

'STRUCTURAL GLASS PROCESSOR' UPGRADES TOUGHENING AND EDGING FIRMANS - BIGGER AND TOUGHER

Delegates at this year's GGF conference will remember Tim MacFarlane paying tribute to the expertise of John Hodgson and his company **FA Firman**. There can't be many greater complements in the glass trade.

Working with **Dewhurst MacFarlane** and other structural engineers, the Essex processor has supplied many landmark structural glass projects, including the 'glass box' entrance to Glasgow's Buchanan Street station and the Tokyo subway glass canopy.

Being able to say yes to these projects means that unusual demands are typical for Firman's.

The recent purchase of a new factory has effectively extended the Bates Road site in Haroldwood, allowing



Va-va-voom:
One of Firman's supply and fit jobs: Skywood House, Denham, Bucks., location for the Renault Clio advert

additional processes to be brought in-house. 'It's as good as it's going to get', says Jody Hodgson, Sales Manager at Firman's, about the new factory layout.

Firman's has invested in a *Cooltemper* tempering furnace from **Unilam**, adding to its smaller **Efco** set-up. The new furnace boasts a bed size of 4800mm x 3000mm and 19mm thickness capability, and it removes the headache of sending away large glass pieces for toughening.

Another new purchase is a **Bavelloni VXII** double edge polisher. Although versatile **Schiatti** machinery is already in place for really large glass sizes, the Bavelloni is quick.

Staying ahead

Firman's is best known for niche projects where there is limited competition from other processors, but the additional factory and new machinery purchases will ensure the company stays competitive for shopfitting

contracts in the South East. Northern-based processors are competing for this business, but the distance is a factor.

'Shopfitting companies expect to order at six o'clock at night and get it next day', says Jody Hodgson.

Firman's supply and fit service, which encompasses bespoke metalworking, really comes into its own on bespoke projects. Large glass sizes are common. For example, 8m glass beams and 5m long double glazed units are two ongoing jobs. Both projects are in Guernsey.

The limits on glass sizes are being pushed, and it's only right that one of the companies responsible can do it in-house.

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