



TOM CRUISE

Born: Thomas Cruise Mapother IV, July 3, 1962 (Syracuse, New York, U.S.).

Star qualities: Clean-cut good looks; one of the most sought-after actors in movie history; adored by women worldwide for his boyish charm and manly sex appeal; among Hollywood's highest-paid stars and top-grossing box-office attractions.

Recent interest in the mysteries of Scientology set to one side, Tom Cruise is undeniably one of the world's top leading men. That is no small accomplishment for a one-time high school athlete with a flair for stage performance but who was also saddled with difficulty reading and has suffered the embarrassment of two very public divorces (from actresses Mimi Rogers and Nicole Kidman).

Raised in a home divided by parental conflict, his ascent to superstardom was anything but inevitable. There was no process of selection of the aspiring thespian from among the ranks of the well-trained by an experienced actor with a sharp eye for skill. Nor was there a contest Cruise won, inasmuch as he toiled through the apprenticeship of all screen actors and emerged to become the personification of stardom. The early years of his career, though, weren't particularly notable, aside from supporting performances to other emerging stars in *Endless Love* (1981), *Taps* (1981), and *The Outsiders* (1983). But then came the lead in the comedy crime caper *Risky Business* (1983), a part in which Cruise combined small-town naivete with a hustler's worldly wiles.



Top Takes...

Mission: Impossible III 2006

War of the Worlds 2005

Collateral 2004

The Last Samurai 2003

Minority Report 2002

Vanilla Sky 2001

Mission: Impossible II 2000

***Magnolia* 1999 ☆**

Eyes Wide Shut 1999

***Jerry Maguire* 1996 ☆**

Mission: Impossible 1996

Interview with the Vampire:
The Vampire Chronicles 1994

The Firm 1993

A Few Good Men 1992

Far and Away 1992

Days of Thunder 1990

***Born on the Fourth of July* 1989 ☆**

Rain Man 1988

Young Guns 1988

Cocktail 1988

The Color of Money 1986

Top Gun 1986

Legend 1985

Risky Business 1983

RIGHT: Ethan Hunt saves the day, and gets the girl, once more in *Mission: Impossible III*.



ABOVE: Cruise and Val Kilmer as hot pilots Maverick and Ice in the smash-hit *Top Gun*.

Top Gun (1986) cemented his beefcake style and affirmed his position at the center of a consolidating movie market. In this way, Cruise has been something of a global phenomenon, having anchored such works as *The Firm* (1993), *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994), the *Mission: Impossible* trilogy (1996, 2000, 2006), *Jerry Maguire* (1996), *Minority Report* (2002), and *War of the Worlds* (2005). For some, though, the real attraction lay beneath his good looks—*Cocktail* (1988), *Days of Thunder* (1990)—with personality traits and vulnerabilities he would probably not consider part of his mainstream appeal. And, with *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), the Oliver Stone-directed story of paraplegic Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, he showed his real acting skills. That he's continued to affirm his commercial appeal above artistry, save for *Magnolia* (1999), is a convention of our times. But it is a comfort to know that our leading, leading man has masks we have yet to uncover. **GQC**

Breaking Out of Type

Moviegoers expect to see Tom Cruise play the good guy or the hero. Although some of his characters have been flawed, they have not been fatally so. His role in *Magnolia* hinted at darker depths, but the part that has taken him furthest away from type was his portrayal of the ruthless hit man in *Collateral*. His performance also won favor with critics. Cruise said of the part: "Vincent interested me because he is such an antisocial personality, bringing destruction and chaos with him wherever he goes." Perhaps audiences can look forward to more "surprising" roles from the star in his middle years.