

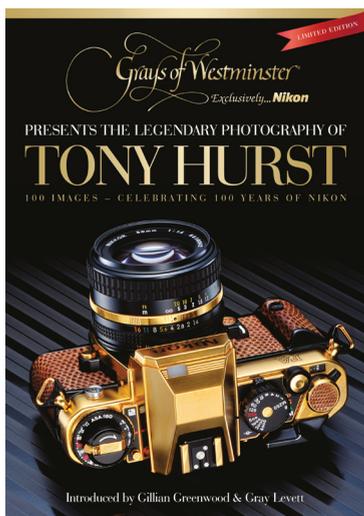
Just what the doctor ordered

It's all go at Nikon-only specialist **Grays of Westminster**. Not only is there a new book of Tony Hurst's photography coming to coincide with Nikon's 100th year anniversary, but actor Martin Clunes – aka Doc Martin in the long-running ITV series – recently dropped in to be interviewed about his love of photography for the shop's own publication, *Nikon Owner* magazine.

You'll recall we featured the uniquely Nikon-only specialist Grays of Westminster in BPI News last year to coincide with its 30 years of trading, commemorated in the hardback book *Grays of Westminster – The Legend and The Legacy* by Gillian Greenwood. Back in 2014 we also featured the retailer when it became the first camera shop in the world to be granted its own Coat of Arms.

This year the photo independent is celebrating another milestone – 100 years of Nikon – with a new publication, this one focusing on the lustrous, Nikon-centric product photography of Tony Hurst, often featured in Grays' press ads and shop window. Its publication date of July cleverly coincides with Nikon's actual birthday (see also Nikon's micro site at www.nikon.com/100th).

Unusual and rare Nikon equipment from over the years will be a large part of the book's appeal – and the same is true of Grays as a camera shop. Becoming a 'destination store' for all things Nikon has enabled it to stand out and be celebrated in its own right, whilst a location in London's Westminster and attention to detail – embodied in an exterior brass plaque bearing a signature based on Gray Levett's own copperplate handwriting



Grays of Westminster Presents The Legendary Photography of Tony Hurst is going to be a special, signed, limited edition of 100 images to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Nikon



Doctor who? L to R: Grays of Westminster's Gillian Greenwood, actor and Nikon enthusiast Martin Clunes, Grays' owner Gray Levett. Clunes was recently interviewed for the store's self-published Nikon Owner magazine, drawing a great response...

– has helped attract big-name customers. Stanley Kubrick, David Suchet and many others, including Rod Stewart, Matt Damon and Tim Burton, have been among the notable, whilst a further convert to both Nikon and Grays is actor Martin Clunes, aka ITV's *Doc Martin*.

A doctor calls...

Asked about the connection, Grays' founder, Gray Levett, responds: "Martin's wife, Philippa, who produces the *Doc Martin* series, popped in to buy a camera for him and he was very happy with it. Subsequently, when he visited the store, I introduced myself and we chatted about some of the vintage equipment. He's a very charming and amiable man. We talked about his photography and I mentioned that we'd love to do something with him for *Nikon Owner* magazine. He jokingly told me that I'd regret the offer, because he'd 'bombard me with his masterpieces'.

"Some time later he returned to the shop, came up to my office and it went from there; we arranged to do the interview and I worked on it for about three months. The issue of *Nikon Owner* in which he was featured

received an extraordinary response, both within the photographic world and from the general public, as he has a huge number of followers. It was like a replay of the time we featured (former glam rock star) Marc Bolan of T.Rex on the cover with a Nikon F in his hand (*Nikon Owner* Issue 53, July 2016). That also drew a lot of interest from fans. A further twist was that Michael Putland, the celebrated music photographer who took the Bolan shot, once had his studio in our basement. A lot of famous artists have been through these doors, including Marc Bolan, Alice Cooper, Slade, Andy Williams and legendary DJ John Peel.

"We've had people contacting us not only from the UK, but from America and Canada as well, saying they're huge fans of Martin Clunes. I can completely understand the attraction. He is a man with a great generosity of spirit, which comes across in his work and when you speak to him personally. We've just completed some service work for him on his equipment. The response was 'I don't know what you've done, but the camera is shooting better than ever.'"

In addition to connections with famous faces, there aren't many independent camera stores who can

lay claim to publishing their own photo magazine, which, of course, is another clever marketing tool in Grays' arsenal – an additional way of establishing and maintaining a long-running relationship with its customer base.

Look out for Grays' own Nikon celebration *Grays of Westminster Presents The Legendary Photography of Tony Hurst*: a special, signed, limited edition book of 100 images to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Nikon. "There will be beautiful full colour pages with a caption detailing each item of equipment," promises Gray. "The celebrated photographer and film director, Terence Donovan once told me that Tony Hurst was a genius while another said, 'Gray, you do realise that this is Nikon camera porn...'"

For further details, including how to order a copy, keep a look out via www.graysofwestminster.co.uk or email info@graysofwestminster.co.uk

To order Grays of Westminster Presents The Legendary Photography of Tony Hurst email info@graysofwestminster.co.uk