

CAR CARE HEADACHES? RELEASE THE PRESSURE!

By Steve Walker

Whether you're the sort of motorist for whom cleaning the car is an unspeakable chore or the kind who breaks out the chamois leather religiously every weekend, you must have occasionally thought that there must be an easier way.



For most of us there are a number of choices: You can expend vast amounts of your own energy and elbow grease in cleaning your vehicle by hand or you could pay someone else to do the dirty work for you. Alternatively, you could travel to use the mechanised car wash at your local filling station and risk damaging your vehicle's paintwork or pump some Pounds into their coin-operated pressure washer. Beyond these there's the often preferable solution of driving a dirty car but another way also exists, one that can be more convenient and practical than any of the above – clean your car at home with your own personal pressure washer.

Pressure washers are becoming increasingly popular in automotive circles with basic units available for under £100 and motorists who like a pristine motorcar viewing that as a good investment. You can see why too, when you consider the hassle of hand washing and the expense of visiting a carwash on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Of course, there are pressure washers and then there are pressure washers. For an outlay of £100 or less you can pick-up a small portable unit that will do a decent job of cleaning your car. As you ascend the price range, the machines available become more powerful, larger and, consequentially, less portable. You can pay up to £500-£700 and for this kind of money you'll be looking a heavy duty units and even hot water washers with formidable cleaning power.

We tested a Lavor Rio hot water pressure washer that comes from the upper echelons of the scale. Using a machine like this you can achieve a professional finish on your vehicle quickly and with the minimum of effort, on your own driveway. It runs on mains electricity but the heated water is generated by a diesel-powered heat exchanger. This can heat the water to a temperature of around 90 degrees C which is far in excess of the temperature that garage forecourt washers are permitted to operate at by law. The result is that the Rio cuts through built-up grime remarkably easily. Another advantage is that much of the water evaporates from the car's paintwork as steam, leaving a streak free finish.

The machine has an in-built detergent reservoir that feeds directly through the washer's nozzle but with a flick of the wrist you can switch to hot, clean, high pressure water to do the rinsing job. The Lavor Rio is a very substantial piece of kit that feels extremely well constructed but its wheels make moving it around reasonably simple and there are places to neatly store all the associated cables and accessories. There's a lot of weight involved in a Lavor Rio and even with the wheels, some people might find shifting it over steps or up slopes difficult. There is, however, always the option of going for a lighter machine that can be more easily moved.

When using a pressure washer, especially one of the more powerful units, it's vital to remember the extreme force at which water can be expelled from that nozzle. Always adhere the manufacturer's instructions and hold the nozzle a safe distance away from the surface you're cleaning. Modern cars will be impervious to the effects of a powerful jet if it's used properly but caravans, wooden objects and even masonry can be damaged if a pressure washer is used incorrectly at high power. One of the beauties of a hot water pressure washer like the Lavor Rio is its ability to perform numerous cleaning tasks around the home. Amazing results can be achieved on patios and other surfaces with the hot water facility significantly boosting the cleaning power but always take care and remember that these are powerful tools.

The Lavor Rio retails at £699.98 which sounds like a lot of money but even at that price, the machine makes a strong case for itself. Think how much time and money you spend on keeping your car clean over a lifetime and the Rio starts to look like decent value. Add in its ability to be used for numerous other household jobs and it looks better still. The Rio along with various other high quality washers is available from K40 UK Ltd, telephone (01942) 708995 or visit their www.k40.uk.com website for more information.