



BEASTLY BURDEN: The future of *Beauty and the Beast* rests on the shoulders of "Beast" Ron Perlman (above) and "Beauty" Linda Hamilton. "We predicted an early cancellation," says one ad exec of the unlikely hit about a "monster" living in the bowels of New York and the beauty who loves him.

This season, the dark horses to bet on for long-term hit status include shows about hairy underground city creatures, hairy above-ground space creatures and a family of working-class slobs who've captured America's heart.

"We predicted an early cancellation notice for *Beauty and the Beast*," says Betsy Frank, senior vice-president at Saatchi, Saatchi, DFS-Compton, a New York advertising agency. "But the show struck a chord. It's CBS's hit for the year."

Beauty and the Beast, which stars Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman in the title roles, has been ranking in the top half of the Nielsen ratings in recent weeks.