

# Newton's 70lb art book comes with coffee table attached

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IT'S NOT so much a coffee-table book, more a book with a coffee table.

The volume of photographs by the legendary Helmut Newton goes on sale in Britain next month complete with its own special table, designed by Philippe Starck.

The addition of the table is no mere stylist's whim. Without it, the 480-page book is virtually unreadable. It weighs nearly five stone, measures 20in x 28in and goes under the appropriate title of "Sumo". Each book is numbered and personally signed by Newton.

Brad Pitt, the actor, has already bought three of the £1,000 limited edition vol-

umes. British luxury-book lovers will have their chance to buy from 15 December.

Each country has a strictly limited allocation. A tenth of the 10,000 worldwide print run will be available here, although only 300 will be ready for Christmas.

Publishers say the book cost £3m to produce and covers every aspect of Newton's career from his fashion photographs to more recent portraits of stars including Elizabeth Taylor, David Bowie and Jodie Foster. Some of the 400 pictures are published for the first time.

Benedikt Taschen, the publisher behind the venture, said: "I wanted to build a monument to the most important photographer of the 20th century."

Despite the £1,000 price tag, he claims

that everyone who sees the book cannot believe it costs so little. "Remember, this is not a coffee table book, it is a book with coffee table," he said.

When Mr Taschen approached the 79-year-old photographer with his idea, he took a cardboard dummy of the book with several of Newton's pictures in it, including one of his wife, June, also a photographer, sitting half-naked in the couple's kitchen.

"I said yes, like a fool," Newton said, in a recent interview in America where he lives. "It meant a year of sleepless nights worrying about the quality of the reproduction." But he professed himself happy with the final result. Just don't put your coffee mug down on it.