

Sexy, Macho Tom Selleck Carries New Series

The lush, tropical settings of Hawaii are just too good to resist when TV producers look for a series site. And when CBS retired long-running hit 'Hawaii Five-O', after Jack Lord quit the show, the network began to search for a suitable replacement. (TLC)

Thus, 'Magnum P.I.', starring macho Tom Selleck, (on the cover), along with a fine cast of secondary characters was launched. Seen on Thursdays, it's up against some heavy competition—ABC's 'Barney Miller' and 'It's a Living,' and NBC's 'Thursday Night at the Movies.'

However, based on early returns, the show has lots of promise. Against an action-adventure scenario, Tom Magnum (Selleck) is a retired naval officer living a playboy's life on an estate run with militaristic precision by its caretaker, Sgt. Higgins (John Hillerman).

Occasionally distracted by nubile young stewardesses who roam around the estate's grounds, Magnum fancies himself as a private detective, taking on cases that even Jim Rockford would have trouble solving. But, our hero is not without his island sources of info. There's Rick (Larry Manetti), the owner of a Hawaiian disco (with obvious references to 'Casablanca') who has underworld connections, and T.C., a hotshot chopper pilot who helps Magnum get in and out of risky situations with reckless abandon.

The show's strength and promise is due primarily to the charismatic approach Selleck takes in developing his character. His tongue-in-cheek portrayal coupled with his smoldering good looks make Tom Magnum believable and likable, two crucial attributes which separate the winners



Ready for action and rarin' to go! Here are the stars of 'Magnum P.I.' (from L.): Larry Manetti, Tom Selleck, Roger Mosley and John Hillerman.

from the losers on television.

Selleck does bear an uncanny resemblance to Burt Reynolds with his ruggedly handsome profile. If the scripting does not become repetitive or too silly, this series could give CBS one of the top rated private eye shows on the tube.

Stars like Robert Blake, Telly Savalas and Garner have proved that a dynamic personality can transcend average scripts—if the show's basic premise is sound. Once the audience makes a connection with the leading character—be he hero or villain—a series can get set for a long run.