



Tom Selleck and Pamela Shoop in "Magnum, P.I."

**YOU CAN COUNT ON ONE HAND** the number of superstars television has produced in the mold of James Garner and the late David Janssen. But Thursday night, when "Magnum, P.I." premieres on Channel 2 (8-10), we suggest you take a good look at the series' star, Tom Selleck, and see if he isn't a candidate. (RC)

The rugged, dark, handsome, 6-foot-4, 210-pound actor, 35, plays an former Navy officer named Tom Magnum, once attached to the NIA (similar to the CIA), who after serving in Vietnam turns private eye. You never learn why he quit the service, but his contacts in the opening two-hour pilot are still pretty solid. He lives on a luxurious Hawaiian estate owned by a faceless, successful pulp writer named Robert Masters. In charge of security for the house is the pompous Higgins, played stone-faced by that delightful actor from "The Betty White Show," John Hillerman. He stands on a balcony, whip in hand, as his "aides," Doberman pinschers named Zeus and Apollo, go after intruders.

**THE FREE-WHEELING,** adventurous Magnum has a deal with his absentee host. He can live in the lush guest house provided he keeps Higgins on his toes and tests security while the writer travels. So for opens you see him break into the grounds, with

Zeus and Apollo on his heels, and steal Masters' red Ferrari right under Higgins' nose. (RC)

His destination? The airport to pick up Navy Lt. Dan Cook (Allen Williams), son of the admiral, a friend he served with in Vietnam, who is returning from an assignment. Before Magnum gets there Cook is kidnaped by a couple of thugs dressed as SPs and killed. When an autopsy is performed, cocaine is found in his stomach. He's denied burial with honor.

Magnum, sure that Cook could not have been a smuggler and that he must have been onto something, starts his own investigation. In agreement with him is the dead man's beautiful sister, Alice (Pamela Shoop), who joins him in the hunt for her brother's murderer.

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**THEY ARE THRUST INTO** a web of intrigue, a drug ring involving a woman known as Snow White, and gold shipments. Interwoven are flashbacks of his fighting in Vietnam, where his fellow officers wear a signet ring with a T on it. We advise you to pay attention to these segments because they're significant. (RC)

Altogether, the series is an interesting mix of mystery, adventure and romance, with Selleck projecting a strong, manly image on the tube. He's extremely likeable and attractive, and competent in the role. Hillerman, as Higgins, offers a wonderful foil for him and an interesting contrast. The idea of these two men living in the lush quarters of an absentee landlord is a solid TV premise. In addition, there are the attractive Hawaiian backgrounds.