



6 things...

# MAD MEN

**express**  
from the US

season 6

The critically acclaimed, multi award-winning drama is back. Usually tight-lipped creator **Matthew Weiner** reveals what we can expect from the new season

**Break** out the scotch and skinny ties – *Mad Men* is back. Series creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner, who describes the show as “the best work I do in my life”, is famously secretive about the drama, which follows dapper 1960s NYC advertising executive Don Draper (Jon Hamm). Luckily for us, we managed to prise a few revelations about the upcoming sixth season from him.

## 1 A movie-length opening episode

Last time we saw Don and the partners at Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce (SCDP), they were being tested by infidelity, objectification and suicide. The two-hour season six opener seeks to touch on all these issues. “This year, this first episode is constructed like a film,” says Weiner. “It has its own story and hopefully foreshadows the rest of the season.”

## 2 This is the penultimate season

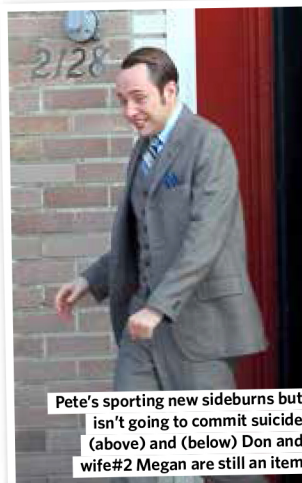
*Mad Men* will be no more in two years. “I want to leave the door open in case something amazing happens,” says Weiner, “but my gut feeling is that seven seasons is the right number.” Despite the end being in sight, Weiner promises season six will maintain the drama’s pace, intricate storytelling and surprises. “What’s great about doing this show is that every season you never know what you’re going to get,” he says.

## 3 The story will jump ahead at least a year

*Mad Men*’s storylines often skip ahead months (and sometimes even years) between seasons – a tactic Weiner plans to reuse for season six, which will leap from 1967 to sometime “straight in the middle of the tumultuous late 1960s”. Describing time jumps as “a great story engine for the show”, Weiner was reluctant to say how much time passes between seasons five and six, but hinted that real-life events might be featured in the show. “It’s been interesting to see how history interacts with our daily life and what world events pierce their way into our anxieties,” he says. “The characters are consistent, but the period is changing, the world is changing and the story is changing.”

## 4 Don and Megan are still together

Last season left things between Don (Jon Hamm) and his young wife Megan (Jessica Paré) on an ambiguous note. Sitting alone at a bar, Don was approached by a beautiful woman and we were left imagining what he does next. Nevertheless, photos leaked from the set show the Drapers enjoying some beach time in Hawaii. Although keen



Pete's sporting new sideburns but isn't going to commit suicide (above) and (below) Don and wife#2 Megan are still an item



to keep finer plot details under wraps, Weiner did confirm the couple is still together. “As season five went on and Megan began to express her own ambitions, it was a real blow to Don,” he says. “Maybe Megan wasn’t exciting to him once she wasn’t devoted to him anymore. But it ain’t over.”

## 5 None of the cast has been let go

Peggy (played by *Top of the Lake*’s Elisabeth Moss) – despite leaving SCDP – and Pete (Vincent Kartheiser) will both be back for the new season. “I never said to anyone that Elisabeth was leaving the show,” says Weiner. “I just said that the character was moving on. You’ll have to watch.” He also refuted all the suicide rumours surrounding Pete, who was on a low last season. “I don’t see him as someone who would ever commit suicide,” Weiner says.

“Pete said in episode 13 last season that he views it as weak, and that was already written and shot before all of this hubbub started.”

## 6 Rewatch the end of season five before season six starts

According to Weiner, the closing minutes of last season’s finale contain “incredibly important” information about season six. “Are you alone?” was a not-so-innocent question posed by an attractive woman to Don. It’s a loaded query, which is followed by Don entering darkness as the credits roll. Weiner explains these final scenes – a sequence of linking moments depicting Megan at a shoot, the partners gathered in the office and Don alone in a bar – are significant. “Sometimes the hero gets what he wants and sometimes he doesn’t,” Weiner teases. **F**

## Watch it

**Mad Men season 6**  
Monday, 8 April at  
4.45pm and 9.45pm  
**first on showcase 403**  
**404 HD S G+**

**WHY?** The penultimate season promises thrilling plot twists and more golden moments. Don’t miss the uninterrupted, double-episode opener, screening express from the US within three hours.

## The five seasons of Mad Men Refresh your memories of Don & co. with this snappy retrospective guide



### SEASON 1

Meet ad guy Don Draper, real name Dick Whitman. He’s taken on a dead man’s identity to escape his past and clashes with Pete, a young account exec. Don’s secretary Peggy sleeps with Pete and spars with office manager Joan, who’s having an affair with head honcho Roger. Peggy gets promoted and has Pete’s baby.



### SEASON 2

1962. Don clashes with accounts chief Duck Phillips and suffers a meltdown after Betty chucks him out for his cheating ways. Plus Peggy – who gave Pete’s baby up for adoption – returns to work, Joan gets engaged and Betty reveals she’s pregnant again.



### SEASON 3

1963. A British firm now owns the agency, Duck is gone and Lane Pryce is on board. Joan quits work to be a housewife for Greg but he joins the army and she must find a new job. Lane conspires with Don and co. to start a new agency. Don grants Betty a divorce and she leaves with her new beau Henry.



### SEASON 4

1964-65. Don’s drinking heavily and bickering with Betty. He gets sober and a healthy romance with consultant Faye follows. Betty squabbles with Henry, Peggy explores counterculture, and Joan sleeps with Roger and gets pregnant. Don impulsively proposes to his secretary Megan.



### SEASON 5

Betty is as dissatisfied as ever, Joan’s a single mum, Peggy’s embarked on a post-SCDP career and the second Mrs Draper’s pursuing her acting ambitions. SCDP is thriving, Pete’s stifled by suburban life, Roger is fresh from the divorce and Lane... well, Lane was no more (RIP Mr Pryce).

Images: SPLASH Words: Kara Byers