



# gil's girls



**Gil Elvgren:  
The Complete  
Pin-ups  
(Taschen, £7.99)**

Fans of cheesecake and kitsch American memorabilia will be familiar with painter and illustrator Gil Elvgren's work. Most notable for his gorgeous pin-up glamour girls that saturated

the US media from the mid-1930s through to 1972, his classic pictures capture a unique and nostalgic window of US culture and the concept of the American dream.

An Elvgren model is always the all-American girl next door, but in Technicolor fantasy, whose inimitable charms are revealed in that fleeting instant when she's been caught off-guard in a humorous but potentially embarrassing situation. Be it a gust of wind blowing up a skirt to reveal nylon-clad limbs, a naughty dog pulling a dress up an inch too high or a precarious ice-skating accident bruising a peachy bottom, it seems the elements are conspiring to divest her of clothing. But being a good

old American gal, an Elvgren model always takes it with good grace and a cheeky smile or shocked lipstick pout.

Elvgren painted over five hundred pictures of beautiful women and although most of his work was created for commercial use, it has been increasingly recognised as fine art. This book is the fulfilment of a promise by Elvgren's old friends Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, and took them ten years to collect and assemble. In this beautiful collection, they present the story of his life, followed by the full spectrum of his work. Most of his pictures are oil on canvas and were intended for reproduction, so his paintings were rarely dated or signed and gathering them all together has been a lifetime of work in itself.

Since the re-emergence of burlesque, his work is increasingly reproduced for flyers and advertising, as the cute but coy girls perfectly embody the innocent sauciness of the striptease. With her baby face and knockout body, an Elvgren girl is simply gorgeous and this lovely book will no doubt be a true pleasure for old fans and a warm welcome for new ones into the world of the old school pin-up glamour girl.

R.A.