



COVER SHOT

by Chris Rose, Stuck in Plastic

The strong connection I had with toys in my childhood led me into toy photography, and LEGO photography in particular. As a child, I was lucky enough to receive the Galaxy Explorer set one Christmas, setting the stage for my obsession with the Classic Space line; I used to beg my parents for sets at every opportunity. As an adult, I've managed to pick up some of the sets I owned as a child, with the 894 Mobile Tracking Station being one of my favourites.

I particularly love shooting these sets outdoors where I can use local parks and woodland to create worlds for the astronauts to explore. This particular shoot took me to a local woodland where Christmas trees are grown. It is a great spot to shoot in as the young trees can pass for

as enormous ancient oaks in comparison to the tiny minifigures.

When I find a location like this, I like to have a walk around to take in the scenery and work out the best spot to shoot. It's important to make the background interesting, but not distract from the subject. It was quite a sunny day so I picked a suitable spot under the trees to avoid the harsh light. An overly bright scene can make a shot look washed out and lose the definition of the colours.

The next step was to get down to ground level to take the shot. This enables you to get into the mini figure's world and to feel like you are part of the scene. I placed the camera on the lid of a plastic box that I carry my figures in to keep the camera steady and protect it from the elements.

To avoid a heavy contrast of light and shade, I used a simple bounce card—a small piece of white

cardboard—to bounce and diffuse the natural light back on the figure's face.

If you don't have card a simple piece on white paper will do... and if folded correctly it will stand on its own.

With lots of interesting textures on the ground, such as moss, it was also important to make sure I focused on the astronaut's face to draw the viewer's eye away from distracting elements. You can achieve this result by using the aperture settings on your camera or phone to create a narrow depth of field by setting a low F number.

This particular shot was taken with a 35mm lens with an aperture setting of F2. When I set the camera to focus on the figure's face most of the background ended up slightly out of focus which in turn made it less distracting.