

Howard Hawks: The Grey Fox of Hollywood

Todd McCarthy

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Howard Hawks is now regarded as one of the greatest directors ever to work in Hollywood. His career stretched from the silent era through the seventies and left an indelible stamp on American cinema. A filmmaker of incomparable versatility, he made the landmark gangster film "Scarface," aviation classics ("The Dawn Patrol," "Only Angels Have Wings," "Air Force"), several of the best screwball comedies (Twentieth Century, "Bringing Up Baby," "His Girl Friday"), an immortal war story ("Sergeant York"), two sizzling Bogart-Bacall melodramas ("To Have and Have Not," "The Big Sleep"), a dazzling musical ("Gentlemen Prefer Blondes"), and several towering Westerns ("Red River," "Rio Bravo," "El Dorado"). He was Hollywood's leading starmaker, having discovered or given important roles to Lauren Bacall, Montgomery Clift, Carole Lombard, Rita Hayworth, Frances Farmer, Jane Russell, Paul Muni, Joan Collins, James Caan, and Angie Dickinson. Howard Hawks was the filmmaking partner of Howard Hughes; the drinking buddy and working colleague of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway; cofounder of Hollywood's first elite motorcycle gang; an inveterate gambler constantly in trouble with gangsters; and a self-styled ladies' man whose second wife was to become the celebrated Slim Keith. This first biography of Hawks penetrates the persona he so carefully constructed for himself and reveals one of the most formidable, complex, and enigmatic figures of Hollywood's Golden Age.

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