

## Summers' photos put fans inside frenzy of '80s tour

By Amy Kaufman  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — After the sound checks, in-between the room service and before the groupies attacked, Andy Summers, the guitarist of the Police, used to sneak off into deserted America with a black Leica camera tucked under his arm. He'd spend hours alone wandering through Seattle, Albuquerque, Fresno — hiding in the shadows of the scenery and snapping pictures to illustrate life during the frenzied early '80s, which marked the height of success for the rock super-group.

"When you're traveling around in a large entourage and being in a group where you're supposed to share ideas, photography was a way for me to have autonomy over my own universe," Summers said by phone earlier this week as the band — Summers, Sting and drummer Stewart Copeland — prepared to hit the road again for its reunion tour.

Having amassed almost 25,000 images from his time on the road, Summers collated them and boxed them away in his attic. The images remained hidden for nearly 20 years, until a friend suggested Summers pull together his impressive collection.

So out of the dust came the aptly titled book "I'll Be Watching You: Inside the Police 1980-83," the recently released work Summers compiled that blends hundreds of his pictures with dated journal entries.

The publisher, Taschen, recently distributed 1,500 signed and numbered limited-edition copies of the book worldwide, attached with a lofty \$400 price tag. In October, a smaller coffee-table version with identical content will retail for \$39.99.

The images certainly feed the pervasive sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll stereotype.

Among them: a crazed fan attempting to score an autograph through the band's limo window, a maid offering room service, a naked girl stretched out beside a guitar and Sting luxuriating like a god in a glistening body of water.

"Do you hate touring or love it? The meat grinder of hell or the heaven of adoration?" Summers writes in one entry, dated Dec. 3, 1982. "But the fact that 'they' are thrilled to see you — with their 50,000 faces turned in your direction every night — you become part of the bacchanalia. . . . You shrug and then leap like a rabid dog on to the stage."

"I wanted the book to have the quality that you're on the inside and everyone else is looking at you," Summers said of the compilation. "You're below them, and they're looking down at you all the time."

Graying former groupies, cowboy boot-clad hippies and a handful of celebrities turned out at Santa Monica's Bergamot Station, an art gallery complex, last week to catch a glimpse of 32 black-and-white pictures from the book, which will be exhibited until July

13.

"I wanted the exhibit to reflect that rock 'n' roll lifestyle," Summers said, as he stood in the center of the room.

"I couldn't have it all be straight. I wanted to show the, uh, width of the experience," he joked, pointing to an image of a woman's curvaceous body.

"I see the paparazzi all have fast motor drives and shoot many pictures to find one that will work," he added, motioning toward the numerous photographers surrounding him. "My method is much, much slower. I'm like a hunter creeping up on a deer through the forest, waiting for the right moment."

Lead singer Sting recalled Summers' camera as a constant presence on tour.

"I sort of got used to having Andy's camera in my face," Sting said. "His photos were more candid, nothing like those awful photo sessions that I hate."

"It just feels like so long ago when I look at these," said drummer Stewart Copeland. "I was a 25-year-old kid. That was the old Police, who aren't connected to who we are at all now. We're all older and wiser, totally the same people, but our foibles have been cast in stone."

Jeremy Piven, who plays Ari Gold on HBO's "Entourage," said he intended to buy two of Summers' photos, including one of Copeland drumming, which he plans to hang above his own drum set.

"It's like the way Hunter S. Thompson wrote," Piven said. "Through Andy's photos, we suddenly get to see the belly of the beast and be on tour. It's real art."

Though the backstage folly may have evaporated, the band insists being back on the road hasn't changed discernibly.

"A lot of it's really the same," Summers, 64, said. "It's completely comfortable to me. It was much stranger not being in the band, actually, because the experience we went through was very intense and vivid. It imprinted deeply and doesn't just fluff out a few months later."

"I'm a much truer man, and no one is throwing TVs out of windows now," Sting said with a smile. "It kind of feels like mom and dad got back together; it's a warm feeling. My instincts were perfect."