

CLASSIC DRIVER

[The police drove Lola T70s in George Lucas's directorial debut](#)

Lead

Chances are you've heard of Lamborghini Gallardos and Porsche 356s used in law enforcement roles – although it would take a brave mind to put a light bar and siren on a genuine Lola T70. But that's exactly what Star Wars creator George Lucas did in his directorial debut, *THX 1138*...

Given the values of [Lola T70s](#) today, you could be forgiven for writing off the two cars that appear in Lucas's 1971 dystopian cult classic *THX 1138* as glassfibre replicas, particularly as kitcar company FiberFab was listed in the credits. But at least one is known to be a genuine T70: chassis SL73/117. First sold as a road car in 1967, it was soon passed on to American actor James Garner's racing team, where it entered several endurance races and came 2nd at the 1969 Daytona 24 Hours. However, the T70 soon became uncompetitive (thanks to Porsche 917s and Ferrari 512s) and therefore held little value, and it was passed on to Lucas for a second life as the 'hero car' in Lucas's film. Subsequently, it was given to racing driver John Ward as payment for his stunt driving.

Tunnel vision, but no sound

At the time of filming, it appeared the engine of the future would be a gas turbine, following numerous high-profile experiments by major manufacturers in the previous decades. As a result, Lucas decided the T70 police cars in *THX 1138* – set in the 25th Century – should be thus equipped, and SL73/117 and its understudy were modified with relevant appendages. "We'd shoot at night because it was the only way we could close off these tunnels... and the tunnels acted like an amplifier," says Lucas in the film's DVD commentary. "We had these huge race car sounds coming out at two in the morning, and all the neighbours would call the cops." However, during post-production those glorious wails were replaced by turbine soundbites, which were manipulated recordings of an F86 Sabre during landing.

Better left alone

The story of the other T70 in the film is not widely known; perhaps it was an original car, or maybe a glassfibre 'splash' from SL73/117. Considering Lucas also managed to recruit Tom Meade's famous 'Thomassima II' for a cameo in the same film – "I knew a lot of guys who raced cars," he recalled – it could quite possibly be the former. But one thing's for sure, the authenticity was all but trashed in the 2004 Director's Cut re-master, in which primitive CGI models were inserted into the chase scenes. Proof that some things are better left unchanged, even if you are one of the most successful filmmakers of all time.

Photos/Videos: Lucasfilm

Gallery

Includes video

Has video

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