



NIGHTSIDE ASSISTS HUBCO DEMONSTRATE THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Media release, 25 February 2009, Nightside Test Design, Christchurch, New Zealand: Christchurch based Nightside Test Design has assisted roofrack manufacturers Hubco to tremendous success at the recent Automechanika show in Germany, thanks to the design of an innovative wind tunnel.

According to Nightside managing director, Peter Brown, the wind tunnel was designed to demonstrate at the massive Automechanika exactly how much quieter the Whispbar roof rack is over and above a range of competing products that are currently widely used worldwide.

"Hubco wanted to show that the sound of their roof rack was equivalent to having no roof rack on a vehicle, and we needed to do it in such a way that it would be suitable for a trade show setting – which meant it had to be easily transportable, and easy to operate in a marketing environment, rather than a scientific setting," Brown said.

Since wind tunnels are normally only found as very large, permanent fixtures in research facilities, this was a start from scratch design project. Hubco's engineers designed the tunnel to be relatively small, easily dismantled and easy to ship, and called in Nightside to provide a control and measurement system that would enable them to drive the windtunnel from the control booth, and graphically show the results on a computer screen that could be viewed by customers or printed off for them to take away.

The screen displays a speedometer that reflects the airspeed through the tunnel, while beside the speedo, a line graph powerfully demonstrates the noise spikes of the competitor's products, by comparison with the Whispbar, which follows a line very similar to the result of having no roof rack on a vehicle.

The system also controls the operation of the fan in the windtunnel, which can be run at speeds between 10 and 160km per hour.

Operation is very simple, selecting options on the screen that allow the user to choose the speed of the wind tunnel, along with the bar they wish to test. No technical expertise is required to run the system, which means that clients can drive it themselves if they wish.

According to Hubco project manager Bruce Robertson, the tunnel was very successful at Automechanika, drawing large crowds and very positive responses from all those who viewed the demonstrations, including 13 of the world's biggest car manufacturers.

"We were located in the accessories area of the trade show, and most of the other displays were simply static booths with product information and samples. Visitors were drawn to the innovative nature of our booth with the windtunnel in operation, and we even had a couple of Asian accessory manufacturers ask if they could buy a similar tunnel to test their own products.

"Executives from Mazda Japan were so impressed they gave us a round of applause after the demonstration!

"Nightside assisted us in creating a powerful control and interactive display system for our wind tunnel that was very successful in demonstrating the effectiveness and innovation of our product to a key target audience," Robertson said.

The effectiveness of the project was demonstrated by the more than 200 sales enquiries that were received from potential distributors and manufacturers, ensuring the European launch was a great success for Hubco.

Since Automechanika, the Whispbar roof rack has been selected as a winner of a 2009 iF Award – an extremely prestigious international design award that will be a major boost to Hubco's sales efforts across Europe and North America.

The windtunnel is now set up in Hubco's premises in Christchurch, being used as a sales and demonstration tool for customers and distributors, and will be pressed into action again for upcoming trade shows.

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About Hubco and the Whispbar:

Christchurch based roof rack manufacturers Hubco have spent more than 10 years investigating ways to make their roof racks quieter and more aerodynamic, working in conjunction with researchers at the University of Canterbury to develop a wing shaped roof rack bar that draws on aviation engineering to reduce on-road noise.

The result of many years of research, refinement and innovation is Hubco's Whispbar roof rack. The new bar has been proven to be significantly quieter than any competing products and after establishing the product in Australia and New Zealand, the company was ready to launch the new bar on the European market.

The Whispbar product was selected as the only car accessory in Automechanika's prestigious Green Directory of 25 products that met very high standards of environmental performance. The Whispbar was chosen because of its ability to save up to 3% in fuel consumption due to a 70% reduction in drag, and the way that it combines with Hubco's patented Smartfoot to reduce the number of components and options required to fit a roof rack to any make or model of vehicle.

More at www.hubco.co.nz

About Nightside Test Design:

Founded in 2001, Nightside is one of New Zealand's largest specialised test engineering businesses, offering independent test engineering solutions to exporters and manufacturers throughout New Zealand.

Nightside's professional services cover the full product development lifecycle from design to production, including software testing, production testing, embedded development, industrial control, measurement and data logging.

Nightside clients include Meridian Energy, Airways Corporation, Dynamic Controls, AgResearch, Pacific Helmets, OBO, Eaton, Energy Intellect, General Cable, Industrial Research and Humanware.

More at www.nightside.co.nz

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