

Spies Hecker refinisher wins ŠKODA UK Painter of the Year award

Spies Hecker refinisher Chris Lovegrove from Pentagon Paint & Body in Watford won the UK leg of the annual ŠKODA Global Challenge that was held at the Volkswagen Group National Learning Centre in Milton Keynes in December 2018. This win secured Lovegrove a place at the international ŠKODA Global Challenge 2019, which took place between 27 and 30 June in Šibenik, Croatia, where he came second in the Paint Technician of the Year category.

Lovegrove has worked for Pentagon Paint & Body for nearly five years and has been the paint shop supervisor at the Watford branch since 2017. He was nominated to enter the UK leg of the competition by the Spies Hecker technical team in the UK, who thought he showed outstanding levels of knowledge and expertise.

Lovegrove says, "I was excited and nervous about being nominated for the UK competition, as I'd never done anything like this before. But I felt pretty confident as I am so used to all the products."

The UK competition consisted of painting a new vehicle wing to VWG warranty standards using Spies Hecker paints; Lovegrove took first place with little trouble. However, the international competition into which Lovegrove was automatically entered following his win, required a whole new level of skills and preparation, and the team at Spies Hecker were only too happy to help.

As well as brushing up on his ŠKODA brand knowledge and coursework, Lovegrove spent a day at the Axalta Refinish Academy in Welwyn Garden City working closely with Spies Hecker technicians. With their help and guidance, he covered everything he needed to be competition-ready, including learning about Spies Hecker's Permasolid HS Speed Clear Coat 8800, which he hadn't used before, and which was used in the international competition thanks to its exceptionally fast drying time - just five minutes at 60°C.

"The competition in Croatia was far more complex," Lovegrove continues. "I had to paint a vehicle door to VWG warranty standards and polish it. There were several colour tests, including a Munsell test (colour blind test), and even team challenges, including a brand test and an Escape Room style challenge. I was up against 32 very strong competitors from all over the world. As you can imagine, I was thrilled to be awarded second place, and I couldn't have done it without the help and support of the Spies Hecker team."

Jodie Henly, Marketing Specialist for Axalta in the UK & Ireland, says, "We are absolutely delighted that Chris has done so well in both the UK and International ŠKODA Challenges. Pentagon has been using Spies Hecker products for more than five years, since it swapped to Spies Hecker Hi-TEC Performance System in order to meet manufacturer approvals. Chris will have received extensive training to work with our range of efficient products like the Permahyd Hi-TEC 480 Base Coat, and this, combined with our close collaboration with him in the run up to the competitions, has certainly paid off. We look forward to working with him again next year, when he goes back for the 2020 challenge."

About Spies Hecker

Spies Hecker, one of the global refinish coating brands from Axalta, develops optimum and practical paint system solutions that can make bodyshop work easier and more efficient. With over 135 years of success behind it, Spies Hecker's high-quality product systems, customised service and targeted training demonstrate its partnership with the refinish industry. The Cologne paint brand is one of the world's leading vehicle refinish brands, and is available in over 76 countries worldwide.

Spies Hecker – simply closer!



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