Nikon Ambassador Amy Shore’s top tips for car photography

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1. If you love cars, harden your heart. I couldn't count the number of bad images I've seen where the photographer was so interested in the car for itself that they didn't really consider the photograph they were about to take. One of the reasons I think I've done well with car photography is that I wasn't into cars when I started; I was simply attempting to highlight their best features. So try to see the car as an object, not a love object.



2. Move. Don't use a superzoom to capture intimate, exciting moments from afar. Get a wider lens and dive in so the viewer feels like they are right at the heart of the action. Keep longer lenses for moments where the viewer really does need to feel like an onlooker, or for picking out details such as wheel arches and rear quarters. Wider lenses should be avoided when shooting the entire car, however, as they will distort the body shape that a bunch of people have painstakingly designed every square inch of.



3. Shoot a variety of angles. Front, rear, front 3/4, rear 3/4, 7/8, profile, details, wider interiors, and anything specific about the car are usual 'must haves' of car shoots.



4. The whole car doesn't have to be in focus. I love shooting at f/1.4 because that's what our eyes do – we focus on a point and the rest is lost. Sometimes shooting at f/8 has its place, but it depends on what you're trying to achieve from the look.



5. Give yourself space – cropping too closely, like clipping off the back of the car from the frame, can ruin a great shot. Either crop more to make it deliberate or pull right back and give yourself space, sky, a background to the subject.



6. If you want to shoot a car really well, take it away from ugly ones. Shooting a car in a car park next to average cars will not make a good photo. Network at car meets, get to know the owners, and see if you can arrange to shoot their car away from the meet.



7. A polished car is effectively a giant mirror, so use a circular polarising filter to control reflections and glare in the bodywork and windscreen. It will also saturate colours for a more punchy result.



8. Light, colour, shapes – these are the elements you're trying to arrange in your picture. If it's a dull day, focus on colour and shapes. If you're lacking colour, focus on shapes and light.



9. Wonky horizons have their place, like banked tracks or dynamic slanted action shots to emphasise speed. But don't shoot them when the horizon should be flat, please. It just looks daft.



10. As with anything creative, these are only rough guides. All of the points could be countered with a number of beautiful and contradictory images, so don't get too hung up on "how it should be done". Take these tips as a starting point for experimenting and developing your eye.

All images taken by Amy Shore.

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