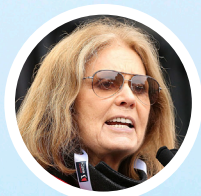


## THE AVIATORS CLUB



GENERAL DOUGLAS  
MACARTHUR



GLORIA  
STEINEM



TRACEE  
ELLIS ROSS



TOM  
CRUISE



STERLING K.  
BROWN



### THE CLASSIC

# AVIATORS

By Lindsey Van Gelder

**AVIATOR SUNGLASSES** were designed in the mid-1930s by Bausch and Lomb, originally to shut out glare for pilots at high altitudes—hence the trademarked name “Ray-Bans.” Aviators had their first celebrity branding during World War II when General Douglas MacArthur was photographed in a pair in the famous beach landing to liberate the Philippines. With their mantis-eye lenses, skinny metal frames, and double bridge crossbar, aviators have since been reaffirmed as cool in every generation.

In the opening credits of the 1953 film *The Wild One*, Marlon Brando peeled down a California highway in a black leather motorcycle jacket and dark rebel shades. Elvis had custom-made gold-trimmed aviators with purple lenses and a monogrammed nose bridge. (They sold for \$159,000 in 2018, complete with the King’s prescription.) Gloria Steinem later

proved that women could rock them, too. Tom Cruise meta-aviated in *Top Gun*. More recently, Freddie Mercury’s signature mirrored lenses were revived in *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and Brad Pitt sported orange lenses in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. Jennifer Lopez, Chrissy Teigen, and Tracee Ellis Ross regularly shield their eyes from the paparazzi in aviators.

**Ray-Ban** is now owned by Luxottica and makes aviators in multiple colors for both men and women. **Oliver Peoples**’s unisex Rikson models have super-lightweight titanium

frames that taper to tortoiseshell earpieces, and unisex “Sean” aviator frames from **Tom Ford** are available in rose gold-tone metal with smoky mirrored lenses and a leather brow bar. **Cartier**’s Panthère de Cartier line makes frames for both men and women that are embossed with tiny gold-finish metal panther heads on the lenses near the earpieces.

Whatever the details, aviator sunglasses are a classic eyewear statement, even if you never get closer to being a pilot than the bulkhead seat in first class.