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Club-A-Rama Week 6:

## LION

1962



The video entertainment this week is a mashup between the 2004 pilot episode of *WONDERFALLS* entitled *Wax Lion*, and the more time-appropriate (for my purposes) 1966 academy award winning movie *BORN FREE*. *WONDERFALLS* was a short-lived comedy-drama TV series that was broadcast on the Fox television network in 2004. It was filmed in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and enjoyed positive reviews from critics, but suffered from little advertising and an unannounced time-slot change. It was unfortunately canceled after just four episodes, though all 13 episodes that were made are available on DVD. *BORN FREE* was a 1966 film based on the true story of Elsa the lion, written by Joy Adamson.





c1970s Lion Country Safari, CA

The machine on the right is vending the large lion (the one on the left is vending the large elephant.) The Lion Country Safari wasn't founded until 1967, so it's not the original use of the small lion moldset. While over the years there were a number of locations for Lion Country Safaris, only one Lion Country Safari remains in operation, in Loxahatchee, Florida. Unfortunately for current collectors, that one Lion Country Safari no longer has a Mold-A-Rama machine (but they should!!)



1974 Lion Country Safari, Laguna Hills, CA

The large lion moldset (NOT this week's figure) is late-style unnumbered design, placing its origins post-1967, the apparent year that the owner of Mold-A-Rama at the time (ARA Services) sold Mold-A-Rama. (No moldset originally made after 1967 uses the original design numbering system.) On the other hand, the small lion moldset (which IS this week's figure) is among the very few early-style unnumbered designs, placing its origins squarely in 1962, most likely just after the end of the 1962 Seattle World's Fair. Both the small lion and the large lion have been vended at Lion Country Safari, but the large lion much more so.



The small lion moldset is shown on the left; the large lion moldset on the right. The large lion is much more prolific and commonly available (and in fact is the figure in the *Wonderfalls* pilot). The small lion's use quickly faded into the background after the large lion moldset was made, causing the small lion to be fairly hard to find. But it's not the size that matters. MOLDVILLE's focus is on what I refer to as the '25c era', and as such I generally prefer the earlier moldset designs to the later (though there are exceptions.)



The original use of the small lion is unknown, though a strong influence from the 1950s original by the inventor of the Mold-A-Rama machine, J.H. Miller himself, appears clear. Above is a comparison between MOLDVILLE's reissued 1962 lion standing next to a 1950s original by J.H. Miller.



This is MOLDVILLE, 'dressed' with an original early 1970s plexi backglass from LION COUNTRY SAFARI, just for this week's production of lions!



A nice yellowish/orange lion color was created for the MOLDVILLE machine to accomplish this week's production. It actually took 2 full days to arrive at this color. (Can you see the remains of a recycled, mostly melted lion figure?)

Disclaimers: The color and/or exact condition of the MOLD you get in the CLUB-A-RAMA may or may not be as shown. Not for children under 3.

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**If YOU would like to own this very moldset** (and perhaps even include a fully operating MOLDVILLE machine to go with it) so you can reissue your own souvenirs from 50 years ago, please email [MoldvilleMachine@gmail.com](mailto:MoldvilleMachine@gmail.com) TODAY - before someone else beats you to it!

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