



# Late Net

with

# Conan O'Brien



The Young Master of Late Night is all over the Internet, whether as a quick-witted guest in live chat rooms or as the subject of countless adulatory Web sites. Here he joins *Y-Life* on an after-hours Web crawl

BY BOB STRAUSS

A three-foot-high inflatable pickle teeters precariously above the computer in Conan O'Brien's modest office, a harbinger of the bandwidth snarls, brownouts, gremlins, and complete system meltdowns that tend to plague diehard internauts starting in the early evening. O'Brien, who is about as far from being an experienced Web surfer as Chevy Chase is from a talk-show comeback, has just finished taping the day's installment of "Late Night." So in TV time it's 1:30 in the morning, but in reality it's only about seven in the evening, and the NBC building in midtown Manhattan is still bustling with activity.

"Let me tell you something," O'Brien says as he slumps his six-foot, four-inch frame into an armchair while digging into the hamburger his assistant has just brought him. "You're at NBC. Things are going to go wrong."

As it turns out, that's not quite an accurate assessment. It's certainly not NBC's fault that tonight's Web-hopping experiment is bumpier than the Gowanus Expressway during rush hour (though it would help if 30 Rockefeller Center, which, as an NBC inside joke goes, is "140,000 years old," had a faster Internet connection).

Still, O'Brien is a good sport as he settles down for a peek at the weirder side of the Web, to which he has made a vast, if inadvertent, contribution. His key role as an early writer and producer of "The Simpsons" (his favorite of his own episodes is "Marge and the Monorail") already ensured him lasting online infamy. The late-night show (which defied the expectations of naysayers—it is now four years since Conan replaced David Letterman) inspires only a smidgen of O'Brien online. O'Brien doesn't contribute to or even watch "The Simpsons" anymore—he doesn't have the time, he says—but he should still be providing Internet fodder for the foreseeable future, since NBC recently extended his "Late Night" contract

FASHION STYLIST: LOUISE GODWIN; SET DESIGNER: LORI BELIGER; WARDROBE: SMOKING JACKET AND SHIRT BY PAUL STUART; STUDS BY BROOKS BROTHERS; PAJAMAS BY FERNANDO SANCHEZ; PROPS & GLASSWARE BY NEDMAIER NYC AND ORIO TRIO NYC; RUG BY LEATHER.SUEDE.SKINS INC. NYC

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