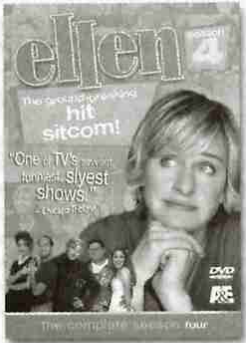


# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

BY BILL BISS

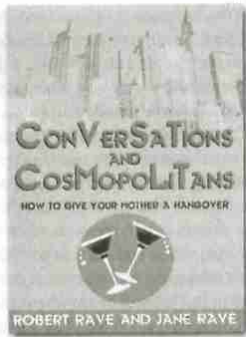
## DVD QUICK PICKS



**ELLEN—SEASON 4** A&E Home Video, \$49.95 (retail)

In the much-anticipated Season 4 of hit sitcom *Ellen*, all hell breaks loose. Thirty-something Ellen DeGeneres plays a neurotic L.A. bookstore owner who manages to get through her daily follies and foibles with the help of her loyal and lovable friends. Season 4 is the most triumphant for the series, where Ellen begins taking risks and letting the storyline become more raw and edgy. Featuring the famous “Puppy (Coming Out) Episode,” Ellen’s character triumphs and escalates the show to even greater ratings. Ellen DeGeneres no longer has to subconsciously censor herself, unveiling a blossoming of characterization in the show’s main character. Despite the socially relevant, the series is filled with characteristic *Ellen* humor, keeping fans of the series coming back for more. The complete boxed set includes an audio commentary with writers of “The Puppy Episode.”

## THE WRITE STUFF



**CONVERSATIONS AND COSMOPOLITANS** By Robert & Jane Rave, \$13.95 (retail)

*Conversations and Cosmopolitans: How to Give Your Mother a Hangover* highlights the true story of a gay boy and his mom as they go through the trials and zany tribulations of leaving home, joining Weight Watchers, and body waxing. When Robert came out to his mom (co-author Jane Rave), it was a difficult and confusing time for both of them as they re-negotiated their relationship. Although the book sounds dramatic and heavy, its tone and sense of humor makes it a lighter read. Robert teaches his mother about “point-if-ication,” being brainwashed into counting everything you eat and putting it into a point system, and “me but Latin,” what most gay men are looking for in a potential mate. Released in time for National Coming Out Day (October 11), *Conversations* is a good read for families and interested parties alike looking to bridge those small gaps.

## FOR THE RECORD



**ELECTRONIC — GET THE MESSAGE** Rhino/Wea, \$18.98 (retail)

Fans of British band Electronic will be thrilled to find all their favorites consolidated in one album. *Get the Message* spotlights all three albums from the super group featuring Bernard Sumner of New Order, and Johnny Marr of The Smiths. The collection includes chart-topping favorites and some hard-to-find tracks as well. Taking 10 of its 13 tracks from the group’s studio albums, the collection contains music from 1991’s self-titled debut, 1996’s follow-up, *Raise the Pressure*, and 2000’s *Twisted Tenderness*. Electronic crafted a number of dance-pop singles, including the vibrant “Getting Away with It” with the Pet Shop Boys’ Neil Tennant. The limited edition includes a bonus CD with all the band’s music videos.