



Image © Martyn Goddard

The car's the star

Martyn Goddard has spent a great deal of time taking lots of beautiful pictures of beautiful cars, and is the default choice of manufacturers and magazines alike. His take on where the advertising and publishing industries are going is about being willing to adapt to changing times and focusing in on where the remaining budget centres lie

What you wanted for Christmas and what arrived can be poles apart, but up there on the top sellers list for the latest round of 'stocking fillers' will have been iPads, iPhones, Smartphones, Kindles and the like... sack fulls of them, no doubt about it. Not content with the seismic shift to the web that has engulfed our consumption of news, transformed our shopping habits and sadly caused us to spend our lives staring at hand-held devices whilst we really should be talking to one-another, the latest target for change is our diet of magazines and books. It's a tough one to predict in that reading a book digitally is never going to be everyone's cup of tea, and indeed it's hard to see how the raft of women's magazines can translate the flick-read feel to a screen, but nevertheless there is an unstoppable trend towards hard-copy publications being the initial front-end flag-waver for masses of rolling on-line content and iPad editions. Even the more mature amongst us are getting the iPad bug, with anecdotal evidence of Mr Osborne's heating money being blown in PC World left, right and centre. Joking aside, it's a new media form that us suppliers of content (that is, imagery) will have to embrace. So, for an editorial or advertising photographer of any type, more is being required – be that the addition of 'can you do a bit of video on this for us' or 'we'd like to put a 360 of that on the web'. Therefore, if you've got a new-ish camera with HD video capacity and you haven't got into playing yet... think again.

All this has a lot to do with editorial and automotive photographer, Martyn Goddard. Within the industry, he's a name, has a remarkable track record, and so is a good point of reference to determine what's going on as 'new media' becomes mainstream. He comments: 'Yes, I've started supplying video for pretty much all my shoots now. The 360-degree panoramas of car interiors is also an assumed element of the task now too. It all makes the shoots quite complicated as you have to do the →





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→ “normal” work but then the client says they want a “quick video clip” as well – but without the knowledge as to what’s involved. It’s serving the endless demand from websites, but it’s not just in automotive – it’s everything, another fundamental change in what we do.’ And let’s take a guess... there isn’t a separate budget for the new work? Martyn replies: ‘In the US they often have a separate internet editor who’ll have some budget to run content and you might get a bit of that. But if a client can “tag-on” a bit of video on a

“day” it’s all the *same money*. It’s up to you really – you can see it as having to do more for less or you can take a view that it’s a shift in the reality of working as a photographer and it’s up to you to keep abreast of that. You can be sure the world will not wait.’

If there was any sector that would cause a furrowed brow on any contributor, you couldn’t pick a better one than the US automotive industry, and certainly Martyn’s not a photographer who has sat around wondering where the next commission is coming from. Like any industry in changing times, there’s the constant need for diversification to keep the work, of one type or another, coming through the door. He explains: ‘Right now around 60 per cent of my work is automotive – it’s come back up recently. The industry took a real hammering and the advertorials work all but disappeared. However, the US magazines are re-grouping – they’ve cut costs and cut budgets and are looking at a differently shaped market.’

It’s on the newsstand in your average WH Smiths that the changes are showing: why wait for a weekly or monthly magazine to give you news content when the web does it for you minute to minute? Hence the content of surviving titles is changing and your regular niche interest news-based magazine is disappearing. We see it with photography titles such as the *BJP* having to change fundamentally from weekly trade-news rag, to in-depth analytical monthly, literally after *decades*. Martyn comments: ‘*Octane* is one automotive title that’s a good example. It now has a separate front cover for subscribers called the “collectors” edition with no cover lines, just the purity of the subject, the car. Then there’s the newsstand issue that fulfills a different role. It’s the newsstand that will fall away within ten years. Publishing in hard-copy is set more and more towards high-quality niche areas and away from the common-or-garden consumer.’ This might sound harsh, but it’s a brave man who seriously disagrees.

OK, let’s think practicalities: so you can put your iPad in a case and not worry about it too much but it’s still a shinny, somewhat fragile, device that can be harmed and *stolen*. Who’s ever been mugged for their copy of *Top Gear*? It’s this that Martyn thinks holds everything back, for now: ‘The day every publisher should really worry about is when you can get a “hardcore” iPad that can be bashed about a bit and mucked around with. However, even then the collectors and special interest end will carry on, as long as it’s an area that is not price sensitive.’

Octane magazine provided Martyn with the chance to not only photograph the new Lancia Stratos (our front cover this month), but put together a classic →

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→ group shot of the original and new cars for their cover story. Martyn says: ‘The shot looks fantastic despite the wind being up and a constant threat of rain! It was a fantastic scoop – we were the only people in the world to get the original and new cars together, the full family. It was possible because we know the manufacturer, the designer, the people who have the old cars. For me it tells my client that they can attain great global coverage due to the networks and links we have – it’s more than being a car photographer, it’s about playing to our strengths.’ Therefore, photographer plus a network of contacts and trust built up over the years becomes something akin to an agency for media, providing

images, video and often copy too. In many instances, Martyn will work with a specialist writer and syndicate the resulting feature around the world.

Not just anyone can do this – you can’t simply ring up the owner of a £1m classic Maserati and get a drive in the snow. Nor will a story be of interest if it’s just eye-candy: ‘There has to be the experience content,’ he says. ‘Then from a global syndication point of view it’s heaven-sent.’ He continues: ‘Say you’re a Japanese magazine and there’s no chance you can plunge a massive budget into setting up all the necessary logistics from scratch. We can syndicate copy, images, video – all at a reasonable price – and they can power print, web, mobile and interactive – it’s great because it’s cost-effective and we’re a neutral source too. You have to see it as a “family” behind a magazine brand these days, and the print version may well be the face of it, but more and more content is going the other way and sitting online. It’s also the case that in many instances the website of a magazine will gladly accept content that the print version won’t go for. You can do well out of the appetite that the web has for rolling content.’

So this is just *fun, fun, fun* dashing around the world, driving, writing, photographing *amazing* cars and selling the result? Sounds good. On the →

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→ one hand, Martyn has certainly responded to how the advertising and editorial worlds have changed, rather than sitting on his hands and complaining about the state of the world and lack of direct commissions. However, the flip side of the coin is he has been *able* to because of his track record. If you were starting a business plan from scratch as a budding car photographer, the 'let's ride off into the sunset on a classic motorbike' approach might raise the bank manager's eyebrows. Whilst it may not be perfect if you're starting out, the well-connected Goddard can indeed conceive of these 'travel' style pictures and come up with the goods all round. Think of it all as engaging tales of motoring daring-do with pictures to match and you're about there. Martyn has won the Audi & Guild of Motoring Writers Photographer of the Year Award with almost embarrassing regularity. This year he entered just one picture. The story went like this: just after D-Day, Warrant Officer Robert J DeMatio hits Omaha Beach with the 118th Field Artillery Battalion of the United States 1st Army. It was the first →



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→ stop on a journey through France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany that continued through to 1945. He chronicled the journey in a typewritten history. Sixty-six years later, his son retraces the route in a Cadillac CTS-V coupe (it's a bloody big V8). Martyn Goddard takes the pictures and the tag line goes that 'American power – at least automotive power – is still embraced on the Continent'. How neat! If not necessarily true... Martyn explains a little more: 'We had this new hot-shot Cadillac and they wanted to launch it in the US but following this journal. The opening spread was entirely unplanned. We went two days before the D-day celebrations and happened to see the Jeep down at Omaha Beach – a French re-enactment society had it. I talked to them about our project and got a couple of their guys to face the Cadi opposite the beach. I had to take a few tourists out of

the background but that was it.' But back to the day job, and an assignment to photograph the new Audi A7 Sportback on location in very wet southern Spain. Martyn says: 'For Audi UK I will provide a set of pictures directly. It's specifically without the German slant, so without all the grey and the technical imagery and architectural designs. I was out in Spain for two days. You have the locations which are great, but it was all shot on

the hoof – we got around 25 finished images across two cars. It shouldn't work that way, but the relationship is that they know I've been doing it a long time – I will always give them stuff they can use. We go on these missions and it will always gell in some way. Spain is often used because it's one place where there's still very little traffic!' So this is about trust on the commercial and commissions side, and then yet more trust with the self-conceived features:

'I try to come up with lots of ideas – but it's really about having access to the most exciting and interesting cars. For instance, only last week I was out with Maseratis from the 1950s – we were driving around 2 million euros' worth on slippery roads. You need trust from the owners, and they must know that they will see their car somewhere they will be proud of. It's also about trends – what's popular and unusual. It gives you a huge edge – we all actually drive them – so giving a modern assessment of what they are like to drive, what it feels like. Magazines won't take a feature unless it's real – the reader has to get a feeling of how it is in real life.'

Martyn concludes: 'Stills and video out on location is where I want to be. I love the challenge of going out with 18 hours to shoot the story. You have to come back with the goods. tP

