



Report Card:

2003 Subaru Impreza WRX Hatch (Black)



DISCLAIMER: Use of Adobe Photoshop.

All photographs are **UNALTERED** except for the addition of a frame and watermark, and any necessary contrast adjustments.

Registration plates have been masked in accordance with our client confidentiality policy.



CURRICULUM

1.0 Enrolment:.....	5
2.0 Remedial Tutelage:	9
3.0 Initial Assessment:	21
4.0 Course of Correction.....	25
Nearside Front Wing.....	28
Near Side Front Door.....	30
Nearside Rear Door.....	32
Roof.....	33
Bumpers	34
Offside Front Wing	36
Offside Door	37
Offside Rear Quarter.....	39
6.0 Finishing	41
7.0 Final Showing	45





1.0 Enrolment:

Recently we were provided with the opportunity to engage in some charity work and offer a scholarship providing a “Complete Curriculum of Correction” to a decidedly agricultural recipient.

This Subaru Impreza Wagon was purchased new in 2003 and the owners have put it to good use as a general workhorse on their Pukekohe farmlet, with daily commuting into Manukau thrown in for good measure. From a distance, things weren't looking too bad:



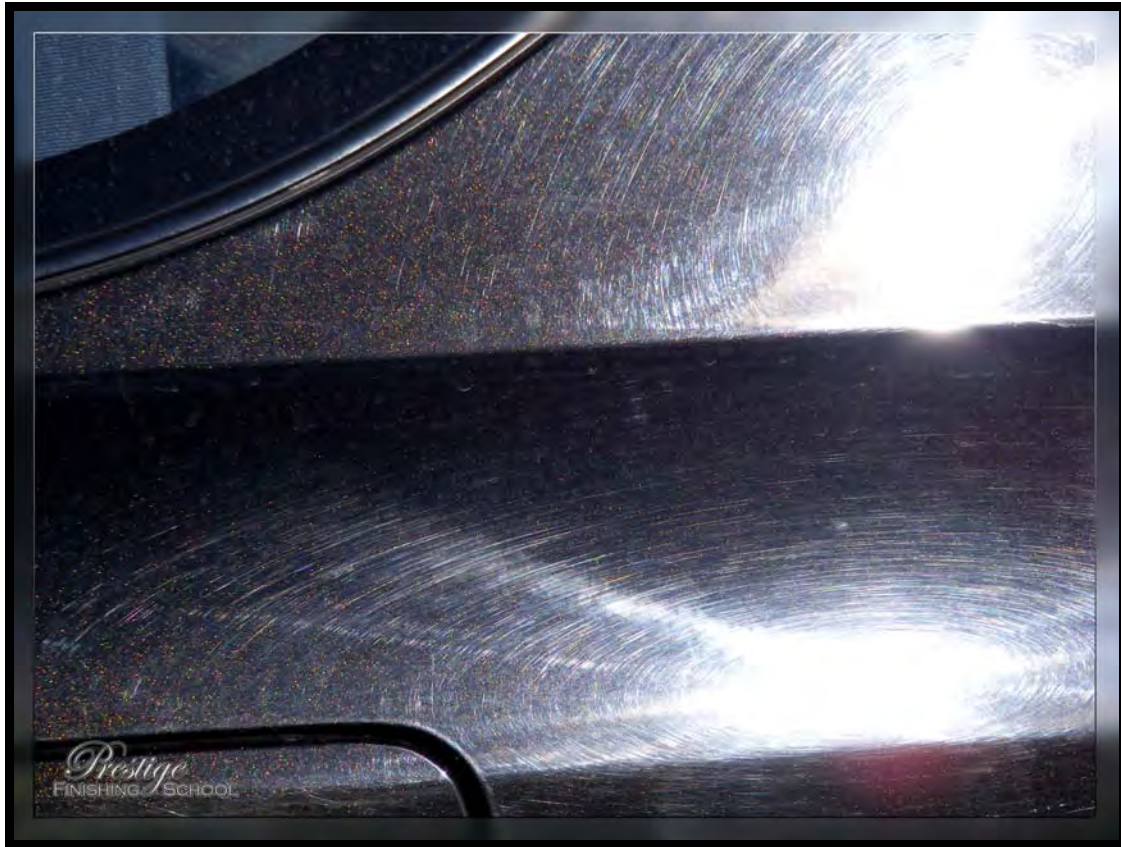
However, as you near the vehicle, you begin to get some idea of the task ahead:



The wheel rims appeared to be in especially poor condition:



Direct sunlight showed a long history of abuse by automatic carwashes, with heavy swirling of the paint evident all over the vehicle:



And even more disturbing, several areas covered in particularly deep scratches:



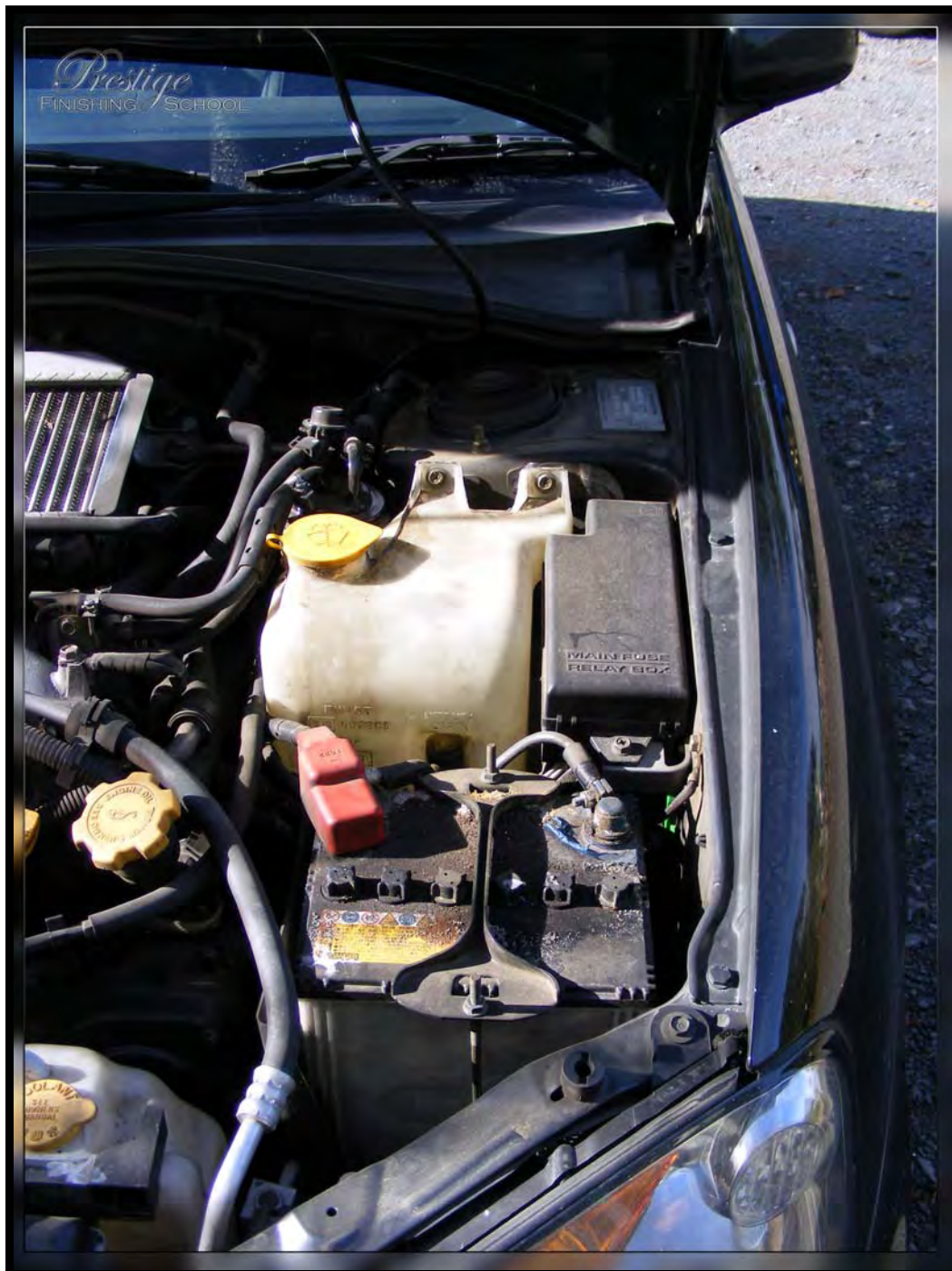


2.0 Remedial Tutelage:

The first step in resolving any kind of deep seated blemish is always to wash away the exterior dirt and grime. Not only does this provide us with the opportunity to fully appraise the 'raw' state of the paint surface, it ensures that any corrective action taken will result in the best possible finish, free from any marring that may be caused by contamination of either the paint itself, or the polishing material.

Engine Bay

To begin, the engine bay is detailed. It was in no better state than the vehicle's exterior:





We tackled this with Meguiars All Purpose Cleaner:



Wheels & Arches

Before going near the paintwork, we prefer to ensure that any extremely dirty areas of a vehicle (that require concentrated cleansers and/or degreasers) are properly addressed. Accordingly, as well as the engine bay, the wheels and wheel arches are given some attention. In this case, the condition of the vehicle warranted removal of each wheel and comprehensive cleaning with Meguiars Wheel Brightener, diluted at a ratio of 10:1.



With the wheels off, we had the opportunity to clear out the wheel wells with Meguiars Super Degreaser (diluted at 4:1) and a stiff bristled brush.



Clean!



And the front arches:



Clean!



...and re-fitted:



Pre Rinse



Foam Bath

The vehicle was next treated to a bath of Meguiars NXT Shampoo applied via an Autobrite UK Foam Lance.



The foam was left to dwell on the vehicle for 5min which gives it an opportunity to dissolve the grime and loosen it from the vehicle's surface.



And rinsed clean.



Hand Wash

With as much dirt as possible removed from the vehicle without direct contact, it was time to complete the wash process with a hand wash via a Lambswool Mitt and Meguiars Shampoo Plus.



A lambswool (or microfibre) mitt should always be used for ‘contact’ washing of a vehicle’s painted surfaces. Particles of grit and dirt on the paint are the **primary** cause of swirls on modern vehicles with clear ‘coat paint’. Regular sponges cause the grit to be trapped against the surface of the paint and dragged across it. (Even worse still are the brushes at self-service or automatic carwashes.) The plush mitt however will draw the dirt away from the paint surface, deep into the fibers of the wool, thus preventing it from inflicting further damage.

Also notice the separate buckets for ‘wash’ and ‘rinse’ action. This is the safest and most effective way to clean a vehicle’s paint. The Mitt is soaked in the 60° C Shampoo Plus solution which has a “*Low-Suds / High-Lubricity*” formula and then worked over the vehicle. After each panel, the Mitt is cleaned off in the ‘rinse’ bucket, dislodging any dirt picked up off the car, before being re-soaked in the shampoo.





If you consider the use of two buckets 'overkill', consider the state of the rinse bucket after completing the wash:



Would you consider wiping your car with anything soaked in the left bucket?



Clay Treatment

The final step in ensuring a perfectly clean paint surface is the removal of bonded contaminants with a detailing clay bar. This can include tar spots, tree sap or industrial fallout, all of which contribute to making the paint surface rough to the touch and dull to look at. In this instance, a Meguiars 'Quick Clay' bar was used with Meguiars Last Touch (diluted 1:1) as lubrication.



It's a source of constant amazement just how much contamination remains on a vehicle's surface after comprehensive washing!



The vehicle was then given a final rinse off with the pressure washer and then patted dry with a Sonus Der Wonder Microfibre Drying Towel.

With the vehicle's exterior now in a perfectly clean and dry state, it was moved inside to begin a thorough examination of the condition of the paint and to determine the type and quantity of correction that would be required to produce a perfect finish.



3.0 Initial Assessment:

At this point, we get to see and understand the true and unadulterated state of the vehicle bodywork. Without the benefit of any (defect masking) wax and under the unforgiving twin 500W Halogen lights, things were not looking good!









As you can see, the paint has suffered significant damage over the past few years. It is incredibly difficult to capture on film the extent of the swirling on the paint. It almost looks like it has been scrubbed, top to bottom, with steel wool! Of more concern, however, were the much deeper scratches (that look to have been inflicted by the family dog jumping up against the doors), dings, and even paint transfer from various parking 'incidents'.

This vehicle would pose a real challenge!

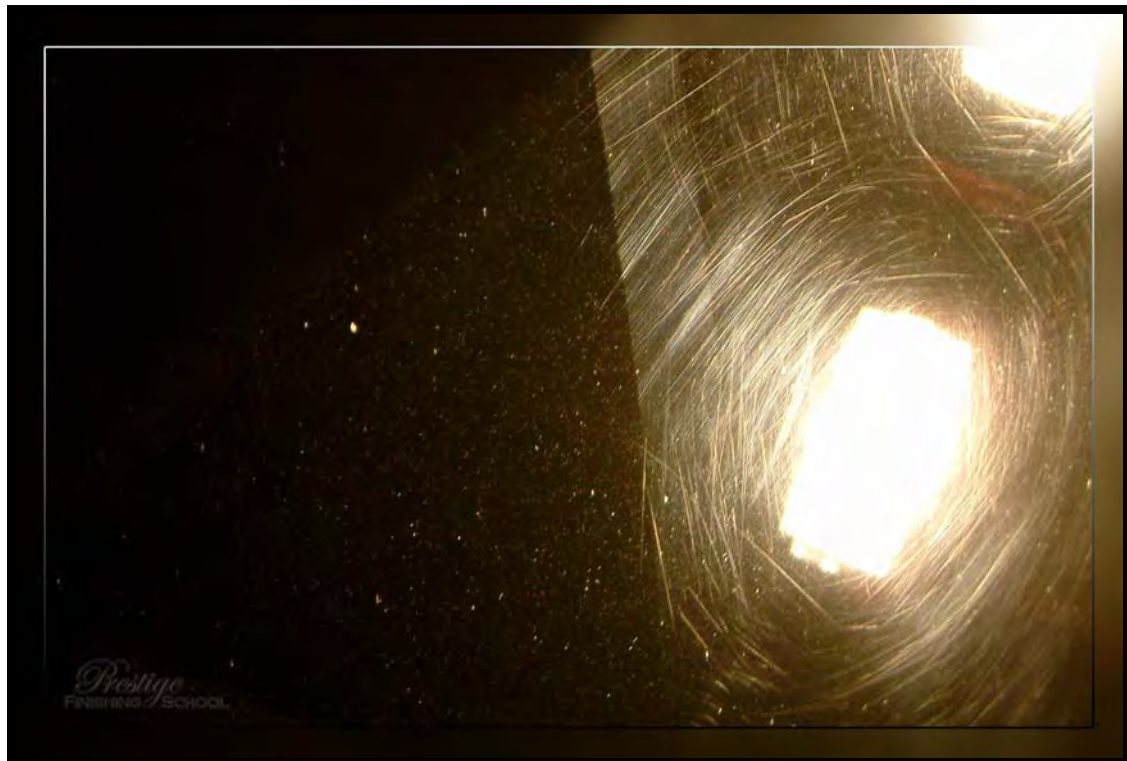


4.0 Course of Correction

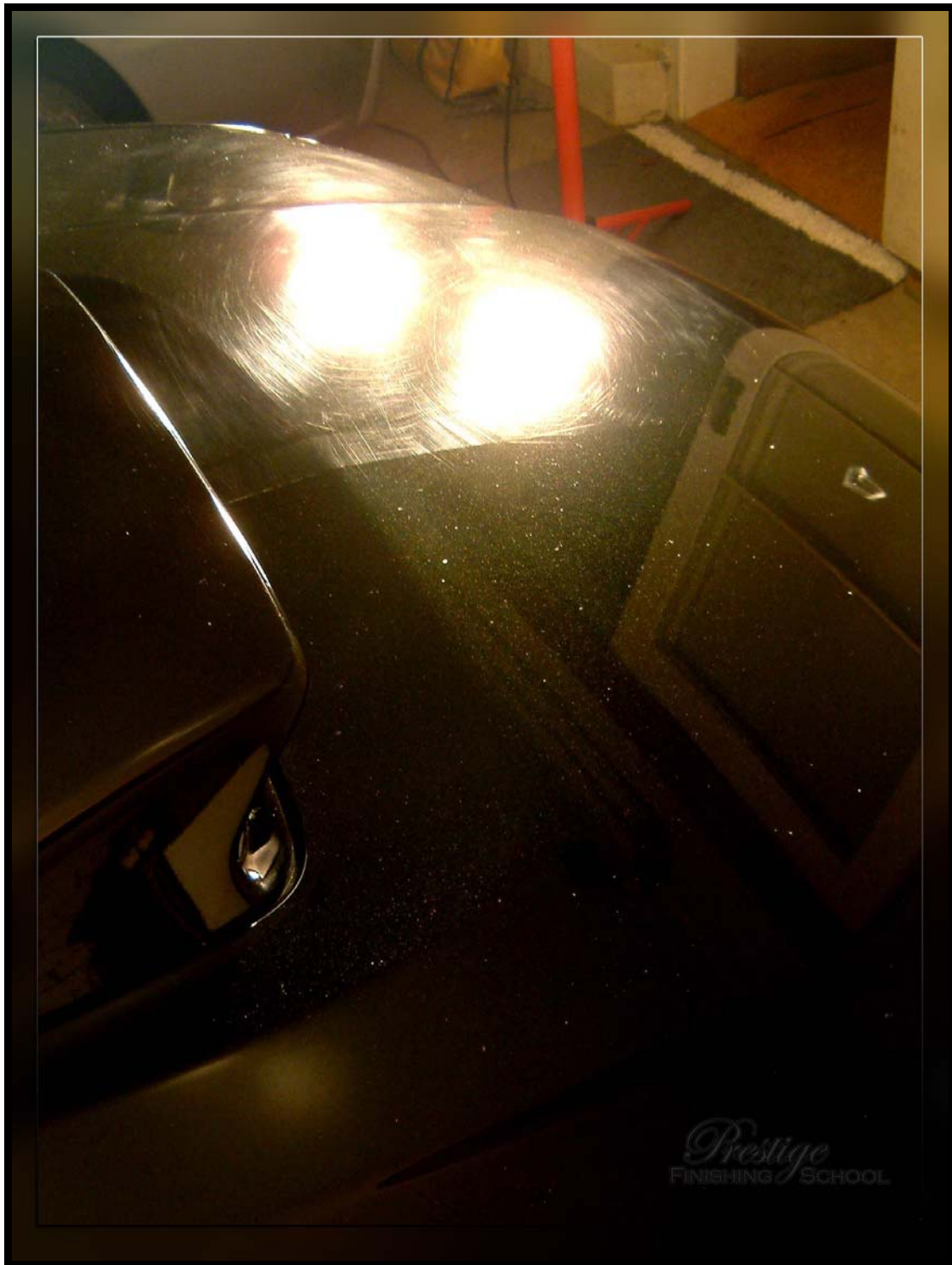
We commenced with the bonnet. Ordinarily, this is a straightforward panel to tackle and a useful indicator of which combination of polish & pad will achieve the desired level of correction. In this case however, we first had to deal with the 'clear bra' that had been fitted to the leading edge of the bonnet. (see photo on Page 19)

The clear plastic film lifted away with relatively little difficulty, but it left behind an enormous amount of glue residue. (In fact, I would go so far as to say that any protection offered by this 'shield' was more due to the sheer quantity of glue stuck over the paint than to the plastic film itself!) Several different concentrations of citrus degreaser were tried, but in the end nothing short of a soaking with kerosene and a good half hour of careful scraping were required to fully remove it all. This was followed up by a re-wash of the bonnet and bumper to remove any trace of the solvent.

With the bonnet now ready, we commenced machine polishing with a Meguiars G220 Dual Action Orbital Polisher and Meguiars 6.5" Polishing pad. Meguiars M80 "Speed Glaze" was used first up, and with a bit of work gave encouraging results, with all swirl marks removed, and only the deeper scratches remaining visible.



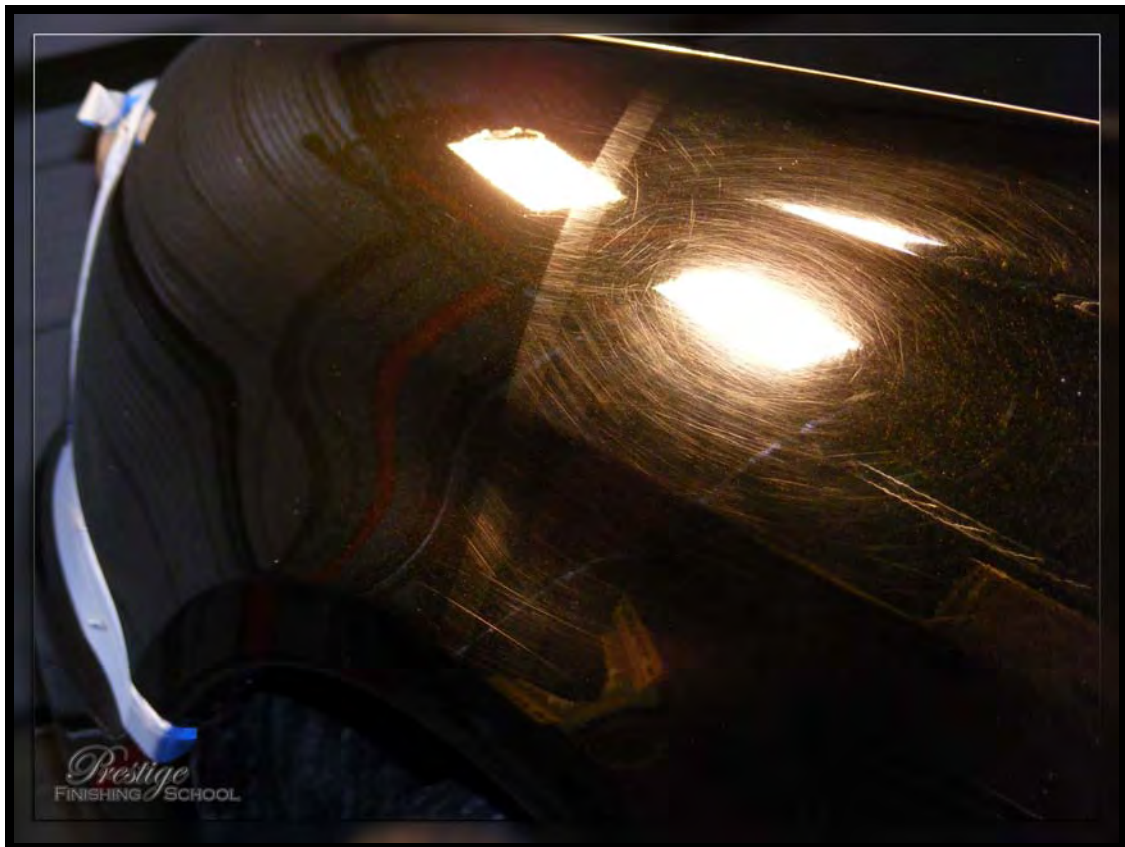
A Lake Country CCS 4" light cutting pad was used on a custom 70mm D/A backing plate to correct the trickier areas like the sides of the bonnet scoop.



This is a particularly interesting shot. The left half of the bonnet has been corrected, but on the right there are two different finishes. The upper part is heavily swirled from years of neglect, but the lower portion has been covered with a plastic film since the car was delivered in “brand new” condition. Look at the swirling evident in this ‘virgin’ paint – it’s quite unbelievable how much damage some car dealers inflict on “new car” paint in their efforts to “valet” them prior to sale. This is precisely why it’s not unheard of for us to perform correction details on brand new cars.



Nearside Front Wing



And the fully corrected panel...



Prestige
FINISHING SCHOOL



Near Side Front Door

This panel was showing evidence of many types of particularly harsh defects. As well as severe swirl marks, there are many deeper scratches as well as what looks to be impact damage from the door being opened against a post or other stationary object.





Nearside Rear Door



Roof



Bumpers

The bumpers were in a very bad state. A history of bumps, scrapes and a large number of stone chips all contributed to a generally poor state. These were tidied up as much as possible with a 4" light cutting pad on the G220 polisher.

The rear bumper was even worse, with numerous large scratches that went all the way through the paint to the ABS plastic mouldings. The visual impact of these was significantly reduced with the aid of a 6.5" Polishing Pad and Meguiars M83 Dual Action Cleaner Polish.





Offside Front Wing



Offside Door



Some deeper scratches to be removed...



Offside Rear Quarter





6.0 Finishing

Now that the paint is in the best possible condition, we turn our attention to protecting the mirror-like finish from the elements. In this case, our Premium Imported Carnuba Wax from Blackfire USA would be the “Last Step Product” of choice.



We find that this wax leaves an unrivaled ‘wetness’ to the look of dark paints. It was applied to the entire vehicle with a foam applicator and buffed off with a Sonus ‘deep pile’ microfibre cloth leaving an incredible shine and massive reflectivity.



Wheel rims were sealed with Poorboys Wheel Sealant



And tyres dressed with Blackfire Long Lasting Tyre Gel.



Plastic trim pieces were protected with Meguiars 'All Season Dressing'



The windows were cleaned, inside and out, with Meguiars Glass Cleaner Concentrate.





7.0 Final Showing

All that remains now is to roll the vehicle out into the sunlight and indulge ourselves in a few choice pictures.









In the end, we are absolutely delighted with the results. This represents more than 19 hours meticulous hard work – with over 12 hours of machine polishing alone!

However, the most important factor is that this mirror finish will not simply “wash off” in the next rainstorm. By adopting a smart wash routine (Avoiding sponges and using the two-bucket-method) and staying away from automatic carwashes, the owners can preserve this level of shine and reflectivity for many years.

Irrespective of its decidedly humble origins, we are proud to present another top class graduate from the Prestige Finishing School!

