

new wave waterborne

TECHNOLOGY IN THE WORKS

Right now, 'waterborne' is the word on the lips of automotive paint manufacturers and refinishers operating in European Union (EU) countries. Both are working hard to meet the considerable challenges of making the transition to waterborne paint systems on 1 January 2007.

On that date, legislation will stop paint manufacturers from marketing traditional solvent-based paint materials in EU countries and body shops will be forced to change to environmentally-friendly, waterborne technology. Manufacturers will, however, still be able to market solvent-based product to non-EU regions as well as internationally.

Generally, South African refinishers compare favourably with their EU counterparts with local trends running parallel in most areas of operation. However, when it comes to the implementation of waterborne technology, EU refinishers are in the lead.

Waterborne technology has been described as 'probably the largest single change the international refinishing industry will ever undergo'. Spies Hecker in South Africa advises local refinishers to familiarise themselves with it before legislation comes into play. "This will

make their future transition to this new technology less of a challenge to implement and easier to get to grips with," says Claire Bowen, Spies Hecker Brand Manager.

"While no such 'green' legislation relating to the refinishing sector has yet been passed, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is implementing some significant measures to protect the local environment. In a recent media statement, Government outlined its approach to the crafting of its new system of Environmental Impact Assessment."

Spies Hecker, however, is already taking steps to introduce local refinishers to eco-friendly technology and continues to market the Greentec Line, an innovative range of products combining efficient application with an environmentally compatible refinish. Suitable for use even with MS technology, a number of Spies Hecker product tins already carry the distinctive Greentec logo on their labels.

Certain products which local refinishers have used for years - HS Premium Surfacer Filler 5310 for example - are in the Greentec line up and in



coming months, the Greentec logo will be included on their labels to indicate that they are VOC compliant and therefore better for the environment.

By putting Greentec products to work, refinishers will have taken the first step towards converting their shops into more environmentally friendly and healthy workplaces.



Focus on back seat safety

Renault Research

Last November, over two hundred journalists from more than thirty countries attended a safety test at the Lardy technical centre. In the crash test zone, a Scenic 11 and a Nouvelle Clio, each propelled at 50km/h (or the speed of a collision at 100km/h) slammed into each other head on.

The test aimed to demonstrate Renault's know-how in the area of passive safety involving issues few carmakers seem to take interest in: the protection of backseat passengers and children and the compatibility of vehicles of different mass (220kg separate the Clio and the Scenic).

Following the crash and its oral analysis, the journalists were invited to take close-up photos of the two vehicles.

The could check whether the structure had fulfilled their role of "energy sponge" and the passenger compartment's role of resilient "life cell". In compliance with Renault's policy of "safety for all", the seven dummies inside fully benefited from the protection provided by the structure and seatbelts, in both front and backseats.

Thus, thanks to the safety restraints (notably associating a seatbelt, a pyrotechnic pretensioner and a hump integrated into the seat's structure), the small size female dummy (highly sensitive to the phenomenon of "submarining"), remaining perfectly wedged against the backseat of the Nouvelle Clio, thus averting any abdominal injury. The three "children" loaded into the cars emerged from the crash test without a scratch, thanks to their Isofix enhanced seats, a technology developed by Renault.

Among them, Junior, just 10, who seated in the central place in the backseat of the Nouvelle Clio, the only vehicle on the market offering an installation entirely dedicated to the comfort and safety of children ages to 6-10.

Spectacular and harmless, crash tests should not distract from the essentials: by far the best protection is to avoid accidents in the first place.

