



## HUMPHREY BOGART

**Born:** Humphrey DeForest Bogart, December 25, 1899 (New York City, New York, U.S.); died 1957 (Hollywood, California, U.S.).

**Star qualities:** Legendary—the ultimate tough guy, the ultimate movie star who delivers the ultimate lines, the ultimate man; “Bogie”; trademark lisp.

Humphrey Bogart is a legend. Several polls have named him the greatest movie star of all time, including the American Film Institute in 1999. It is a testament to Bogart’s talents to note that, even by his own admission, most of his performances are unremarkable, yet he has endured.

Bogart made a handful of classic movies that will always be appreciated. If there is much mediocrity to sit through—and even if, as has been suggested by people such as director John Huston, the actor’s career suffered from his own self-involved appropriation of the sharp-tongued, hell-raising, womanizing Bogart persona—there is undeniable magic onscreen. As satirized in numerous films and television programs, “Bogie”—the nickname given to him by his friend and fellow actor Spencer Tracy—is the man all other men aspire to be.

Born the son of a surgeon and a commercial illustrator, Bogart was nearly forty by the time he made an impact as an actor. Not a natural student, he was expelled from the prestigious Phillips Academy in 1918. He spent time in the Naval Reserve before straying into acting, attracted by



### Top Takes...

*The Harder They Fall* 1956  
*The Desperate Hours* 1955  
*We're No Angels* 1955  
*The Barefoot Contessa* 1954  
*Sabrina* 1954  
***The Caine Mutiny* 1954 ☆**  
*Beat the Devil* 1953  
***The African Queen* 1951 ☆**  
*Sirocco* 1951  
*In a Lonely Place* 1950  
*Knock on Any Door* 1949  
*Key Largo* 1948  
*The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* 1948  
*The Big Sleep* 1946  
*To Have and Have Not* 1944  
*Passage to Marseille* 1944  
*Sahara* 1943  
***Casablanca* 1942 ☆**  
*The Maltese Falcon* 1941  
*High Sierra* 1941  
*They Drive by Night* 1940  
*Dark Victory* 1939  
*Angels with Dirty Faces* 1938  
*Dead End* 1937  
*The Petrified Forest* 1936

RIGHT: Bogart and Peter Lorre look mournful as captives in *Passage to Marseille*.



ABOVE: Bogart looks suave as club owner Rick Blaine in the classic film, *Casablanca*.

the nocturnal, glamorous lifestyle. After playing minor parts on Broadway, he moved to the big screen. His career throughout the 1930s was undistinguished, filled with more than 30 B-list features in which Bogart appeared as a variety of tough guys, gangsters, and stock roles in which he was not capable of excelling. Bogart complained that Warners was handing him the second-tier parts passed on by big stars like James Cagney.

There are exceptions during this period. *Dead End* (1937), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and *They Drive by Night* (1940) are memorable, but Bogart became a star with *High Sierra* (1941). The film’s cowriter, John Huston, would again use Bogart well in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). But the best was yet to come. *Casablanca* (1942) teamed Bogart with Ingrid Bergman in this beloved and iconic wartime romantic drama.

“Acting is like sex: you either do it and don’t talk about it, or you talk about it and don’t do it.”

### Bogart the Hell-raiser

"I never should have switched from scotch to martinis," were Humphrey Bogart's last words. Never one to turn down a drink, "Bogie" was a boisterous presence in Hollywood. Here are just a few examples of his troublemaking antics:

- After dining one night at the exclusive Beverly Hills restaurant Chasen's, Bogart and fellow diner Peter Lorre seized the restaurant's huge safe, rolled it on to the street, and left it there for all to see.
- He was often at Romanoff's in Beverly Hills, sporting inappropriately casual attire and poking fun at the owner.
- Bogart was candid about the movie industry, and was quick to criticize his fellow actors and directors. "If he isn't any good, why can't you say so?"
- A keen sailor, he named a boat "Sluggly" after his third wife, the hot-tempered Mayo Methot. The couple were dubbed "The Battling Bogarts" in the press.
- In 1950, Bogart paid a late-night visit to the El Morocco Club in New York with his friend Bill Seeman and two giant stuffed pandas. Bogart demanded a table for four, and introduced the pandas as their "dates." They were later thrown out after a fight. When asked, "Were you drunk?" Bogart replied, "Isn't everybody at three in the morning?"
- Bogart was the founder of the original "Rat Pack"—a Hollywood drinking club.

Bogart's charismatic performance as exiled American club owner Rick Blaine affirmed his place in movie history and gave him the opportunity to shine in a romantic lead role. His portrayal of a hardened, cynical man who still found room for love and a conscience showed that Bogart had depth as an actor and could play a tough guy struggling with a soft heart. The movie captured the mood of the moment and the emotional dilemmas faced by the public at the time. It also gave Bogart the opportunity to deliver some of the most famous lines ever written and that have been parodied ever since, including "Here's looking at you." Bogart himself is thought to have had a hand in this; it is not in the draft screenplays, and has been said to have risen out of the poker lessons Bogart gave Bergman between takes.

### Life and love after *Casablanca*

But the two subsequent movies that brought Bogart together with director Howard Hawks and Bogart's real-life love Lauren Bacall, *To Have and Have Not* (1944) and the iconic film noir *The Big Sleep* (1946), may be even better. Bogart and Bacall's offscreen romance transferred to explosive chemistry onscreen, and Hawks capitalized on it by adding extra scenes.

There would be other outstanding roles to follow. Bogart worked with Huston again in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948), *Key Largo* (1948), *The African Queen* (1951), for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor, and *Beat the Devil* (1953). But Bogart's best performance is in an underrated thriller produced by his own company, *In a Lonely Place* (1950). It reunited Bogart with his *Knock on Any Door* (1949) director Nicholas Ray, and the film is a haunting, powerful study of rage, self-loathing, and masculine identity in violent crisis, with Bogart as an unstable screenwriter incapable of controlling his temper. It disproves the belief that he was unable to fully immerse himself in a character and shed the "Bogie" image for a role. Other than the Huston collaborations, his 1950s work is unremarkable. He was happily married to his fourth wife, Bacall, until he died of cancer in 1957. **TC**

RIGHT: Bogart and Katharine Hepburn take a break during filming of *The African Queen*.

