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Lee Iacocca interview

INSIDE: 1938 BUICK LIMO, '68 TORINO & MUSTANG, ZOLDER IN A
CORVETTE, 1960 CHEVROLET IMPALA, 100s OF CARS FOR SALE



US contributor Richard Truesdell shares some of his tricks of the trade, giving you tips on how to capture your car in its best light

**Words and Photography:
Richard Truesdell**



IMAGE 1: Opening Shot

RICH doesn't suggest trying this shot at home. It is a side-by-side shot, with the rear driver's side door opened, and Rich laying on the floor of a 2008 Subaru Impreza WRX STI - which is very uncomfortable - shooting slightly to the rear. This shot was taken at 1/80th of a second, at f 8 with the 18-200 mm zoom set at 22 mm. The low angle gives the shot a more dynamic look than would have been the case by simply shooting through the open window. It gives you some idea of the effort Rich puts into his shots for Classic American



IMAGE 2: Engine Shot

LET'S start under the hood and by parking the car in the shade, preferably next to a light-colored building. In this case it's behind my local Target. By shooting in the shade, you eliminate the possibility of shadows ruining your shot or obscuring the details. Almost every modern digital camera has a capability to provide a fill flash and most even let you adjust the power. In my case I set my camera at a 100 ASA exposure index, used shutter priority, set the exposure for 1/2 second at f 11 with the flash set at 1/8th power to get a little extra light in the dark areas. Because of the slow shutter speed I set the camera on the tripod - the best \$30 you'll ever spend - and used the self-timer to avoid any chance of camera shake.

Automotive Photography

FOR DUMMIES

OVER THE YEARS I HAVE photographed hundreds of cars, from million dollar Ferraris to million dollar muscle cars. Just recently I found some old black and white prints dating back to the 1971 New York International Automobile Show, taken when I was just 15 years old. And it's safe to say that my technique has improved a bit from those humble beginnings.

While the tools might have changed - back then I was shooting with a Yashica Mat 124G 6x6 twin lens reflex and Kodak Tri-X 400 ASA film, and today I shoot with a Nikon D200 with an 18-200 mm image stabilized lens, capturing to a 4 MB compact flash card - the fundamentals of a good shot remain the same. It's all

about composition and lighting, and in the case of feature cars, capturing the details that make the car special.

It never ceases to amaze me, as well as the editors I work with, the poor quality of the images submitted to publications, if even just for the 'Reader's Rides' sections of the various publications. To put it bluntly, many of the shots are, as you Brits say, pure rubbish. And the sad thing is that there are no reasons, in this age of digital capture, for this to be the case, especially if you follow just a few simple rules.

Recently I had the opportunity to shoot a great-looking 1968 Ford Mustang California Special, a limited-production Pony sold in just the western states. About 4,000 were built and this is an especially nice example that I tried my best to do justice to. Let me walk you through what it takes to shoot your car properly, especially if you're hoping to see it in publication.

Let's start with the details because for the 'money shots' I needed to wait until the sun got lower, closer to the 'golden light' provided by the setting sun. The details include under the hood, the interiors, and any elements that are unique to the vehicle that you are shooting. Besides a camera, and I've said this so many times, you will need a tripod to get good results. To give you a time line, we started shooting just a few minutes after 6 PM (Pacific Standard Time).

California made it happen

THE California Special that is the subject of our photography guide is a very special car. Unlike most California Specials, which were equipped with the 289 two-barrel/C4 three-speed automatic transmission combination, this 27,648-mile car, owned by Sherryle and Tom Wenzel of Riverside County, California, is equipped with a big-block 390, C6 automatic transmission and the heavy duty 9-inch rear-end. But what possibly makes their car unique, possibly a one-of-a-kind combination, is the front bench seat configuration, which from the start of production in 1964 found its way into a small percentage of Mustangs, along with the overhead console option.

Sherryle, who attends many local Southern California shows, noted a difference in reaction to the car, based on gender: 'Women for example gravitate to her because of her beautiful Brittany Blue paint and contrasting Parchment White vinyl top. When they get closer they love the interior. Men, on the other hand are impressed by the big 390 V8 with the 9-inch rear.' Over the seven years that Sherryle has owned her California Special, it's developed something of a history. California Specials expert Paul Newitt, who runs the California Special web site (californiaspecial.com), says that her car is possibly a 1 of 1 or a 1 of 2, while her Marti Report says that only 27 cars were made with her trim codes, although that number reflects all 1968 Mustangs, not just the California Specials.

IMAGE 3: Interior Shot

YOU can follow basically the same technique when shooting the interior. And here's why I try to park next to a plain, light-colored building. I use the building as a huge reflector, bathing the interior in soft, shadow-free light. Again, I used the fill-flash technique to highlight some of the details on the dash. In this case the exposure was 2.5 seconds at f 22 for lots of depth of field (front-to-rear sharpness). The first time I took this shot there were shopping carts in the background so I raised the tripod head to get a higher angle and eliminate a distracting background element. The thing here, that I was trying to show, was that this Mustang was equipped with a very rare bench seat and I wanted to show that and the three sets of seat belts.



IMAGE 4: Front 3/4 Static - Shot on the Bridge

BECAUSE I was still waiting for the sun to get lower relative to the horizon – it was about 6:50 PM at this point – I had some time before attempting the car-to-car shots, the owner suggested a brand-new bridge close by as a background. Unfortunately the available position of the light and construction conspired against us, so I went for a front three-quarter shot from a low angle with the car on the crown of the bridge.

The light was okay, but shadows became an issue from the streetlamps on the opposite side of the bridge. I used a wide angle setting for this shot, down low, about a foot off the ground, knowing I could always crop the shot later. The streetlamps are an interesting element but probably not right for this particular car. The exposure was 1/250th second at f 5.6.



IMAGE 5: Side Scoop

BECAUSE the California Special is directly related to the Shelby Mustangs of the same era, it was essential to get a close-up shot of the side scoops. Here I turned the camera sideways to get a vertically framed shot. It's really important to mix up your shots, shoot from different angles and look for unusual details, in this case the mesh embedded in the scoop. Here the exposure selected was 1/60th of a second at f 5.6.

I'm not as happy as I would like to be with this shot; the door, while shut, doesn't line up perfectly and upon close examination, the top screw is missing. Unfortunately the other door was about the same, down to the missing screw. A fix in Photoshop would be to clone the bottom screw and paste it in the top and crop the photo tighter so the misaligned panels weren't so noticeable.



IMAGE 6: Vertical Tracking Shot



THIS is the shot that many think separates the men from the boys but in reality it's quite simple. The problem is that if you're doing it on a public road, you'll be running the risk of a moving violation for not being belted in. If you're trying this for the first time, I suggest a big, open parking lot on a Sunday. This shot was taken from an open sunroof (with the roof closed as much as possible so if the driver should have to stop short I'm not ejected, Goldfinger-style up through the roof,) with a golf course with a lake in the background.

The key here is to have the cars maintain the same relative speed, in this case 25 miles-per-hour, using a slow shutter speed to get an element of blur on the road and on the fence in the background, all while avoiding shadows thrown by the camera car. Sounds simple, right? The exposure? Just about 1/80th of a second at f 7.1. If I had it to do over again and wasn't

so pressed for time I'd probably go for 1/45th second at f 11. Still a strong shot, framed for use as a possible cover with lots of room for the art director to use his own magic. (Cover shots require that the photographer think in terms of the magazine's title, space for the cover lines, and maximum impact; that's why you see a lot of red, yellow, and bright blue cover cars and rarely dark blue or brown or especially black unless it's an exceptional shot with a contrasting background.)

Once I knew I had the shot I wanted, we drove to a local In-N-Out Burgers to grab this shot. By this point it was 7:45 and I knew that the exterior lights would be on, but it wouldn't be so dark that it would cause a burn in the image. This comes with practice and having a feel for things having done this dozens of times. At this site, because I had used it so many times, we only took about 10 shots.

IMAGE 7: in-n-out Burger Uncropped/Cropped

I TRIED a few different positions for the car relative to the building and settled on this, then cropped the image a bit when I edited the images, to eliminate the truck coming through the drive-thru on the left as well as to use the outline of the building to frame the car. Here the exposure was set at 1/15th of a second at f 7.1 so that the car and the building would both be sharp and in focus.

If I had gotten farther back, used a longer lens (300 mm vs. the 52 mm I used), used a wider aperture, and moved the car away from the building, I could have kept the car sharp but blurred the building. But as soon as I looked at the shot on the camera's LCD display, I was happy with the result. You should notice how the quality of the color changes; at this point the sun has just ducked below the horizon but when using a tripod you can take advantage of the richness of the light at this point.



Image 8 - Rear 3/4 Shot

NORMALLY I would have stayed at this site shooting until there was no light left but I wanted to return to the bridge as one of the residents in the development said the lights went on at 8:15. As it was 8 PM at this point and the bridge was 10 minutes away, we packed up and headed to the bridge. We got there at 8:15 but the lights hadn't yet triggered.

Thinking that they were on some sort of photocell, we took a number of shots until at 8:25 they came on and we grabbed this shot using an exposure of a half-second at f 6.3. While I was shooting I told the owner to put on her parking lights and to press the brake pedal, giving this wonderful effect. As I had no real good shots of the car from the rear, I was glad I grabbed this shot when I did.



Image 9 - Rear Shot on the Bridge

AT 8:30 PM we were losing the light rapidly; in fact in the time we turned the car around we lost most of the light leaking over the horizon, which was replaced by illumination from the lights on the other side of the bridge. It took some time to get the car positioned with respect to the lights behind it and by the time I was happy with the composition, I was looking at some very long exposures, in this case five seconds at f 8. As my tripod wouldn't go low enough to get this angle we scouted the site and found a sandbag to steady the camera, necessity being the mother of invention.

I worked this image just a bit in my image editor, Nikon Capture NX, which is optimized for the Nikon RAW file format I shoot. I could further enhance the image post-production in Photoshop, but overall, I was satisfied with the final result. If you get the shot right when you take it, you'll have less to do in your image editor. I've found that many photographers get lazy thinking they can 'fix' the image in Photoshop, but now, as it was back in 1971, it's always best to get the shot



properly exposed when it is taken. In the digital age, with the ability to review your shot on your camera's LCD, there's really no excuse for taking a badly lit shot.

When I filled my 4 GB card it was 8:45 PM and I called it a night. Start-to-finish we spent two hours

30 minutes shooting the car, taking 150 individual images. I got home, cooked and ate dinner, then sorted through the images and by midnight I had 30 images for submission to a publication here in the US for its October issue. Needless to say, I had no trouble falling asleep!