



Revolution

Panoz Auto Development

Special Feature
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Panoz Auto Special Feature - JRD Tuning

JRDI



Photo by Dale Atzuda

Many customers and dealers who have visited the world famous Panoz Factory in Hoschton, Georgia would have come across the stables of JRD Tuning. JRD Tuning is a vehicle customization and tuning enterprise founded by Johan Ragnarsson. Johan who originates from Sweden has over 15 years of experience in building specialist and customized vehicles. He describes himself as an engineer, an artist and car enthusiast. Johan grew up around his Dad's sheet metal shop in Sweden and at an early age began making himself the toys which

he couldn't afford to buy or that did not yet exist. As he got older and cars increasingly became the focus of his attention, his creativity was directed at more automotive projects. He consequently founded JRD Tuning (Johan Ragnarsson Design Tuning). In 1993 Johan moved the business to the US and cut his teeth providing sub contracting services to RENNTech, the Florida based Mercedes tuning business. "The experience was tremendously valuable for which I credit all the RENNTech staff," said Johan. During this period he also worked on high profile specialist and concept cars including the Rinspeed Mono Ego, an internationally recognised single seater concept car. It won the 1997 Auto Week award for best concept car at the Geneva Auto Show. Johan was part of the build team of cars for several celebrities including Ken Griffey Jr., Jerry Seinfeld, Ray Buchanan, R. Kelly, Allan Jackson and other high profile celebrities. Johan met Dan Panoz in 1998, who invited him to get involved with the Panoz Esperante. Johan moved his tuning business to Hoschton, GA and worked with Panoz Auto Development as a subcontractor while continuing to build customized cars. He was intimately involved in the research and development of the Standard Panoz Esperante. After the Esperante was launched, it was a natural progression for Johan to apply his customization talent to the Esperante as an independent tuner. "Even though we are separate companies, there is a seamless flow of technology and innovation between Panoz Auto and JRD. This means we can service our customers very effectively," commented Johan. "Where we differ from other tuning

outfits is that fundamentally we are coach builders. We're not a hot rod company that simply bolts on accessories. We are capable of high levels of customization and development such as building premium convertibles from coupes, and building wide body cars," he continued. This rationale of world class performance, aesthetic and options is what JRD brings to their custom Panoz Esperante's. "The Panoz Esperante is truly a fantastic car straight from the factory. We take it to a level of personalization, performance and options that would be very difficult for the factory to provide while retaining its breadth of appeal. That said, it is very important for us to retain the Esperante's identity. A JRD Esperante is a compliment and homage to Panoz," said Johan. After delivery, customers can take their registered cars to JRD who offer a variety of customization packages. They start with the JRD Panoz Esperante S which boosts the car's horse power to 350bhp. At the top of the range is the JRD Panoz Esperante RSr featuring a 525bhp built engine, reinforced drive train including six speed transmission, a sports exhaust, JRD Brembo brakes (14" 4 piston front and 13" 4 piston rear callipers) and the signatory JRD hood scoops. The product line also features carbon fibre front splitters, Recaro seats, various leather treatments, wheel packages and multimedia system options. Dan Panoz said "JRD were very valuable in the development of the standard Esperante. They are highly customer service orientated and do great work." JRD Tel: 404 2133908, E-mail JRDtuning@aol.com

Paul Fiore - JRD Customer Profile



Photo by Dan J Gardner

Paul Fiore of Beverley Hills, CA was in the market for a new car and was considering a Lamborghini or Ferrari when he learned of the Panoz Esperante from a Road & Track article. The Panoz' American made, new and unique qualities really appealed to him. He also liked the fact that the car utilized great technologies like carbon fibre, aluminium extrusions and SPF coach work. He sent an e-mail to Danny Panoz and got a response on the same day which also impressed him. Paul took up Walter Dawydiak, the dealer he bought the Esperante from and Danny Panoz' offer for a factory delivery and decided to come and take delivery of his completed car in Hoschton, GA. He

was flying to Atlanta from the west coast when he had to re-route his flight via Las Vegas to meet a friend. While in Vegas Paul won \$53,000 from \$1,000 at craps. Consequently he arrived in Atlanta with \$53,000 to spend. He asked Danny how he could customize his Esperante and was thus introduced to Johan and JRD. "I wanted the latest and greatest car," said Paul. "However, even though I wanted something custom, I wanted it to remain classic," he added. He gave Johan a general sense of direction in terms of his performance requirements and full license on creative execution. The result, a Graphite 525bhp JRD Panoz Esperante RSr. Paul's car

features a whole host of options including 18" SSR GT3 wheels and tires, sport suspension, HID lights carbon fibre brake ducts with integrated projector fog lamps, carbon fibre front splitter, trunk lid spoiler, engine cover and slam panel. The car has a custom two tone interior with Recaro seats. It also features an Alpine multimedia system with flip up navigation and DVD, a six disc CD/DVD changer driving sound through a 500W, 5 channel amplifier and 10 speaker system. Paul says the car is probably the most eye catching car in Southern California! "It always gets more attention than the most beautiful girl I have with me," he continued. Paul particularly enjoys the car's breathtaking performance and spectacular sound system. "It's a pleasure to drive and often the subject of many conversations." Paul Fiore's JRD Panoz Esperante RSr is clearly a very unique car with a very unique owner. Paul was the youngest CFO of a \$100m credit union at 24. He started a software company, Digital Insight which is traded on the NASDAQ (DGIN). He is also a partner in an entertainment & film production company. He bought himself the Esperante as a reward for his IT company's IPO.