



Saturday, December 24, 2005

## News flash: Miami U is preppy

### 'The U' disc set tours eight Midwest schools

By Lori Kurtzman  
Enquirer staff writer

**OXFORD** - "If you're willing to spend, like, a lot of money on your jeans, this is probably the right place for you."

So says Jeri, a Miami University student sitting on a pink porch swing and talking to a video camera. Jeri's got the dirt on her school, and she's freely spreading it around. She's one of a handful of first-name-only Miami students featured in a new DVD box set that aims to show prospective students "what life is like at the 50 most popular colleges in America."

The "insider" video tours, hosted by heartthrob WB stars and cut with music, quick graphics and real student interviews, explore everything from the party scene to dining options to course offerings.

Miami, referred to as "J. Crew U" on the DVD for its notoriously preppy student body, is the only Greater Cincinnati school that makes an appearance in "The U: Uncut" five-disc series. It's part of the Midwest disc, which tours eight schools, including Ohio State and Northwestern universities and the University of Michigan.

"I was very frustrated with the college search process," said Doug Imbruce, a recent Columbia University graduate who started "The U" out of his dorm room. "I'd go on these campus tours and really wouldn't learn anything other than how old a certain statue was."

That's why "The U" series, which Imbruce hopes to expand, shows things a tour guide never would - messy dorm rooms, houses decorated with Dumpster-worthy furniture, bars full of slightly tipsy coeds.

"It's like staying on campus for a week with a hip older brother or sister," he said.

The DVDs definitely go beyond what you'd read in a college brochure.

In fact, some of this stuff would make a recruiter cringe:

"Miami's known for not having any diversity whatsoever," says Alexis from Demarest, N.J.

Ben from Hamilton, a prep sporting a yellow polo shirt with a popped collar, notes: "Appearance is key here," with the goal being, "How rich can I look?"

An unidentified girl sitting behind the wheel of car turns to the camera, waves and says, "Hi, Daddy, thanks for paying for my alcohol," while another remarks that the local bars aren't too strict about fake IDs.

#### A COLLEGE TOUR, REALLY

**What:** The U, a set of five DVDs that give an "insider" tour of schools across the country, including Miami and Ohio State universities.

**Cost:** \$14.95 for the Midwest DVD, or \$39.99 for the set, which includes tours of Yale, Harvard, Stanford, University of Florida and Georgetown. (Some high schools will receive free, shorter copies of the DVDs.)

**Quote:** "Miami University likes to think of itself as the Harvard of Ohio. But it's better to think of this school as what Harvard would be if you moved it west, dropped it in a cornfield, kicked out all the nerds and added a lot of hotties rocking the popped collar. Yeah. The students here are into academics, but definitely not studying on a Saturday night." - WB star Jared Padalecki, who introduces the Miami segment

**More information:** [www.theu.com](http://www.theu.com), where you can see previews of the DVD. Miami's is the most watched clip.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The DVD balances its picture, though. While it shows sweaty young women in heavy makeup dancing at bars and chugging beer ("Miami rules!" one girl yells), it also reveals Miami's sprawling, gorgeous campus. Students talk about the easy access to professors and the good reputation of the education and business schools, and a voiceover calls Miami one of the more prestigious schools in the Midwest.

And there's the food, which the students rave about: "I can't stuff my face fast enough," one student says, without a trace of sarcasm.

In Miami's communications office, Assistant Director Claire Wagner watched her school's segment and, "overall, I thought Miami came off pretty well," she said.

And besides, Miami isn't the only college taking a few punches on the Midwest DVD. Consider these comments, from another tour:

"If you hate sports, don't bother coming."

It "isn't known as an academic powerhouse." "It's not, you know, Harvard or anything," remarks one student.

Then the kicker: During a portion of the tour talking about past riots, a host remarks, "When they're not in jail, (this school's) students are really friendly people."

The school? OSU.

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