



Hollywood's 10 Greatest Actresses: Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Judy Garland, Marlene Dietrich, and Joan Crawford

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures.

*Includes a unique introduction of each actress.

*Includes quotes by the actresses about their lives and careers.

*Includes bibliographies of each actress for further reading.

In 1999, the American Film Institute released its list of the 50 greatest Hollywood stars of the 20th century, and selecting the 10 best actresses out of the bunch was certainly a tall task. The competition was so stacked that women like Ginger Rogers, Grace Kelly and Rita Hayworth were not even among the Top 10. So who were the Top 10 women selected by the AFI?

Aside from being one of the most recognized and acclaimed actresses in history, Katharine Hepburn's career is also of great importance because she forced Americans to reevaluate their expectations for female behavior, both in films themselves and off the movie set as well. As society began to pay greater attention to the importance of strong roles for women, Hepburn's career gained an even greater importance as a fiercely individual figure who offered a daring alternative to the conventions of femininity that had long existed in American culture.

Bette Davis presided over Hollywood at a time in which the film industry was at its most influential. Every actress from Katharine Hepburn to Ingrid Bergman and Ginger Rodgers, themselves now considered among Hollywood's greatest icons, lived in the shadow of Bette Davis.

For someone whose career ended over 30 years ago, Audrey Hepburn continues to retain her popularity and exert a strong influence over how people view beauty and sophistication. She remains an American icon, despite the fact that she did not even move to the United States until 1953 (at the age of 24) and spent the majority of her life living in Europe, while her characters in films such as *Roman Holiday* (1953) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961) are still held up as the paragon of delicate femininity and elegance.

At times during her career, Bergman was the darling of Hollywood, but at other times she was literally a pariah. It is all too common to remember Bergman for her performance in *Casablanca*, forgetting the fact that she was effectively exiled from Hollywood for several years during her romance with Roberto Rossellini.

Of all the great movie stars, there may be none more enigmatic than Greta Garbo, who remains internationally famous despite the fact her life and career raise more questions than answers. How did a Swedish actress with very little film acting experience in her native land arrive in the United States and achieve instant stardom?

Few actresses lived their lives in the public eye more than Marilyn Monroe, and yet her life remains shrouded in mystery to this day. While it is common knowledge that Marilyn's life is a rags-to-riches story, her life is bookended by hazy details surrounding her early life and even more mysterious death.

In many ways, Elizabeth Taylor enjoyed being in the public spotlight and living the lifestyle of the rich and famous, and her personal life very much resembled a performance suitable for Hollywood. Taylor faced great adversity throughout her life, including being married on eight different occasions to seven different

spouses and fighting battles with weight and drug addiction.

Judy Garland might be known today based more on her demise than anything else, and there's no denying that one of the most fascinating (and tragic) aspects of her life story is the manner in which her downward spiral occurred with the same rapid progression as her meteoric ascent.

When Marlene Dietrich first became a household name in the United States, she introduced a new standard for female sexuality on screen. Her performance in *The Blue Angel* (1930) not only stands as one of the most glamorous roles ever played but also one of the frankest depictions of the femme fatale ever captured on screen.

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