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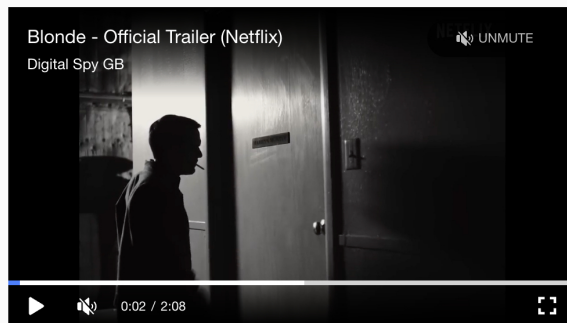
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Netflix's "Blonde" Filmed at Many of Marilyn Monroe's Real Homes

They offer, arguably, the only connection to the late star's real life.

BY KELLY ALLEN | PUBLISHED: SEP 30, 2022 6:28 PM EDT

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Netflix's *Blonde*—based on a fictionalized account of the life of **Marliynn Monroe** from Joyce Carol Oates's novel of the same name—has received a lot of criticism, from the time it was greenlit to the current influx of reviews following its release on September 28. Among the most recent discussions are the filming locations, which include some of Marilyn Monroe's real homes—and even the exact room where the star died.

While the Andrew Dominik-directed film is a reimagining centered on the trauma in Monroe's life, the filming locations and set design were intentionally rooted in historical accuracy. "Andrew wanted to take the audience down a visual journey that was very accurate," production designer Florencia Martin tells *House Beautiful*. "It felt like an honor to be able to represent her factually [in that way.]"

Of the many places Monroe (born Norma Jeane Mortenson) resided in throughout Los Angeles, four were used as filming locations: the **1920s bungalow on Afton Place** where she lived with her mother in the early years of her life; the former Beverly Carlton Hotel, which is now known as the **Avalon Hotel**; the **Bel-Air home** she rented with photographer Milton Greene and his wife, Amy, during the filming of *Bus Stop*; and her former **Brentwood home on Helena Drive**, where she died from an overdose in early August of 1962 when she was only 36 years old. Today, all of these homes are either rental properties with current residents or privately owned.

Extensive research was done to recreate the spaces Monroe inhabited, which were well-photographed during her life. They offer, arguably, the only touchpoint of who she was as a human being in the film. The former Beverly Carlton Hotel (which was redesigned by **Kelly Wearstler**), for example, was brought back to its original 1948 aesthetic for the film. It features custom-made furniture, like Monroe's daybed and famous quilted sofa, and personal belongings including books. "She was an avid reader and poet and she loved art, so it's actually really beautiful, the

images from this time in her life, because they really reflect her personal self," Martin says.



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But filming Monroe's death scene in the actual room where she died has sparked a conversation on social media about the ethics of preserving such tragedy on-film. A fairly sparse room, it technically could've been recreated anywhere. Either way, the scene was likely to be included. But Martin explains: "It wasn't about recreating images just to recreate them but to have a juxtaposition [of what was real] to the emotional thread of the story, which is specifically about this woman's trauma."

Martin notes that the film is *not* a biopic. "We're not telling the story start to finish of Marilyn," she says—a decision that, in fact, had quite some bearing on the choice to film in real-life locations. "Setting this story against the images of her real life just expanded the reality of what was happening and the believability as opposed to fictionalizing it as well," Martin says. "Then you're in a full story of fiction."

It's been **reported** that Monroe haunted the production of the movie. When filming in Monroe's real homes and specifically in the room where she died, though, Martin says she didn't feel her presence. Instead, she says, "it felt moving in a positive way to honor the real image of Marilyn as it's depicted in thousands of photos."

The 47-day production filmed at 25 locations in and around Los Angeles. Other locations include the famous restaurant she frequented called **Musso & Frank** and the beaches of Malibu along with filming studios Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox.

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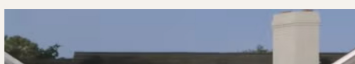
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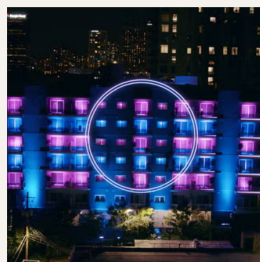
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