

Marilyn Monroe Photographer Bert Stern: She Was The Perfect All-American Girl

Interest in Marilyn Monroe has surged recently, no doubt thanks to "My Week With Marilyn," and now Taschen has the ultimate Monroe-themed gift for any major fans of the late, great star: "Norman Mailer, Bert Stern, Marilyn Monroe."

Priced at \$1,000, the limited-edition tome brings together Norman Mailer's 1973 biography of Monroe with Bert Stern's now-legendary photos. Only 1,962 books have been printed and all are signed by Stern. If you're feeling particularly generous, there is an even more limited and exclusive edition priced at \$2,500.

Stern's photos, known as "The Last Sitting," were shot over three days at the Bel Air Hotel for *Vogue* magazine, and include the iconic images of Monroe provocatively lolling about, clad only in a scarf and ones of her donning a black wig, imitating Jackie Kennedy.

Just six weeks later, Monroe was found dead.

At the time, Stern didn't see anything controversial about his Monroe photos and still seems a little perplexed by all the fuss.

"It was the magazine's idea," he told The Huffington Post. "I didn't think about it very much. Everybody talks about it, so I guess I get it now."

Unlike many colleagues and friends of Monroe's, Stern, now 82, never saw the fragile and lachrymose side of the actress.

"I never saw her cry," he said. "I didn't see her as a sad figure at all. She had her problems but who doesn't? She didn't seem at all unhappy to me."

To Stern, Monroe was always the smiling woman we've seen in the photographs.

"She was great. She was sexy, beautiful, funny -- the perfect all-American girl. I loved her."

Check out some of Stern's photos from "Norman Mailer, Bert Stern, Marilyn Monroe" below, as well as other photos of Monroe through the years.