

DETAILING GUIDE:

Snow Foam

IF YOU FOLLOWED LAST MONTH'S MACHINE POLISHING GUIDE, THEN 'SNOW FOAMING' PAINTWORK WILL PAY DIVIDENDS TO THE MAN HOURS YOU PUT IN REMOVING ALL OF THE PAINTWORK'S SWIRL MARKS. FROM PRESSURE WASHER LANCES TO HOSEPIPE VERSIONS, IT'S ALL HERE...

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Corrected paintwork won't stay correct for very long if subsequent washes are carried out without a well-known trick of the detailing world. Depending on how advanced you happen to be with your product kit list, the common preconception is to hose the worst of the dirt off, then use a mitt or sponge to clear the rest. The latter stage is where the damage is inflicted.

Any form of contact with the bodywork multiplies the chances of damaging previous efforts to make paintwork optically perfect. No matter how soft or deep piled a mitt is, the debris will still be wiped across the surface. But even if you aren't a stickler for perfection, drafting in a snow foam gun will give better results. With a decent wax barrier on the bodywork, it's possible to see the dirt literally slide off...

GILMOUR FOAMSTER II

A pressure washer is considered an essential tool to power a snow foam lance, but Ultimate Finish has a solution from the USA that can be used in conjunction with a standard garden hose. The Gilmour Foamster II is supplied with a standard male Hoselock fitting and is capable of mixing the solution by the dial on top of the gun.

The success rate is better if you have good water pressure in your area, but even if you do have the luxury of a pressure washer, the £59.95 Gilmour kit is handy for those times when there's no electricity. Before entering a show for example, when there's only a hosepipe available, the Gilmour could help clear the road grime you picked up en route. If you do have low water pressure, a minimal dilution of snow foam is recommended, but the likes of Bilt Hamber's Auto-Foam are not compatible with the Gilmour.





KÄRCHER K-SERIES PROFESSIONAL FOAM LANCE

The K-Series Professional Foam Lance (£59.95) was used with Kärcher's new K6.610 pressure washer. The one-litre reservoir is capable of taking care of multiple applications as well. An adjustable nozzle means you can tailor the way the foam is dispersed, from a concentrated jet to something that fans the snow foam over a wider area.

A dial on the top also governs the product to water mix ratio, giving you full control over the process. As we found out later, it offers a dense application of foam that clings to the bodywork.

ULTIMATE SNOW FOAM

Essential to any lance is the product that runs through it, but be mindful of what you choose because it mustn't be harsh enough to strip wax. We used Ultimate Snow Foam during the feature, which is compatible with both the Gilmour and the K-Series lance.

It has an updated formula to encourage more foam and it clings to the bodywork for a longer period to lift any grime, but it won't affect any layers of wax or sealant on the paintwork. It costs just £14.95 for five litres, which should last for a long time if you choose to dilute it.

Initially, we used the product neat to great effect, but if you are conscious of economising, it can be diluted. We found a 50/50 mix to still be effective, but play around with ratios until the desired effect is reached. There's no need to get too scientific with precise quantities; just measure it by eye to get an approximate amount.

KARCHER K6.610 – AKA ‘THE BEAST’

Karcher's new K6.610 has been coined 'The Beast' for good reason because it's the most powerful water-cooled consumer pressure washer to date. We were sent one for the purpose of this snow foam feature but the early delivery date allowed us to get to grips with it beforehand.

Assembly was straightforward, but the universal instructions means you have to rely on pictures rather than words, so everybody from China to England can be issued with the same instruction sheet.

If you haven't used a pressure washer for car cleaning, then we'd strongly recommend it. It makes easy work of blasting the snow foam off and it's ideal for cleaning inside the arches, and removing any suds or shampoo residue during the washing process. The Beast is the sort of thing that once you have used it, you won't want to revert back to anything less.

It comes with a range of accessories, from a brush to two lances: one is the Vario-Power; the other is the Dirt Blaster. The other handy accessory is a T Racer. Although not technically for automotive use, it's similar to a metal detector in design and when hovered over patio surfaces or decking, it takes seconds to clean large areas, with minimal mess when compared to using a standard lance.

If you are looking for something portable, then the Beast is just that thanks to its wheels, but as the name suggests, at just under 20 kilograms, it's no lightweight. However, the weight increase brings an increase in performance, because the Beast's long-life aluminium three-piston axial-flow pump can churn through 550-litres



Above: Dirt Blaster lance is intended for the more stubborn areas.

Above right: Operation is simple. There's an on/off button and an adjustment dial for the water mix at the top.

Right: Nine-metre hose reel is ideal to access each corner of the car without having to move the pressure washer.

Below: Vario-Power lance allows a reduction in pressure for the times when you don't want 150 bar!

of water per hour, and with 150 bar of pressure on tap, it won't disappoint.

Another bonus is the hose reel at the top. Its nine-metre reach means it's possible to work around the whole car without having to move the main unit. What's more, you won't be cursing at it kinking half way round beneath one of the tyres, because it doesn't!

If you have been accustomed to using the garden hose, even with a well protected car (waxed and/or sealed), the standard hose pipe pressure is often under par for removing water from the bodywork. Believe it or not, in most cases pressure washers such as the Beast use less water because they get the job done instantly, which asks



for less water – and this model in particular is nearly 40 times more powerful than a standard hose.

Which brings us to the Vario-Power lance. This is ideal because the pressure can be adjusted so a less aggressive jet can be used when 150 bar isn't required. At close range, this sort of pressure can be a hindrance in the more vulnerable areas.

Having used it during the feature, this is what Jez Gilman, Managing Director of Ultimate Finish, said about the new Karcher K6.610: "I have an older Karcher at home and I think they are well built and offer good value for money. This one has the advantage of long reach from the hose reel and it doesn't kink either. And with 150 bar, it's also powerful."

If you want to get into the deep end of pressure washing, then expect to pay £499.99 for Karcher's latest addition to the range. It is one of the dearer models out there, but performance obviously comes at a premium.

THANKS

To Ultimate Finish for its help in compiling this feature. To book your car in for a detail or to purchase detailing products seen in this guide, just visit the website or give the team a call.

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KARCHER
For more details on the full Karcher range, just visit the website at www.karcher.co.uk.

SNOW FOAM: THE PROCESS – KARCHER K-SERIES

01

The reservoir is filled with snow foam, while this dial on the top of the lance governs the water to product ratio. Start from it being wound until the stop, then back it off until you are happy with the consistency.



02

The adjustable nozzle is controlled here. Close the gap and the product is spread over a broader area.



03

The Gilmour permits similar adjustment for the water to product ratio. We used 'A' as a starting point and tuned it from there. But it will boil down to personal preference.



04

The nozzle on the Gilmour isn't adjustable, but the manufacturer setting seemed to do the trick.



05

The Gilmour had good coverage, but it needed a couple of passes to reach the consistency of the K-Series. But for something driven just by a garden hose, it won't be a disappointment.



06

The K-Series lance covers bodywork in a dense layer of foam in one single pass. The pressure washer is the key ingredient to this result, which surpasses the Gilmour.

