



FINN X FAIRLIGHT

Photo Lookbook

West Herefordshire
& the Welsh Borders

February 2020

 **FAIRLIGHT**

Finn Beales



We appreciate anyone that is interested in our brand & products, but when a creative whose work you respect and admire gets in touch to buy one of your bikes, it is extra special.

When you see one of Finns photo's on Instagram, you usually stop scrolling. Beautiful images and stories that for a moment transport you somewhere else. Finn has made his name doing work for brands such as Audi, Land Rover, Breitling, Barbour and Omega, to name just a few. The consistent high quality of his images and his ability to create narrative from still pictures has forged his reputation.

Finn ordered a black Secan build from us and he's already using it to explore the remote, mountainous and dramatic countryside that he calls home; West Herefordshire and the Welsh borders. It was his home landscape that offered the perfect location for our shoot with him. I've done a lot of riding in Herefordshire over the last few years but the little corner that Finn showed us, where the West of the county hits the mountains of Wales, was truly something else! A bold, beautiful and brutal landscape.

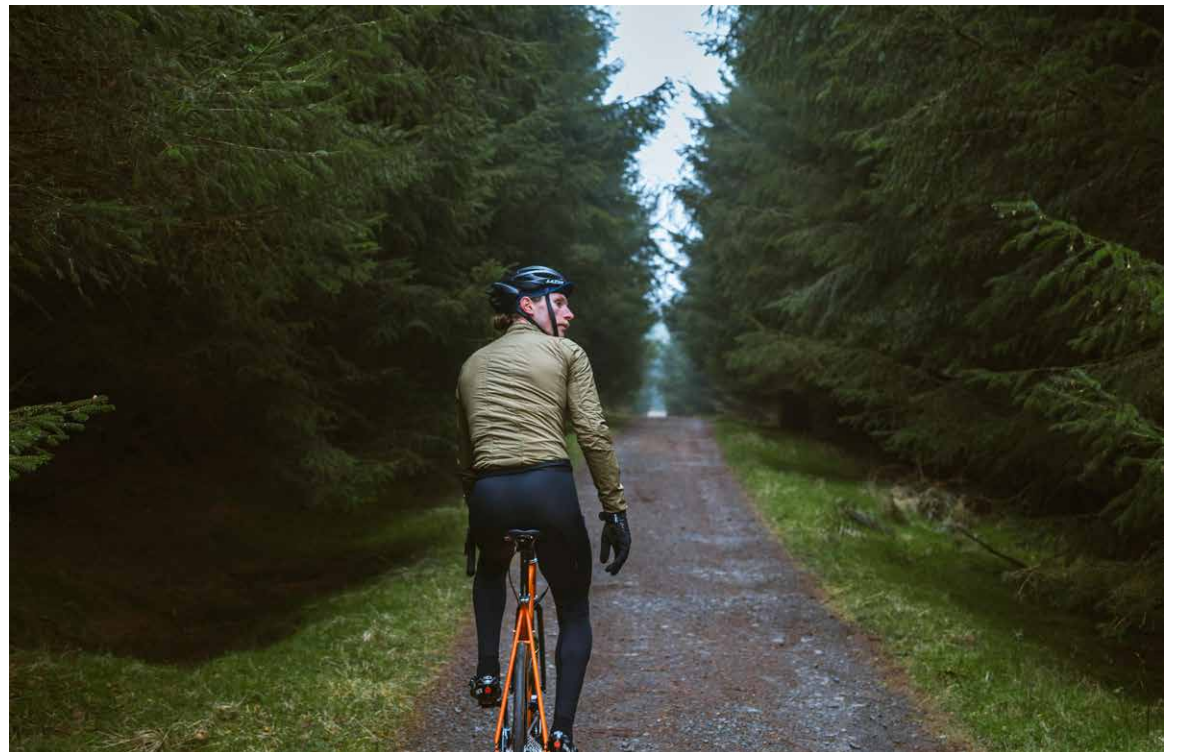
I hope you enjoy the photos in this lookbook. At the back of the document is a Q&A with Finn where he tells us about his work and process, it is well worth a read.

Dom.

























































Q&A

Questions by Dominic Thomas. Answers by Finn Beales.

What is your style?

Cinematic and narrative based. I'm not really a photographer who strolls around with a camera taking snaps. I need an idea or story to build my pictures around which is why I like working in the advertising world and shooting for brands. I enjoy shooting product as part of a wider story.

Whose work inspires you?

I'm inspired by movie makers more than still photographers. I love the storytelling process and often 'borrow' film making techniques and apply them to my stills work. I particularly like the work of cinematographer Roger Deakins.

Is there a single photograph or series of photos (by yourself or someone else) that you find yourself looking back on for inspiration?

The first photograph I ever bought (around 20 years ago) is a constant source of inspiration. It hangs in our hall and delivers everything I aim to achieve in an image. It asks questions.



How do you balance the technical aspects of photography with creativity?

I wouldn't say I'm a particularly technical photographer... I view a camera like I do a car. I love cars and I love driving them but I'm not particularly interested in how the internal combustion engine works. Similarly with a camera...I know how to use them, but I don't really care how they work. Some photographers love the gear and all that technical stuff... but so long as I can get the pictures I have in my head out of the machine I'm good. Creative ability tips the scale over technicality I think.

Did growing up in such a beautiful and remote landscape encourage your photography? Or was it a means to escape?

I'm not sure it encourages my photography but it plays a part. When you make a photograph you are essentially preserving a memory and we all use our own memories as a reason to press the shutter. I'd say growing up here has influenced the type of image I make as opposed to encouraged.

Do you ever shoot with film to re-calibrate your eye and/or style?

Absolutely. Experience of shooting different film stocks and the impact of grain on sharpness and detail gives you a light in the dark and something to refer to when it comes to grading digital files. I love the analogue inconsistencies of shooting film, especially in an old cranky camera where the winder is not working properly or if there are holes in the casing. Light 'leaking' onto film introduces marks and imperfections to photographs. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't, but that's what I love about shooting film. Like life, there's an element of unpredictability. It feels organic and real. Worth noting that the imperfect looks I'm describing influenced many of the popular filters found today on Instagram.



Are there ever occasions where the whole process consumes you to the point that you wish you weren't a photographer?

Nope. I love it.

Do you look at everything wondering how it would look as a photograph? In that sense can it remove from just enjoying the moment?

I'm aesthetically driven for sure, but I wouldn't say I look at everything as though it were a photograph. As before, my work tends to be narrative based...I need to be engaged on that level before I think of bringing out a camera.

Have camera phones and latterly social media damaged the art of photography?

I think the 'like' button on platforms like Instagram has funneled creativity for some. The social validation that hundreds of likes brings can be addictive, but certain types of image 'work' better on that app than others. Instagram is a one-shot platform, so you tend to find those big grand, epic location shots are 'rewarded' more than close-ups, portraiture or images that require a user to look twice. Unfortunately chasing likes is a recipe for creating empty art.

Does nostalgia play a part in your photography?
Especially when shooting your local landscape, do you find yourself trying to re-create a feeling?

Like I said, photographs are, by nature, memories. A snapshot in space and time, so nostalgia certainly plays a part in my work. Nostalgia is that warm, fuzzy emotion we feel when we think about memories from our past and leaning on it helps create feeling; which is tricky to achieve when you think a photograph is a silent, static 2 dimensional image.

West Herefordshire and the welsh borders are remote.
Do you find that living (and growing up) within a rural community keeps you grounded?

100%. Especially when I land on set in Los Angeles to direct a shoot. It's heady stuff...but I'm like...hang on a minute...a week after we wrap, I'll be back on my cowpat strewn hillside in Wales lol. There's nothing more grounding and I'm all the better for it.



I've recently been reading The Wood by John Lewis-Stempel and I found the following line interesting "West Herefordshire is a separate country. Hard against the mountains of Wales, fronted by the rich River Wye, a place apart, a compromise between man and nature". Does this line speak to you?

Oh for sure. Love that quote! This is frontier land between Wales and England and has been for centuries. The Welsh Marches...where the English Lords were stopped in their tracks...hard against the mountains of Wales.

What made you choose a Fairlight and what was the appeal of our products and brand?

You make the best looking steel frames on the market! Classic and well proportioned. I love the provenance and your attention to detail. I also love that you offer an element of customisation too. The new Black Secan frame sealed the deal. I love it.

Thank you Finn.



Special thanks to our friends at Albion for supporting the shoot and to Charlie at Albion for riding on the day, along with our very own Lloyd.

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