

Legends of the Big Screen

Porsche is a cinematic star. Sports cars from Zuffenhausen play key roles in numerous Hollywood movies. We present twelve of the Porsche films we agree are most worth seeing. Lights, Camera, Porsche!

By Gary Stock
Illustrations by Jan Bazing



TIMELESS

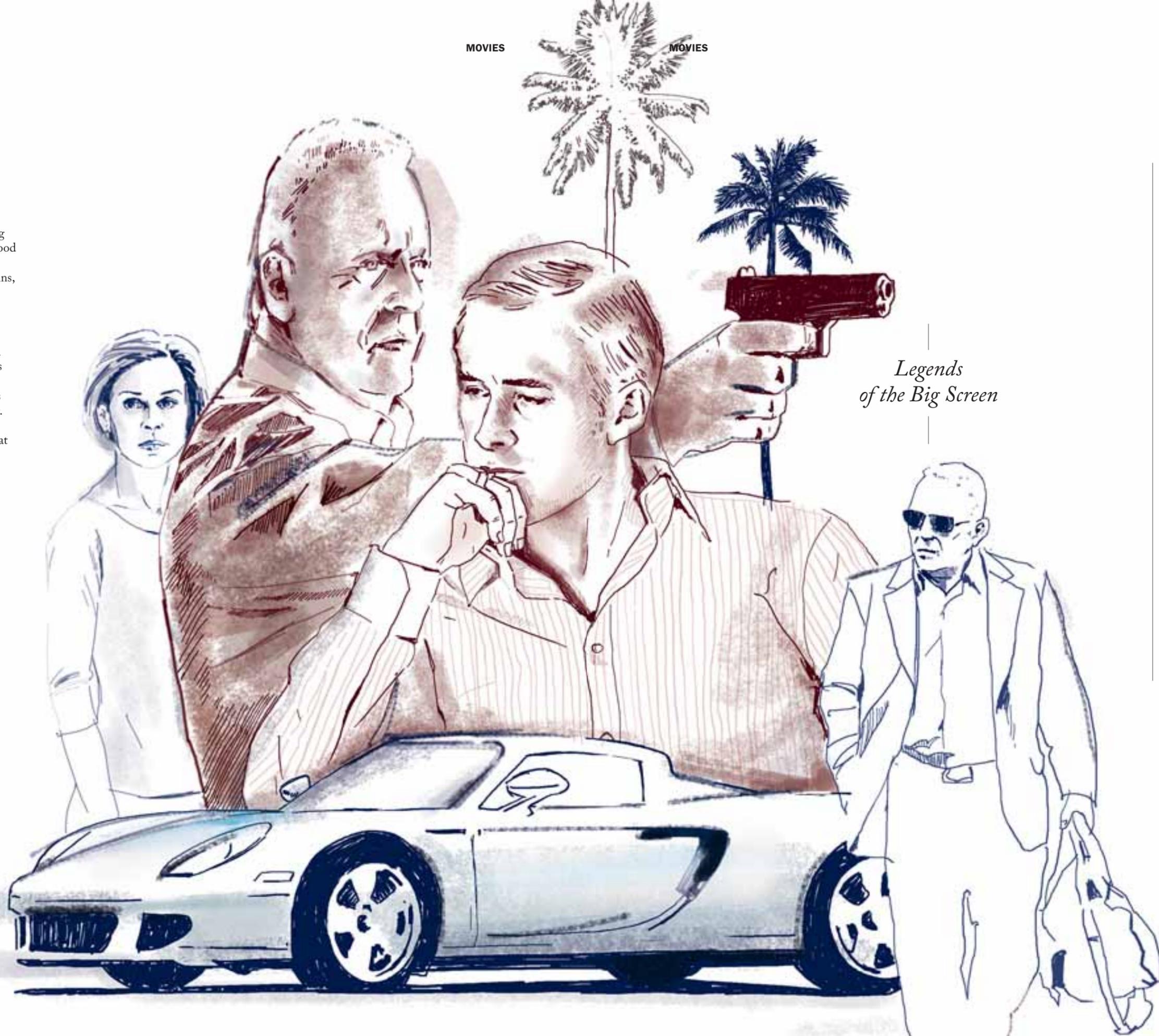
LE MANS

Best Porsche fan film of all times: Surveys show that 99.5% of Porsche fans would choose Steve McQueen's *Le Mans* (1971) as their sole DVD if stranded on a desert island. Yes, it's overlong, has continuity errors galore and a threadbare plot, and lacks convincing secondary characters. But these are minor details. After all, the movie consists in large part of original footage of the 24-hour races. From the 917 to two-piece driving suits to clunky watches, *Le Mans* is faithfully rendered, and epic rivalries such as that between Porsche and Ferrari are presented in detail. McQueen was initiator, financier, and actor all in one—coolness personified, as well as a serious Porsche driver off-screen and a role model for many a male Porsche owner who keeps his key in his left-hand pocket.

BAD FOR GOOD

FRACTURE

Best bad guy in a Porsche: Much as we hate to think of a villain driving a Porsche, Hollywood does give good rides to bad guys. One member of this category is Sir Anthony Hopkins, who seems to have a special talent for playing mannered but chilling malefactors. In *Fracture* (2007), he plays an aircraft manufacturer with a breathtaking but unfaithful wife (Embeth Davidtz). Hopkins's gorgeous Carrera GT stands in stark contrast to the boring wheels of his stolid pursuer Ryan Gosling. The plot is a triple-pretzel-twist version of an aristocratic, somewhat overconfident murderer being caught by a clever prosecutor. The car, however, goes free.



*Legends
of the Big Screen*

TIME TO GROW UP

RISKY BUSINESS

Best coming-of-age film featuring a Porsche: Tom Cruise and his white BVDs achieved certified stardom in *Risky Business* (1983), with his dad's sleek 928 coupé serving as a key plot element and representing his quest for maturity. Enthusiasts will wince at the underwater dunking of the rare 928. But close your eyes during the splash and then open them again to watch Cruise grow up.

INNER VALUES

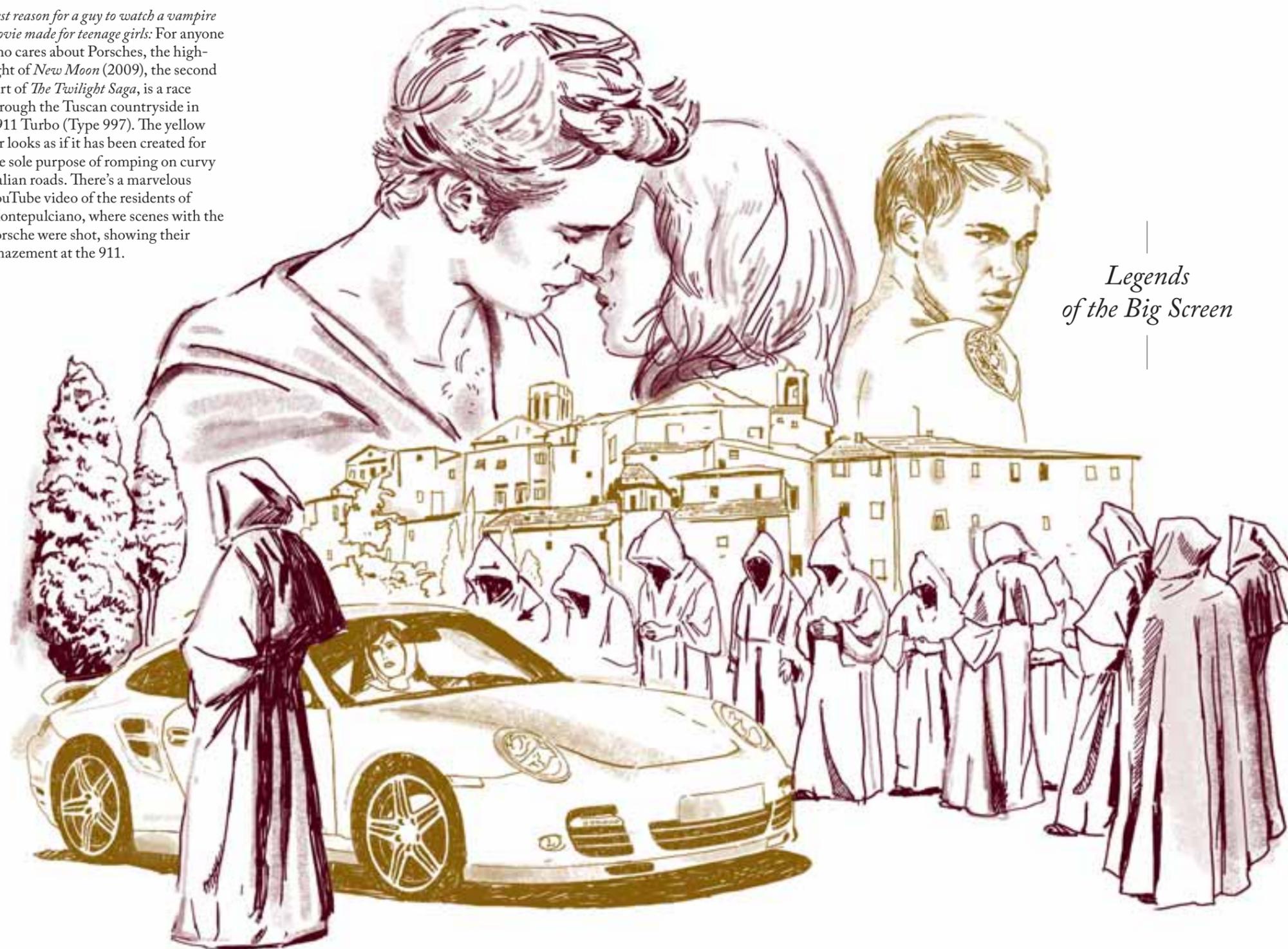
HARPER

Best use of a Porsche 356 as a symbol of mature masculinity: In *Harper* (1966), Paul Newman plays Lew Harper, an L.A. private eye from the weathered Humphrey Bogart school updated by way of a Ross Macdonald novel. Harper's Porsche speedster has seen better days, the driver's door and fenders are rusted, but the car shows a generation of moviegoers how well it runs regardless of the cosmetics.

(NOT) ONLY FOR GIRLS

NEW MOON

Best reason for a guy to watch a vampire movie made for teenage girls: For anyone who cares about Porsches, the highlight of *New Moon* (2009), the second part of *The Twilight Saga*, is a race through the Tuscan countryside in a 911 Turbo (Type 997). The yellow car looks as if it has been created for the sole purpose of romping on curvy Italian roads. There's a marvelous YouTube video of the residents of Montepulciano, where scenes with the Porsche were shot, showing their amazement at the 911.



*Legends
of the Big Screen*

TWO DAYS OF TASTE

48 HRS.

Best use of the Porsche 356 as a symbol of authenticity (part one): In *48 Hrs.* (1982) we're introduced to Eddie Murphy as a noisy inmate in prison blues, but once sprung from the Big House he is revealed to be more than a street hustler. Clue number one is his flawless Prince of Wales suit. But the giveaway is his vintage Porsche 356—Hollywood's way of telling us that this young man has style and depth. This time, policeman Nick Nolte is the master turned pupil.

MISSION POSSIBLE

CELLULAR

Best movie featuring a Porsche supporting an unlikely hero: The 2004 suspense flick *Cellular* might seem an odd choice for a Porsche fan; after all, the movie promptly introduces us to a Porsche owner who is grotesquely self-absorbed. However, the film's young hero, Chris Evans, ends up screaming around Los Angeles on a desperate mission to find the trapped heroine. Porsche owners can laugh at the overplayed stereotype while also cheering on the 911 Cabriolet's over-used brakes and over-revved engine.

LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Best cautionary tale about irresponsible behavior in a Porsche: Taylor Hackford's 1984 film-noir remake *Against All Odds* captures the glittering shallowness of L.A. nightlife and the dangers for a callow football player in becoming too wedded to a champagne lifestyle. Today of course the film is most famous for an insanelly irresponsible road race on L.A.'s Sunset Boulevard between Jeff Bridges in a 911 Targa and James Woods, the creepy boyfriend of wonderfully beautiful Rachel Ward, in a Ferrari. Back then the movie's producers had to justify this scene in interviews with the caveat "don't try this at home, folks." That warning to viewers also portends the film's tragic denouement for all its characters.

DRIVING CULTURE

LEGALLY BLONDE

Best Porsche that reflects the character of its driver: Reese Witherspoon is the irrepressible heroine of *Legally Blonde* (2001), a clash-of-cultures romantic comedy that poses the question, "What happens when a shallow social butterfly enters an Ivy League law school?" Self-aware and resolute, Witherspoon ignores the snobbishness of assorted intellectuals around her. The storyline mandates that her car be impeccably stylish yet also extroverted and possess a certain measure of plucky bravado. Presto, a sapphire blue Boxster that accompanies her through each stage of her journey.

FOR HIGH FLYERS

TOP GUN

Best use of the Porsche 356 as a symbol of authenticity (part two): This category is a tie. In *Top Gun* (1986), Kelly McGillis is an implausibly young and beautiful flight-tactics instructor at the Top Gun fighter pilots' school, resisting the well-practiced romantic tactics of Tom Cruise. Her restored 356 Cabriolet becomes a symbol of depth and authenticity, and the audience immediately senses that this instructor will teach pilot Maverick a thing or two before the credits roll.



*Legends
of the Big Screen*

*Have we left out your favorite?
Do you agree with our choices?*

*Let us know:
christophorus@porsche.de*

AUTOMOTIVE LOVEMAKING

**MISSION:
IMPOSSIBLE II**

Best cinematic spin in a Porsche: No real-life encounter will ever attain the sheer perfection of the pas de deux in *Mission: Impossible II* (2000). After a verbal flirtation with Thandie Newton, Tom Cruise pursues her over the narrow mountain roads of Andalusia on a golden summer day. With Cruise at the wheel of a 911 Cabriolet and Newton driving an Audi TT convertible, the stage is set for strategically placed gravel to get both cars spinning side by side in a ballet of perfect concentric circles, as the two soon-to-be intimates gaze at each another desirously—a choreography of automotive lovemaking.

ANIMATION ON SPEED

CARS

Best movie with a Porsche in a speaking role: The 2006 classic film *Cars* features flawless computer animation, a beguiling plot for the whole family, and Paul Newman in one of his last vocal roles. But the real show-stealer is sassy Sally Carrera, the blue Porsche 911 Carrera Coupé with a heart of gold, voiced to perfection by Bonnie Hunt. As the big-city gal who settles in fictional Radiator Springs and then wins the heart of hero Lightning McQueen, Sally represents every lady who ever found that love is more about truth than appearances. As for the sequel (*Cars 2*), let's just say Sally was bound to it by contract.