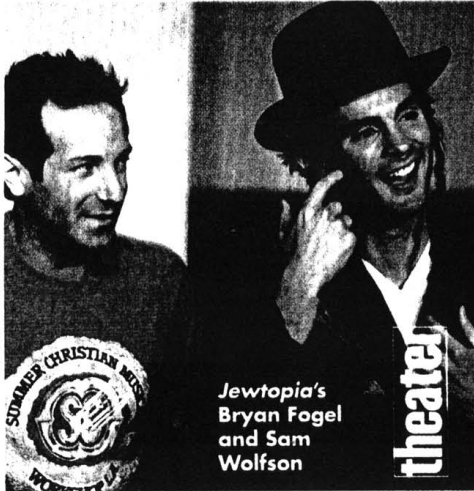


ELLE

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KEEPING THE FAITH

Two average Joes hit New York with the frequently irreverent but always hilarious *Jewtopia*



They'd come to Los Angeles to act, but after seven years their careers were still "pathetic and awful," so Bryan Fogel and Sam Wolfson decided to write parts for themselves. Even though Fogel had been raised in a Modern Orthodox home (he walked to synagogue) in Denver while Wolfson's family—from Florida—was, he says, "so Reform we were basically Episcopalian" (his bar mitzvah featured a *Miami Vice* theme), both had stereotypical Jewish family dynamics, including mothers who insisted their sons fax itineraries whenever they traveled. So they wrote *Jewtopia*, a hilarious, cliché-embracing, equal opportunity-offending comedy that ran for more than 300 performances in West Hollywood before moving to New York this month. Fogel plays

Chris O'Connell, a gentile pretending to be Jewish because he wants to date Jewish girls (so he'll "never have to make another decision"); Wolfson plays Adam Lipshitz, a "bad Jew" who reluctantly dates within the faith for fear of killing his mother. While Adam teaches Chris to walk the Jewish walk (always eat salmon; never discuss race cars), Chris introduces Adam to an online dating service (based on JDate.com) that hooks them up with the likes of Firetushy and Chop-Jewey. As for the authors-actors, both now 31, success has coincided with romance. Wolfson is dating a girl he met recently... on JDate. Fogel, the once-religious one, has found himself the perfect shiksa—proving that God not only exists but, like *Jewtopia*, has a wicked sense of humor.—J.G.

