary People* was met with huge popularity, sold over 57K copies following publication, and swiftly rose to join top 20 bestselling hardback books in the UK four days after its release during the competitive Autumn/Winter sales period.

The eighth series of **Taskmaster** will air on Dave in May, catch up on series 1-7 on UKTV Play -

<http://uktvplay.uktv.co.uk>

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT TASKMASTER

Funny, revealing, and glorious...Caitlin Moran once wrote that the comedy panel game is one of the glories of British TV. A new one shone bright last night

★★★★★ **Andrew Billen, The Times**

The kind of Dave thing that shouldn't quite work but is actually wildly stupid fun. Mainly thanks to Alex Horne, late of so much splendid radio, and Greg Davies...a winner

Euan Ferguson, The Observer

It's glorious mayhem and stupidly funny

David Butcher, Radio Times

We're up to series 7 and it's as winning as ever

Sharon Lougher, Metro

Brilliantly madcap comedy game show

★★★★★ **Christopher Stevens, Daily Mail**

One of the funniest game shows on TV

★★★★★ **Natasha Holt, TV Times Magazine**

The keynote themes are ludicrous absurdity and moderately cruel sadism. Somehow, however, it all works brilliantly, with the presence of Horne adding the barest modicum of civility to proceedings...prepare for tears of laughter

Mark Wareham, Mail on Sunday, Event Magazine

Taskmaster is an unashamed celebration of the bizarre and the mediocre

Sam Wollaston, G2 Guardian

Never before has anything so absurd, so stupid, so utterly pointless, made such good television

Sara Wallis, Daily Mirror

Inventive

Mike Ward, Saturday Magazine, Daily Express

The funniest show on telly

The Sun, TV Magazine

Creative Chaos

Emma Messenger, TV Choice

This seems to be a series that really brings families together

Bruce Dessau, Beyond the Joke

Splendidly silly

Sunday Times, Culture

Clever

David Stephenson, Sunday Express, S Magazine

The show routinely delivers the funniest, most unexpected comedy of the TV week...The cleverest spin on the panel show format in years, it's must-watch TV

Wesley Mead, Den of Geek

Notes to Editors

About Avalon:

Avalon is a multi-award winning talent management, live promotion and television production group with offices in the UK and the USA. Avalon and ARG, the talent management arm, has discovered and represents many artists that are household names, both in the UK, the USA, and around the world.

In 2018, Avalon was again named the number one true independent television production company in the UK and has produced numerous ground-breaking television shows including: Emmy and Peabody award winner *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (HBO), multi-award winning and Emmy-nominated *Catastrophe* (Channel 4/Amazon Prime), RTS and Rose d'Or winning *Not Going Out* (the BBC's longest running sitcom currently on air), BAFTA and RTS-nominated *Taskmaster* (DAVE/UKTV), multi-BAFTA award winning *TV Burp* (ITV1), *Russell Howard's Good News* (BBC2), *Fantasy Football League* (BBC/ITV) and *Workaholics* (Comedy Central USA).

Avalon and Topical Television form the television arm of the company and other shows recently in production include: *Catastrophe* (C4/Amazon Prime), *Taskmaster* (Dave), *The Russell Howard Hour* (Sky One), *Not Going Out* (BBC One), *Stand Up Central with Rob Delaney* (Comedy Central UK) and *Russell Howard & Mum: Road Trip* (Comedy Central UK); whilst the catalogue is sold worldwide by Avalon Distribution.

Avalon produced *Newman and Baddiel: Live at Wembley*, the UK's first arena comedy show; *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the first West End show to win all four UK 'Best New Musical' awards; and has continued to produce live shows globally, as well as promoting more winners and nominees of the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Award than any other company. For Avalon news visit: www.avalon-entertainment.com or @avalonent.

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About Dave

@davechannel

Sky 155, Freeview 17, BT & TalkTalk 17, Freesat 160

On demand on Sky and UKTV Play

Since bursting onto TV sets in 2007, Dave has been putting in hours at the gym and is now a beefed-up powerhouse of brand new and original commissions from some of the biggest stars and production companies in entertainment. Romesh Ranganathan, Jon Richardson and YouTube sensation Yianni Charalambous are just some of the latest additions to the channel's ever-increasing slate.

Whether it's innovative comedy entertainment like the BAFTA and Emmy-nominated Taskmaster, Unspun with Matt Forde, and Dara o Briain's Go 8 Bit or scripted sitcoms including the worldwide hit Red Dwarf, Zapped, and Porters, Dave's guaranteed to work your funny bone like never before.

Dave's also committed to bringing live sport back to free-to-air and has an ongoing deal to show fights from David Haye's Hayemaker Ringstar venture. There's also Red Bull Soapbox, Cop Car Workshop, Sin City Motors and a whole host of much loved programming, all shot with Dave's unique personality that's led to the channel reaching 20million adults a month.

About UKTV

UKTV is a commercial broadcaster reaching nearly 40m viewers every month.

The award-winning independent has eleven imaginative brands - UKTV Play, Dave, W, Gold, Alibi, Yesterday, Drama, Really, Home, Eden and Good Food. These include the two most popular non-PSB channels in the UK and account for nearly 10% of the British commercial TV market.

The network delivers inspired channels to audiences through Freeview, Sky, BT, TalkTalk, YouView, Freesat, Amazon Fire and UKTV Play, and distributes its highly valued original programmes to 200 territories.

Now celebrating over 20 years at the forefront of digital television, UKTV - an independent commercial joint venture between BBC Studios and Discovery, Inc. - is proud to be the first British television broadcaster in The Sunday Times top 100 companies list.

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