



# **Hollywood's 5 Greatest Actors: The Lives of Humphrey Bogart, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart, Marlon Brando, and Fred Astaire**

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures. \*Includes actors' quotes about their careers. \*Includes bibliographies. \*Includes a table of contents. In 1999, the American Film Institute released its list of the 50 greatest Hollywood stars of the 20th century, and selecting the best actors out of the bunch was certainly a tall task. The competition was so stacked that men like Gary Cooper and John Wayne were not even among the Top 10. So who were the Top 5 men selected by the AFI? One man has long been considered the greatest male star. From the time he first became a leading man, Humphrey Bogart's screen image has resonated with viewers more than perhaps any other actor. His persona as a tough guy who manages to maintain his sense of virtue no matter how compromising the situation features in some of the most famous films ever made, including *Casablanca* (1942), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), and *Key Largo* (1949). Movie stars are revered for their ability to captivate audiences, and perhaps no actor has done it as well as Cary Grant, the epitome of the suave, debonair actor who may have been rivaled only by dancer extraordinaire Fred Astaire. Grant offered a version of the male actor that stood in stark contrast with the gangster heroes and hard-boiled film noir detectives that populated the screen throughout his career. If the list was reconstructed today, it is entirely possible that Stewart would rank first. Not only have movies such as *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) and *Vertigo* (1958) continued to gain in popularity even into the 21st century, but Stewart has come to embody an accessible image of American values that is easy for everyone to embrace. Over the course of his long, prolific career, Marlon Brando was considered perhaps the greatest actor of the 20th century as well as one of the most complicated and misunderstood. Uniquely able to be both emotionally charged and technically constrained in the same performance, he single-handedly changed the direction of not only the American style of acting, influencing successors such as Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and even Johnny Depp, but the acting profession on a global scale. Virtually all famous actors are regaled by the public, but even still, Fred Astaire occupies a privileged position in American pop culture. The specific films in which Astaire acted may not be especially famous in their own right, but Astaire's dancing prowess invariably creates a lasting impact on viewers. *Hollywood's 5 Greatest Actors: The Lives of Humphrey Bogart, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart, Marlon Brando, and Fred Astaire* profiles the life, career, and legacy of the men deemed by the American Film Institute as the greatest male stars. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the AFI's Top 5 actors like you never have before.

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