

PRO DETAILER MAGAZINE

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE CAR CARE TRADE ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION



MAMMA MIA FIGARO

Vinyl Roof Care & Metal Polishing
Tom Morrison-Jones - Ecurie Esprit

When you think 'JDM' your mind is normally drawn to boosted marvels of the Fast and Furious generation - but here we have something a little different. PRO Detailer reader Adrian got in touch when we asked for some JDM cars for the showcase chapter and volunteered his daughter's Figaro that has been in his custody since she moved to London. Adrian happens to work in the car auction world so we bumped into him at Salon Privé and got a little preview.

The Figaro was only built in 1991, so this car, like all others, is twenty six years old. It came out long before Fiat re-introduced the 500, BMW the Mini, VW the Beetle - in fact we think it might have invented the modern retro genre. Given its vintage now though, it's slipping into classic modern retro territory.

Twenty thousand were produced, of which an estimated 4,500 still exist in the UK - so it's not that rare. As any car bore will explain, usually at length, it's based on the Micra underpinnings and has a little blown four-pot connected to a three speed auto. Thanks to its slippery shape, lightweight, and (we suspect) a tailwind, it will exceed 100mph.

This particular car was brought over in 2007 and re-sprayed the interesting off-red colour. On closer inspection the paint job is rather good, technically speaking. This Figaro is kept in a garage and cleaned more often than it's driven (in the interests of keeping the mileage down, obviously) so finding something to improve on wasn't entirely straightforward.

We arrived at Adrian's house early doors with one of the Ecurie Esprit transporters and took the Figaro back to Tom's detailing studio. As he stores a lot of high-value cars, the precise studio location is kept under-wraps, hence the need for the rather smart covered transporter and Isuzu tow truck.



We taped up the Webasto-style vinyl roof prior to commencing the wash as neither of us were 100% sure it would be entirely pressure-washer proof. Washing the car was otherwise fairly straight forward - snow foam pre-wash, citrus spray along the lower sills, dwell - agitate - rinse. Then a standard three bucket wash followed by a blow and towel dry. Tar and fallout remover came next, though we didn't clay the car as we weren't planning on machine polishing.

The little Figaro has numerous idiosyncrasies that take a little getting used to. The bonnet tips forward like classic cars - a throwback to when catches were a little less reliable. It has two boots - the one on top opens backwards and reveals a shallow, flat space into which the roof and rear window can fold. The second is more of an alcove - think of it like a glove box you can access from outside the car. Each orifice can hold quite a bit of water, so it is well worth opening everything you can during the drying stage to prevent pesky dribbles!



Clean and dry, we wheeled the light magenta beauty into the studio and took a closer look under some proper lighting. We decided the two places we could really improve matters were the vinyl roof and chrome-plated headlight cowls. The former looked pretty good initially, but after doing a test patch we knew we could brighten it up by a good few pantones. The chrome on the car was a mix of plated plastic and genuine chrome-plated steel. The plastic is not easy to restore, but the metal components could be rescued.

Detailer Fact File - Ecurie Esprit

Name: Tom Morrison-Jones
Started: 2013
Location: Stratford-Upon-Avon
Telephone: 07910108507
Web: www.ecurieesprit.co.uk
Email: tom@ecurieesprit.co.uk

Approved by Swissvax, CarPro
C.Quartz, Koch Chemie, Xpel