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## BRÜNO



RYAN BARNETT

**S**acha Baron Cohen shocked everyone when his mockumentary *Borat* became a monster hit in summer 2006 – everyone but his fans, that is. This spring, Cohen is back in theatres with another spoof. *Brüno*, featuring the flamboyant Austrian fashion reporter that he originated on *Da Ali G Show*, brings the same type of guerrilla-ambush-style comedy that served *Borat* so well. But Cohen won't be able to confuse and amuse audiences and critics a second time. They're ready for him, and the prevailing winds seem to be against him. Here are five reasons why the media will label *Brüno* a failure regardless of whether it's good or not.

**AN UNREALISTIC FIGURE** > For any genre, *Borat* was huge. It grossed almost \$130 million, more than six times the amount of *Best in Show*, the most popular mockumentary of all time until Cohen came along. *Brüno* will only be considered a success if it makes *Borat*-type money.

**THE PRICE TAG** > *Brüno* cost twice as much as *Borat* to make. Universal didn't get Cohen in a fire sale – his \$40 million deal was widely reported. There's nothing the media likes to do more than to declare a star officially overpriced.

**TOO SOON?** > The film reportedly has Cohen (disguised as his new character Straight Dave) taking part in a rally in support of California's anti-gay marriage legislation, Proposition 8. This scene will become the talking point for critics who will say that Cohen's satire is more harmful than humorous.

**NICHT SO FUNNY** > *Brüno* also has the unfortunate distinction of being the least funny, accessible and comedically fertile of Cohen's three characters from *Da Ali G Show*. Those looking for the next *Borat* will be disappointed.

**MEDIA SPOILS** > In the heat following the success of *Borat*, Cohen's next project became a much sought-after gossip item for entertainment bloggers and reporters. As a result, we've already seen many stunts from the film, like his Prop 8 rally, walking the catwalk in Milan, crashing a Stella McCartney fashion show and trying to interview the Governorator. The film shoot was hunted like Princess Di, so *Brüno* will never appear as fresh as it may have otherwise.

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