

Applying Permagard protection

FRENCH PRODUCT PERMAGARD is much more than a polish, according to its Australian distributors. It is a chemical process which, through the application of a reactive polymer, puts an additional surface on to paintwork. The claimed result is not only protection but a permanent better-than-showroom shine.

There are two levels of Permagard: Pro-Coat which is used mostly as a new car pre-delivery treatment to heighten customer satisfaction, and Permagard Reactive Polymer 5000 which is applied to used car paintwork. We decided to test the 5000 version and, to make it more difficult, chose a new Toyota Yaris four days after delivery. Toyota's factory paintwork was of a high standard to begin with, and to improve upon it would be a tough call.

We sent the car to authorised Permagard user, Kingswood Smash Repairs, along with a photographer to observe what really goes on when consumers pay \$800 or more for the paint treatment.

Ryan Pate was the technician who carried out the process. He'd been trained by Permagard through its manual, plus several days of on-the-job instruction. Because the paintwork did not need buffing to get rid of oxidation, and it was a small car, he allocated two hours to complete the Yaris.

Permagard offers users some 44 different products for body and cabin protection. An entire kit would cost a repair shop around \$14,000. Entry level is around \$2,500 and an optimum setup to do body paintwork is around \$10,000. While that may sound like a sizeable investment for a panel shop, the profit per application can be over 100 per cent (labour included), which means the set up cost is quickly amortised.

The kit used on the Yaris included a Permagard-supplied low speed buffer (although application by hand is possible) washable bonnets (each application uses four of them) wash crystals, and polymer cream. The shop had to supply a high pressure water washer, bucket and sponge, chamois, microfibre cloth and an air hose for drying.

Permagard managing director for Australia, Mark Pettitt, suggests to customers that they come back for a Permagard service in nine months and thereafter every 12 months. This costs the car owner between \$200 and \$300 but ensures the superb finish is maintained.

Shops that take on Permagard get assistance in finding work, formulating advertising, after-care customer contact and even business cards. There is extensive log-in information on the website as well. In other words, it is a complete package.

The following newsreel tells the story of the Yaris plus Permagard.

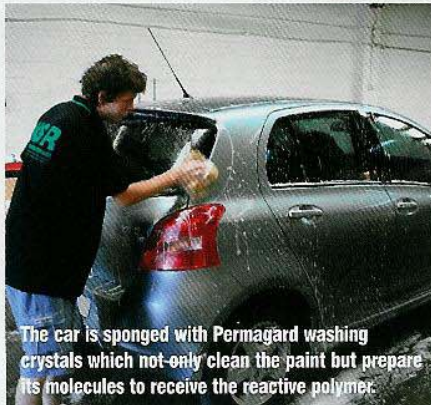
Enquiries, Tel: (02) 9362 5755.



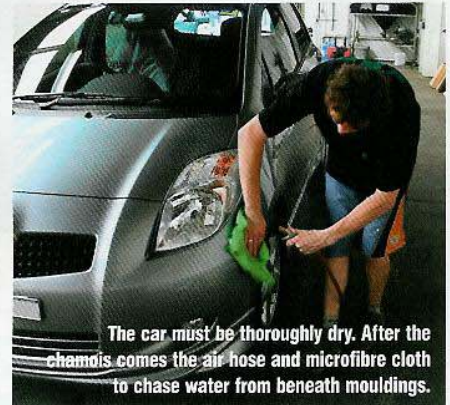
The Yaris arrives at Kingswood four days after delivery. For a mass produced car, the paintwork is very good.



First up is a wash. In this case it only needs a hose to remove the dust.



The car is sponged with Permagard washing crystals which not only clean the paint but prepare its molecules to receive the reactive polymer.



The car must be thoroughly dry. After the chamois comes the air hose and microfibre cloth to chase water from beneath mouldings.



The buff pad is loaded with cream. This will do half a panel.



The cream is applied using the buff. Any textured plastic has to be masked because the cream will stick to it. There is a right and wrong way to handle the buff. Lights and glass are treated too.



The cream buff bonnet leaves circles which the cleaner bonnet takes off.



The finished result is superb.