



By Beverley Thomas, @bevypix Stuck in Plastic

GOVER SHOT

Growing up I had a fascination with toy cars and over time I had built up quite a varied collection. I remember owning Kojak and the Dukes of Hazard's replica cars. As a child, I would watch them on television and owning the toy models allowed me to create exciting stories of my own. Looking back, it becomes evident as to why I chose cars over dolls.

As a family, we could only afford to buy second-hand cars and my father would be constantly under the bonnet fixing something. My toy car collection, I suppose was my way at that time of my family owning a brand-new car and I took great pride imagining the journeys that I could encounter.

On my bedroom wall was a poster of the beautifully designed Ferrari Testarossa. Years later, and I was now behind the wheel, fortunate to drive the Testarossa and the Ferrari 355 around

a racetrack. What a thrill! However, that feeling of driving, speed and the open road is something I never take for granted and it comes with a degree of responsibility that we must never underestimate.

To this day, I continue to have a passion for toy cars but this time in Lego brick form. I am a photographer by profession, and I began shooting toy photography as a hobby. This came about because my boys had grown up, stopped playing with Lego and we had plenty of it. So, I started using a minifigure as a self-representation after completing my degree and this began another journey.

The toy photography led me back to my love of cars and I was asked to shoot the LEGO Creator Aston Martin DB5, Technic Land Rover Defender, the Technic Porsche 911 RSR and the recently released creator Porsche 911 Turbo and Targa,

which can be seen on the LEGO SoMe channels. Aesthetically, I always try to place the cars in locations that compliment and showcase where you would naturally find them. There have been occasions when I am in public lying on the floor taking photographs of the cars by the roadside and drivers stopping to ask if I'm ok? When I explain what I am doing it often makes them park up so that they can come over to have a look and a chat. Which leads me to the cover shot.

Having decided that I would shoot new images and include a few of my Speed Champion models, I set out to capture the essence of speed. I intended to include the new LEGO city road plate that I had purchased especially for this particular collection. Sadly, I found that the Speed Champions are wider than the road width by about 2 inches. Granted, this road build set would have been perfect setting to add a realistic

backdrop, but the required modifications to enable them to look right, has made me rethink the shoot at this present time. Needless to say, I love these road plates, they are a great addition to anyone who wants to construct roads into their building sets.

With this in mind, I adopted to use one of my printed backdrops that bares similarity to that of a road surface, this enabled me to have a wider area to allow for cropping. Initially, it was important for me to send images into the editors for approval and I first decided to push the photoshop editing to the edge. I guess, being a woman, I am always trying to prove I am capable of delivering something quite different. And with no disrespect to anyone, the perception of cars and photography were always in the classification of a man's world. Nowadays, the acceptance of

women in photography is changing and yet we are still to see women F1 drivers make the grid.

At first, I had only included two cars, the Formula E Panasonic Jaguar Racing GEN2 and the Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo EVO as they complimented each other by colour. However, I knew they were completely different racing types of cars and this played on my mind a little. In order to achieve what I was seeing in my head it was a good excuse to purchase the Nissan GT-R Nismo and the Ferrari F8 Tributo. Ironically, I only now realised that all my minifigure drivers are males, so I did pick up the LEGO City set because it had a woman driver included. Needless to say, many shots later from different angles I felt that I had a selection that I was happy with. The crazy thing is, I added only the male drivers because they were already in the exclusive sports cars.



The technique I used was pretty basic. I shot in my studio using only natural light. However, to avoid the harsh lighting bouncing off the glossy cars from the window light, I decided to diffuse the light using a transparent reflector and then I used a fill light back onto the cars using silver card. If you do not have professional reflectors, then a sheet hung against the window and foil will do the trick.

I shot this particular image using a Nikon D750 set on a tripod with a 105mm macro lens and an aperture setting of F8. The main focus was directed on the Jaguar driver and I wanted the cars in the background to look like they were moving, so the choice of aperture allowed me to get the majority of the front shot in focus and the depth of field was helped with the contributing focal length. On the contrary, very little post-production was made on this occasion. However, I added a little light and smoke effect in photoshop just to give it a more dramatic reality.

The attention to detail is paramount when shooting subjects that are familiar and I have enjoyed the creative process whilst shooting all of the LEGO car models. They have enabled me to develop and slow down my way of shooting. At the same time, shooting for the cover has given me an insight into design layout and what it takes to win the race.