

# TWISTED VISION

Operating from unassuming premises well off the beaten track and proving difficult to find even with two GPS systems in the car, Twisted Vision of Gosport are like a breath of fresh air with their down-to-earth attitude, infectious enthusiasm and undoubted professionalism.

Jamie Cooling started Twisted Vision in 2004 almost by accident. After graduating from Bournemouth Institute with a degree in product design and prototyping, he went to work as a freelance designer in the movie industry and contributed to the making of many well known films, including one of the James Bonds, The Avengers and Lost in Space. Soon he was able to afford to buy himself a car and he chose a Toyota Celica, but just any old ordinary Celica was not what Jamie had in mind. The car was given a unique custom-built body kit, full re-spray and an ultraviolet glow-in-the-dark movie character (Jack from Nightmare before Christmas) on the back shelf. All of this was achieved in Jamie's garage, and merely driving the car around the Portsmouth area proved to be the best form of advertising. The car was noticed wherever it went and before very long Jamie's talents as a custom car designer were in big demand.

We visited Twisted Vision on a wet and murky summer day. Gosport is not an easy place to get to, and the industrial estate where the business is based is right next to Portsmouth Harbour with several disused Royal Navy warships moored just a few yards away. Searching for their premises, we drove past the unit several times and only eventually located it with a phone call. Ash Worsford guided us in and stood in the rain to make sure



we didn't drive past again. They must get a better sign put on the unit! Ash is the audio and electrical guru at Twisted Vision and is responsible for making sure that their customers' cars sound every bit as good as they look.

From humble beginnings, Twisted Vision has grown quickly and now has eight people working in the business including Jamie's co-director John Matsen. They recently moved to their present premises from the first Twisted Vision workshop in nearby Fareham, giving them much needed extra space and scope for further expansion. It was John who provided most of the information for this article. His role in Twisted Vision is one of general management, he turns his hand to any job that needs doing in the day-to-day running of the business, and is equally at home in the office, answering the phone or tackling a project in the workshop. Twisted Vision was launched with £50,000 initial funding provided in equal parts by a bank loan and by directors' investments; the third director, Jamie's father David Britten, is a silent partner. Their first year of trading saw a £60,000 loss, their second year a £30,000 loss and now half way through their third year they are about £5,000 in profit.

Twisted Vision is the only business of its kind on the south coast, the nearest similar business would be in London, and Jamie is keen to stress that they are not a body-shop. With every project they try hard to create a one-off design, a unique style. 'After all,' Jamie tells us, 'the whole point of a custom car is owning something that no-one else has!' Their work is far from limited to custom cars; custom paint jobs on motor bikes, lambo hinges and audio boot-builds all form part of Twisted Vision's range of services. One job in the workshop during our visit was a 15-year-old Mercedes SL500 which had been stripped completely down and will eventually emerge as a near-perfect replica of a Mercedes SLK500 AMG. The cost new of such a vehicle is in the region of £120,000 – the car's owner will pay Twisted Vision £10,000 for the conversion job, this includes £2,000 for special paint, which is a considerable saving over buying the genuine article.

Jamie's and John's wives Gini and Rachel also work at Twisted Vision making sure that this is truly a family business, with Allan Prince and Warren Harrison completing the workshop team. John tells us, 'it's fashionable these days for a business to have a mission statement. Well we like to be different, we don't have a mission statement, but we do have a mission. We aim to provide the best quality and the best service, for the best price, available anywhere. Our overriding ambition is to be simply the best.' But where did the name come from? Jamie explains, 'to create a unique and memorable name combine any two random words together.' Apparently the business was nearly named Twisted Egg, but this doesn't have quite the same ring to it. But on the experience of our visit to this Hampshire business we can tell you one thing for sure, you are guaranteed a breathtaking ride from Twisted Vision.

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