

Press Release

August 2021

Hotel Bel-Air hosts rare exhibition of Bert Stern's The Last Sitting® with Marilyn Monroe



"Pure Marilyn is what I wanted... first I had to decide where we were going to do it. Marilyn had only one condition: the sitting had to be in L.A. I had it... the Bel-Air Hotel." ~ Bert Stern ~

On a late June afternoon in 1962, Marilyn Monroe arrived at Hotel Bel-Air — alone, five hours late, ready to discard her inhibitions for the camera of legendary photographer Bert Stern. The 12-hour photoshoot that ensued, and the following two sessions, yielded nothing short of magic: the 2,571 portraits revealed a Marilyn completely unreserved yet utterly glamorous in wispy scarves, pink silk, birdcage veils, and an iconic black velour gown by Christian Dior. Collectively called The Last Sitting®, the intimate portraits would be the public's final glimpse into the life of the Hollywood icon before her untimely death six weeks later.

Guests and locals alike will have a chance to discover Stern's series in a rare exhibition taking place in the lobby at Hotel Bel-Air September 1 – October 31. The exhibition will feature 15 photos from The Last Sitting®, two of the standout images are double-sided 8ft by 3ft prints featuring a playful Marilyn behind the camera. A teaser to the exhibition will be on display in the lobby starting July 1st and will feature 9 photos.

"Bert captured Marilyn in a series of images so comprehensively," says curator Shannah Laumeister Stern, wife of the late Stern. "He went beyond her external and ethereal beauty to her essence. Marilyn seemed to trust Bert and let go in ways she had never before. She was free and playful, and

Hotel Bel-Air

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Bert captured the total of her with the reverence and passion he felt. They had a relationship through what they both related to most, the lens of the camera."

"Marilyn Monroe is the first American Goddess— Our Goddess of Love. She is gone, but she is everywhere. Stars die, but lights go on forever. Through the magic of photography the light from Marilyn Monroe is still reaching us, still drawing on, like moths to a flame" - Bert Stern

The exhibition is complimentary and open to the public 7 days a week.

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Dorchester Collection

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