



# Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis: America's Favorite 1950s Comedy Team

*Charles River Editors*

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=\*Includes pictures.

\*Includes Martin and Lewis' quotes about their lives and careers.

\*Includes a bibliography for further reading.

Like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin is an American legend for his longevity and success across a garden variety of different platforms. Martin began as a nightclub singer, performed in a comedy act, starred in films, recorded hit albums, and capped his career by serving as a television host. In fact, there may be no star who was better able to transcend the different avenues of entertainment.

Martin's success was made all the more amazing by the fact that he never had to change his personality or persona to find success in his different endeavors. From the beginning, Martin's public persona remained largely unchanged. He grew more famous and wealthy, but he always remained the smooth-talking Italian with the easy charm and the cool veneer. As Jerry Lewis noted in his memoirs about Martin, "Dean had this uncanny way of making everything bad look like it wasn't all that bad." If anything, Martin suggested that no matter the circumstances, people can always face their situation with leisurely charm.

Jerry Lewis has been in show business for over 7 decades, a multi-talented entertainer known for comedy, acting, singing, and producing and directing films to match, but he is best known for his work with Dean Martin, and in that sense, he remains overshadowed by his more famous partner. There's no doubt part of this was due to the stark contrast between their images, as Martin was suave and traditionally masculine while Lewis was a bundle of frantic energy. Although the circumstances that initiated their partnership are unusual and purely coincidental, the natural contrasts between the two ensured a perfect and complementary comedic fit. Working as "Martin and Lewis", the team became the most popular nightclub act in America, commanding huge fees for their appearances all across the country.

Perhaps the most ironic aspect of their success is that Dean Martin was not a comedian in any real sense of the word, and even during their act, he essentially served as the straight man to Jerry Lewis. The routine ensured that critics took more notice of Jerry Lewis, who intentionally came across as an awkward figure with a brand of bodily humor that was borrowed from a lineage of Yiddish humor predicated on physical slapstick. And just as Martin benefited from Lewis' comedic skills, Lewis also further developed a singing career thanks to the more famous Martin's crooning. Though it's often forgotten now, the duo eventually broke up in the mid-1950s because Lewis was starting to outshine Martin in their joint film career.

Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis profiles the lives and careers of two of America's most famous entertainers. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Martin and Lewis like never before.

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