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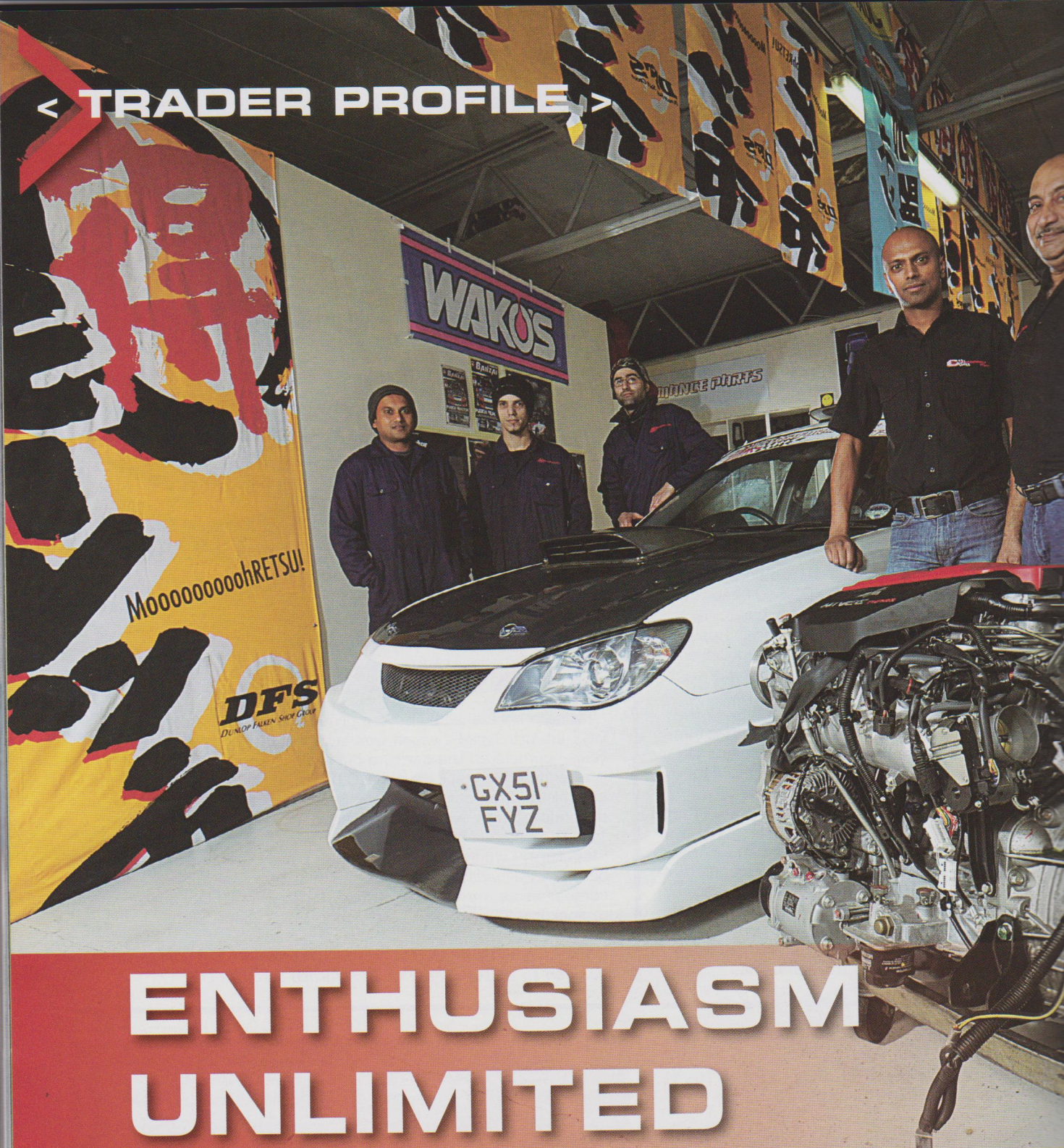
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No.1 MAR/APR 2011 \$4.50



## < TRADER PROFILE >



# ENTHUSIASM UNLIMITED

*Creating a profile on a parts supplier to the Japanese tuning scene could be little more than a rudimentary task for Iain Robertson, although it was a markedly more memorable experience to deal with Sajid Moghal and his Jap Performance Parts business.*

One of the frequently unnoticed tenets of running a business operation is the amount of enthusiasm that its management can muster. When it comes from a born and bred Crawley, West Sussex resident, Sajid Moghal, and is deeply infused across his company and all of its many commercial exploits, the amount of satisfaction that it produces can put

a smile on the face of even the most jaded of observers.

Originally established in 2003, Saj, a business graduate and ex Police service senior manager, was determined to create a fresh approach to the tuning scene, having recognised that it was an area not particularly well-served that could benefit from a unique approach. He was already a fan of the tuning market and had enjoyed a run of personal European motorcars that had all been modified and refined to the nines. However, he could see the fast-track growth of the Japanese tuning sector. He was curious and started to exercise some niche rights from his family's home address.

### SMALL ACORNS

As he explained, "The Japanese car market was fascinating to me. I carried out a lot of research, even travelling to Japan, to try to understand it better. Quite soon, I realised that a fairly superficial styling and engineering business existed in that market, which was remarkably changeable and not dissimilar to the fashion scene."

"Although tuning companies proliferate in Japan, it is not unusual for components to be fitted and discarded by car owners on a whim. If something better comes along, and it invariably does so, for those people with a modicum of disposable income, they hardly think twice about adopting





# JHP PERFORMANCE SPECIALIST PARTS



IMAGES: MATT RICHARDSON

HONDA DC2  
WING  
INDICATORS

the next stage in development. In fact, the Japanese equivalents of Halfords, the car accessory chain, have a core business activity in recycling used parts."

Saj returned home, having established some sources of supply, and commenced importing complete cars but ensuring that they possessed more specific appeal, to guarantee that he was not competing with the grey importers of the time. Establishing a friendship with a Japanese contact, who was able to translate fluently, gave him an advantage over some operators importing from the Orient.

"I was utterly determined not to introduce heaps of crap to the UK," he

stated, "but I perceived a demand growing for brakes, suspension, exhausts and other components, right up to complete engines and transmissions, which were every bit as easy for me to import. The growth of my business was organic thereafter."

When you consider how costly it can be to modify any Japanese car, the fitting of new parts demands fairly deep pockets. Naturally, some individuals would never dream of fitting anything else but new to their beloved machines but they are in a privileged minority. Provided with an opportunity to bolt-on something that remains eminently serviceable, possessing at least 80% of its life expectancy intact, wise money says 'go for used'.

## REFINING THE PROCESS

"Plenty of enthusiasts visit web-sites, eBay and even car boot sales, if the local classifieds cannot turn up what they desire most for their cars," Saj explained, "but, if they come to us, we have built up not only one of the most comprehensive collections of spares and accessories but we are also providing a valuable service to our customers."

Two years after getting the business off the ground (his first two years were part-time, while Saj still worked full-time), having delivered around 400 cars to expectant owners and running out of space at his parent's home for myriad spares, arising from a combination of components importation and breaking

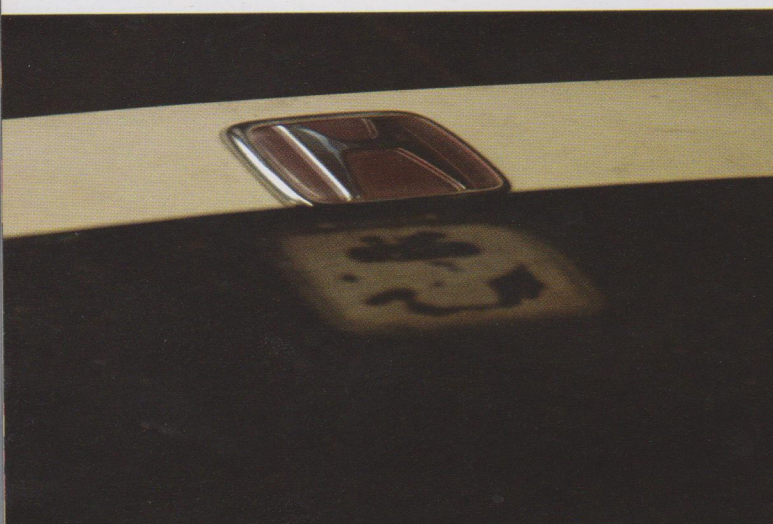


## < TRADER PROFILE >



“We are already marketing a range of Jap Performance Carbon products.

Although new, using a very high quality manufacturing process, they are based on original manufacturer trim items”



> cars on the family driveway, Saj determined that he needed a workplace of his own and he expanded into a factory unit on the outskirts of Crawley to establish the business properly. It was the second (as the first was the use of his father's workshop yard) of what has now been three relocations for the business, to accommodate its rapid growth.

Quality control is a priority for Jap Performance Parts. Dismantling is still managed by Saj's father and all parts and assemblies are monitored very carefully prior to placing them in storage. Of course, another key was ensuring that prices were maintained at the keenest levels (from 50 to 65 per cent of new cost remains a target).

While there are clear 'green' implications in play with JPP, Saj admitting that his aim is to reduce waste to an absolute minimum, there are no fanciful premiums for customers to pay.

"The fact is," he continued, "I did not want customers arriving at our shop to walk away dissatisfied. Our stocking levels had to be more than adequate. Our attention to detail is impeccable and I work tirelessly to ensure that we deliver to the 'endth' degree at all times, even with our mail order deliveries, which are now 'next day' both within the UK and Europe. Having created the market, JPP is now acknowledged as the leader within it, which of course places us on a pedestal from which I am only too aware we can

be toppled."

Naturally, expansion was the most positive direction that Saj could take and his business soon diversified into three distinct strands: car sales, used spares and Europe's largest stockist of used tuning parts. In the latter arena, allow your mind to expand to include seats, safety harnesses, anti-roll bars, alloy wheels, competition brake discs and flywheels, roll-cages, intercoolers, lamps and turbocharger kits, among a host of smaller and larger spares that includes big wing kits, spoilers and trim pieces. None of these items are inexpensive to begin with but, if you can half your budget expectations, they are all within the reach of a much larger audience.





## DEALING WITH FASHION

In some ways, JPP's business is not dissimilar to an off-High Street dress exchange service (ask your wife or partner about such facilities), in that costs can be reduced further by trading in old or unwanted parts, as a means to recouping some of an earlier outlay. 'Unobtainium', most notably from the competition arena, suddenly becomes affordable.

"While welcomed by the vast majority of our growing customer base," highlighted Saj, "I am acutely aware that we are still carrying out an education process for a lot of people. Yet, I am also very keen to point out that we are not running a scrap yard. Although we currently have 20,000sq ft of storage space and can satisfy the needs of the most popular Japanese tuner cars - Subaru, Mitsubishi, Nissan and Honda - I like to believe that we have the additional cachet of being able to supply items that might simply never be available by any other means."

It is true to suggest that the Japanese treat their cars and the bolt-on accessories fitted to them like fashion items. It is that very aspect that lies at the heart of the entire import scene, however Saj is also aware that his business is subject to external market forces. "When the economic 'crash' occurred a couple of years back," he explained, "the demand for JPP was so great that we were still able to ride it out. However, the car import side of the business, while not 'dead', has suffered from that combination of poor currency exchange rates and a drop-off in interest."

"We knew that we ought to consider expansion into other areas and a recent link with James Kaye, the BTCC racer and Type Approval specialist, has spurred some fresh developments. We are already marketing a range of Jap Performance Carbon products. Although new, using a very high quality manufacturing process, they are based on original manufacturer trim items. We started with the Mitsubishi Lancer (Evos 4 to 10) and Subaru Impreza (from 1998), producing replacement high-gloss carbon, interior trim components, although this has

developed into complete exterior panels, such as bonnets, bumpers and even boot lids. Again, we are maintaining a price competitive stance and, judging by the uptake rate, they are proving to be exceptionally popular with all of our mail order clientele."

JPP launched its 'Jap Performance Carbon' (JPC) division to provide a retail range of carbon and carbon-related products. Interior trim sets are produced with a high quality carbon finish. Prices starting at £275.00 a set and the added advantage of cash-back for traded-in trims. JPC offers a range of different OEM-standard products with the finish from stock. An adjunct to this business is a new range of dashboards, ready to install with in-built gauge pods and pre flocking.

There is no need for customers to live without a dashboard or trims for weeks, while they are being flock-finished. Although the company carries ready-made stocks, bespoke requirements can be handled and the range of finishes includes red, white and, naturally, carbon-black. If you happen to be in the Crawley area, you should pop along to JPP/JPC to see the firms' Evo X, complete with FQ400 body-kit, centre exiting exhaust and its carbon effect interior.

## RACING AHEAD

With an equal amount of enthusiasm as that presented for JPP, Saj is an ardent supporter of various forms of motor sport. Understandably, with the Japanese brand predominance in the drifting scene, perpetuating that link to his company was entirely logical, although his approach to participation was as methodical and considerate as it was to setting-up JPP.

"There are three main forces in drifting, EDC, BDC and JDM", he outlined. "After much thought, I have determined that our future promotional effort will lie in the latter series, although I want to take an alternative approach. It is my belief that drifting is maturing very well and as audiences are growing in line with new teams coming along, a more professional stance is required. Therefore, we shall be introducing a VIP Club activity that

will accompany our participation in the series. Full hospitality will be provided to invited guests, along with the opportunity to take a ride in the cars and to become involved with the team."

This activity is far more involved than ever and it is sure to encourage other teams to follow suit. Of course, Saj is no stranger to taking carefully calculated 'risks' with his promotional exercises, a factor that was highlighted by the development of the company's Subaru Impreza Type-R Classic that is powered by a Nissan RB25 engine driving the rear wheels only. This fascinating machine, which was presented in an immaculate condition for its first and subsequent drift outings, proved that mixing and matching technology was not only feasible but could also become immensely successful. Interestingly, the 'Subaran' was built with JPP's used spares, all ex-stock, and proved to be one of the most reliable cars in 2010, with successful outings in Belarus and Dubai to add to its cachet.

However, JPP also supports James Kaye's Honda Integra DC5 Touring Car entry in the BTCC, a factor that is reinforcing a strategic alliance between the two businessmen. The launch of Jap Performance Carbon was made on the back of the sponsorship programme. When Saj reflects on what he has achieved in the past six years, he deserves to feel as satisfied and enthusiastic as most of his customers. Jap Performance Parts is experiencing unprecedented growth, while the Carbon division is going to develop strongly. If you are contemplating a rebuild or series of upgrades to your Japanese performance car, then JPP ought to be on a 'short dial', because it is a company that is driven and is going places fast, while providing a valuable service all-round.

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