

Helping to improve operations at Cazoo: The implementation of wet blasting for the surface finishing of automotive wheels

Cazoo is an online car retailer that aims to revolutionise the car buying experience by giving customers a convenient and transparent platform for purchasing high-quality used vehicles. As part of their commitment to delivering exceptional products, Cazoo sought to enhance the appearance and quality of their vehicles, particularly focusing on wheel surface finishes, including Small to Medium Area Repair Technology (SMART) repairs and refurbishments.



With wet blasting being one of the most popular surface finishing methods for alloy wheels, Cazoo looked to Vapormatt for a solution. Prior to implementing wet blasting, Cazoo faced several challenges related to wheel surface finishing:

Challenge 1: Time-consuming processes:

Achieving a uniform and aesthetically pleasing finish was challenging using traditional methods alone. Their existing surface finishing methods were time-consuming and labour-intensive. Traditional techniques such as dry blasting or hand finishing required a significant amount of manual handling and extended processing times, impacting operational efficiency.

Challenge 2: Inconsistent finish quality:

Without a highly controllable surface finishing process like wet blasting, inconsistencies in wheel surface finishes were much more likely to occur. Dry blasting is harsher compared with wet blasting and is more likely to damage the surface of the wheels.

Solution: Vapormatt Puma Manual configured with wheel jig

Cazoo integrated their Vapormatt Puma wet blasting machine seamlessly into their existing SMART repair and refurbishment processes. The setup involved configuring the machine with a wheel jig, according to their specific requirements, that sits inside the cabinet and can be easily manoeuvred for ease of loading and unloading; as well as making it easier to blast each side and angle of the wheel.

The water in the wet blasting process eliminates the danger of the surface damage commonly associated with dry blasting, resulting in a smoother, more even finish. The process also removes imperfections, such as oxidation and rust, effectively rejuvenating the appearance of the wheels without damaging them. With the addition of inhibitors in the wet blasting process, the risk of oxidation can be removed, eliminating the pressure of having to process wheels within a certain timeframe.



As part of the installation process, the team received comprehensive training on the operation and maintenance of the machine. They learned the appropriate techniques for achieving optimal results whilst ensuring safety throughout the process.



Conclusion:

The adoption of wet blasting technology by Cazoo has delivered numerous benefits that positively impact their operations, such as enhancing their operational efficiency, quality control, and saving them both time and money.

By reducing processing time, wet blasting has enabled Cazoo to streamline its operations. The improved efficiency has resulted in faster turnaround times, allowing the company to handle a higher volume of wheels and meet customer demands more promptly.

An additional advantage of wet blasting that has benefited Cazoo is the minimisation of material waste and a reduction of rework requirements, resulting in cost and time savings. The streamlined workflow has optimised resource allocation, further improving operational efficiency.

The consistent and uniform finish achieved through wet blasting has significantly improved the overall quality of their wheels' surfaces. This has led to higher customer satisfaction levels, as a result of vehicle appearance being significantly improved.