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Edition 241

September-October 2025

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Cover and contents:
MINI Cooper JCW Concept

EDITORIAL

A SUBTLE EVOLUTION IS ALREADY HAPPENING



Claire Macfie
claire@autoref.co.za

In the world of being environmentally aware and claiming the goodness and restoration of our planet, the automotive industry is still completely silent and unmoving on the repair versus replace mindset. Across many industries, the idea of repairing has moved from being an afterthought to feature prominently – but not in the automotive sector.

Other markets like agriculture and consumer electronics are heeding the call to change and replace instead of just repair across the globe. Companies are offering self-service kits in these sectors. Sustainability and transparency are expected elements in trading for the future.

Many perfectly repairable panels and plastic components are routinely discarded. Why you may ask? The system isn't built to value repair and is still fixated on profit over logic and sustainability at the end of the day. A well-executed repair outperforms replacement in both time and environmental impact.

Repairing a part should be seen as a badge of honour as at the end of the day you are using your skills to maintain and not just throw away many parts of a whole vehicle that can still be reused. You are not settling for something inferior by restoring a part, but enhancing the product, the body shop's bottom line as well as being kinder to the planet by doing so.

A while back, insurers thought that repairs were too unpredictable and estimating platforms made it easier to replace. Many bumpers and headlight assemblies are far easier to mend than current practises reflect. However, the ratios remain very skewed when it comes to repair versus replace.

With the costs of repair on the rise, as well as inflation the repair versus replace is gaining in its argument. Global supply chains are stretched and delays in orders are commonplace, making repair a logistical nightmare. Insurance premiums continue to increase along with customer frustration due to crazy delays – and the body shop is inevitably the "piggy in the middle" and could repair the parts far quicker and with less frustration in many cases.

Modern repair techniques are anything but crude and correctly trained repairers are highly skilled artisans – despite outdated perceptions still held by many.

The green effect is being overlooked

The automotive collision repair industry is now ranked as a leading contributor to global polypropylene waste. While polypropylene

is known for its strength, heat resistance, flexibility, and resistance to chemicals and water. Polypropylene is bad for the environment because it's a non-biodegradable plastic that persists in the environment for hundreds of years, contributing to plastic pollution in landfills, oceans, and waterways. Its production also relies on fossil fuels and releases greenhouse gases. While Polypropylene is recyclable, its environmental impact is significant without proper waste management and recycling infrastructure.

Tons of bumpers, covers, grilles that could have been salvaged, restored and reused are filling landfills every year. This is not a material issue but a mindset problem.

What will make this a reality?

As always, legislation would be lovely, but we live in South Africa, so it's not always the prominent driving factor or indeed implemented very keenly. Shall we say that the majority of legislation is seen as merely a suggestion, to put it kindly.

We are still in a unique position in our local market, where less than 20% of vehicles are insured and the majority are out of warranty. This loosely translates to the fact that you are able to direct the course of your business on the whole. Begin with educating your customers. Less time to return a customer's vehicle has to be a plus, as well as the responsible choice for the environment.

Train your technicians to see the repair of plastic not as a shortcut, but as a specialised repair. Look at redesigning your estimation as well as your workflow spaces to flag parts that can be repaired instead of replaced. Perhaps there could be collaboration on KPIs with insurers to reflect more on quality and not cost?

This is one way to give your body shop a strategic edge and a reason to choose you over another at the end of the day, so use it as a marketing tool. Start with changing your mindset in your body shop and the your customer.

Embracing repair isn't only smarter, it's greener and far more cost effective. The subtle evolution is just that – small beginnings. The rest of the globe is already heading this way in various sectors and the collision industry will have to play the game eventually.



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**The National COLLISION
REPAIRER
MAGAZINE**

AUSTRALIA



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CRA CONFERENCE - SAVE THE DATE



The CRA Conference will take place on Thursday, 30 October at the Automechanika Johannesburg show at Gallagher Estate. The conference will run from 09h30 until 15h00 and will include lunch. This is an open conference and will provide an opportunity to network, stay updated with an excellent speaker line-up as well as spaces where new products are being introduced to help enhance your repair business.

Staying ahead of the game with the ever-changing landscape of repair is always key, and our keynote speaker, Andrew Marsh, will be focusing on what's on the horizon and how it can benefit the repairer. There is a full line-up to showcase new products and services, training, insurance, ADAS and much more will fall under the spotlight as well.

To register, visit: <https://ads.crasouthafrica.co.za/> and book and pay for your seat. It is at a cost of R450 and includes lunch, snacks as well as coffee and tea.

PLEASE NOTE: You need to register with the link for the CRA Conference, as well as the Automechanika Johannesburg link so that they also have you on register for entry to the show. Registration is free for the Automechanika Johannesburg show at: <https://app.messereg.com/events/visitor/automechanika-2025>



HYUNDAI HOSTS "HEELS ON WHEELS" WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN DRIVERS

Hundai Automotive South Africa hosted an inspiring initiative, "Heels on Wheels" a dynamic workshop designed specifically to empower women with essential motoring and technical skills.

The initiative aims to break down barriers in the traditionally male-dominated world of automotive care by equipping women with hands-on experience. The workshop held at the Centurion Hyundai dealership focused on key vehicle maintenance skills – including how to safely change a tyre, perform basic safety checks, and understand dashboard warning lights.

Recent studies show that significantly less South African drivers – men and women – were not taught how to change a wheel during formal driving training, while learning that the silent majority still lacked these critical skills.

"Too often, women are left feeling vulnerable when it comes to car-related troubles," said Christine Masinga, Human Resources Director at Hyundai Automotive South Africa. "Through this workshop, we are not only teaching skills, but we are also building confidence while offering solutions should the ladies encounter unforeseeable mechanical challenges on the road."

The event featured interactive demonstrations led by expert Hyundai Automotive South Africa technicians and included engaging sessions on vehicle safety, maintenance basics, and even emergency preparedness. Participants also received complimentary car care kits and step-by-step guidelines for routine checks. "Heels on Wheels is about more than just changing mindsets. We want women to feel empowered, informed and in control whenever they get behind the wheel," added Masinga.



AUTOMECHANIKA JOHANNESBURG

The 10th Automechanika Johannesburg will take place on 28 - 30 October 2025 and will continue to offer exclusive networking opportunities. There is a venue change to Gallagher Estate this year and plenty to look forward to. The MesseFrankfurt team have had an intensive African roadshow throughout this year so far, to highlight the aftermarket show and to drum up excitement and possible business. This year's theme is the African Connection.

Automechanika Johannesburg's Repair & Maintenance category covers everything related to the servicing, upkeep, and repair of vehicles. From diagnostic tools and equipment to lubricants and mechanical parts, this section showcases the latest in vehicle repair technologies and services. It's an essential destination for service providers, garage owners, and professionals looking to enhance their repair operations and stay up to date with industry best practices.

A number of conferences will be held during the show with the Collision Repair Association's open conference being the most pertinent to the collision repair market. Talks that will be happening will be MIWA Spanner Talks as well as ARA Gas Conversion, RMI Skills and Youth Development, Township Mechanics - GGDA AND AIDC as well as the The Alexandra Hub - Dept of Economic Development will be on hand at the show.

Registration is free for the Automechanika Johannesburg show at: <https://app.messereg.com/events/visitor/automechanika-2025>



MAHINDRA OPENS R70M ASSEMBLY PLANT IN DURBAN

Mahindra has officially launched its new R70 million Pick Up assembly plant at the Dube TradePort Special Economic Zone in KwaZulu-Natal. Situated near the company's original 2018 facility, the new semi-knocked-down assembly plant features a semi-automated line, bonded warehouse, and advanced IT-driven production system.

The ISO 9000-accredited site has the capacity to assemble over 1 000 Pick Up single- and double-cab models each month, with room to scale further as demand grows. Around 100 employees were transferred from the previous plant, while the new facility also allows Mahindra to increase the use of locally sourced components and accommodate upcoming models.

Developed in partnership with AIH Logistics, the Durban facility is expected to play a central role in Mahindra's feasibility study with the Industrial Development Corporation into establishing a full-scale manufacturing operation in South Africa.

eThekweni Mayor, Cyril Xaba, hailed the investment as a major boost for the local economy. Noting its strategic location near King Shaka International Airport and Durban port can only strengthen the city's automotive hub. "We are not just opening a factory, but celebrating a partnership that creates jobs, builds skills and drives investment in our community," he said.

CRA UPDATE

IN AN UNSTABLE ECONOMY, WHERE DOES YOUR COLLISION REPAIR BUSINESS STAND?



Steve Kessell
www.crasa.org.za

Of late a considerable amount of time is being taken up with body shop enquiries about insurers' new service level agreements (SLAs). They are updating criteria, some beyond the established terms, with new interventions of their freshly charged service level agreements and even undefined removal from procurement steering.

We are noticing the drive to reduce the repair cost spend on their estimate. This is nowhere near a full quantum of required repair scope and leaves the Motor Body Repairer (MBR) to either not do the additional work, or take shortcuts. The industry has become used to fairness of best practice, but administrative burdens are now reaching unmanageable proportions. It must be a perception that we as repairers must be micro-managed. Cost saving can, to a point, be better managed with efficient first time right work accomplished and complete estimates in reasonable time. This lowers turnaround time from first notification of loss to restored return and minimises car rental days, but is generally overlooked.

It is very difficult to get a "one size fits all" approach to run any body shop where every single repair job is different. The complexity of new vehicle design has left vehicle damage assessors far behind in the real world of repairability. A huge boost of investment is needed to educate and train frontline quotation insurance assessors to keep pace with it all. Let us fast track VDQ certification as a means of best collaboration and relationship confidence.

Once a shop signs with an insurer, it effectively hands over a large degree of control of its business. The promise is always equitable margins and payment of all repair processes that need inclusion, but mark-ups on parts are prescribed, or the offer of parts supply – a detriment to survival of any MBR business – margins are squeezed. When volumes of work disappear, shops are left exposed.

Every vehicle is different, every repair is unique, and complexity has grown enormously with the example of ADAS systems, advanced cameras, and changing vehicle construction. Yet, despite this, insurers continue to treat labour times as the main battleground, rather than recognising the skill, equipment, and training required to repair modern cars properly.

At the same time, "cash in-lieu" settlements and undervalued write-offs have become more common. Many customers are paid out at a lesser value below the real market/retail value of their vehicles. This practice not only disadvantages policyholders, but also feeds into the world



of Code 2 rebuilds and used car headaches – raising questions around anti-competitive behaviour and consumer protection compliance.

For body shops, the path forward lies in taking back control. We need to focus on customer fairness, investing in staff training, and pushing for recognition of the real complexities of modern vehicle repair. Insurers need to shift their mindset from cost-cutting to collaboration – because at the end of the day, fair repair practises are at the heart of every insurance contract and that principle needs to be upheld for customers and repairers alike.

Save the date

Plans have now been formalised for the CRA Conference on Thursday, 30 October at Automechanika Johannesburg show at Gallagher Estate. The conference will run from 09h30 until 15h00 and will include lunch. This is an open conference and will provide an opportunity to network, stay updated with an excellent speaker line-up as well as spaces where new products are being introduced to help enhance your repair business.

Staying ahead of the game with the ever changing landscape of repair is always key, and our keynote speaker, Andrew Marsh, will be focusing on what is on the horizon and how it can benefit the repairer. He has great insight into how the trade can align with the fast moving innovative changes that we face. ADAS rectification, the massive Chinese vehicle explosion and other dramatic influences will be looked at as well.

Andrew has been a speaker of choice across the world from the USA, Germany, Australia and of course, Africa.

The line-up will cover many facets of repair. ADAS will be put under the spotlight as well as feedback from Hyundai on their repairer approval programme (HARP) showing their successes and how they have learnt from feedback and collaboration with the CRA and **Automotive Refinisher**.

The subject of training and skills will see a panel debate about what we are doing right and where we can improve in the sector of upskilling for the future. It will be a place to learn and grow what is working well.

A panel of insurers will answer questions on the industry and there will also be a slot for Audatex, Lightstone and Automatrix to showcase their views on customers service and the way they are moving forward.

On a commercial note, a number of pop-up trade stands will preview their recent product innovations and services. These will include Moxical, Audatex, BASF, Sagola, Lightstone, Edge, Dr Smash, PPG, VDQ and Paintwizz.

The chance to meet with like-minded fellow business people, learn from one another and catch up is an opportunity not to be missed.

To register, visit: <https://ads.crasouthafrica.co.za/> and book and pay for your seat. It is at a cost of R450 which includes lunch, snacks as well as coffee and tea.

PLEASE NOTE: You need to register with the link for the CRA Conference, as well as the Automechanika Johannesburg link so that they also have you on register for entry to the show. Registration is free for the Automechanika Johannesburg show at: <https://app.messereg.com/events/visitor/automechanika-2025>



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Luxor Paints Named Top Value Brand for 2023, 2024 and 2025

For three consecutive years, we've proudly been recognized as the **top value brand in South Africa**. Our commitment to providing exceptional quality in an adapting environment sets us apart.





WHAT'S HOT?

RECENT NATIONAL INDASA TRAINING WITH LUXOR PAINTS

The national Luxor-INDASA training days were well supported.

Sixty Luxor distributors recently attended an exclusive international programme for INDASA which was held at the impressive Hurricane Training centre along with INDASA's team from Portugal. The event showcased the INDASA product range, as well as their successful relationship with Luxor Paints.

Delegates were treated to a hands-on performance on the INDASA product range. The national roll out also covered the Durban and Cape distribution markets, which were also well supported. Luxor plan to increase sales for the highly innovative dust-free solutions from INDASA in these regions as well.

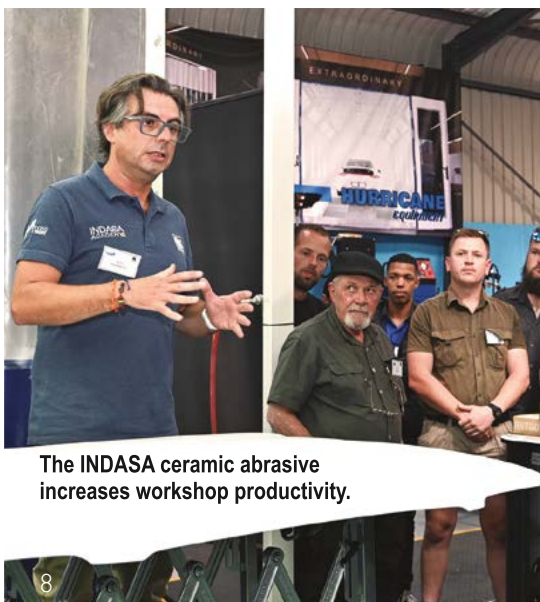
Daniel Cruz, Global Business Development Manager, and Humberto Plácido, Group Technical Manager, demonstrated INDASA's various high performance systems that offer process savings across the board. He outlined the brand's expansion over the past 44 years right from the development of Rhyno Abrasive Systems.

Founded in 1979, INDASA is now one of Europe's leading manufacturers of high performance coated abrasive technology based in Aveiro, Portugal. The company have stayed ahead of modern

development in new refinish solutions, as well as vehicle manufacture, to always get the best from their abrasive option for any job. INDASA offer a wide range of abrasive solutions from RhynoWet white line and Plus Line, Rhynalox, Ultravent, and Rhynogrip Mesh Line and HT Line, as well as a range of power tools including the new orbital sander PRO-XS to mention a few.

Their latest HT Ceramic is formulated to tackle the most challenging substrates. It delivers a prolonged increase in durability along with vastly improved anti-clogging capabilities using a unique self sharpening abrasive design. This product is currently ramping up to supply demand and you can expect to see the product by the end of the year.

Kevin Lurie, MD for Luxor Paints, outlined the recent successes of the company becoming the top value brand in 2023, 2024 and 2025. He is pleased that the various company brands are recognised for their outstanding performance locally, in Africa, and beyond. Luxor Paints are all the while pioneering a whole new product range that will meet distributor and customer needs for all things automotive repair related.



The INDASA ceramic abrasive increases workshop productivity.



Kevin Lurie MD of Luxor Paints, hosted the Luxor training initiative.



Humberto Plácido (left) and Daniel Cruz from INDASA Portugal, introduced the new Ceramic line abrasive.



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*The car diagrams are representative only, not the number of cars polished.
The extent of product savings will vary between bodyshops and between operatives.

WHAT'S HOT?

THE HIDDEN FUNCTIONALITY OF YOUR VEHICLE'S BLACK BOX



by Nicol Louw

Most people are aware of the black box (which is usually orange in colour) flight recorder on an aircraft. This unit records all the aeroplane's vitals during flight including the radio communication between the pilots and air traffic control. It is designed to survive the impact of a crash and keep the data safe for retrieval to aid the crash-investigation team to determine the cause of the disaster. Did you know that modern cars have similar capabilities?

Technical background

A modern vehicle consists of many sensors and systems connected to electronic control modules (ECU). These modules in turn are interconnected on a network known as the CAN bus of a vehicle. This means that all modules have access to the information carried on the bus as uploaded by the individual ECUs.

A crash signal is generated by either a physical sensor, for example behind the front bumper, or an inertial switch that activated if the vehicle acceleration/deceleration exceeds a calibrated threshold much higher than what is possible during normal driving/

When it comes to retrieving crash data, a crash-data-retrieval tool is plugged into the onboard diagnostic (OBD) port of the vehicle and usually connects to the air bag ECU. This module has a data buffer that stores the values around ten seconds before the crash signal is triggered and a similar time after the crash to give the full picture of events.

The investigation process

A crash investigation can be prompted by

a customer claiming that a mechanical failure was to blame for the incident, fleet or rental owner wanting to verify the crash report from the driver or even a social media outcry where the air bag operation was questioned as an example.

It is important for crash investigators to visit the scene of the accident to form a clear picture of the location, road surface, elevations, blind corners and the like. It is also important to determine the trajectory of the vehicle before and after the accident as this needs to tie up with the accident data. The impact itself is usually over in a split second but the time leading up to the crash can be telling.

Although the statements of drivers are also studied, studies show that these statements are the least reliable as the driver was either in too much shock or discomfort after the crash to recall the events clearly or because they try to hide some details on purpose to avoid prosecution.

Once the data is extracted and loaded in the crash-simulation software, the crash event can be replayed in the digital space to monitor driver inputs and vehicle dynamic reactions. Even a signal like ambient temperature (if available) can help prove if there was a possibility of ice on the road during the crash. Specific skills are required to analyse the data set.

The future

Currently GPS data is not part of the information extracted from the vehicle, but it is likely to change. Even if the vehicle does not have GPS capability, most smartphones

do and when paired with the vehicle, it is possible to get access to this information.

Expect the crash-investigation data set to grow in the future, even adding video footage, to the point where it would be possible to simulate exact crash in software erasing any confusion as to what confusion has transpired, in short, this would help make our roads safer, stop false insurance claims and provide valuable feedback to manufacturers or vehicles. The black box is part of the reason why air travel has become a lot safer than road transport.

Real-life example

A customer approached the Toyota centre of technical excellence stating that the prop shaft of his bakkie snapped leading to a serious incident. The crash-investigation team visited the scene and noted that the incident happened on a straight-stretch of road and that the vehicle was severely damaged.

On extracting the data, the team discovered that the vehicle speed was always linked to the engine speed up to the crash which opposes the driver's report that the prop shaft disconnected. The accelerator input was close to 100% up to the moment of the crash trigger and the engine would have bounced off the rev limiter if the drive to the wheels was suddenly lost.

More incriminating for the driver was the vehicle speed that reached 170km/h during the five seconds before the crash followed by a cycling of the steering wheel angle with increasing amplitudes as the driver failed to keep the vehicle in control.

RESEARCH

THATCHAM RESEARCH WELCOMES NEW LEGISLATION ON THEFT DEVICES



by Simon Wait

Thatcham Research has welcomed the government's new Crime and Policing Bill targeting electronic devices used in vehicle theft, while emphasising the need for a comprehensive approach to combat increasingly sophisticated criminal operations. The new legislation on theft devices, which will make possession of signal jammers and relay devices an arrestable offence, represents a crucial development in addressing the rising tide of technologically-enabled vehicle crime.

Thatcham Research's specialist security team has worked with the Home Office to shape vehicle theft legislation, ensuring it effectively targets criminal tools while protecting legitimate automotive industry devices.

Thatcham Research's ongoing work with vehicle manufacturers has already led to enhanced security measures, including improved shielding against relay attacks and the integration of ultra-wide-band communication platforms. Vehicle manufacturers continue to develop advanced factory-fitted security systems for future models, demonstrating the industry's commitment to addressing these challenges.

Thatcham Research highlights that while the new legislation is positive, the organisation continues to collaborate with vehicle manufacturers and the police to address vulnerabilities, which forms only part of a broader strategy.

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ARTISAN PROFILE

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE



Reolebogile
"Lebo" Seattle.



Spraypainter learners at Mbuntu Training use a waterborne, as well as a 2K refinish product to perfect their skills.

Wouldn't it be a great job if you trained and mentored upcoming artisans to reach their goals and potential? Reolebogile "Lebo" Seattle – a trainer and assessor at Mbuntu Training – gets to do that every day.

Not so long ago, Lebo had no idea that women could even have a place in the collision repair industry, but that all changed when she was given the opportunity with Mbuntu Training with a six-month painting and repair course. She hails originally from Bloemfontein but made the move to Johannesburg to pursue the chance given to her.

Lebo says that the highlight so far for her chosen career path has been the fact that she was the first female spraypainter to qualify at Alberante ARC. The challenges she says are working in a male dominated industry where she constantly has to prove herself can be taxing.

"Nothing beats the feeling of helping others qualify and succeed in their life journey," says Lebo. "Keeping my own skills up to date is equally important to me, so I do a lot of research and stay on trend with techniques as well as technology."

"A big challenge in the training sector is the language barrier: I get to meet many different people from across South Africa and beyond our borders for training and assessing. The way to get around this is teamwork, as well as making each student feel at home."

"I am passionate about empowering women in the workplace and would love to see many more on the shop floor. We really lack skilled workers in SA, Africa, and globally. How do we close this skills gap? One trained and qualified person at a time. Remain positive, train others to an excellent standard – there's nothing we can't achieve if we adopt this attitude and work towards it together."

"My advice to other women would be to say that there's no need to be scared and that there is a great need for our skills

of perseverance, our eye for detail and our ability to listen and work with excellence and compassion."

As with anyone, work life balance is key. Lebo says she is very fortunate to work for a boss who has created a work environment that she wished she had as a woman starting out in the industry. Times for starting and ending work include thinking about family and fetching children from school.

"Can't wait to see what amazing accomplishments lie before you, Lebo!"

Patient and thorough training is what Lebo insists upon. She loves helping other artisans qualify and says the look on their faces can't be beaten, and the way it makes her feel, when they've achieve this goal.



The disposable cup system from Daze Technology are easy to use and speed up every job on the go.



WHAT'S HOT?

DAZE DISPOSABLE CUP SYSTEM

Daze Technology's disposable paint cup system is designed for HVLP and LVLP paint spray. Why use a disposable cup system? There are massive savings in cleaning solvent when you use disposable paint cups as you don't need to rinse the cups with solvent to clean them at the end of the spray – just replace with a clean liner and you're onto the next job quickly.

It is fast and easy to change colours when painting and there is no time wasted by the spraypainter looking for new clean cups, you

simply replace the disposable cup inside. The outer cup shows easy to read mixing ratios and there is no need for paper paint strainers as all the lids have a built-in filter.

When using the disposable paint cups, a spraypainter can even spray upside down if need be, in difficult to reach areas and get the same paint delivery. Paint can also be stored in the cup to use later. All in all, overall productivity increases, and savings are made on solvent using the disposable paint cup system.

The Daze cups come in various sizes

from 100 ml, 200 ml, 400 ml, 600 ml and 800 ml. There is also a UV disposable cup available. They are corrosion resistant when using paint and thinners. The black colour lid and liner are UV resistant and can be easily identified as different to the rest of the paint cup system. The paint can be easily mixed into the internal liner by using the measurement lines on the cup.

For more information on the Daze disposable cup system, contact Neil Butterworth at neil@dazechina.com or sophie@dazechina.com.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

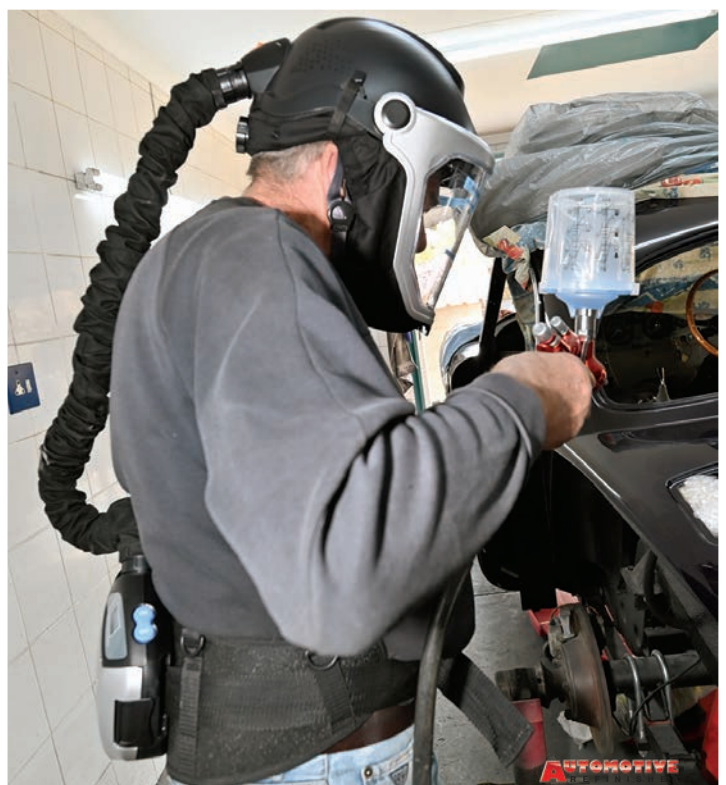
DEFENDER BATTERY POWERED AIR PURIFYING RESPIRATOR

This new Defender respiratory protection package features an operation system that is portable so there are no trailing airline complications. It supplies clean air to operators with long-term durability usage without any breathing resistance. This fits many specialist applications and is designed for spray painting use for vehicle refinishing, aircraft, industrial and commercial vehicle manufacture spraying.

The powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR) eliminates toxic particulate overspray hazards with its versatile design, which features components that are lightweight. It is a versatile and comfortable design, with a backpack turbo air filter that is attached to the waist belt.

The digital read-out shows the lithium battery conditions at all times. The Defender purchase includes a specifically designed carry bag, filter covers, spark arrestors, pre-filter spare parts and a special air flow tester. Made to the top-level protection standards of CE 2834, it offers a full 12-month guarantee.

Dealer enquiries are invited. Contact Neil Butterworth for price and availability via WhatsApp +44 793 617 9561.





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- **TIME SAVINGS**
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- **INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY**



Lekwa Collision Repair (LCR) burst into life just a few months ago. It is the brainchild of Nico Higgs and two of his children, Annemarie Third and Nick Higgs. The sister shop - Modern Collision Repair (MCR) - is based in Secunda, and has 30 years of success under its belt. Nico decided that a way to celebrate this milestone, would be to expand and invest in an all-new shop in Standerton. "Starting an all-new operation is not for the faint hearted," says Nico, "but the opportunity has proved to be too good to miss."

"LCR will start with a structural approved rating which covers smart repairs and major structural as the new business ramps up. It always takes a fair amount of time to get a good rhythm going in any shop when you start from scratch like this."

There has been a heavy investment programme to get to start-up level in Standerton. By promoting a number of new job opportunities within the community, their customer base has been maintained by some key features; repeat clients and outstanding auto insurance and long term relationship support.

The standout modern presence will assist LCR in the expansion drive and already customers are actively coming in for quotes on damaged vehicles, which is great. Nico has a long history as a motor racing enthusiast. It's with this passion for all things on wheels that he has designed LCR from the ground up, and in doing so has been able to realise his dream.

The no-cost-spared approach is amplified by a state-of-the-art spray booth and double dedicated preparation zones and production areas, as well as the use of a colour matching room. Henry Swanepoel

is the manager at LCR and he comes with panelbeating and quotation knowledge to offer first class help to new clients. Developments on body repairs feature an EZ Bench rack from Chief. It is a good piece of kit for bakkie type construction which abounds in Standerton and the Free State market.

ADAS equipped vehicles can also be recalibrated to vehicle manufacturer specifications in-house using approved diagnostic tools before the repaired vehicle is returned to the client. "LCR has plenty of expansion space to move into," says Henry, "to keep pace with the constant changes that are happening with new vehicle designs since many damaged vehicles are becoming uneconomical to repair. A vital part of this business will be keeping a client's damaged vehicle on the road."

Nico says that luckily their in-house Merseta training programme has upskilled their entire staff complement. This ensures a quality right first time vehicle repair. It is this in-house enthusiasm that is helping the company move forward in leaps and bounds.

The refinish of choice in LCR is with Sherwin-William's Octoral brand which has been installed and expertly serviced by Trendline Automotive Suppliers. "We evaluated various refinish paint systems, but Octoral offered outstanding features of data colour formula retrieval and other great economy on cost and rapid production repairs in the new company," said Nico.

Right now their operation is gearing-up, but should hopefully see an output of some 60 vehicles a month or so, in the future.

TOP SHOP

NEW CONCEPT BODY SHOP FOR STANDERTON





The Octoral refinish team from Sherwin-Williams have become the refinish paint of choice at LCR because of the great back-up service from Trendline Automotive Supplies.



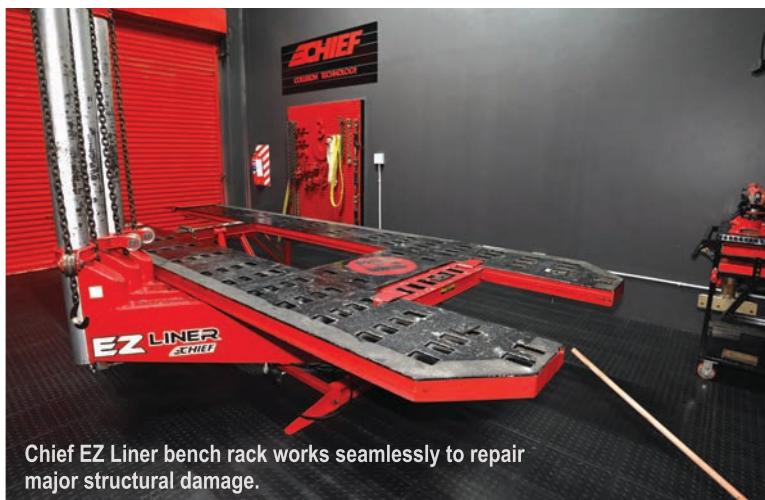
Sherwin-Williams' Ronald de Zwart, Senior Market Manager CEE MEA, says that the refinish system puts in a great performance overall in the SA marketplace.



John Beam 3D Adjustment system.



Nico Higgs (left) is seen with Bianca and Henry in the reception area.



Chief EZ Liner bench rack works seamlessly to repair major structural damage.



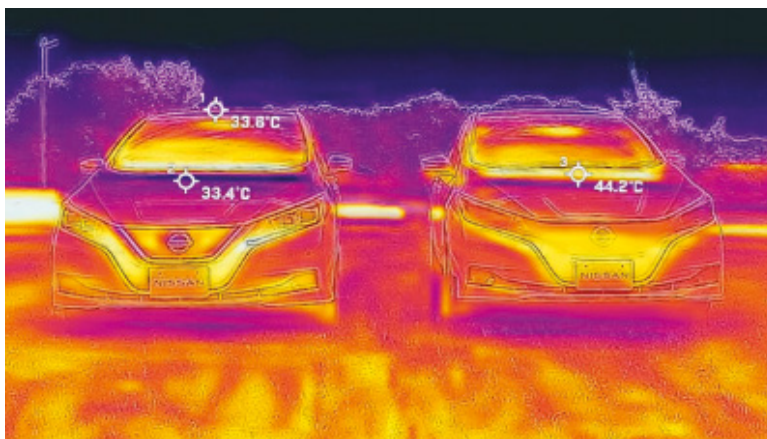
The Octoral system is housed in the mixing room.



It is quite clear that LCR are gearing up for a future of success with this spraybooth set up.

WHAT'S HOT?

NISSAN'S NEW PAINT TECHNOLOGY TO LOWER CABIN HEAT



Having a car with a comfortable cabin can turn your tedious daily drive into a pleasant treat. Whether you're driving a budget-friendly economy car or a high-end luxury vehicle, advancements in cabin comfort and technology have elevated our driving experiences. Plush seats, advanced infotainment systems, and seamless connectivity are now standard in many cars, making even the most routine commute feel like a mini-vacation. But Nissan is raising the bar even higher by taking the concept of "cool" quite literally.

A game-changer in vehicle cooling

Developed in partnership with Radi-Cool, a specialist in radiative cooling products, this paint features embedded meta materials; and synthetic composites with unique properties not found in nature. These materials are engineered to tackle one of the most common problems faced by driver: excessive heat. The paint can reduce the temperature of a vehicle's exterior by up to 12°C and the interior by up to 5°C when compared to traditional automotive paints.

Why is this such a big deal?

Think about the last time you entered a car that's been baking in the sun. The heat can be unbearable, and you might find yourself cranking up the air conditioning just to survive. By reducing the internal temperature of a vehicle, the paint minimises

the reliance on air conditioning, which can significantly lower energy consumption. For electric vehicles (EVs), this means conserving battery power and extending driving range, while for traditional vehicles, it reduces the strain on the engine and improves overall efficiency.

Nissan's cool paint technology stands out for its dual approach that keeps your car cool:

The first particle reflects near-infrared rays from the sun, which would otherwise cause heat build-up.

The second particle creates electromagnetic waves that counteract the sun's energy, redirecting it away from the vehicle.

Together, this combination significantly cuts down on heat transfer, keeping the car cooler even after long periods of exposure to the sun.

Real world testing of the cool paint technology

Since 2023, Nissan has been putting this technology to the test at Tokyo International Air Terminal at Haneda. The airport's vast, sun-exposed tarmac offers a perfect environment for evaluating the paint's performance under real-world conditions. The results so far are impressive as vehicles coated with Nissan's cool paint show a significant reduction in temperature, even after being parked in the blazing sun for extended periods.

Dr Susumu Miura, a key figure in Nissan's Advanced Materials and Processing Laboratory, emphasises the importance of this innovation. "My dream is to create cooler cars without consuming energy," Miura states. This vision aligns with Nissan's broader goal of developing technologies that contribute to a more sustainable and efficient driving experience.

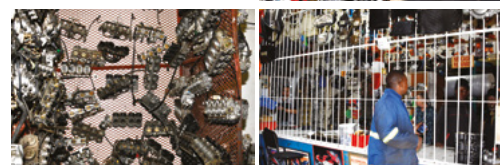
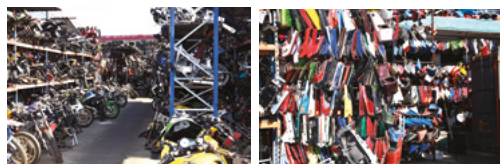
Looking ahead

While this technology shows great potential, there are still hurdles to clear. The paint currently used is 120 microns thick, about six times thicker than standard automotive paint. The added thickness ensures durability and performance but also presents challenges in application and aesthetics.

To this end, efforts are underway to develop thinner versions that maintain the same cooling performance. Additionally, Nissan is exploring ways to expand the colour palette beyond the initial white, acknowledging that drivers have diverse preferences. While the initial focus will be on introducing this cool paint technology in commercial vehicles, such as delivery vans and long-distance trucks, there's strong potential for it to become available for passenger cars.

Nissan's cool paint technology hints at an exciting future for automotive innovation. For a glimpse into their cutting-edge vehicles today, visit Group 1 Nissan.

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With the help of BASF, a committed team of trainers, body shops that helped provide on-the-job experience and much more, these ten graduates were evidently proud of their achievements.



by Claire Macfie

CONCLUSION

BASF GRADUATION SUCCESS CONTINUES

It's not always the case that artisans receive a day of celebration for their graduation. However, BASF can always be relied upon to go the extra mile – and that's exactly what the BASF team did.

Ten spraypainting artisans were given the spotlight as they received their qualification certificates recently. It is always a joyous occasion shared with family and friends, as well as service providers and body shops who have teamed up to make sure these learners achieved success.

BASF continues to update their training curriculum to incorporate the latest refinish technologies, colour matching and process improvements. They offer blended learning models that combine hands-on workshops as well as webinars and e-learning. Their global expertise filters down and ensures global standards are met.

Mbuntu Training Services assist BASF with their training programme as well as the body shops where real-life experience is gained. They have all made a big impact on these learners' lives. Regular calls from BASF technicians have also helped these students achieve their goal of qualification.

The benefits for BASF being involved in training are a pipeline of skilled BASF-trained artisans as well as improved brand loyalty and product usage with the students. The company also strengthens industry standards and professionalism in the sector indirectly. Working closely with body shop and service providers also allows them to build long-term relationships and enhances corporate responsibility.

Meet the Refinish Competence Centre (RCC) Team

Trevor Vogl, National Technical Manager: Trevor began his career as an apprentice and has held roles as a painter, technician and sales manager. He currently oversees technical operations and makes sure that high standards in training and product support are met. He is also passionate about sharing his extensive industry knowledge.

Wayne Botes, National Training Manager: Wayne also started out as an apprentice and qualified as spray painter before joining BASF as a technical consultant. In his current role as National Training Manager, he leads the development and delivery of training seminars at the RCC.

Titus Khoza, National Technical Trainer: Titus entered the industry and later became a professional spraypainter. He joined BASF's technical team and focuses on mentoring apprentices and sharing practical refinishing expertise.

Timmy Agebag, National Technical Trainer: Timmy grew up in the industry and qualified as a spray painter. He joined BASF and became a trainer where he is known for his enthusiasm for teaching and commitment to industry development.

Trevor Vogl, National Technical Manager, was encouraging with his words for the graduates.



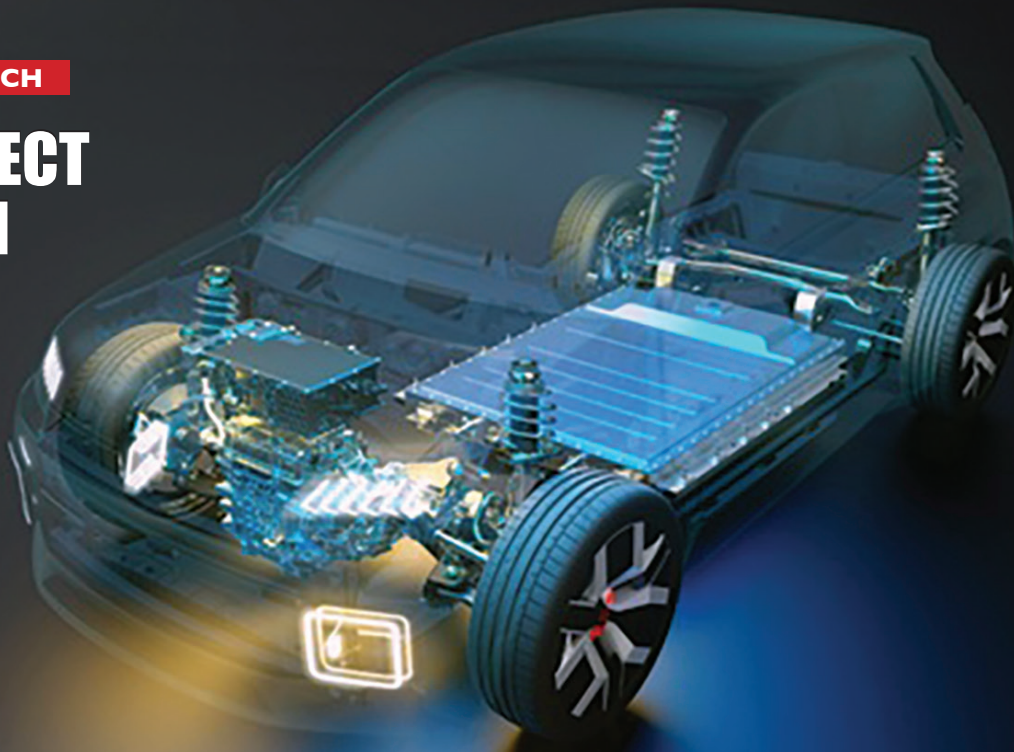


IGNITE YOUR SUCCESS WITH BODY SHOP BOOST

BOOST

FUTURE TECH

A PERFECT STORM



As you may have noticed, I am located in the land of whinging Pommie bar stewards. Presently all forms of communication are monitored so I'd just to like to make it clear the Right Hon Sir KR Starmer KC, the Glorious Prime Minister of United Kingdom, is thriving. Now the unpleasantness is out of the way, down to business.

Motorists zoom about

Motor insurers scope risk, and provide cover for all sorts of unintended action. Collision repairers restore the vehicle back to pre-accident condition, which may be even better than that.

Vehicle manufacturers build vehicles, and dream of keeping "customers" after the initial purchase. The most numerous vehicles weigh anything upwards of 1200kg, are packed with multiple sub-systems which are steadily increasing in number as the main technologies become cheaper. Add into the mix the way a vehicle is powered can be via one or more powertrains, using at least two sources of on-board energy.

To meet not only the requirements of Australian type of approval, but to also show well in ANCAP, stripping the vehicle content back and reducing complexity was left back in the 1990s. Until now.

Electricity for some, not all

Electrified powertrains are here to stay, at least until the ultimate battery is discovered which can store lots of electric power; cost less than half the weight, and less than half of today's Li-ion technology. As we know, given Li-ion was a revolution, making double digit improvements with energy storage is a very long walk off a very short plank, whilst at sea.

The broader point would be via considerable investment in power generation as well as an almost as vast investment in power distribution systems which could get BEV powered vehicles to those who's daily commute in circa 80 km or less in total. Make no mistake, there are so many diverse vehicle requirements in Australia, not one single powertrain type will do – and the public should be able to choose what works best for them.

The problem: Vehicle manufacturers can build vehicles at a profit with pure mechanical drive, and diminishing profit all the way down to small(er) BEVs. In Europe the vehicle manufacturers, the EU27 commission and Right Hon Sir KR Starmer KC, the Glorious Prime Minister of the United Kingdom have decided to improve sales, small and cheap is just the ticket.

Except: The design development, tooling and manufacturing investment for a new model is pretty uniform, so the choice is to sell vehicles further up the market at a bigger margin, or sell smaller vehicles with substantially less profit per unit at far higher sale volume.

All of the costs have to be covered, somehow, and it's easier to do so with higher priced vehicles.

Then there's the BEV market penetration, which seems to only go above 20% market share when incentives are on offer, only to slide back towards 15% at best when they are withdrawn.

To give an idea of the incentives:

- Cheaper electricity if charging at home, below the domestic rate – subsidised by the public.
- No annual tax – subsidised by the public.
- No congestion charges – subsidised by the public.
- Increased write-down for business users – in effect, subsidised by the public.

Up front incentives for new vehicles from vehicle manufacturers (there goes the profit) and Government (there goes more of our tax revenue).

Baldrick's got another cunning plan

With most long-term model plans in ruins, the manufacturers who kept building internal combustion engine powered vehicles – usually combined with a few varieties of electrification – have continued to weather the massive global economic instability. This was done in the face of multiple governments screaming that the only way was BEV – until it was painfully evident mass adoption was not happening.

So, how does this get solved?

Smaller than usual electric cars which can be retailed for less than the cheapest BEV, aimed at daily commutes 40 km with a 200 km-ish range. This solves in part selling more units, but of course makes the power generation/distribution problem significantly worse.

Having developed the cunning plan in a matter of almost seconds, the glorious leadership have saddled up and are pushing this with all their combined might. The Right Hon Sir KR Starmer KC, the Glorious Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the Glorious President Emmanuel Macron of France even considered crushing one grape between them. I know. Awesome.

Historic and new market trends clash

While the BEV saga with it's peskily expensive energy storage system adding back more than all the cost savings by deleting internal combustion engines, there are a few trends which conspire to damage vehicle residual value.

1. A vehicle will fall in value throughout its life, with the rate of depreciation set when a model is introduced, and edited in light of actual aged vehicle prices in later life.

2. Motor insurers in the UK and EU27 want to get a vehicle out of the repair network and flipped for cash via salvage agents. While this process has existed for decades, the scale of the business has

increased dramatically in the past five years.

3. Can you guess what happened in the past five years? The BEV roll-out in Europe was supposed to happen, and instead with endless lock downs there was a shortage of new vehicles to sell, plenty of people with some money which pushed up residual values. This collapsed like a soufflé in 2023, but the effect was significant new vehicle advertised price inflation, weakening finance and near worthless older vehicles.

Danger ahead

The present European plan is to get as many new BEV cars and light commercial vehicles under a magic 2000 Euro threshold, where in effect the unsustainable tax revenue funded incentives are replaced with inherently cheaper products with fewer, if any, incentives. The collective governments noted when imports from China were given a significant increase in import but the response was... "We're still going to import, and we are still making a profit."

The panic was included by the European manufacturers of smaller vehicles, mainly Renault and Stellantis, who are vulnerable to the wave of products arriving from China. This commercial battle is way below the products of Tesla and Co., but is being studied by every single automotive company.

The answer is make the vehicle with fewer parts than ever. Renault for example will base the 2026 BEV Twingo on the architecture of the BEV 2024 Renault 5 E-Tech Electric, but use 30% fewer parts. Volkswagen Group have said similar things about the BEV ID.1 due in 2027.

These claims are unverified at the moment, but from what has already arrived in the market we can see:

- BEVs frequently have no front chassis rail sections, because it's inherently shorter than an ICE application. This means after the serviceable front plate is replaced, the next stop is a combination of an entire rail or structure up to the firewall.
- BEVs frequently have super reinforced rear chassis rails, especially if there is a rear drive module. This limits impact repair.

WHAT'S HOT?

PORSCHE STEALS THE SHOW AT BRYANSTON SHOWROOM

Forty gleaming classic and collectible cars went under the hammer at Creative Rides' Main Road showroom in Bryanston, thrilling more than 200 enthusiasts on site and many more online.

The highlight was a 1989 Porsche 911 Speedster, selling for R3.3 million under

the gavel of renowned auctioneer Joff van Reenen.

A one-year-only, limited-production model unveiled at the 1989 Frankfurt Motor Show, the Speedster was inspired by the 1955 Porsche 356 Speedster. Only 2 104 were built, with just 139 right-hand-drive G-Series

models – none officially sold in South Africa.

At launch, the Speedster carried a 25% premium over the 911 Targa, priced locally at R341 000. With 100% import tariffs, a landed Speedster would have cost around R450 000 — modest compared to its value today, giving the seller a stellar return on investment.

- BEVs have higher strength side structures, especially in the region of the rocker, to prevent intrusion into the battery pack during side impact.

Now consider a vehicle made with even fewer parts.

Has the single-use vehicle arrived?

Something has to give. In Europe the vehicle manufacturers are lobbying for a 'Kei' class, to allow discontenting of vehicles which will bring break-even closer to reality. Publicly Euro NCAP have remained quiet, but the idea of reducing safety on smaller vehicles which need better protection in order to 'tread water' is not likely to be welcomed. Western Europe already has such a type of vehicle – the quadricycle, which is limited by engine size, dimensions and weight.

Collision repairers sell skill by the hour

If design trends make common repairs more difficult by requiring deeper structural intervention, with an ultra-low value starting point, surely this will work in one of two ways:

- A vehicle which might be repaired is less than a year old.
- A vehicle which could be repaired for a few years more as long as the design for repair has been considered in ways we have not seen before. Even then, the drive is to reduce complexity, which means less hours to sell.

It is highly likely the whole scenario outlined above will happen, at least in Europe, and the rash of small BEVs which can be undercut by imports from places like China or Vietnam will end up as scrap. The niche may survive, but it is highly probable the European political cunning plan will fall to bits.

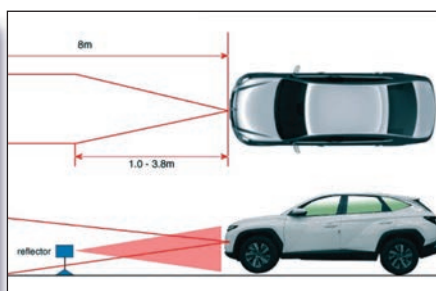
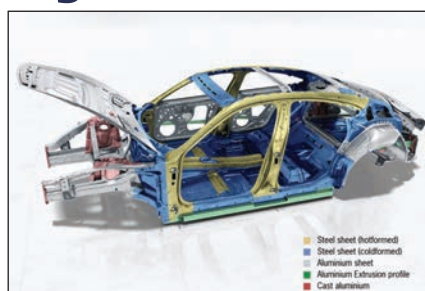
So, there are better times ahead, it's just how do we get there without being ruined?



Andrew Marsh
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Why have Hyundai South Africa launched a full hybrid model? The answer is, because they can. With 100 000 million vehicles produced, 57 years of success under the Hyundai brand belt and 123 000 employees globally – the Hyundai brand is here to stay. The next logical step was for the Hyundai Santa Fé Hybrid to be launched locally in their line-up.

The Hyundai Santa Fé Hybrid is a three-row SUV with seating for up to seven passengers. With dimensions featuring an overall 1 900 mm width, a 2 815 mm wheel base and 4 830 mm overall length, this eco-friendly SUV comes with a high-powered 132 kW/265 Nm turbocharged 1.6-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine with a 44 kW/264 Nm electric motor.

To mark its territory as one of the high performance SUVs in the world, the hybrid powertrain produces a total system output of 175 kW and 367 Nm all-wheel-drive system. As a hybrid system, you can also expect smooth acceleration and responsive performance across various terrains.

The combination of the engine and electric motor helps to reduce fuel consumption, resulting in 7.5 litres per 100 km, which for such a large vehicle is excellent. It blends electric and petrol power and delivers refined performance and exceptional efficiency.

The electric motor boosts power for acceleration when you need it. With the use of the steering wheel paddles, you can

increase the regenerative braking and recover kinetic energy, which converts back to electrical energy – so no plug-in is needed. This form of braking also helps clean the brakes and will increase their lifespan to around 80 000km.

On the outside the Hyundai Santa Fé Hybrid has had a radical makeover. It has a raised bonnet as well as newly introduced H-shaped LED headlamps and rear brake lights in the same shape. The front grille now shows four red dots – the four dots in Morse code mean “H”. These features will help this model stand out in the crowd.

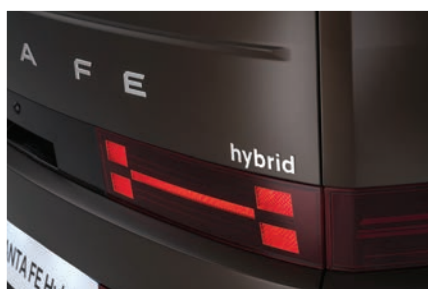
The honeycomb spaces that form part of the chrome front bumper aesthetic open up and allow air through to keep the battery and other electrical components included in the hybrid model cool. The front bumper is modular and easy to repair.

There is a double sunroof which makes the vehicle feel incredibly light and even larger on the inside than it already is. The ride and drive are smooth and effortless, while being enconced in comfort. All the safety features abound as well as all the bells and whistles of 360° cameras, a large 12.3-inch screen and a Bose sound system to take it to the next level.

It is priced at R1 249 900 – and comes with Hyundai's legendary seven-year/200 000 km warranty. This includes coverage for the engine, transmission and other key drivetrain components. Furthermore, the hybrid battery pack is covered by a separate eight-year/160 000 km warranty.

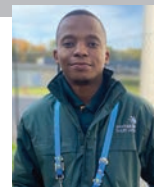
DRIVEN

HYUNDAI SANTA FE HYBRID



BUILDING A FUTURE

HOLLARD ARTISAN PROGRAMME UPDATE - TWO YEARS IN



Neo Moshabela
www.c3academy.co.za
WorldSkillsSA.

The automotive refinisher industry is one of precision, creativity, and technical excellence. As we step into the second year of the Hollard Artisan Development Programme, we are proud to share the significant progress and impact of this initiative, which is successfully shaping the next generation of automotive spray painters and auto body repairers.

Partnership and support: the heart of the programme

This programme would not have not been possible without the unwavering support of our partner Motor Body Repairers (MBRs), dedicated mentors, and business owners who genuinely care about skills development. Their investment in young people and their commitment to training continue to inspire us and ensure the sustainability of our sector.

The data clearly shows the success of these partnerships with trainee candidates gaining invaluable hands-on experience and contributing directly to the industry. Each placement represents a real investment by businesses who believe that the future of their craft lies in the intentional training of the next generation.

The journey so far

When we launched the initiative in late 2023 and early 2024, we started with two cohorts of 100 learners in total, embarking on a three-year journey to achieve their trade qualification. Recruitment focused on identifying candidates with both aptitude and passion for the trade. Of course, we also recognised that these young people would need time to adapt to the demands of a highly technical and disciplined industry.

With a combined retention rate, close to 80%, we are proud of the group of committed and talented young artisans who have remained dedicated and proven themselves. Their resilience, adaptability, and determination reflect the transformative power of this programme.

Now, more than a year in, all candidates are immersed in advanced, hands-on tasks, moving well beyond the basics.

Auto body repair trainees are tackling major structural repairs, including measuring, cutting, and welding, while continuing to master strip-and-assemble process.

Automotive spray painter trainees are refining advanced spraying techniques, maintaining flawless finishes, and learning the intricacies of mixing solid, metallic, and three-stage paints.

These skills set the foundation for excellence, ensuring that each candidate develops technical depth and confidence.

Voices from the floor: tailored technical approaches

The success of the programme lies in its adaptability. It is not a "one-size-fits-all"

approach. Each host shop develops its own way of integrating candidates, matching their strengths to production requirements.

At Sanrose Auto Body in Johannesburg, a Mercedes-Benz approved shop, the emphasis is on meticulous, brand-standard finishes using premium techniques. Meanwhile, a shop specialising in fleet vehicles prioritises durability and efficiency, giving learners exposure to high volume, time-sensitive work. This diverse range of experiences ensures candidates are versatile and industry-ready.

The Cohort 2 Placement Review data proves that this flexible approach is working. 19 out of 29 active candidates (65.52%) are performing above 80% at stand-alone capacity.

Supervisors report zero notable gaps, with many praising candidates for adapting quickly and working with minimal supervision.

Mentors consistently describe their performance as "very good" and affirm that candidates "know their work."

At Chako Panelbeaters, one supervisor described candidate Isabella Dube as "a real asset in our workshop" – a testament to the tangible value these young artisans bring.

These statistics and direct feedback from supervisors prove that the programme is not only effectively training future artisans but is also producing highly capable individuals who are already functioning independently in their roles. The stats show that candidates are way ahead of the traditional training and that this programme has the power to quickly advance candidates so the host shops can quickly see a great return on investment.

Accreditation status

The programme is not just transforming candidates – it is reshaping the ecosystem. As one of five accredited sites in South Africa for the legacy trades, C3 Auto Body Repair Academy continues to deliver training and trade testing supported by a seasoned team of assessors and moderators.

We remain accredited for CBMT Level Trade Testing and Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) in both auto body repair and spray painting. Looking forward, we are preparing for QCTO occupational accreditations, ensuring our training stays aligned with the country's evolving qualification framework.

For out-of-town candidates, the Academy provides accommodation and transport assistance in Bloemfontein, breaking down barriers of access and enabling wider participation.

Innovation through collaboration

Since our inception in 2018, C3 Auto Body Repair Academy has embraced innovation and collaboration as non-negotiables. By working closely with industry partners,

insurers, and government institutions including TVET Colleges and other Skills Development Providers, we have created opportunities that are meaningful, practical, and transformative.

Together, we are proving that artisan training is not simply about skills transfer – it is about shaping the culture, resilience, and professionalism of a new workforce. The energy in our workshops today reflects a shared vision for tomorrow.

Great facilities and national reach

Our facilities are recognised for excellence, efficient operations, and exceptional customer service. These strengths enable us to extend our reach nationwide.

Through trainee sponsorship, we have successfully placed candidates in different provinces, ensuring that geography does not limit opportunity. Whether in Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Limpopo or KwaZulu-Natal, candidates are gaining the same standard of quality training and exposure.

Conclusion

"The Hollard Artisan Development Programme is now firmly established as a benchmark for excellence in artisan development. By year two, it has not only retained and developed a strong pipeline of candidates but also delivered clear value to host shops and the industry at large," says Neo Moshabela – Head of Operations: C3 Academy and national expert for MBR: World Skills SA.



WHAT'S HOT?

ELECTRICITY FOREVER?

Body shops have a unique place in British commerce, because there are very few SME businesses that get through as much energy. The collision repair business, especially the body shops, are a consistent source of employment right across the country. A key part of business activities are essential services – water, gas and electricity. There are issues with all three, notably cost, but electricity has a looming additional issue.

Once upon a time

In the early days of power generation in the late 1800s and early 1900s, supply varied wildly. Some suppliers used serial connections, meaning each customer was supplied after the previous one in the line. The result was variable voltage, and frequently over-stretched supply during high-demand periods. Remarkably there was even a battle over how electricity was supplied – the voltage, and if it was direct current (DC) or alternating current (AC).

The days of unregulated start-ups were numbered as electricity supply quickly became the cornerstone of British life. Through many twists, turns and commercial failures, a nationalised power generation and supply system emerged. One benefit was harmonisation of supply standards, standardisation of domestic as well as commercial power supply types, and most importantly, investment strategy.

The nationalised company was subdivided into major regional hubs, each with an overview of existing as well as potential commercial activity. This is where the idea of a national grid was born – a system of AC power lines operating at a variety of voltages to minimise energy losses, was born. By elevating the voltage, the amount of current (amps) for a given power (watts) can be completed with reduced resistance (ohms) – alternatively sticking to lower voltages requires much, much bigger power lines to minimise the resistance.

Lost in time

Since the early 1960s the vision of a national power grid connecting power generation sites with customers has been left to carry on. The planned buffer zone has been progressively been removed as the population increased and large coal-fired power stations were removed. The replacement power generation in the form of photovoltaic panels and wind turbines are not available year-round regardless of weather or daylight.

There's more. From wood poles to ceramic insulators, the vast majority of the system carrying power to end users gets almost no maintenance. Thanks to use of a helicopter with thermal imaging cameras, annual surveys are completed to detect the onset of potential failures, but in the main the devices are left alone.

That includes power transformers. These increase the power transmission voltage from a power station to the main grid, and then step down the voltage in multiple stages to the consumers. Each transformer has a thermos-syphon cooling system with special oil selected for its insulation properties, and are in a case made from sheet steel and/or cast iron.

The national grid is now operated by seven companies. National Grid ESO provide the main network, with the power transmitted at 400 000 or 275 000 volts AC. From there six companies look after distribution in each area of the UK, stepping down the voltage to 132 000, 33 000 or 11 000 volts AC, and then again right the way down to 400 volts AC for SME use and 230 volts AC for domestic use.

The whole system is monitored in real time to check on what power is where, matching demand to supply. Combined with physical checks of the system such as using a helicopter to fly the lines, any issue should be caught ahead of failure.

In the event of failure, the system can reroute connections to restore power sully while repairs are made.

The issues

The success of the national power grid is that with very little policy or strategy from government, it has served the nation for more than 75 years with few disruptions.

However, that is changing. The buffer – maximum demand, maximum power generation – has been almost eliminated.

Population continues to grow, as does power demand – but supply is going in the opposite direction.

Photovoltaic cells convert little more than 25% of available energy from the sun to power, and output DC which has to be synthesised into AC for the grid – and won't work at all in the dark. Wind turbines can output in AC, but are highly dependent on a relatively narrow wind speed range to produce anything at all – there are such things as entire days with wind speeds below the required 5 km/h minimum.

With mixed energy supply – solar, wind, nuclear and fossil fuel – power generation shortages can be fixed. The bigger problem is the grid – it is literally everywhere, and it's time to reinvest. The transformers are old, and the grid providers are seeking to extend the service life from 60 years to 65 years. Quite simply, planned strategy would have ensured ordering replacement transformers starting at least a decade ago, because there is a global shortage and most are built to order.

So, we – including HM Gov. – can't pop on to Amazon to get a large transformer.

What should we do? Take a trip to the nearest substation. See the state of the transformer. And plan!

Right now, the government cannot guarantee electricity supply, and if failure does come it's more likely to be from the grid than generation – although generation shortfall is becoming a bigger issue with each passing year.

Time to take stock. What is the minimum amount of electricity required to maintain business? Can this be supplied in an emergency? If so, how? It's better to plan ahead than just wait: communityenergyengland.org – until the lights go out.

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WORKSHOP

MASTERING BODY FILLER APPLICATIONS IS VITAL

by TJ Rourke



Body filler has long suffered from a questionable reputation – often due more to technician misuse than to actual product limitations. Fortunately, modern body filler formulations have significantly evolved.

Today's premium products offer better application, improved sanding characteristics, faster curing and enhanced adhesion. Technicians can now work with fillers that mix easily, spread smoothly and produce fewer pinholes – key attributes for high-quality collision repairs. Despite these advancements, filler selection and application still require thoughtful technique, adherence to OEM and product guidelines and continual training. Even the best body filler cannot compensate for poor panel preparation or rushed procedures.

Root causes of filler failures

Common problems in body filler application often trace back to improper surface preparation, exceeding maximum thickness limits, incorrect mixing ratios or using the wrong sanding grits. These issues not only impact cosmetic quality but can also lead to poor adhesion, corrosion or failure down the line.

Training helps address these challenges by accelerating technician proficiency. Many manufacturers now offer online training and technical data sheets that detail correct storage, mixing and application methods. However, technicians must remember that filler should never serve as a short cut for thorough metal straightening.

Importance of cleanliness and prep

Surface preparation remains one of the most critical – and overlooked – steps in filler application. Clean panels and the correct surface profile are essential for adhesion and longevity. Many OEMs now require epoxy primer over bare metal before filler is applied, enhancing corrosion protection and durability. Applying filler over self-etch primer, once a common practice, is now widely discouraged.

Moreover, shop contamination is a hidden threat. Relying solely on soap and water or only using wax and grease remover can leave behind a polar or non-polar contaminants. The best practice is a two-step cleaning: first washing with soap and water followed by a VOC-compliant cleaner recommended by the shop's refinishing system provider.

Getting the application right

Mistakes in filler application can damage more than just the panel – they can damage your shop's reputation. Improper prep or applying

filler over incompatible surfaces can lead to blistering, cracking or contour mapping that appears under the topcoat. These flaws may not be visible immediately but could show up later and erode customer trust and CSI scores. Technicians must also consider substrate-specific practices. Some bonding methods – such as MIG brazing or structural adhesive joints – may require fibre-reinforced fillers. These products, while robust, often need to be finished with a premium polyester filler or glazing putty for optimal topcoat appearance.

Curing behaviour is another red flag. If a filler cures too fast or too slow, it could be the result of improper hardener ratios. Either scenario risks repair failure – whether due to pinholes or sanding issues – and underscores the importance of precise mixing.

Modern materials and methods

Today's vehicle substrates range from high-strength steels to plastics and composites – materials that require compatible repair strategies. Some OEMs even prohibit filler use on specific plastic panels. Shops must stay informed by reviewing both products TDS and OEM repair procedures.

Additionally, the rise of ADAS has shifted repair boundaries. Sensors embedded in bumpers, mirrors and panels restrict filler usage in certain areas. Understanding these limitations is vital to preserving vehicle safety systems.

Building consistency

As repair complexity increases, so does the need for consistent application processes. Shops can boost consistency by establishing detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) conducting regular quality audits, and fostering a culture of precision and accountability. New technicians especially benefit from mentorship and structured training.

Leveraging OEM resources

Proper filler application hinges on reliable technical knowledge. OEM service manuals provide model-specific guidance.

Summary

Today's vehicles demand smarter repairs. As body filler continues to evolve alongside vehicle design, shops must match that evolution with modern processes, accurate information and a commitment to craftsmanship. The end goal is more than visual perfection – it's structural integrity, safety and professional pride in every repair.

WHAT'S HOT?

HYBRIDS ARE LEADING SOUTH AFRICA'S GREEN MOTORING SHIFT



Hybrid vehicles are powering South Africa's transition to cleaner motoring, with New Energy Vehicle (NEV) sales surging 82% year-on-year, according to *AutoTrader's* latest Mid-Year Industry Report. Hybrids account for 84% of all NEV sales, making them the real force behind eco-friendly transport.

Leading the trend is the locally manufactured Toyota Corolla Cross Hybrid, South Africa's top-selling NEV, with 700 units sold in the first half of the year. In total,

2 049 hybrids found buyers between January and June, compared with just 397 fully electric cars. The best-selling EV, Volvo's EX30, achieved 64 sales in the same period.

Toyota dominates the hybrid market with models such as the RAV4 Hybrid and Lexus NX, while Chinese brands like Haval, GWM, and newcomers from Chery and Omoda are steadily gaining traction.

With load shedding, limited charging infrastructure, and affordability concerns, battery-electric vehicles remain a harder sell

for many households. Hybrids, on the other hand, offer the reassurance of petrol power with real fuel savings, smoother driving, and lower ownership costs. Even with used hybrid prices rising 3% year-on-year, they remain nearly 40% cheaper than EVs on average.

For now, hybrids strike the best balance between cost, convenience, and cleaner driving—making them South Africa's most practical step on the road to sustainable motoring.

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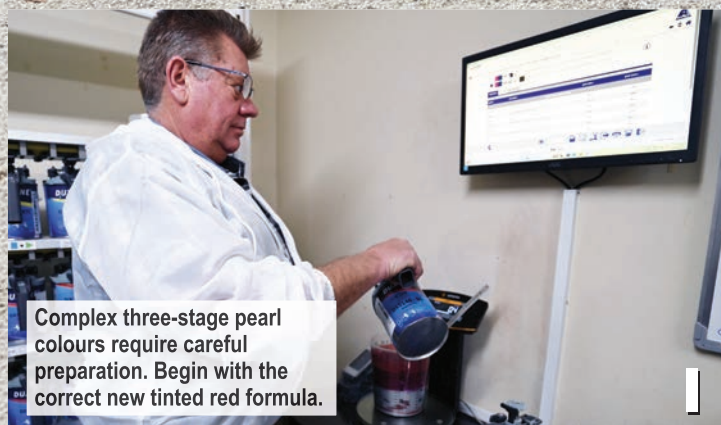
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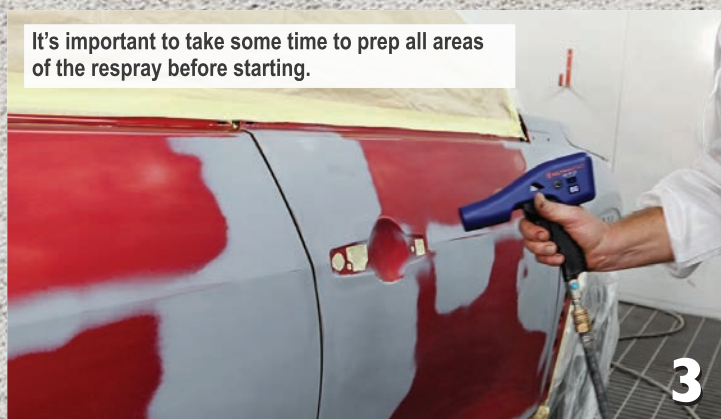
STEP-BY-STEP THREE-STAGE PEARL RED



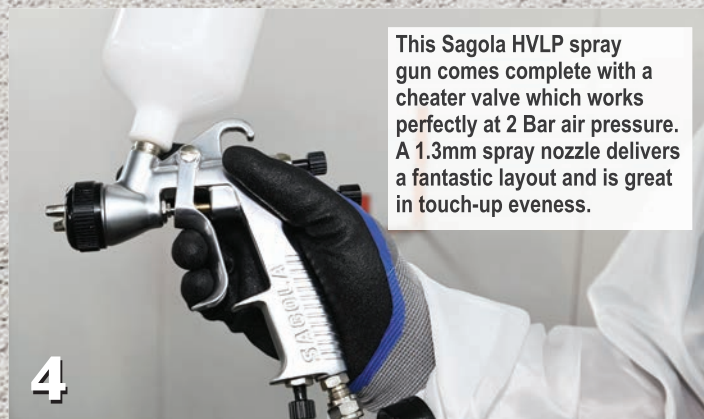
Complex three-stage pearl colours require careful preparation. Begin with the correct new tinted red formula.



Body preparation was completed with solvent primer DX62 grey primer. It is vital to take time out and check for no defects here to eliminate dust. We used the Ultrastat anti-static blow gun.



It's important to take some time to prep all areas of the respray before starting.



This Sagola HVLP spray gun comes complete with a cheater valve which works perfectly at 2 Bar air pressure. A 1.3mm spray nozzle delivers a fantastic layout and is great in touch-up evenness.



Make sure that spray gun fan delivery is done correctly with the trigger fully pulled back to avoid a wet centre problem of over delivery.



Check masking work and use a primat reactive wipe to complete the final preparation process.

THREE STAGE MICA COLOUR REPAIR FROM DUXONE BASECOAT REFINISH



How do you perfect a three-stage pearl red? Experts from Autoboy's have helped to create a step-by-step guide using Duxone basecoat refinish to get this challenging colour repair correct, first time.



Test colour panels will show just how many translucent red coats will deliver the correct colour match on magenta shades.

7



Correct application viscosity needs to be checked at all times to eliminate refinish paint variables.

8



Edge to edge colour matching is challenging. It is best to blow in adjacent panels and use Dx48 clear with DX20 standard hardener for a smooth wet look finish.

9



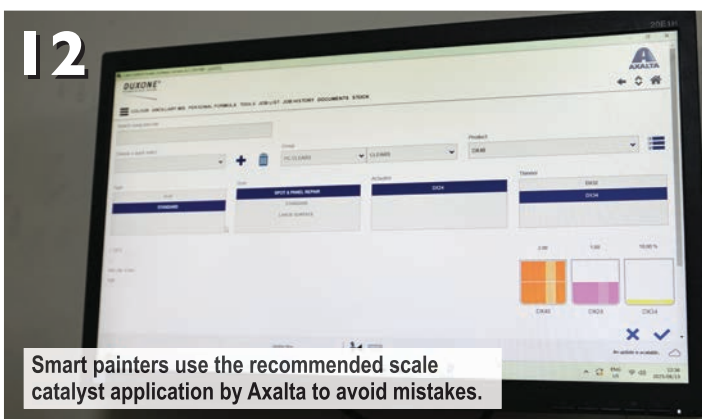
With two extra panels in this repair it takes skill to determine the blow-in basecoat optically, because you don't want to obliterate the prismatic base.

10



Applying the AXT104 transparent third-stage Candy Apple Red basecoat requires the correct flash-off time between coats to avoid delamination.

11



Smart painters use the recommended scale catalyst application by Axalta to avoid mistakes.

12



Final clearcoat DX48 delivers amazing-overall wet-look for a factory finish final repair.

13



Painter Paisley shows the final result of the Duxone Magenta three-stage pearl touch. It's perfect!

14



SKILLS PROFILE

INDUSTRY TRAINING AND CONSULTING CONTINUED SUCCESS

How do you get the best out of learners who want to be spraypainters and panelbeaters but have special learning needs? The answer: a passion for people and teaching combined. This is the foundation that Industry Training and Consulting (IT-C) was based upon and continues to grow in this vein today. Automotive Refinisher was on hand at the most recent graduation ceremony to celebrate this milestone with them.

IT-C is a family affair with “Oom” Frik and Frik Botha – his son – involved in every aspect of training. They truly care for every individual who trains with them. Their latest graduates have been training for six months and are their sixth group of pupils. The initial three groups were exclusively hearing-impaired learners. The subsequent three groups have been made up of hearing impaired – as well as learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN).

IT-C work with the MerSeta Skills programme. Historically only focusing on the hearing-impaired community, they became very aware of the need for LSEN students to be given the same opportunities, but with

more personalised training. Reading, writing and language barriers is what these learners battle with the most.

With this in mind, IT-C focus on hands-on skills development with less written assessments. They have also learned to customise their pace to each student as they get to grips with new technology and abilities. They also have alternative evaluation methods which provides a more accurate measurement of their competence.

LSEN students have unique strengths. They are persistent and determined as they have had to battle with their learning disabilities to overcome and find their place. They are generally adept at hands-on and practical tasks and often have excellent creative and artistic abilities, making them great candidates for the tasks of spraypainting and panel repair. An incredible eye for detail often makes them an excellent asset in this field.

“While each learner is unique, recognising and nurturing these strengths can enhance their learning experience and employment prospects. Tailoring skills programmes to capitalise on these strengths can lead to greater success and confidence for LSEN

students,” says Frik Botha.

“In the six years since starting the programme, we have trained 68 learners and each of them have received their Statement of Result (SOR). We have not had any students who haven’t received their SOR, which highlights our commitment to each student’s achievement and the effectiveness of the skills programme delivery.

“By incorporating LSEN into the existing programmes we aim to create a more inclusive environment that addresses diverse learning needs and promotes equal opportunities for all students. This approach ensures that our educational offering remains relevant, accessible, and beneficial to a broader range of learners. The main objective is to introduce these candidates after the six-month course, into the panelbeating and spraypainting environment and getting them qualified in three years using Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL).”

The consistent success of their graduates highlights the dedication to quality and student support that IT-C provide well.

IT-C focus on hands-on skills development with less written assessments for Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN). This helps harness the best in each student.



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ADAS TALK

CAPPING ADAS CALIBRATION COSTS: A RISKY MOVE FOR INSURERS AND REPAIRERS



In recent months several insurance companies have begun experimenting with capping reimbursement rates for ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems) calibrations. While controlling costs is a priority for all of us, capping reimbursement rates for these critical services is not the answer. This approach threatens the safety of vehicles, the profitability of repair shops, and ultimately the reputation of the collision repair industry.

Here's why capping ADAS calibration costs is a dangerous path for our industry to take:

1. High costs of equipment and training

ADAS calibration is a highly specialised process that requires significant investment in both equipment and technician training. Shops must continually upgrade their diagnostic tools, calibration targets, and software to keep pace with evolving technology. The costs associated with training technicians to perform these precise calibrations are also substantial. A blanket cap on reimbursement fails to account for these ongoing expenses, discouraging shops from investing in the necessary tools and expertise. This results in a reduction in service quality, which can have serious implications.

2. Complexity and variability in ADAS systems

ADAS systems are not one-size-fits-all, and neither are the calibration requirements. Calibrations differ based on the vehicle's make and model, the specific ADAS system in question, and whether the process involves static or dynamic calibrations – or both. For instance, newer or higher-end vehicles often require more intricate and time-consuming calibrations. Capping reimbursement rates ignores these complexities, forcing repair shops to absorb additional costs. This threatens to create a “race to the bottom” where shops are incentivised to cut corners just to break even.

3. Potential for compromised safety

Perhaps the most concerning consequence of capped reimbursement rates is the potential for compromised safety. When shops are pressured to stay within a set up price cap, they may resort to cutting corners. This could include rushing through the calibration process or opting for cheaper aftermarket tools rather than using OEM-certified equipment. The result? Inaccurate calibrations that could lead to malfunctions in key safety features such as automatic braking, lane departure warnings, or adaptive cruise control. These

malfunctions put drivers at risk and expose repair shops – and insurers – to increased liability.

4. Erosion of OEM standards

Many OEMs require certified tools and procedures for ADAS calibrations. These certified procedures ensure that the vehicle's safety features work as designed, preserving the integrity of the vehicle and its warranty. However, adhering to OEM standards can be more expensive than using aftermarket alternatives. A cap on reimbursement rates could push repair shops towards cheaper, less reliable methods, eroding the adherence to OEM standards. This not only compromises vehicle safety but also risks voiding warranties, leading to dissatisfied customers and long-term damage to the reputation of the repair networks.

5. Shrinking pool of qualified repair shops

Shops that have heavily invested in ADAS calibration technology may find it financially unsustainable to perform these services under a capped reimbursement model. As a result, many high-quality shops may opt out of insurance networks altogether, reducing the overall pool of qualified repair facilities. This will leave consumers with fewer options for safe, reliable repairs and could force insurers to rely on less specialised shops, further reducing service quality across the board.

6. Profitability at risk

The collision repair industry already operates on slim margins. Forcing shops to absorb additional costs through a cap on ADAS calibrations could have significant financial consequences. If shops cannot cover their expenses, they may be forced to cut costs in other areas or pass those costs onto customers in less transparent ways. The long-term result will be a strain on both profitability and customer satisfaction, undermining the quality of the entire collision repair ecosystem.

7. Liability risks for the entire industry

The risks of improper ADAS calibrations extend far beyond the individual shop. ADAS systems are directly tied to the safety of the vehicle and its passengers. If a system fails due to an improper calibration, the repair shop could be held liable for any resulting accidents or injuries. What's more, the liability exposure could extend to the entire network of shops participating in an insurer's direct repair programme. The financial and reputational risks are enormous,

and capping ADAS reimbursement rates could significantly increase these risks for insurers and repair shops alike.

A call to collaborate for a better solution

It is clear that controlling costs is important for both insurers and repair shops. However, capping reimbursement rates for ADAS calibrations is not the way forward. Instead, we need a collaborative approach that balances cost management with the complexities and safety requirements of ADAS calibrations. Insurers and repair shops must work together to ensure that calibrations are performed correctly, using OEM-certified tools and procedures, while still allowing repair facilities to remain financially viable.

The future of vehicle safety depends on our ability to adapt to new technologies like ADAS without compromising on quality and safety. A cap on calibration costs does just that – it compromises safety and puts undue financial pressure on repair shops. Let's avoid going down this dangerous path and instead seek solutions that protect the integrity of our industry and the safety of the vehicles we repair.

Let's work together to keep our roads – and our businesses – safe.



UK NEWS

MOTOR INSURANCE PREMIUMS INFLATED BY BAD INDUSTRY PRACTISE

The Financial Conduct Authority has said high motor insurance premiums are partly down to the way insurers manage claims.

It said that motor insurance prices have been driven up by the rising cost of claims, which is the result of higher labour rates, higher energy costs, increasingly complex vehicles and the cost of hire vehicles.

The cost of theft claims and uninsured drivers has also risen significantly.

However, the FCA also found that referral fees from credit hire companies and accident management companies have contributed to slower claims processing and therefore higher costs.

It said it is taking direct action against companies where it had identified bad practises, and would provide this evidence to the government as part of its motor task force, which was set up to understand the reasons behind high motor insurance premiums to take steps to reduce them.

A fair deal

Sarah Pritchard, deputy chief executive of the FCA, said, "Insurance provides peace of mind but people must be confident they can get a fair deal and be treated right when the worst happens. External cost pressures are primarily to blame for recent motor premium increases, not increased firm profits, but there is some more work to do on claims handling. That's why we're stepping up, making sure claims are handled promptly and fairly and pushing for a coordinated effort to tackle the root causes of rising motor premiums."

A well-functioning insurance market helps consumers navigate their financial lives and supports growth by building people's resilience to financial and personal shocks.



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WHAT'S HOT?

HYUNDAI SA KEEPS PACE WITH SERVICE DIAGNOSTIC TRAINING

Keeping up with the constant evolution of vehicle technology is no small task. Hyundai SA's national team has made it a core focus of their ongoing Service Diagnostic (SD) programme. According to Michael Rohde – After Sales Director at Hyundai, the sheer number of technical advancements in the past five years alone has made it essential for front-line technicians to stay ahead – offering effective diagnostic solutions for the latest passenger vehicles in the Hyundai line-up.

To ensure thorough and focused instruction, Hyundai limits training classes to around 12 technicians per session. The programme is structured into three distinct competency levels, starting with Level Certified Technician, which covers basic wiring, electrical systems, and GDS installation for passenger vehicle technicians.

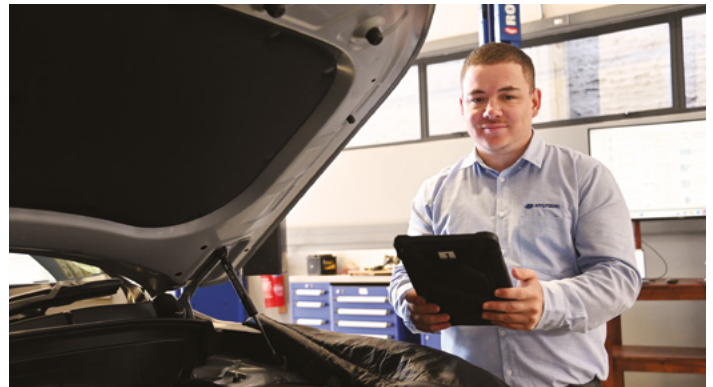
Joanne Cockburn Collins, Training Manager at Hyundai Automotive SA, explained that Level 1 Expert certification involves an intensive three-day course focused on engine, body electrical and chassis sensor actuators, drivetrain systems, and fault-finding techniques. This level requires attendance at four training blocks, totalling 12 days, to achieve full competency.

The pinnacle of the programme is the Level 2 Master Technician certification, a rigorous system diagnostic qualification spread across seven modules and typically completed over three years. Technicians at this level are expected to demonstrate deep understanding and hands-on skills in areas such as safety systems, diesel engine diagnostics, body electricals, and steering and suspension fault-finding. Certification is only granted after passing examination sessions where technicians must accurately diagnose and resolve real-world faults.

Training is delivered nationwide, with facilities in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal. All programmes are conducted under the expert guidance of the after-sales management, ensuring consistency and excellence across the group's operations.



Joanne Cockburn Collins (right), Training Manager at Hyundai SA, is seen with her team.



There are three levels of the Service Diagnostic (SD) programme which is offered nationwide.

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Founded nearly 53 years ago, Star Body Works has grown into a world-class collision repair centre in Ruhr Street, located in Windhoek's busy northern industrial area. Under the leadership of Managing Director Dick Cornelissen, the company has expanded through three major relocations – each to larger premises – to keep pace with growing customer demand.

From its humbler beginnings to its current state-of-the-art facility, Star Body Works has built a reputation for precision, reliability, and exceptional service. The family-run business boasts a loyal customer base and is an approached repairer for many of Namibia's leading insurance companies.

The workshop is equipped with the latest collision repair technology, ensuring it can handle both structural and cosmetic repairs on modern vehicles. Ruan Meyer, workshop manager, has played a key role in staff training and skills development, notes that the team stays ahead of fast-changing automotive designs by sending technicians to specialised training with major vehicle manufacturers.

Star Body Works' repair process begins with accurate chassis alignment and full restoration to factory specifications, followed by a dedicated preparation section for foundation coating and painting.

Only genuine factory replacement parts are used – a commitment that reflects the company's please to deliver world class results.

The refinishing department is designed for speed and quality. With five full spraybooths in constant operation, the team delivers flawless paintwork on every job. Adriaan Tromp, brand manager Colour Perfect at Cymot highlights the strong partnership: "We provide Star Body Works with ongoing technical support and solutions to colour-matching challenges, with over 90 000 global automotive colours now in circulation of our close collaboration ensures consistently high standards."

The company's workforce includes second- and third - generation employees – a testament to the strong culture and steady workflow. Much of this business comes from Namibia's top 10 motor insurance companies, with Star Body Works repairing all makes and models to factory-approved standards.

Since its founding in 1972, customer satisfaction has been the driving force behind Star Body Works' success. Today, the Cornelissen family continues to uphold that tradition, delivering meticulous craftsmanship, trusted service, and the personal touch that keeps clients returning decade after decade.

TOP SHOP

STAR BODY WORKS, NAMIBIA

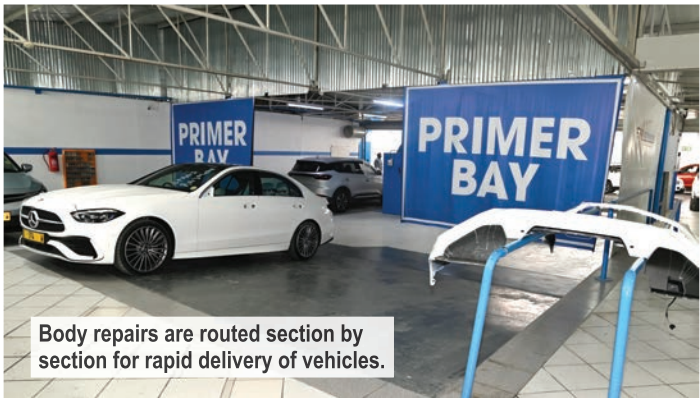




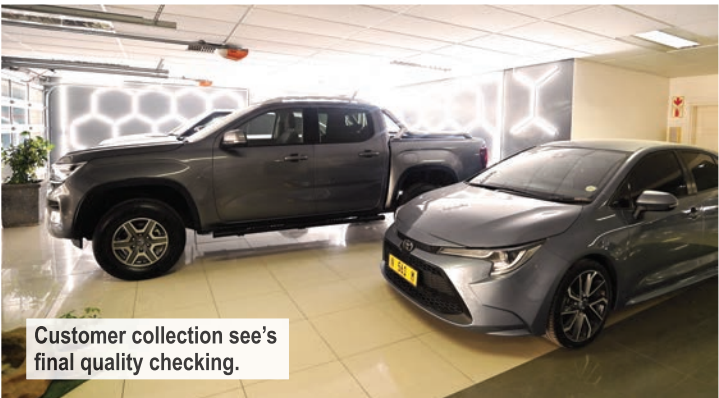
The dedicated Cornelissen family team continue to uphold the very highest standardisation in body repair.



Technical training and approved staff qualifications have kept Star Body Works the go-to repair centre.



Body repairs are routed section by section for rapid delivery of vehicles.



Customer collection see's final quality checking.



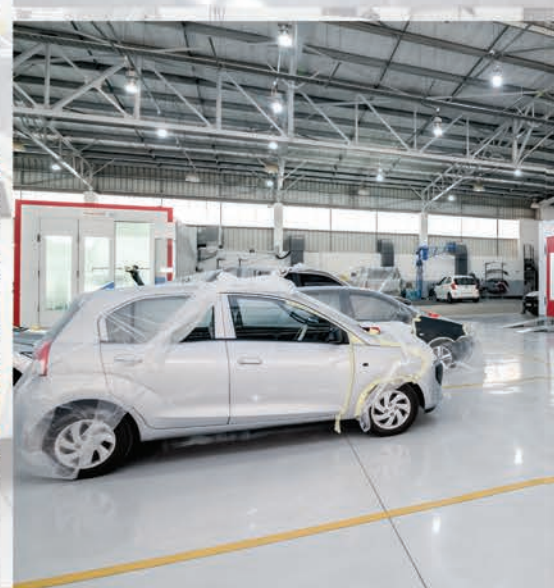
PPG Namibia use the very latest online Envirobase formula retrieval for perfect results.



Hospital style levels of hygiene are maintained throughout.



The vast workforce of technicians, polishers and panelbeaters, some of whom are second and third generation staff, working with purpose for a great repair every time.



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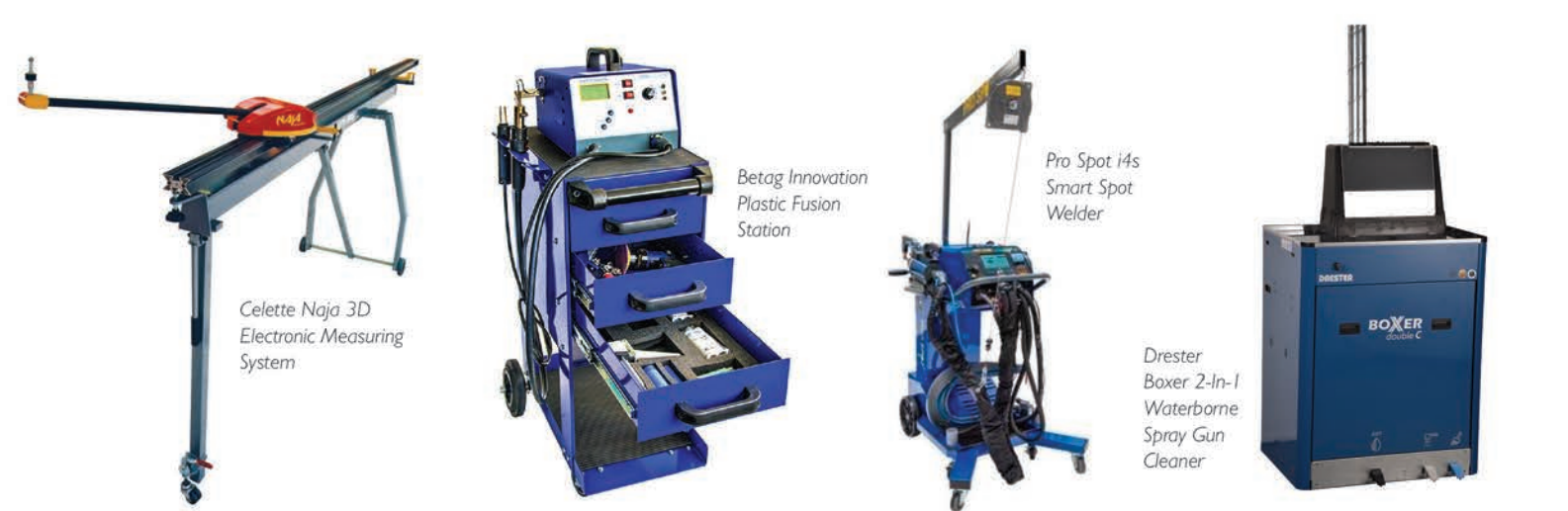
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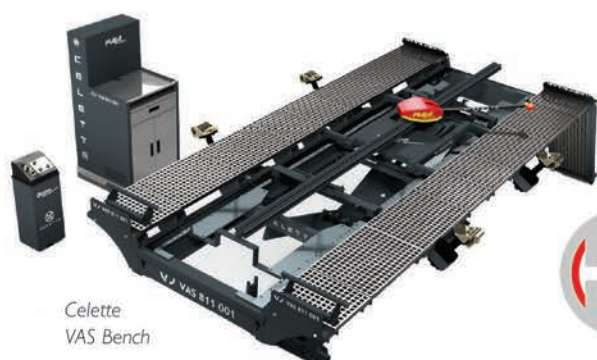
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PETROL HEADS

FESTIVAL OF MOTORING 2025



The years seem to be whistling by as fast as vehicle manufacturers can launch new makes and models onto our local market. The theme of speed certainly doesn't slow down at the Festival of Motoring, for instance, which was held at the famous Kyalami race circuit recently. Cars and bikes whizzed around the track creating a real petrolhead buzz over the action-packed three-day event.

Visitors explored the various halls showcasing 100 exhibitors that were promoting automotive products and services; through to custom vehicles and much more. You could book a lap around in your favourite car with a driver to give your adrenaline a serious boost – with an estimated 10 000 test drives expected over the duration. There was even a dedicated 4x4 off-road course for the vehicles in this market segment!

Models introduced

BAIC SA unveiled the new B30 SUV, which will be produced at the company's Gqeberha plant using a completely knocked-down (CKD) process starting in late 2025 or early 2026. This marks BAIC's strengthened commitment to local production in South Africa, with the B30 launch set for November 2025 after its unveiling at the festival.

The GAC M8 has been confirmed for a launch later this year locally, as part of the brand's aggressive expansion strategy. While a specific date hasn't been announced, it is a key new model. Interestingly, it will be offered as a plug-in hybrid (PHEV) in South Africa. This is a significant move for GAC, as it introduces new energy vehicles to its local range. The PHEV variant features a 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine paired with an electric motor for combined outputs of 274 kW and 630 Nm. The claimed 0-100 km/h time is 8.8 seconds, and with a 25.5 kWh battery, the M8 should offer a truly significant all-electric range.

The M8 competes with the Mercedes-Benz V-Class and the more premium Toyota Quantum model, targeting a niche- but growing premium market segment. While GAC has already introduced its GS3 Emzoom and Emkoo SUVs, the M8 will be a departure, as it's a large, luxury multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) designed to compete with established players in the segment. The GAC M8, the Trumpchi M8 in China, is a luxury MPV with an unmistakable design. It's built to offer high comfort, technology, and space.

The sub-R400 000 SUV market is becoming a hotly contested space, and the latest manufacturer to enter the ring is Chinese brand GAC. Its importer, Salvador Caetano Auto, announced a new entry model called the Emzoom Nova. Retailing at R359 900, it lowers the entry price of the Emzoom by a cool R50 000!

Automechanika CEO breakfast

Michael Dehn, managing director Messe Frankfurt SA, and his team hosted a CEO breakfast for automotive aftermarket leaders. It not only showcased the Automechanika Johannesburg Show which is to take place on 28-30 October, but will highlight the challenges and positives in this market sector.

Duane Newman, EY Africa Climate Change & Sustainability Services Leader, spoke about how the latest Trump tariffs will be felt on a practical level here in South Africa. His speech was titled "Trump 2.0 tariffs" as Trump and other US governments have been implementing tariffs along the way, just not in the usual loud abrasive manner we've come to expect from Trump. On critical minerals there are no tariffs – yet – and the focus of the conference was on automotive aftermarkets – so Duane focused on automotive parts (25% tariff), and copper, steel and aluminium (50%). The latest amendment to the tariffs being that any part or component containing any copper, steel or aluminium will fall into that 50% category.

The introduction of these tariffs is to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers and to increase revenue for the U.S. Our exports are showing themselves to be very price-sensitive, and the loss could be between R1.4 and R1.6 billion a year. This translates to 50 000 to 100 000 job losses in the automotive sector alone, and in our current economy that is significant indeed.

Nicky Weimar, Group Chief Economist Nedbank, said that despite SA being locked in a low growth cycle, the green shoots were that moderate recovery is coming. This is due to consumer spending. As true South Africans do, we live for today and don't think about tomorrow!

However, with AGOA ending soon, which is 1% of our GDP and the local economy not even growing at 1% a year, things are looking tough. There is a murky outlook due to U.S. tariffs, limited power supply, poorly run ports and transportation for goods, as well as municipalities not delivering what they should. New vehicle sales are up, and this is always a good indicator of consumer spend and domestic growth. This can be attributed mainly to interest rate cuts. Gone are the days when things stood still while you could get to grips with new ideas, technology and more... now it feels like a continuous trip around the Kyalami racetrack at warp speed. Not for the faint hearted, but then Africa's not for sissies!



Paying for an adrenaline filled ride in your chosen favourite is a highlight for many.



The BAIC B30 SUV (left) and the B40 Plus.



The GAC M8.



Michael Dehn, MD Messe Frankfurt South Africa, hosted their third CEO breakfast on behalf of Automechanika Johannesburg at the event.

LOCAL UPDATE

AUTO PRODUCTION PLANNERS FACE UNPRECEDENTED DISRUPTION



Roger Houghton
News from the Zoo

Positions working in the car product planning department of a major global vehicle manufacturer used to be much sought after. However, times have changed dramatically. That was the situation a few years ago, when companies were carefully structured to ensure a regular roll-out of new or facelift models. Nowadays it must be hell on earth to work in product planning or vehicle styling.

There used to be long term product plans stretching for a decade or more, but this is no longer the case. There is now such disruption that the planners cannot even be assured of the type of powertrain that will be employed in future products. It used to be a case of choosing between a petrol or diesel internal combustion engine or using both in a range, but it could be either of those combustion engine options as well as battery electric, hybrid or plug-in hybrid.

Styling is not as difficult, as most cars these days are SUVs or crossovers, which are almost indistinguishable from each other, but current whims sometimes call for a coupé or station wagon to be added to a product range at fairly short notice to widen a model's potential market.

It is important to accept that the consumer is king and everything must be tailored to suit their requirements, which are very fickle these days. Being responsible for production planning is now a major nightmare as there is no structured buying patterns as was the case a few years ago. Now demand is driven not only by affordability and fitness for purpose, but in many markets there are incentives, such as those for battery electric vehicles, which can have a major effect on the market. This all makes production volume forecasting increasingly difficult.

Then, in several motor companies - including Volvo, Stellantis, Nissan, and Renault - there have been major changes in top management which can also have a big impact on the directions to be followed by product and production planners, as well as the stylists. What is interesting is that some of those people being called up by motor companies in financial trouble are from the older, experienced generation.

Now let's look and see what are the motor industry disruptors that are causing the biggest shakeup in automotive history.

First, there was the mad dash to develop, build and sell electric vehicles to meet the demands of regulators and environmental groups in a comparatively short time frame. In many cases these vehicles

were not properly developed and dogged by a host of glitches, from software concerns to wheels that literally came off!

Most companies did not fully recognise the role consumers play in defining what they really want to drive. It has turned out that not only sceptics, but ordinary persons-in-the-street are wary of a complete switch to EVs, due to high initial cost, range anxiety and a lack of real-life information on reliability and durability of these EVs. They simply did not buy them in the expected numbers, and many companies have had to turn back quickly and develop models with combustion engines, possibly with the addition of hybrid or plug-in hybrid technology.

But electric incentives from governments have also been cranked down or done away with, which increases initial purchase costs.

Then along to make things tougher, came the arrival - for the second time - of a Donald Trump administration in the United States. This time the rallying call was to make America great again by manufacturing more vehicles in the US instead of importing. However, this plan, using tariffs as the main hook, has backfired. Very badly.

The fact that many components that make up a "Made in America" vehicles these days are imported, as are the robots that are essential for modern auto production. High tariffs on these items, as well as on basics such as steel and aluminium, are resulting in costs rocketing. Buyers are staying away, and companies such as General Motors, Ford and Stellantis are haemorrhaging billions of dollars in extra costs.

Times have changed over the years since the US was the dominant player into the global automotive world. Nowadays globalisation and buying from the most favourable suppliers to control costs have been the tools used to ensure vehicle manufacturers stay afloat financially.

Here in South Africa the local automakers still face challenges as an outflow from Trumps 'tariff-driven economy' as well as from unique setbacks such as the closure of Arcelor Mittal's long steel plant that was a major source of raw material for the industry.

Then there is the general downturn in the SA economy mixed with a tsunami of affordable new vehicles arriving from China and India besides a general deindustrialisation in the composition of income generators. Manufacturing contributed 25% of GDP in 1994 and now the percentage has crumbled to only 15%.

It will be very interesting to hear what solutions to the motor industry' plight are put forward when the industry gets together at naamsa, The Automotive Business Council stages, its AutoWeek in Gqberha at the beginning of October.



CERTIFICATION

OEM CERTIFICATION: THE REFERRAL SYSTEM OF THE FUTURE

by Jason Stahl



As vehicle technology continues to advance, OEM certification is no longer a nice-to-have – it's fast becoming a necessity for forward thinking collision repair facilities. With automakers increasingly guiding customers toward their certified repair networks and the complexity of today's vehicles demanding brand-specific knowledge and equipment, shops that aren't OEM-certified risk falling behind.

Here's why OEM certification matters now more than ever – and why it may be the key to unlocking sustained business growth.

More than just a badge

OEM certification programmes are designed to ensure that a collision repair facility meets the automakers standards for quality safety and proper repair procedures. This usually means investing in specific tools, equipment, training and facility upgrades. In return, certified shops gain access to repair procedures, diagnostic software, proprietary parts programmes and – most importantly – visibility through OEM referral channels.

Unlike generic industry certifications, OEM programmes tie a shop directly to the vehicle manufacturer's brand and customer network. With consumers keeping cars longer and trusting brand-specific service more than ever, that connection can translate into significant long-term revenue.

Steering

A major factor driving the need for OEM certification is the behaviour of the OEMs themselves. Many automakers have ramped up their involvement in the post-collision experience, often partnering with insurers or directly integrating certified repair facilities into vehicle telematics and accident alert systems.

Some vehicle brands now automatically recommend or route drivers to certified repair facilities through in-car notifications or mobile apps immediately after a crash. If your shop isn't on that list, you are invisible to that customer in their moment of need.

As telematics and connectivity become more sophisticated, this steering is expected to increase – which means being part of an OEM programme could determine whether your shop sees that business at all.

Trust and transparency

According to recent customer research, many vehicle owners are more likely to trust a shop recommended by their car's manufacturer than one suggested by their insurance company. OEM certification brings with it a level of perceived trust, backed by the brand that built that vehicle.

This trust can also be a differentiator in conversations with customers. Certified shops can explain that they follow OEM-approved

repair procedures and use approved equipment and parts. In an environment where safety and proper advanced driver-assistance system (ADAS) calibration are top concerns, that sort of reassurance can sway decisions – especially with high-end vehicles or ADAS in play.

Technological complexity

Modern vehicles, especially those equipped with ADAS features, require highly specific repair processes that vary by make and model. OEM certification ensures that a shop's technicians are trained and equipped to handle those requirements.

The rapid pace of vehicle innovation means that shops working outside of these certification programmes may be at risk of performing incomplete or incorrect repairs. In the case of ADAS, even a millimetre of misalignment can result in dangerous outcomes – and major liability.

Being OEM-certified also often provides access to proprietary calibration tools and repair procedures not available through general industry sources. That technical edge can mean the difference between a successful repair and comeback – or worse, a lawsuit.

Insurance DRP negotiations

Insurers are also taking notice of OEM certifications. While the relationship between shops and insurers can be complex, certification can give a shop more leverage when advocating for proper repair procedures and parts usage.

In some cases, insurers may begin to prefer certified shops because they reduce liability and repair cycle times. A growing number of direct repair programmes are now factoring in OEM certifications as part of their partner selection process.

Even if a shop chooses to remain independent of insurer networks, being certified can help justify higher rates, more accurate labour times and the use of OEM parts – because the shop is operating according to the automakers' documented standards.

Investment with return on investment (ROI) potential

Yes, OEM certification requires an upfront investment. Costs can include facility upgrades, equipment purchases, technician training, audits and ongoing programme fees.

However, shops that make the leap often report measurable returns in the form of increased referrals, higher customer satisfaction scores and fewer comebacks.

The real value lies in long-term positioning. Certification can help shops become the go-to provider for specific vehicle brands in their markets.

And as OEMs tighten their networks and raise standards, early adopters will be better

positioned to maintain that status.

Multiple programmes = greater reach

Some shops choose to participate in several OEM programmes to broaden their market reach. While this multiplies the investment it also allows them to serve a larger percentage of the local car parc – particularly if the selected brands have regional penetration.

Strategic selection is key. A market analysis of vehicle registrations in your area can help determine which OEM certifications will offer the best return on investment.

A business differentiator

In a saturated market, OEM certification can help set a shop apart. It becomes a key selling point in marketing campaigns, website content, and conversations with fleet customers or dealerships.

For example, shops can use their certification status to:

- Win dealership repair contracts
- Attract high-end vehicle customers
- Assure cautious vehicle owners concerned about advanced safety systems
- Justify premium pricing by showing adherence to factory repair standards
- Feature OEM logos on their websites, signage and customer communications to build credibility and brand alignment.

Planning for the future

The direction of the industry is clear: More complex vehicles, tighter OEM control and greater emphasis on brand-approved repairs. Certification is just a trend, it's the new standard.

Shops that get ahead of this shift now will be better equipped to compete tomorrow. By aligning with automakers and demonstrating a commitment to quality and safety, body shops can position themselves as trusted partners in an increasingly high-tech repair landscape.

Those who wait may find themselves locked out of essential programmes, struggling to access procedures and invisible to the very customers they once served.

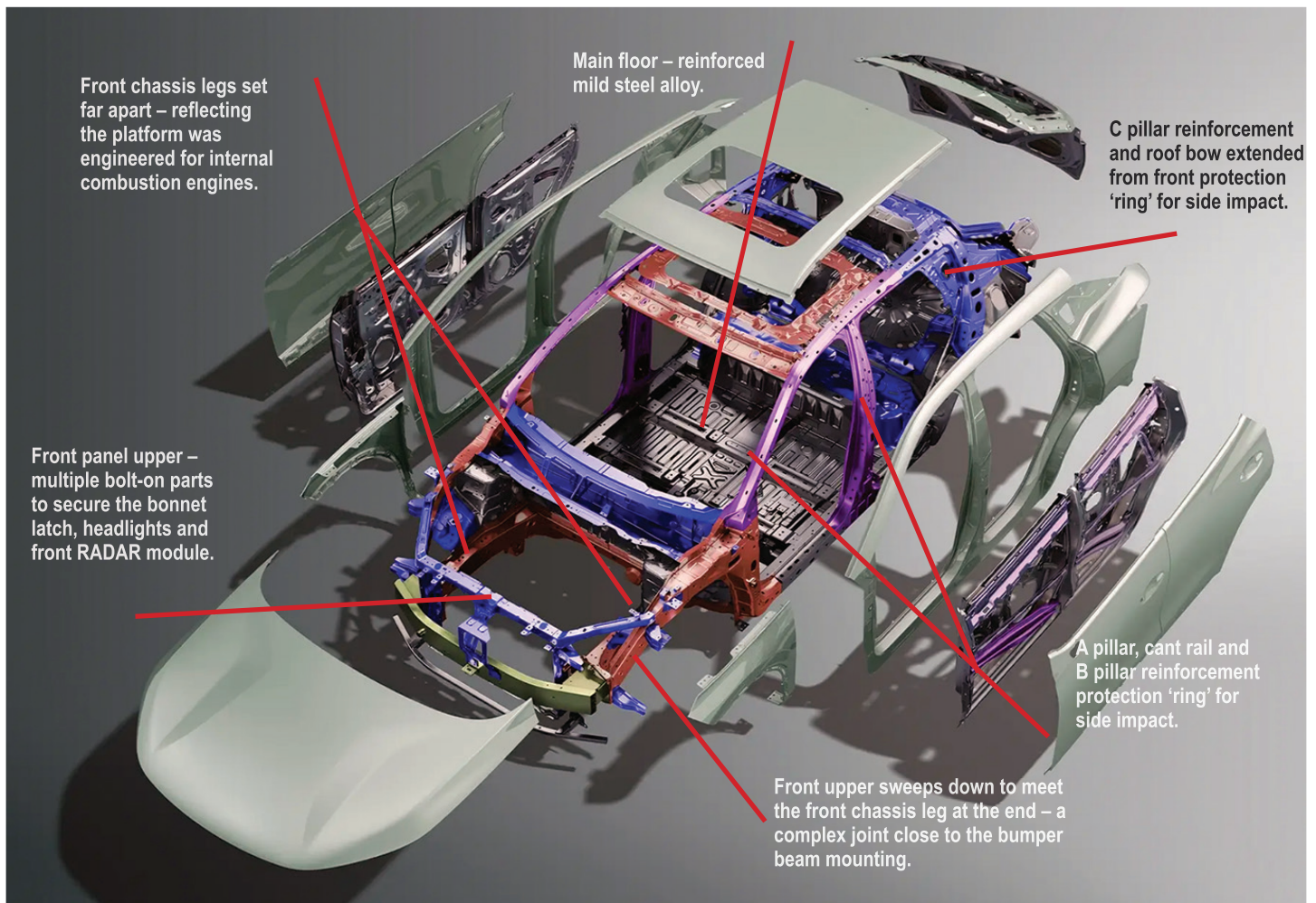
OEM certification is not a silver bullet – but it is a strategic step toward future-proofing your business. It opens doors to better repair data, more direct customer pipelines, and increased credibility with both consumers and insurers.

As more vehicles roll off assembly lines with advanced systems, shops must decide whether they want to keep up – or get left behind. OEM certification offers a proven path forward. If your shop is ready to grow, align with automakers and deliver repair the right way, it's time to make certification a part of your long-term strategy.

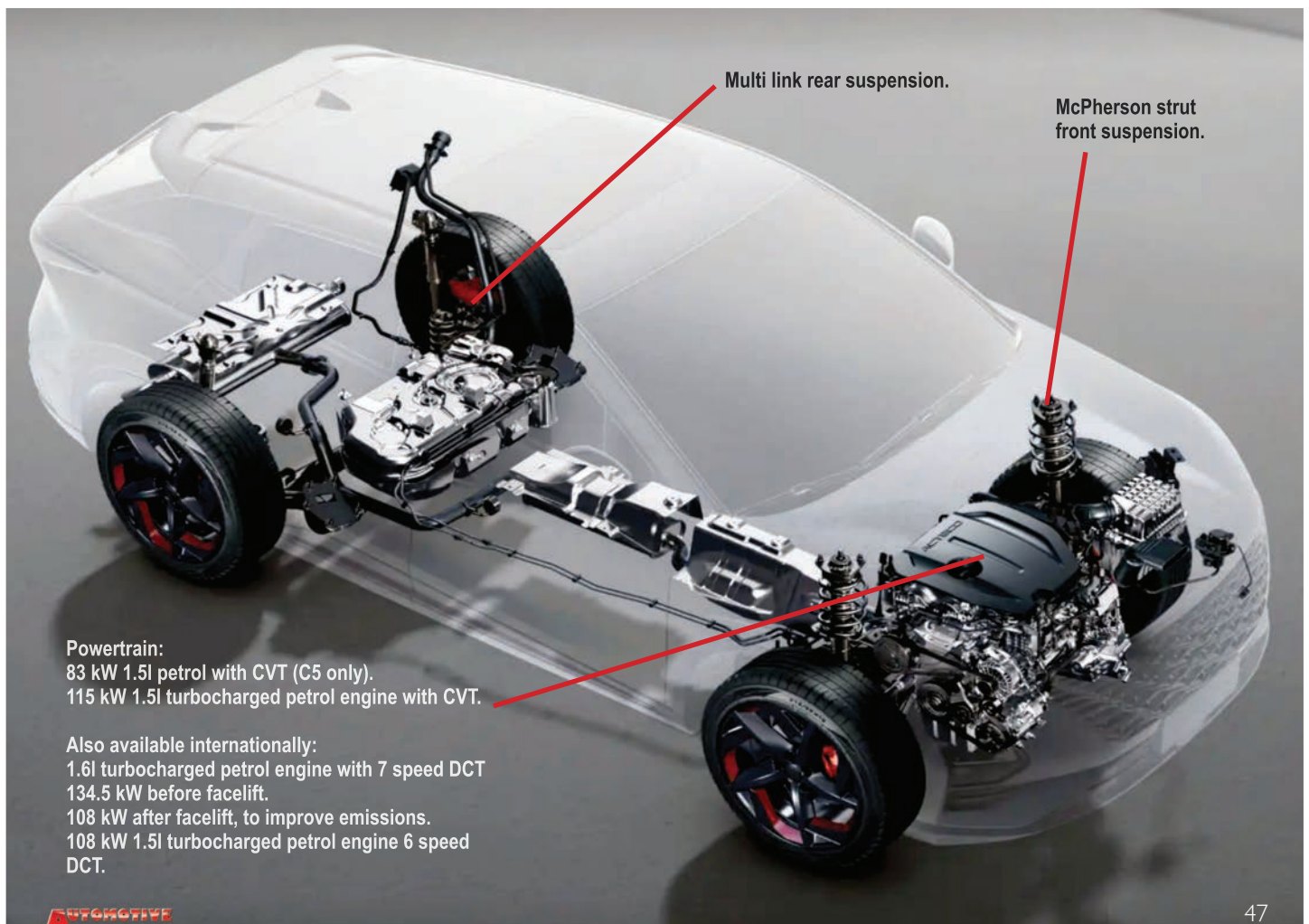
OMODA C5 T1X SOUTH AFRICA

- Omoda and Jaecoo are international brands of Chery – the parent company was formed in 1997.
- Chery formed a manufacturing joint venture for China plant, to be replaced by the BEV Freelander on a Chery platform.
- Omoda C5 (also called Omoda 5 and Chery C5 in other markets) was launched in China during 2022 on the Chery T1X platform.
- Mostly front wheel drive, but some markets got four-wheel drive versions as well.
- 2025 facelift adds:
 - The interior from the battery electric version and revised front bumper.
 - New front uprights, wheel bearings, revised geometry and revised EPAS calibration.
- Deletion of the torsion beam rear suspension option.
- Weight – 1432 kg





78% of the bodyshell is HHS or UHS. The image shows the Omoda E5 – the Omoda C5 is similar with the addition of a central tunnel to the main floor. The 'green' skin panel are made of mild steel alloy.



Tork Craft is one of South Africa's leading brands in power tools and accessories. They are proud to announce that rugby legend Bakkies Botha, is now an official brand ambassador.

Known for his raw power, unbreakable spirit and uncompromising performance, Bakkies Botha embodies the same values that have made Tork Craft a trusted name among professionals, tradesmen, and DIY enthusiasts across the country. This exciting partnership marks the beginning of a bold new campaign designed to inspire confidence in every tool user – whether on the jobsite or at home.

“Tork Craft tools are built tough – just the way I like it,” says Botha. “Whether you’re drilling, cutting, grinding or fastening, you want a tool that won’t let you down. That’s why I’m proud to put my name behind a brand that delivers on strength, precision and durability.

Built tough, backed by Bakkies

The collaboration goes beyond just an endorsement. As part of the campaign, Tork Craft will roll out a national in-store

and digital activation campaign featuring Bakkies Botha.

From life-sized cutouts in retail stores, to an exclusive “Bakkies Box”, fans can expect to see the iconic lock forward integrated into promotions, giveaways, and training content.

Tork Craft will also launch a series of “Tough Like Bakkies” videos, showcasing key power tool features in action – tested and approved by the man himself. These will be supported by dealer events, social media competitions, and high-impact point-of-sale materials to drive consumer engagement and sales.

The perfect fit for a proudly South African brand

Bakkies is more than just a face – he’s a symbol of grit, loyalty, and performance under pressure, traits that perfectly align with Tork Craft’s commitment to supporting the hard-working people of Southern Africa.

Whether you’re a farmer in the Karoo, a builder in Jozi or an automotive DIYer in Durban, this partnership speaks directly to the heart of the working South African.

LOCAL IS LEKKER

BAKKIES BOTHA JOINS TORK CRAFT AS OFFICIAL BRAND AMBASSADOR



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WHAT'S HOT?

THE FUTURE OF AI IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

by Dr Jay van Zyl

Dr Jay van Zyl, CEO of ecosystem AI and a computational social scientist, shed light on artificial intelligence (AI) and its profound implications for the retail motor industry at a recent industry event.

He highlighted the fact that the world's largest companies are now AI-driven enterprises, citing the so called "Magnificent Seven" – Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Tesla among others, as prime examples of this trend. He emphasised that AI is not just about automation but about creating systems that can make intelligent decisions, transforming industries and redefining customer experiences.

AI as a game-changer in customer engagement

Van Zyl highlighted the transformative impact of AI on the automotive industry, noting its pivotal role in revolutionising customer engagement. He explained that AI systems can now analyse customer behaviour, preferences, and even motions to deliver hyper-personalised experiences. He gave the example of an agent that can automatically detect a customer's intent, describe the remedy, and ensure seamless communication.

The capability is already being implemented by companies like Autotrader in the UK, where AI-powered systems allow customers to search for vehicles through conversational interfaces. AI has also been adopted by retailers to automate tasks such as inventory management and customer follow-ups. "The future lies in leveraging AI to orchestrate actions, from sales to service, with minimal human intervention," explained Van Zyl.

The rise of agent-based AI

One of the most exciting developments is the emergency of agent-based AI. These systems are designed to perform complex tasks autonomously, from analysing customer data to initiating sales and even managing after-sales services. He described how these AI systems can streamline processes, reduce errors, and enhance productivity.

For instance, in the context of vehicle servicing, an AI agent could automatically identify the required parts, schedule appointments, and



communicate with customers in real time. This level of automation, Van Zyl argued, is not just about efficiency, but about creating a seamless and satisfying customer experience.

AI in vehicle design and manufacturing

AI is also having a significant impact on the design and manufacturing of vehicles. Van Zyl highlighted the adoption of AI by companies such as Tesla, which has led to the development of software driven vehicles with a reduced number of mechanical components.

"Every Tesla vehicle collects data, not just on the driver's behaviour but on the environment, aggregating it into a central system to improve performance," he said.

He also highlighted Jaguar's recent factory overhaul, which removed 80% of traditional manufacturing steps to focus on radical simplification and automation. "The future of manufacturing is about using AI to eliminate errors and optimise every aspect of production," he says.

A new era of personalisation

Van Zyl emphasised that AI is driving a new era of personalisation in the automotive industry. The focus is on understanding individual preferences and delivering tailored solutions. "Hyper-personalisation is the focus of 80% of the AI industry today," he said.

In the automotive sector, this entails the creation of vehicles and services that adapt to the unique needs of each customer. This could mean recommending a car based on lifestyle or adjusting in-car settings to suit a driver's personality. In short, AI is making it possible to deliver experiences that feel truly bespoke.

The human AI balance

While the potential of AI is immense, van Zyl acknowledged the ongoing debate about the role of humans in an AI-driven world. "Most people want to believe that what they do is uniquely human," he said. He argued that the future lies in a balanced combination of human expertise and AI capabilities. "The objective is not to substitute for human expertise but to enhance their abilities, allowing them to focus on more valuable tasks."

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TECH TALK

HOW TO REPAIR ALUMINIUM USING BLIND RIVETS

In 2015, Ford introduced its all-aluminium F-150 body. In 2023, Ford sold about 765 000 F150s, which translates to roughly seven million aluminium trucks on the road today. There is a great opportunity to repair these trucks, yet many shops shy away from anything more than fender replacements because of the aluminium.

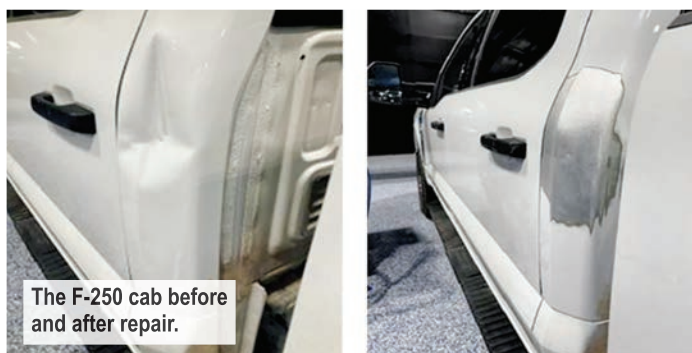
It boils down to proper tools and training

The aluminium cab corner of a Ford F-250 is damaged. The panel is about 1.5 mm thick.

"How would you repair this?" they answered, they would replace it. When I asked if they had the tools, equipment and training to replace it, the majority said they would not accept the job.

Besides using self-piercing rivets (SPRs), Ford uses blind structural rivets. While teaching a Rivet Bonding class, I have seen most techs do not understand why blind rivets are used, or the proper removal and installation procedures. This is what this article will accomplish.

With stronger and lighter materials being used in today's vehicles, we are seeing a combination of several different types of steel, together with aluminium, magnesium, plastics and carbon fibre.



The F-250 cab before and after repair.

Not everything can be welded, so we are seeing new and different joining methods. Remember, heat will weaken high strength steels and destroy ultra-high strength steels.

For example, Honda began using ultra high strength steel in "A" pillar, "B" pillar and rocker reinforcements on its 2013 Accord. Honda stated: "Parts made of Ultra-High-Strength Steel (UHSS/1,500MPa/USIBOR) must be installed as a complete part. No sectioning allowed. Ultra-High Strength Steel requires special welding equipment, procedures and settings. See the welding section of the appropriate body repair manual. Failure to use the proper equipment or follow the proper procedures can result in an unsafe repair." It goes on: "Never do MAG-MIG welding on 1 500 MPa steel."

The repair industry is being asked by OEMs to invest in new equipment and training to repair their vehicles properly. I could go on about this trend, but let's get back to adhesive rivet bonding, or as some call it, cold bonding.

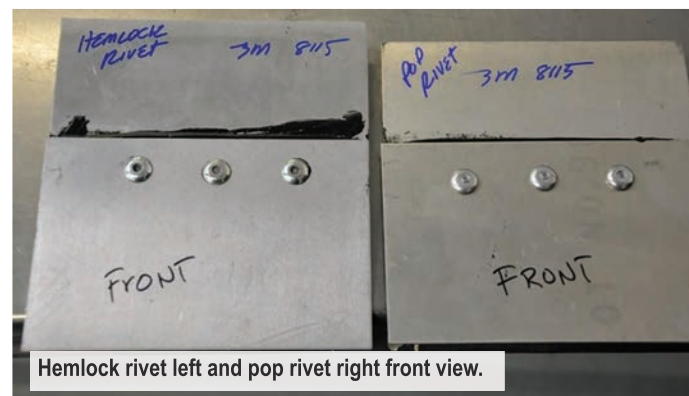
Welding will be used less. The alternative is adhesive, which has excellent tensile strength and is extremely strong when conducting a peel test, but is weak when conducting a shear test. To overcome this deficiency, rivets, spot welding or some form of mechanical fasteners are needed to prevent shearing.



The F-250 rivet.

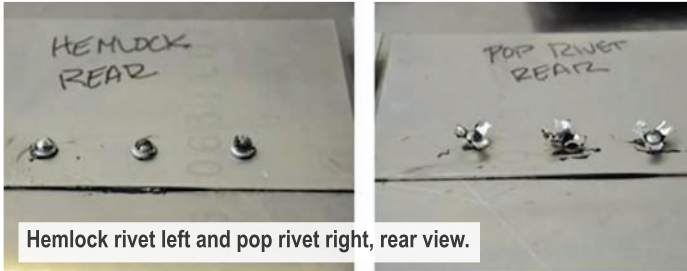
The most important items the figure to the left are the material type and thickness and the shank size. The vehicle engineers will determine everything needed for the repair operation, but you need to know the proper shank size to drill or punch the hole in the material. If the hole is the wrong size, the rivet could be loose and shear movement could occur. Too small a hole could cause the metal to distort and again, the panels will not be in full contact with each other.

There are four major types of rivets used in the repair process: SPRs, flow form, solid and blind. We will look at Hemlock, Monobolt, and Pop rivets in the blind rivet category.



Hemlock rivet left and pop rivet right front view.

Look at the front side of the panels. The rivet heads look very similar. The panel on the left is a Hemlock rivet and the rivet gun (battery or pneumatic) needs 3 500 pounds of pulling pressure. The panel on the right is a Pop rivet from Home Depot and is hand-set with a Pop rivet tool.



Hemlock rivet left and pop rivet right, rear view.

Looking at the back side of the panel (below bottom) with Pop rivets installed, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see the difference. These pictures are self-explanatory.

A Monobolt is a specific type of blind rivet. The mandrel is pulled into the cylinder and expands the cylinder against the backside of the panel. This rivet has high shear and tensile properties and fills the hole.

The other type of blind rivet used in the collision repair process is the Hemlock rivet. This rivet also needs a hole for installation and does not need access to the backside of the panel. The mandrel is pulled over the rivet body and the entire rivet is compressed against the rear panel.

This rivet has high shear and tensile properties and fills the hole. This rivet is excellent for holes that are slightly larger than the recommended hole size.

Necessary tools and best practises

Installation equipment can be pneumatic or battery operated. I have both types: An Astro Pneumatic PRI4 and Gesipa Taurus 4, which are both pneumatics, and a Gesipa Powerbird and Milwaukee M18 FUEL 1/4" Blind Riveter.

Ford specifies in its repair manual the part number, but not the size for a specific location. So how would a technician determine the rivet with the proper grip range?

3/16" (5)	#11	1/8" - 1/4"	64
3/16" (5)	#11	1/4" - 3/8"	66
3/16" (5)	#11	3/8" - 1/2"	68
3/16" (5)	#11	1/2" - 5/8"	612
3/16" (5)	#11	5/8" - 3/4"	614
3/16" (5)	#11	3/4" - 7/8"	616
3/16" (5)	#11	7/8" - 1"	618
1/4" (8)	#F	1/16" - 1/8"	82
1/4" (8)	#F	1/8" - 1/4"	84
1/4" (8)	#F	1/4" - 3/8"	86
1/4" (8)	#F	3/8" - 1/2"	88
1/4" (8)	#F	1/2" - 5/8"	810
1/4" (8)	#F	5/8" - 3/4"	812
1/4" (8)	#F	3/4" - 7/8"	814
1/4" (8)	#F	7/8" - 1"	816

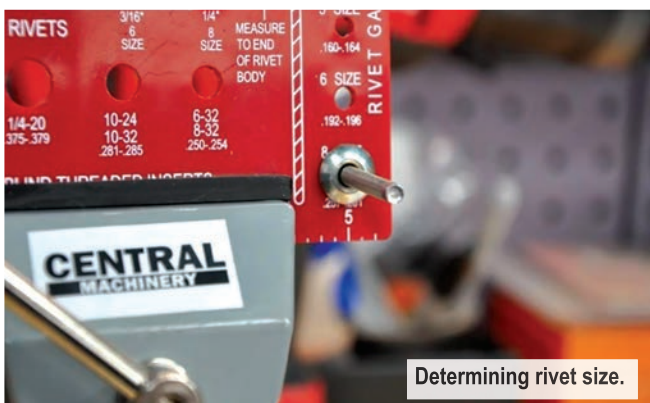
number refers to the mandrel length in 16ths of an inch

Trade Size: **86**

Diameter in 1/32" **8/32" (=1/4")**

1/4" x Rivet

Determining the proper grip range.



Determining rivet size.

There is a blind rivet gauge from Bolts & Nuts along with a chart. Here is how it works: Take the rivet and find which size the rivet body fits in. This one is No. 8. Then, measure the rivet body length (do not include mandrel head) using the No. 8 slot. The size of the rivet is No. 82. Find No. 82 on the chart, and the measured rivet has a grip range from 1/16" to 1/8".

Measure the total thickness of the panels that need the rivets. In this example, the total thickness is 1/8". The selected rivet will work on this panel.

If the rivet is measured in metric, check the conversion chart.

Next, prepare and install the selected rivet. The Ford procedures call for a 6.5-mm drill bit for blind rivets.

Doing a rivet bonding hands-on class – is a must for today's techs – and nearly every time, the shops do not have a 6.5-mm drill bit. The closest size is 1/4". The actual size of this rivet is 6.25 mm.

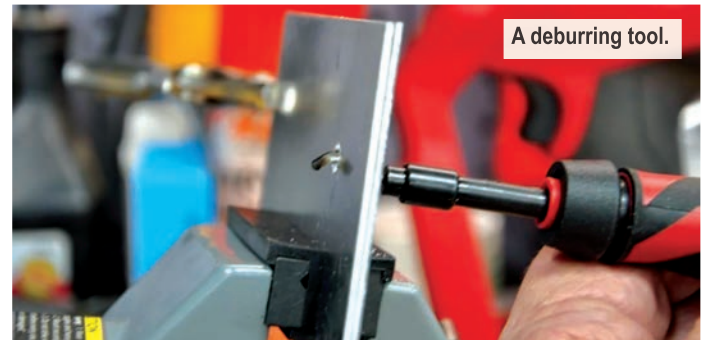
Before moving on, I want to mention these drill bits from Astro Pneumatic. The end of the bit is shaped like a pyramid. The bit does not wander and will step cut the hole two to three times faster than a standard drill bit. Use it on a low to medium speed, and it will not get as hot as a high-speed bit. I was at a local OEM training centre and their tech was able to drill multiple holes into Martensitic steel (more than 1,300 MPAs), and the bit did not dull.

Now back to the drill process. Nearly every one of my techs takes the drill and enlarges the hole for the 6.5-mm rivet to fit.

You will notice on the 1/4" hole, the rivet is not perpendicular to the surface, and there are large gaps around the rivet. Remember, glue has very poor shear strength, and if the rivet is loose in the hole, the panel will move sideways and cause the bond to break. Let's return to the installation process after the correct size hole is drilled.

A 6.5-mm hole is drilled. Use locking pliers when drilling to make sure the joint is tight.

There is a piece of aluminium present after drilling. This needs to be removed prior to the rivet installation because the rivet will not sit flush to a panel. A deburring tool is used.



A deburring tool.

If the tool has no access to the back side, there is a possibility an excess aluminium chip will not be removed. The Shaviv USA (B30 blade) cuts the front and back side at the same time.

The hole is deburred, the correct rivets are ready, adhesive is applied (if specified) and necessary clamps are assembled. The rivet tool for the Ford OEM blind rivet needs to have 3 500 pounds of pulling force.

Always make sure that the tools you are using are up to the job. Check the specs of your blind rivet gun and make sure it has the pulling force necessary. Always use factory rivets. Always follow OEM instructions.

Always refer to OEM rivet and adhesive usage before starting the repair process. Follow the rules, and you and your technicians will have a great riveting experience.



The final step The nose of the rivet gun is pressed tightly against the rivet head and with a pull of the trigger, the rivet is set. That's it.

TRADE TALK

INTERNATIONAL TARIFF WARS – WHAT OUTCOME AWAITS US?

by Andrew Marsh



The UK just about five decades ago was the biggest producer of buses in the world, and was among the biggest heavy truck manufacturers, too. The UK car industry was awash with models. Of course, this disappeared through lack of investment and huge, huge errors. It was painful. For the EU27 and UK, we now face the consequences of actions planned more than 17 years ago, as fresh internal combustion Euro 6e regulations – in three stages – and proposed internal combustion engine bans bit deep at the very same time BEV sales mandates bite. The house is fully ablaze on the roof. With the trade war between China and the USA in full play, EU27 plus UK is seen as a mere cash cow and collateral damage at the very same time. In effect, the house has a fire underneath it now, as the U.S. and China compete to undercut the regional vehicle manufacturers.

Excess manufacturing capacity, high-cost staff

The EU27 has struggled with excess manufacturing capacity for many decades, never quite getting around to trim back plants. The UK went through the brutal process back in the era of Mrs Thatcher with mass bankruptcies, but the EU27 and Germany in particular were spared this. The UK, like Australia, knows full well that the loss of manufacturing weakens the representation, and even the importance of the market.

Mazda, for instance, will sell the Mazda 6e in 2025 in Europe, even though it's been on sale in China since the end of 2024 and as a Changan Auto model since 2022. "Here's something we made earlier" is all part of the adjustment as Europe seems to lose influence.

However, China carries excess vehicle manufacturing capacity of epic proportions – it has done this for decades. Fiat for example was at one point selling fewer than 30 000 vehicles per year, yet its domestic partners in China could build 600 000 units in jointly owned plants. Not much has changed since.

The difference? European markets are stable with modest growth, and China's domestic market is still growing strongly. Investors will forgive many things when growth is strong.

Vehicle manufacturing, including all its component suppliers, requires a significant amount of cash to invest in buildings, tooling and people. This investment can be moved in a matter of months, but usually a vehicle

manufacturer makes products which can be diverted around a region but not always around the world.

Consider a Ford F-150, still a very profitable product for Ford in North America. For Europe the vehicle is so big it exceeds most car parking spaces, and even if it can be parked there's no space to open the doors. For the dedicated few who import them, they love it and put up with odd inconveniences – high import duties, hefty fuel consumption, left-hand drive.

The majority of the USA production is too big, and once exported, too expensive. Europe, like Japan, South Korea and China, builds vehicles which can be exported to more destinations than domestic USA vehicles, because they were engineered for a global market.

European products tend to carry higher than usual prices due to higher labour costs, and more unique tooling investments. The Chinese model follows Japanese manufacturing, with a lot of major sub-assemblies shared between multiple brands. This is part of the strategy for reduced cost base – a European manufacturer can pare a low-cost BEV to make cents in profit, yet Chinese based manufacturers still have 20%-plus margin at the very same price point.

All of the start-ups (some of which have been "start-ups" for many decades already) have benchmarked against Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Audi and Porsche. This is a back-handed compliment, but a warning sign that has been ignored for too long. Not innovating enough, allowing costs to creep up and simply getting consumers to believe there is parity between established European brands compared to start-ups is not a good place to be. Complacency is the enemy of any business.

China and BRICS just wait

As the own goals between the EU27 Commission and member governments pile up, so profits dwindle, as does tax income. This spiral has prompted the EU27 Commission and one of the six Commission presidents, Ursula von der Leyen, to spring into action. They have stated they will listen, but none of the punishing rules will change, nor the Net Zero ambition. Think King Canute. The sea.

Can we tell how this will end? As the EU27 are attacked from China, the USA and internally, China (paying elevated import duties) is paid by EU27 manufacturers to

buy carbon credits. Yes, that's right. European manufacturers are encouraged by the EU Commission to pay the aggressor – who could then pick up the wreckage for less than pennies in the Pound when the whole show explodes.

What about repairers?

Is the insurer-repairer partnership strong enough to resist the "single-use vehicle"?

China is set to build more than 32 million vehicles in 2025, about one third of the global production. There is little interest in detailed or intricate repair of the vehicles, even though they have been designed for repair. Why? The economics of BEVs, where repairers capable of restoring a damaged battery are so thin on the ground, insurers write off rather than repair.

Not good for repairers

Oh, and by the way ... Autonomy is still "just around the corner" as it's been for the past decade, and it won't eliminate material damage. Nobody has yet perfected a vehicle that is literally driverless unless it runs on a dedicated route. The technology is much, much better than even a few years ago, but if insurers and governments are going to stand behind this, it needs to be perfect.

Well, the end game could be SAE level 5 (hop in and tune out), but the likely end game for around another decade is SAE level 2 or 3. The result? Well, given the massive silence over driver training to get the best out of "autonomous systems" (ie, super ADAS), the "and you now have control" moment will cause all sorts of personal issues.

Consider aviation. Most commercial airliners have highly automated systems to allow pretty-near automatic landing and take-off. However, pilots are given huge training programmes with frequent updates to ensure they are equipped to make the correct decisions when the "and you now have control" moment arrives.

Driving a vehicle at ground level is demanding, and the idea an SAE level 2 or 3 system is an aid. However, this requires a different type of concentration to get the best out of the system. Fear not, for the masses who remain untrained, the underlying ADAS will ensure the impact speed is reduced, but the collision will be exactly, precisely, executed. Whoops.

For repairers, one door closes and another opens.



DeVilbiss® GPG™

Multi-Purpose Professional Spray Gun

Great atomization for a wide range of refinish paints and coatings

DeVilbiss has been at the forefront of developing spray guns specific to applications around the body shop, including meeting the market's demand for a cost-effective, multi-purpose spray gun. The *DeVilbiss* GPG addresses this requirement by providing solid performance that is durable and an exceptional value.

The anodized, drop-forged aluminum gun body of the GPG provides renowned ergonomics together with lightweight aluminum controls and smooth trigger action. It's this legendary combination of fit, feel and performance that makes the *DeVilbiss* brand the professional automotive refinisher's preferred choice.

The high-efficiency and HVLP air caps have been developed to provide excellent atomization of a wide range of automotive refinish paints and coatings.

The large array of fluid nozzles offers a wide range of flow rates allowing for rapid application rates for a multitude of coatings including clearcoats, basecoats, sealers, primers, enamels, synthetics and other common commercial paints.

FEATURES & BENEFITS

- Rugged anodized and forged aluminum gun body with lightweight aluminum controls for a long working life
- Renowned *DeVilbiss* atomization quality for even paint distribution
- Robust and smooth air valve design provides greater air and paint control to help ease fade-outs and blend-ins
- Ultra high flow fluid nozzles provide superb versatility across the major range of viscosities
- Suitable for all primers including the latest generation waterborne and UV materials for fast and efficient application

APPLICATIONS



For stockists in your local area or dealer enquiries please call Tunzi Automotive Supplies.





Allan and Cindy-Jane Devlin in their 1911 two-seater Ford Runabout.





CLASSIC CORNER

FORD MODEL T

Story and pics by Stuart Johnston

Pilgrim's Rest made the perfect pit-stop town for the parade of Model T's on the Pro Auto Rubber Tour which took place in Mpumalanga.

I was sitting next to one of the stalwarts of the Ford Model T preservation movement in the country, when I mentioned that years ago I happened to own a Kawasaki triple, a motorcycle of fearsome repute. Kevin Casey asked me, "Which one, the H1 or H2?" At that moment it dawned on me that here was a man steeped not only in the history of the Model T, but was also a hardcore enthusiast of motoring Arcana that was perhaps known to just the two of us in that crowded room of old-timer enthusiasts. And moreover, that enthusiasm for all things mechanical probably applied to everyone in the hotel dining hall.

It is that raw mechanical simplicity of the Ford Model T that is its huge attraction, not just the fact that most of them that survive in 2025 are well over 100 years old. The Ford Model T was produced between 1908 and 1927, and during that time an astounding 15 million of them were built, literally putting America on wheels. Henry Ford reduced the price of the of a Model T Ford from 800 dollars in 1908 to a little over 300 dollars. Imagine if Elon Musk, a man arguably as famous as Henry Ford in automotive history, had that kind of ethos today!

Ford also raised his workers' take home pay from three dollars

a day to five dollars a day. Responding to criticism from his rich shareholders that he was exhibiting Bolshevik tendencies, Ford replied that "It is not about profit. It is about giving something back to the community we live in." Again, contrast that statement with the actions of Elon Musk, who has built his global popularity on the back of the electric car, and allowed him to amass a fortune of over 360 billion dollars – making him the richest man on the planet!

Mechanically the Ford Model T was simple, with a two-speed planetary gearbox, a side-valve four-cylinder engine that operated without the use of a water or an oil pump and used simple transverse leaf springs, developed on the horse-drawn cart that was still the majority's form of transport when Ford revolutionised personal mobility, (a term that, incidentally would only be coined some 80 years after the last Model T was produced.)

The basis of this article came when I attended the Pro Auto Rubber Tour in Mpumalanga in late August 2025. Some 20 vehicles were entered for this run with glorious scenery forming a backdrop to the cars that were all built before 1930. The vast majority of them were Model Ts with two Model A Fords – cars that immediately followed the Model T in 1920 – with a 1928 Austin 7 and a 1929



Hennie and Corné Marx arrive in Pilgrim's Rest in their 1918 Ford Model T pick-up.



Kawasaki 500 exactly like mine, H1, version two, fastest version ever.



A Model A and two Model Ts at the Hotel Numbi parking lot in Hazyview.



Over 200 hundred years of history right here in one frozen slice of time.



Adrian Deness and Gavin Youngman in Adrian's tiny 1926 Austin 7.



Chrysler adding non-Ford context to an event that was organised by the Model T Ford Club of South Africa.

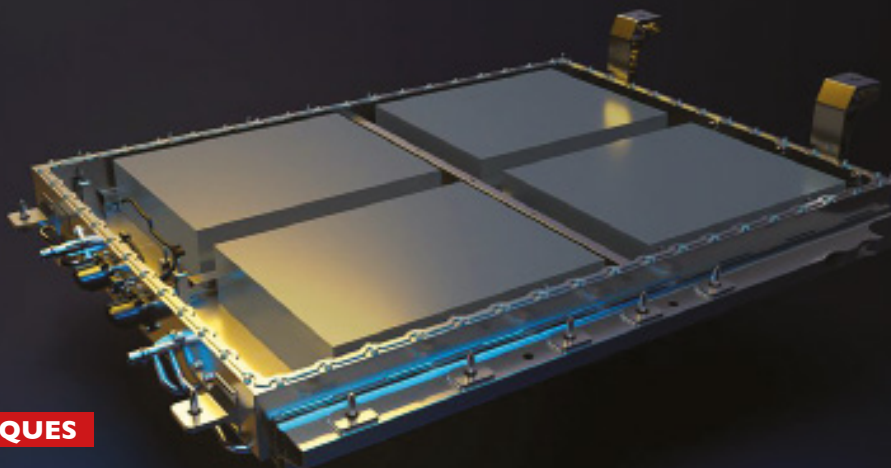
The club is aware of some 100 Ford Model Ts that have survived in this country after about 8 000 were introduced here in the early 1900s. Incidentally, a Ford Model S, dating back to 1907, was crewed on the Tour by two women, driver Alison van Jaarsveld and Althea Purnell. The Model T Club is proud of the fact that its event cater for female participation in a wholesomely friendly atmosphere, illustrating the fact that Model T ownership is not an exclusive male preserve.

Make no mistake, driving a 100-plus year old car on public roads in 2025 is no frivolous undertaking. It requires profound dedication on the part of the owners, many of which are in their 70s and more than a few are now in their eighth decade! It also requires nerves of steel, to share a single lane road in a veteran car capable of just 60 km/h, with massive trucks that whistle past at speeds of up 120 km/h! Such an event would not be possible without sponsorship, and it should be noted that Pro Auto Rubber builds its nation-wide enterprise on rubber seals for classic cars. Other sponsors included Nelspruit Ford who provided back-up and media transportation for

the event. Accompanying these delightful old horseless carriages as a media representative, I was transported back to a simpler time, highlighted by a stop-over in Pilgrim's Rest, which has a well documented history that pre-dates the Model T Ford by a good number of decades!

As for Kevin Casey's question regarding whether I owned an H1 or H2, it refers to the 500 cc H1 Kawasaki, and the 750cc Kawasaki of the late 1960s and the early 1970s. These mechanically simple two-stroke machines were nicknamed the "widow-makers" because their unprecedented powers of acceleration were accompanied by frightening wheelies in a day when such things were unheard of on road bikes; handling that could be generally described as 'marginal' and in the case of my H1 500, with drum brakes up front rendering braking that was purely incidental.

Kevin owns three H1s and at least one H2, and it's remarkable that he and I survived to have a dinner-table conversation about risking our necks, with absolute delight, 50 years after we popped inadvertent wheelies and terrorised our respective neighbourhoods. Just as Model T owners may have done (minus the wheelies!) nearly half a century before Kevin and I were born...



REPAIR TECHNIQUES

PROGRESS AND THE BLEND OF KNOWLEDGE WITH HISTORY

The collision repair business uses a lot of energy one way or another, and while many body shops have done as much as possible to reduce electricity/gas consumption, some of the 'energy' is buried in the new parts used in the repair as well as the refinishing system products. In turn, those supplies are doing things to reduce the amount of energy used.

Regardless of belief, this is the relentless drive for efficiency.

In turn this is related directly to the residual value of the vehicle, where the lower it falls the point at which it simply goes to salvage auction without any input from a VDA becomes more likely. Right now we have new vehicle price inflation directly from the infamous lock-down years, where many manufacturers realised they could make more profit from fewer vehicle builds. In addition, the long march to electrification which was supposed to encompass all forms of powertrain, quickly became politicised and driven towards the most expensive and least profitable version, BEV.

Add into this mix catastrophic BEV residual value falls (I think this is a painful blip which should be corrected) and we can see the base coat of the parts has been driven upwards while the available value of the vehicle to be repaired has been driven downwards.

Progress and history

The hallmark of the present industrialised society is still a mantra that it's easier to buy a new item than get a damaged item repaired. For collision repairers of course we do not support the idea, replacing only the items in the repair process that are not possible to refurbish (seat belts, air bags, SRS sensors, single use screws/bolts, certain UHS steel alloy panels and so on).

Being able to strip something apart and put it back together relies on skills, manufacturers repair process information, and equipment. Taking care to understand how something is put together and so understand how it can come apart is retained knowledge in the body shop. This is valuable to the business, and yet inevitably when a person leaves, that knowledge leaves too.

It is essential for business to retain the knowledge but to give staff the freedom to leave for whatever reason is achieved. To do this from the 20th century view required an apprenticeship, where more knowledgeable staff would transfer information to newer team members. This can be achieved even without formal apprenticeships.

However, there are headwinds here as well.

At the start of the internet and World Wide Web, there was a body of printed works and one could research between both sources. Due to the cost of storage – even though this has fallen in unit terms – the growth of archive exceeds cost reduction rate. So, especially with corporate and media sites, most of the information is 'gone' in under five years.

The point: Not only is the information gone, but the knowledge behind that is 'retired' or moves to another occupation. So, a net loss of intellect.

To research any subject from scratch means using electronic records mainly residing on things like blogs and "wayback machine".

The risk is the material may have errors, but this is getting more difficult to verify.

Why is this important?

Batteries ahoy!

The main reason BEVs have taken such a residual value hit is because apart from market resistance (a completely usual feature of technology mass adoption) and issues over access to electricity, insurers are very nervous.

The first really mass market BEV was the Nissan Leaf in 2010, which as we now know made the error of adequately cooling the battery, and in some markets, failing to provide battery heating, which caused legendary loss of energy retention. Within the life-cycle of the first generation Leaf the thermal management issue was completely fixed, the battery chemistry revised several times, the energy storage capacity and the range increased significantly.

Legends can be created relatively quickly, and remain long, long after the material reality has changed.

Catastrophic battery failures have continued from the start until now, but catastrophic loss of storage capacity has almost vanished – apart from those users who think using rapid charging routinely is a good idea – which means with care an HV Li-ion battery pack is likely to have a service life of 10 or more years. The data is still coming in, and knowledge growing.

I would hope most insurers are reassured about battery degradation – the equivalent of a collision repair arriving with an internal combustion engine within minutes of total failure. That's why VDAs and repairers in general need to evaluate HV Li-ion battery health as part of the initial process.

So, what's left? Well, great difficulty in understanding what has happened to the HV Li-ion battery during the impact. Right now, due to the overall lack of understanding, a damaged battery is a major cost (removal, storage, if information is available – analysis, repair or possible toxic waste disposal). The situation is evolving, but right now repair of a battery is a risky process that could lead to total loss.

The alternative is a new HV battery pack, which is the BEV is more than a few years old, instantly puts the vehicle into salvage.

Because the salvage by hook or crook does not get to be repaired, there is growing evidence the present approach to battery damage assessment is over cautious. There's the key. Growing evidence. Data.

A brighter side

The large HV Li-ion battery is already a feature of our body shop world, and even if all new BEV sales stopped immediately, the present parc means BEVs will turn up for assessment or repair for many years to come. The economics around HV Li-ion battery repair will change, which requires a source of information to do that, the required equipment and of course knowledge.

The BEV fleet is unlikely to achieve more than 30% overall penetration by 2030 but there is plenty of business to be had and a chance to be involved in the evolution from the present possibly over cautious approach to valuation and a better outcome for all.

Why burn money by baking?

Use the proven energy-saving paint system
from Axalta available at Autoboy's

Axalta's patented Fast Cure Low Energy technology reduces energy costs in the spray booth by up to 70% - while still giving you the best quality repair. And you don't even need any special equipment to benefit from it. With the soaring cost of energy, it's a simple way to slash energy costs - without compromising on quality. Don't let your profits go up in smoke. Find out how Fast Cure Low Energy technology can help you right now.

Find out more at autoboy's.co.za

WHAT'S HOT?

ADRIAN HARVEY APPOINTED SAGOLA TECHNICAL SPECIALIST IN SA

Sagola has moved to increase the company's South African market penetration with the appointment of a technical specialist in application techniques in the form of Adrian Harvey to assist at dealer network levels.

"Sagola, who are celebrating over 65 years of successful automotive refinishing excellence in all areas of spray painting advancements, have an amazing offer of product," reckons Harvey.

He comes with over 15 years of experience working with a series of refinish dealers, paint companies and as an expert in application techniques in many areas of the business.

Sagola have moved to up their levels of business activity locally with this development to offer a much improved footprint of sales and service.

The company offer an international wealth of knowledge. The demands of the automotive and industrial sectors are met as Sagola maintain the latest methodology in manufacturer. They export to 80 countries



Adrian Harvey is the Regional Distribution Manager for Sub-Saharan and South Africa for Sagola. He brings a wealth of working experience in the repair industry with him.

and have vast in-house knowledge when it comes to understanding spray painting needs.

They offer the ultimate in VOC compliance with cutting edge transfer efficiency in the painting process with high volume low pressure spray guns that offer an amazing new spray gun for everyday use.

New thinking is being employed with soft flow fluid value precision control at the nozzle application racks up amazingly low levels of spray painting overspray top spray guns for optimised results every time. Harvey was upbeat about the Sagola ongoing paint

refinish manufacturers that the company enjoy special relationships in research and development. What that all translates into is each manufacturer each manufacturer has specific needle and nozzle recommendations. This eliminates all guess work on a perfect material layout on final finish spray painting operations.

Sagola invite trade distribution enquiries for sub-Saharan markets to contact Adrian at aharvey@sagola.com or call him on +27 (0)83 488 1865 for further information.

UK SURVEY

PHONE ADDICTION LAID BARE BY NEW DRIVING STUDY

by Alan Feldburg

Ashocking new study has exposed the extent of the UK's phone addiction by revealing that the vast majority of UK motorists are unable to leave their mobile phones alone while driving.

The report from IMS, a global authority in telematics and connected motor insurance technology, found that nine out of 10 drivers struggle to complete a journey without being distracted by their phones. This is despite the risks around safety, plus fines of £200, along with six penalty points.

Based on survey results from 500 000 drivers over the past year, the research found that only 10% of motorists manage to drive from start to finish without interacting with their device.

Safety risks

Government data showed that mobile phone use was a contributing factor in 23 road fatalities last year, while official statistics report that 'distraction or impairment' was the third most common cause of fatal crashes, playing a role in 34.9% of deadly incidents.



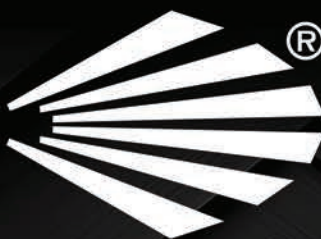
IMS's CEO Paul Stacy said: "Our latest findings show the scale of the issue distracted driving has become on British roads and makes clear that the vast majority of us are guilty of it. The insurance industry is increasingly using smartphone technology to monitor and manage the road risk of policyholders that buy a usage-based insurance product, and from this data, we can see that smartphone distraction remains a significant contributor to road collisions and insurance claims."

RAC road safety spokesperson Rod Dennis added: "We saw a reduction in motorists admitting to illegal handheld phone use after the penalties were toughened in 2017 following pressure from the RAC, but numbers are on the rise again now."

"Our research shows the proportion of young drivers making and receiving calls illegally hit its highest rate in eight years in 2024. Enforcement of the law is critical, so police forces should roll out more roadside cameras to catch people in the act and get them to change their ways."

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Metal to Metal Technology

BASECOAT



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The Ultimate Basecoat Spray Gun for Colours, Metallics or Silvers

- Making it easier to colour match metallics, silvers & pearls.
- Maintains the uniformity of metallic colours.
- HVLP performance in an EPA Compliant gun.
- Standard or digital versions available.



**DVR
HVLP**

Designed for High Volume Low Pressure Applications

- Large fan size to reduce application distance increasing transfer rates.
- Our fastest HVLP application speed.
- Maximum reduction of overspray.
- Standard or digital versions available.

CLEARCOAT



**DVR
CLEAR**

Designed for clearcoats, single stage paints and OEM quality finishes

- Maximum application speed.
- Minimal overspray.
- Ultra fine atomization.
- Standard or digital versions available.



**DVR
CLEARPRO**

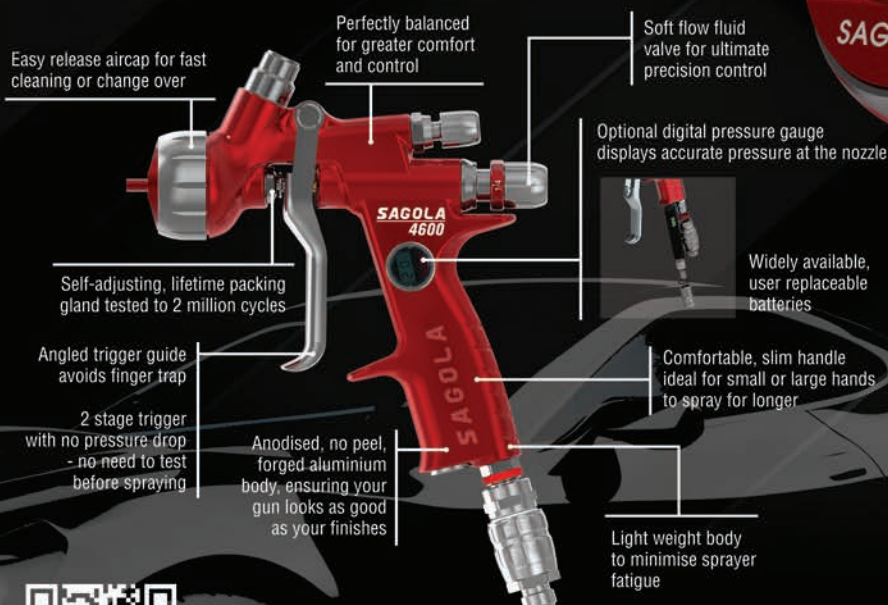
Perfect for luxury mirror finishes, clearcoats and single stage paints

- High gloss in express drying clearcoats.
- Maximum application speed.
- Maximum control. Large fan size.
- Minimal overspray.
- Standard or digital versions available.

SAGOLA 4600

***Our best spray guns
just got better!***

***It's the smallest details
that give you the best results...***



**OUR SPRAYGUN
IN ACTION**

Made in Spain

INSURANCE

THATCHAM'S FORMATION WAS LARGELY DUE TO CAR INSURANCE SCAMS

Thatcham Research

Let us go back to 1969. There were a number of significant insurance scandals that arose in the 1960s...

The UK had had a triangle of law for some time... since the 1930s motorists had to be insured for third party damage by law, and as a condition the driver had to possess a licence and the vehicle had to be able to pass a Ministry standard inspection for roadworthiness. If any single component was missing, the other two are automatically voided.

Due to the significant increase in motor vehicle ownership as well as prosperity after the austerity of post war 1950s Britain, the 1960s became awash with insurance companies. Some of the financial regulations especially around honouring pay-out and what happened if an insurer had insufficient funds to meet all obligations, were not well defined.

Unfortunately, not for the first time, financially opportunistic companies, many from outside the UK, sought to get some of the profits. The result came to a head in 1966 when Emil Savundra, owner of "Fire, Auto and Marine Insurance Co, Ltd" after a very high profile life with plenty of evidence to show he spent freely including associations to the Profumo affair, let his company collapse and leave 400 000 policies unsupported. This was after years of under payment or simply non-payment of claims.

The bonds on deposit? Fake.

The cash on hand? Spent.

The whole thing was a pyramid sales scam, where the incoming policy cash enabled Savundra, a now international fraudster, to take many, people to the cleaners. Live on television with David Frost, in 1967 he stated the policy holders were peasants, and showed no compassion at all for damage his company had needlessly caused. He went on trial and was jailed in 1968.

"Fire, Auto and Marine Insurance Co. Ltd" wasn't an isolated case. By 1966 another company "Transway Insurance Co. Ltd" was in the process of failing, as had many smaller insurers. Some companies were honest, many were not. Concerned for the apparent mess and hardship this had caused, HM Gov collected the insurance company owners together to make it clear this was not 'business as usual' and either: Insurance, and especially motor insurance, would be completely regulated by law including price control or

The sector could do the job for themselves.

The sector opted to self-regulate, but HM Gov were unconvinced. They proposed a mechanism:

An independent body not owned by any single insurer to regulate the broad principles of insurance. With regard to motor insurance this would eventually encompass losses due to collisions involving uninsured drivers, support across the trade should any single company get into financial difficulty, provision of reserves and so on.

Another independent body not owned by any single insurer, to establish the cost of vehicle parts and the cost of collision repair process. This, among other things, was the start of the Group Rating process, and long-term policies such as specifications of theft deterrent devices.

The insurance industry was represented in 1968 by a gaggle of trade bodies include:

- British Insurance Association
- Life Offices' Association
- Fire Offices Committee
- Accident Offices Association
- Industrial Life Offices Association.

Accident Offices Association (Overseas)

The collective insurance company rumbling went on, and HM Gov became impatient. It issued a deadline. By the way, George Darling MP was the Minister of State at the Board of Trade from 1964 until 1968, and was a former journalist. It was down to George and a few other MPs who shaped the hysteric outrage into meaningful law.

So, it came to pass the first officers of the Motor Insurance Repair Research centre (MIRRC) got into the insurance trade bodies collective panel van, and drove from central London along the motorway heading west in August 1969. The mission was to find a building, rent it and set up MIRRC ahead of the HM Gov deadline, translating to a matter of a few weeks.

The place they found? A building on an industrial trading estate next to the village of Thatcham. The company, MIRRC, was established in the time it took to drive from central London to Thatcham – in time to negotiate the building lease.

With the two parts of the mechanism in place, a highly sceptical HM Gov agreed to extend the deadline. The pressure remained 'on' and Lloyds decided from the outset not to participate – they relied on their history as an international maritime insurer as a sign of integrity.

HM Gov pressed ahead with legal reform, introducing revised or new laws to address the way insurance companies should behave – but the cost control of motor vehicle repair, the Holy Grail of motor insurance profit, remained in the independent world of the trade bodies (which merged in 1985 to form Association of British Insurers – still without Lloyds) and MIRRC Thatcham, now called Thatcham Research.

The remnants of the jaunty 1960s finance led to another major insurance company collapse by early 1971, 'Vehicle and General Insurance Co Ltd' which traded as:

- Automobile and General Insurance Co. Ltd
- General and Commercial Motor Insurance Co. Ltd
- Metropolitan General Insurance Co. Ltd
- Transport Indemnity Insurance Co. Ltd
- World Auxiliary Insurance Corporation Ltd.

At the time it was estimated around one million motoring policy holders either had their policies eliminated or were on the point of renewal with a non-existent company. At the time 'never again' was said – yet it did, in 2001 with 'Independent Insurance', affecting 400 000 policy holders. The policy holders were largely covered by the Policyholders Protection Act, passed in 1975 as a result of 'Vehicle and General Insurance Co Ltd' collapse in 1971.

If only the money counters could run straight ...

With its unmatched blend of luxury and practicality, the Ranger Platinum redefines the premium bakkie experience, appealing to buyers seeking sophistication without compromising utility.

Built at Ford's Silverton, Pretoria plant in South Africa for global distribution, this Ranger redefines sophistication in Ford's bakkie segment, sitting alongside the high-performance Ranger Raptor as a top-tier offering. The Ford Ranger Platinum, priced at R1 119 000, is at the pinnacle of the Ford Ranger line-up, blending rugged versatility with premium SUV-like luxury. Its combination of advanced technology, refined design, and robust performance makes it, in the words of Ford, the most luxurious Ranger ever produced.

The Ranger Platinum is powered by a 3.0L V6 turbodiesel engine, delivering 184 kW and 600 Nm of torque through a 10-speed automatic transmission producing a smooth effortless drive. Its full-time four-wheel-drive system, standard across V6 models, ensures exceptional traction in 4A (Auto) mode for on- and off-road conditions. Drivers can switch to 4H, 4L, or 2H modes for varied terrains, making it ideal for towing and challenging environments.

Externally, the Ranger Platinum differentiates itself by chrome trim in the range, chrome detailing in the grille, side steps, and into the interior with vent detailing truly living up to its premium platinum name. The level of premium Ford finishing is further accentuated by the large 20-inch alloy wheels with ebony accents and fitted with all-season tyres and completed by colour coded bumpers and mirrors, completes the premium exterior great looks.

Where the Platinum really feels different is in the interior which rivals luxury SUVs, featuring premium quilted and perforated leather seats with "Platinum" badging. Heating or cooling options

are built into the ventilated front seats. You can find the most comfortable position possible with a 10-way adjustable electric option and it comes with a heated steering wheel to keep your hands warm for those cold early morning starts. The Ranger Platinum dashboard boasts soft-touch materials, Black Maple accents, and an extra upper glovebox for storage practicality.

The class leading 12.4-inch LCD instrument cluster, displays customisable graphics that adapt to the selected drive mode you are in allowing you to tweak suspension settings and customise your driving experience. The SYNC 4A infotainment system supports wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and a 360-degree camera, complemented by a premium 10-speaker B&O sound system adding to the touch of sophistication on offer in the Platinum. A 400 W inverter with 240 V and 12 V outlets, plus dual USB ports, caters to modern device needs.

Practical Platinum features also include six fixed tie down hooks in the load bay so nothing can slide around in the load deck. Roof rails from the Wildtrak model come as standard on the Platinum including a tailgate with a sleek metal power roller shutter, adding even more safety to your cargo as an optional extra.

Advanced lighting technology sets the Ranger Platinum apart, with Matrix LED headlamps featuring glare-free high beams, a High Beam Boost for 30% brighter illumination, and Dynamic Bending Lights that swivel up to 15 degrees for enhanced visibility. Safety is prioritised with far-side airbags – a Ranger first – along with dual front, side, curtain, and driver's knee airbags. Driver assistance features include Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop & Go, Lane Centring, Active Park Assist, Pro Trailer Back-up Assist, and seven Selectable Drive Modes (Normal, Eco, Tow/Haul, Slippery, Mud/Ruts, Sand, Rock Crawl).

The Ranger Platinum comes with Ford Protect: a four-year/120 000 km warranty, four-year/unlimited-distance.

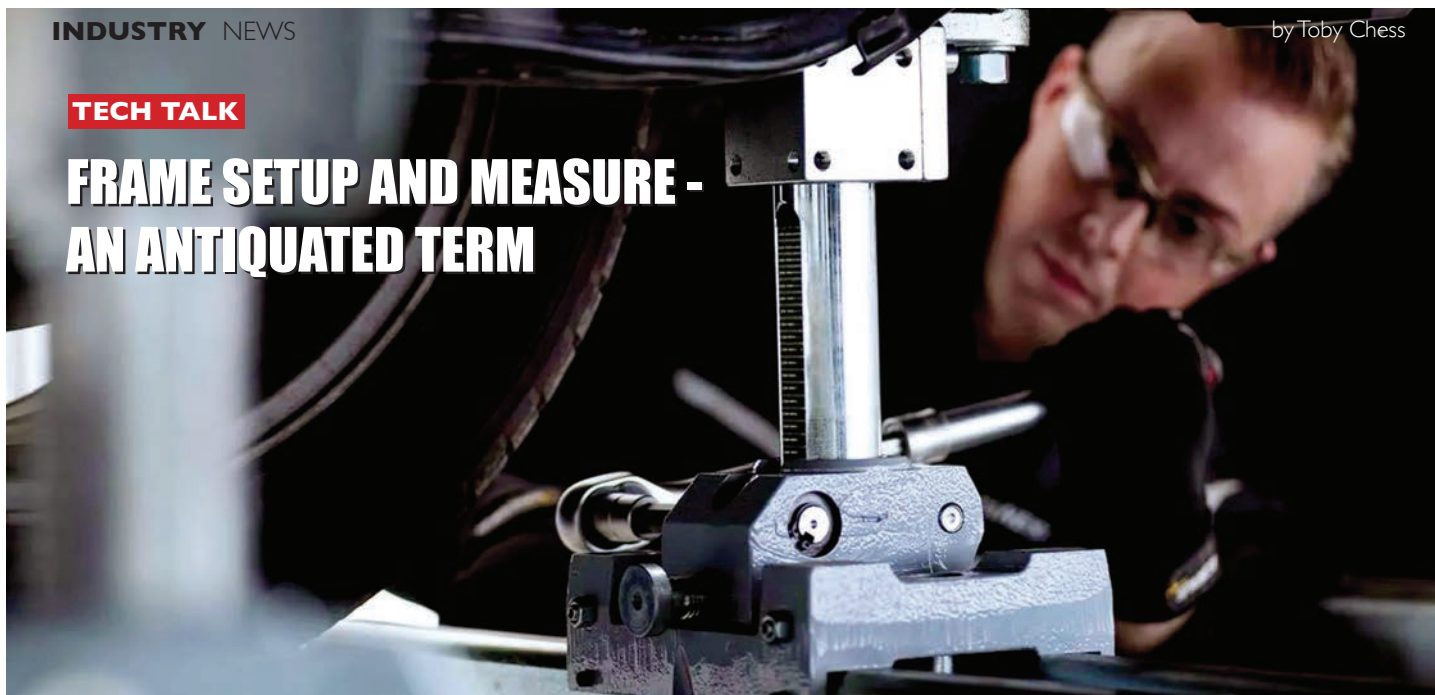


DRIVEN

THE RANGER PLATINUM 3.0 LTR V6

TECH TALK

FRAME SETUP AND MEASURE - AN ANTIQUATED TERM



The antiquated term “frame setup and measure,” why it does not pertain to today’s vehicles? How many of you (owners, managers and estimators) are still using this 60-year-old term? Where did this line item originate?

BOF vs. Unitised

Most vehicles manufactured in the U.S. were body over frame (BOF) up until the mid-1980s. In BOF vehicles, the frame supported the front suspension, steering, engine, transmission, rear suspension and rear differential. In other words, the body could be removed from the frame, and the powertrain and suspension remained attached to the frame. Most trucks and SUVs manufactured today are BOFs.

Unitised body vehicles are manufactured with the frame and body of the vehicle as a single unit (powertrain and suspension components attached to the body). Unitised vehicles are more rigid and safer; have improved handling and greater interior space, and are lighter.

In the good ol’ days, we would secure a BOF vehicle down with chains. The chains would be wrapped around the frame or anything that we could find on the frame (example: suspension components) that would hold the vehicle while it was being pulled. Unitised vehicles do not have a frame; therefore, a vehicle anchoring system was developed to secure the vehicle clamps that would be attached to the pinch welds.

We would measure with tape measures and tram gauges. (Using a tape measure and tram gauge is known as point-to-point measuring.) Both tools are used to measure width and height.

Tolerance

I’m hoping this article will give you a better insight into a few things you need to understand.

First, what is the meaning of the word “tolerance”? In terms of measurement, the difference between the maximum and minimum dimensions of permissible errors is called the tolerance. The allowable range of errors prescribed by law, such as with industrial standards, can also be referred to as tolerance. The build tolerance on most of today’s vehicles is three millimetres or less (Toyota wants a zero tolerance on its vehicle dimensions when repairing a misaligned vehicle).

The next item we need to understand is control points on a vehicle. I found this definition online, and it is spot on: “A ‘control point’ on a vehicle construction refers to a precisely measured and marked location on the vehicle’s chassis or body used as a reference point for accurately positioning other components during assembly, ensuring consistent dimensions and alignment throughout the vehicle build process; essentially, it acts as a key anchor point for measuring and positioning other parts of the vehicle.”

All control points will have a length, width and height. For three-dimensional measuring, a starting point is necessary. For the length measurement, the zero plane is used. It is an imaginary plane that goes through the front torque box and rear torque box areas. On a front-end impact, one would use the rear torque box for the zero point and a front impact would be used for rear damage. The width is measured

from the centre plane. An imaginary plane cuts the vehicle in half lengthwise. The centre plane is the starting point, and each control is measured from it.

There are two types of measurements: symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical points mean a control point on one side of the centre plane is the same as the other side of the centre plane.

Asymmetrical points are not the same

The last item is the datum plane, which measures height. The datum plane is an imaginary plane under the vehicle and the zero point for height measurements for measuring up – using a jig system. The bottom of a vehicle is the zero plane when measuring down.

Next, we have terms that describe vehicle misalignment that you need to understand and utilise:

- SAG: A change in height (up or down)
- Mash: Change in length
- Sway: Change in width
- Diamond: One rail is farther forward or rearward of the other rail
- Twist: Horizontal structural parts are not parallel to the datum plane.

Frame Setup and Measure

Now that you have a better understanding of what’s happening when measuring, let’s look at the term “frame setup and measure” as a single line entry on an estimate. I would like the collision repair industry to change this from a one-line entry to a two-line entry: frame setup to place vehicle on a frame straightening system, and secure vehicle for misalignment correction. This would include looking up the OEM and/or equipment manufacturer’s data on the vehicle; placing the vehicle on a lift when using a bench-type system or driving a vehicle (in some cases, using a winch, which would require additional time); setting up cross beams for jigs or pinchweld clamps or mounting brackets to hold pinchweld clamps; building special jigs for holding the vehicle to the frame equipment; and lifting the vehicle with special equipment to raise the vehicle and then lower it into the pinchweld clamps. Finally, all the equipment needs to be broken down and put back in the proper location for use on the next vehicle (a forgotten process).

Two final notes: Items for pinchweld access will need to be removed and reinstalled (a not-included operation), and undercoatings may need to be removed and replaced as per OEM procedures. There may be additional operations or equipment necessary that I haven’t addressed that would be added to your list of operations. Many direct repair programmes (DRP) have a set time for setup; you’ll need to have discussions with insurers to find out in detail what’s covered in that setup time. Compare your steps with theirs and explain why it may be necessary for additional lines due to your shop’s processes and its equipment.

Let’s use a Chief EZ liner as an example. You can see the four pinchweld clamps on the frame bed. The clamps are removed and a vehicle is driven- or winched onto the frame machine. After looking up the placement of the pinchweld clamps, the vehicle is raised, the

clamps secured to the pinched welds, and then the vehicle is lowered and the clamps are secured to the bench.

There's a big difference in setup time when using a bench system, such as the Globaljig Rotax. The bench is assembled for mounting the vehicle, and then the vehicle is moved to the bench and raised, followed by attaching two lift beams (front and rear). The bench is lowered, and the cross beams are mounted at the specified lengths and widths. Next, the pinchweld clamps are assembled and mounted at their correct width and height. The vehicle is lowered and secured to the vehicle mounting clamps. Something needs to be done to stop a "set time for setup" by the insurance industry.

10 Cents

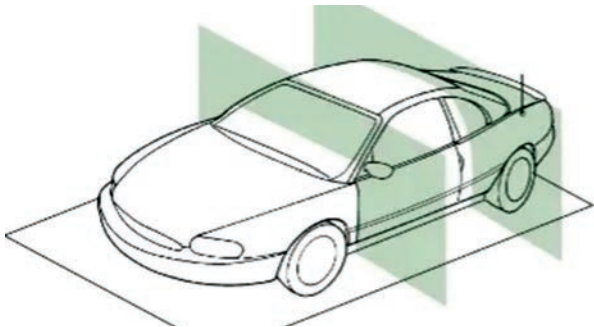
Think about a dime. No, it's not 10 cents, a coin or money. Think differently. The thickness of a dime is one millimetre. My question is: How do we see a three-millimetre change in length, width and height? Toyota requires a zero tolerance, with the reason being that its build tolerance is plus- or minus three millimetres. Let's say a rail has a minus two-millimetre width, but this particular vehicle had a minus three-millimetre build. Where is the control point now? A minus five millimetres, which could have an effect on wheel alignment and/or the ADAS system.

3-D Measuring

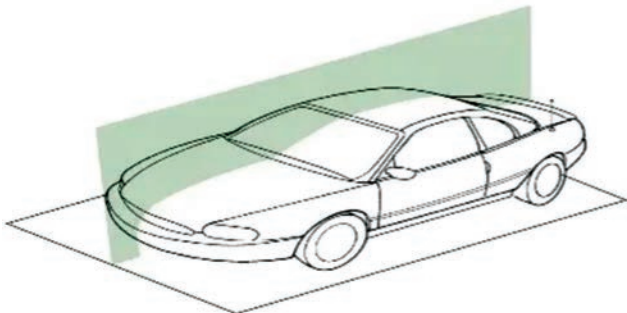
Two of the first three-dimensional measuring systems were the Continental Universal Measuring System and Celette Bench. These systems had the ability to measure not only the bottom of vehicles but upper body points in the engine compartment, as they had vertical towers that attached to them.

Even before the Car-O-Liner (1972), Celette was selling bench systems with dedicated jigs in the mid-1950s. Three-dimensional measuring systems have been around for nearly 75 years, yet we as an industry do not think that accurate measuring is a critical part of the beginning of the repair process. This article is not about how to measure but why we measure. Let's take a quick look at the various types of three-dimensional measuring systems:

- Meridian by Chief Automotive Technologies uses flags and laser beams.
- Car-O-Tronic by Car-O-Liner uses an electro-mechanical system.
- Spanesi uses two systems for measuring, universal jigs and the single-arm touch system (before and after repair measurements).
- Car Bench uses both and electronic measuring (before and after measurements) and a universal jig system.
- Globaljig uses a universal jig system.



For the length measurement, the zero plane is used. It is an imaginary plane that goes through the front torque box and rear torque box areas. On a front-end impact, one would use the rear torque box for the zero point and a front impact would be used for rear damage.



The width is measured from the centre plane. An imaginary plane cuts the vehicle in half lengthwise. The centre plane is the starting point, and each control is measured from it.

- Celette uses electronic measuring (before and after measurements), fixed jigs and a universal jig system.

There are a number of other vehicle measuring systems on the market; do your due diligence when you're looking for any measuring system.

Summary

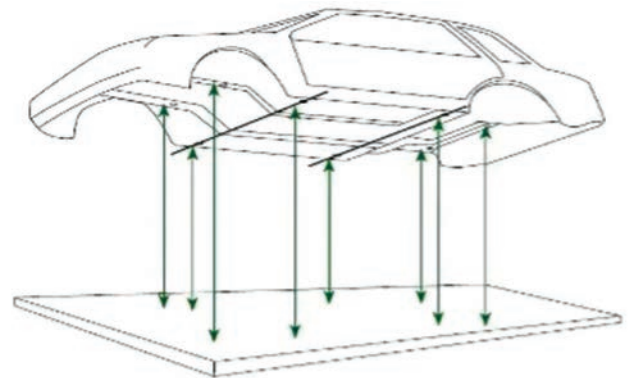
I would like to end with some "food for thought." My friend Ken Boylan, a global expert in vehicle measuring, said the following: "You go to your doctor with an internal problem, and he says he will cut you open and look around and see what might be wrong. You reply, 'Why not take an x-ray?' And he responds, 'That would be too expensive.'"

Don't you think it would benefit you, the vehicle owner and the insurance industry, to know up front how much damage was caused by the collision? There's a lot more ultra-high-strength steel (also known as energy-transfer steel) being used in today's vehicles. To break 1 300 mpa steel takes 189 000 pounds of pressure. This metal will not deform like high-strength steel; thus the energy is transferred through the entire vehicle and will cause the metal to move. Remember that it is you who is responsible for the repairs, not the insurance company.

I hear people all the time call insurance companies their "partners." But a true partner is a person who takes part in an undertaking with another or others, especially in a business or company, with shared risks and profits. If you fix a vehicle incorrectly, you're on the hook for it and not the insurance company. They have the gold, and many body shops will do anything to get the gold, period.

Go back to the beginning of the article and retake the quiz and see if you can score 100% now.

I hope this article gives everyone in our industry a better understanding of the necessary steps for repairing a vehicle's specifications that were misaligned due to a collision.



The datum plane is an imaginary plane under the vehicle and the zero point for height measurements for measuring up - using a jig system. The bottom of a vehicle is the zero plane when measuring down.



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INDUSTRY NEWS



WHAT'S HOT?

THE STORY BEHIND MASKING TAPE WHEN PAINTING CARS

If you've ever painted a room, you may have some in a kitchen drawer. If you refinish cars, you likely keep several specialised varieties close at hand. It's unlikely you've given much thought to where it came from, because it feels like it's always been there. However, masking tape has a story – and it turns 100 this year.

It was in the auto body shop that the story originally began. We've all heard the Henry Ford quote about offering cars in "any colour the customer wants, as long as it's black." But in the early 1920's, the two-tone boom caught on, and painting sharp lines between the colours posed a challenge for auto refinishers.

To paint two-tones, they had to mask one area to paint the other. The combination of newspaper and honey was too messy. Library paste held, but it ripped paint off when they removed it. Stiff Kraft or butcher paper tore instead of curving. Sometimes technicians just held paper against the surfaces with their hands. As the finish became more popular, the people tasked with creating it found the process frustrating.

Richard Drew was a frequent visitor to those body shops. A young 3M salesman tasked with delivering sandpaper samples, he heard the string of "profanity emanating from the corner of the shop," as he later recalled. He knew his employer already used adhesives to bond sand to paper. What would happen if they left out the sand?

Drew's 3M boss, William McKnight, gave him the go-ahead to experiment with new combinations of paper and adhesive during part of his work hours. Two years passed with no success. McKnight told him to stop. Drew did not.

The breakthrough came in 1925, when Drew used paper with a cropped backing and paired it with a mixture of cabinet glue and glycerine. Sticky enough to do the job, gentle enough not to damage the paint, and flexible enough to conform to surfaces without tearing, the new innovation – Scotch Masking Tape – was a hit.

However, Drew wasn't finished. A few years later, he created another adhesive tape – this time with cellophane, not paper. At almost the same moment that the Great Depression forced American households to be thrifter, the new Scotch Tape helped people fix items instead of throwing them away, and its popularity grew.

The demand was so great, and 3M was so busy producing Scotch Tape, that it weathered the Depression with no layoffs. Drew's persistence in creating the first masking tape led directly to the 15% culture of innovation that gives today's 3M employees the freedom to follow their passions and work and spend 15% of their work time developing game-changing innovations. And as masking tape celebrates its 100-year anniversary, the next time you reach for the roll in your kitchen drawer, you now know where it came from.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

BASF POTJIE “BOK POT CHALLENGE”

BASF Coatings launched the Bok Pot Challenge, a nationwide initiative that blended rugby, braai culture, and culinary competition to foster customer engagement in South Africa.

This unique event invited teams of two from BASF's customer base to participate in a potjiekos cook-off, encouraging camaraderie and relationship-building beyond traditional business settings.

The inaugural event was held at Pretoria Country Club, where participants braved the winter chill to showcase their cooking talents. The challenge continued across South Africa, with upcoming events in Johannesburg, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape, ensuring broad participation from BASF's customer network.

The challenge also showcased the 100-year anniversary celebration of Glasurit's mascot, Rudi the Macaw, a familiar figure in South Africa's automotive industry.

It aimed to strengthen customer relationships through shared cultural experiences. The potjiekos format promoted teamwork, patience, and collaboration, creating an informal environment for meaningful connections.

Each team brought their own flair to the competition, resulting in a spirited atmosphere of friendly rivalry.

Celebrity chef and Braai Master Piet Marais served as the official judge, lending culinary credibility to the competition. His presence elevated the event and ensured professional standards in judging.

Regional winners from other events included:

- Saturn Autobody in Pretoria,
- Rudia Autobody in Johannesburg,
- Albertinia Panelbeaters in Port Elizabeth,
- Tekton Autobody Repairs in the Western Cape,
- Vlam Panelbeater in Kwazulu-Natal.

The grand prize is an all-expenses-paid trip to watch the Springboks play in the final in Ireland later this year. This prestigious award added excitement and incentive for participants. The overall winner of this amazing prize were Albertinia Panelbeaters.

Through the Bok Pot Challenge, BASF set a new benchmark for customer engagement by integrating cultural traditions with business development.

The initiative highlighted how shared experiences rooted in local heritage can foster lasting partnerships and community spirit.



Secret family recipes and highly competitive teams was the order of the day.



Official judging was done by Braai Master Piet Marais.



Saturn Autobody were regional winners from Pretoria.



Rudi - the Glasurit Macaw - celebrates his 100th birthday this year.

AIR SHOW

RAF 100-YEAR CENTENNIAL SHOW AT RAF COSFORD, UK

story and pics by Ian Groat



The Red Arrows showed off a number of new stunts to thrill the record crowds.

Maybe I have told you this story before, but I can't remember right now, about my formative years which were spent on remote airfields in England with only a mongrel dog and a big stick to keep me company. It was truly not the best way to develop any type of education as I was placed in about 10 different schools down the years as my parents were moved around from military base to yet another base ...

I recently got an amazing chance to see the impressive Royal Air Force 100-Year Centenary Air Show along with other air enthusiasts – all 50 000 of them! We went along to the RAF Cosford's eminent Airforce College to see it 'all in the flesh'. The day included the very latest F35 and Typhoon Eurojet fighters which collaborated with their global defence duties, from the USA, to the Polish Air Force.

All this was supported with around seven hangars stuffed full of historical aircraft from the dawn of time, in aviation terms, such as the 1918 stringbag-type Kite Aircraft right up to the most modern supersonic jets. Many static stalls showed a really impressive supply chain of technology on offer in Europe right now. To take it all in was a full day's job!

The sky was packed with a great war display of aircrafts using pyrotechnics, numerous types of helicopters, the RAF Falcon parachute display teams, to a French Rafale 5000 showing amazing flying display skills by all the pilots. All these superb demonstrations

were held with a degree of reverence to the Second World War period. The Dutch Air Force came to show off their Supermarine Spitfire with its iconic roar in yet more stunning air displays ...

While the not-to-be-forgotten 'Battle of Britain' Memorial Lancaster Bomber with its four-engine Rolls-Royce engines graced the skies flying with a display of precision flying – not bad for a 85-year-old aircraft! Accompanying it were Hurricanes and Spitfires alongside as it roared overhead. The legion of spectators were packed to the brim at every vantage point possible at Cosford that day.

To keep the international spirit alive the PC-7 Suisse Display Team flew Pilatus turbo prop aircraft and RAF Tutor aircraft primarily used to provide student pilots with first-hand flying experience. But of course, the final act of display was offered by the incomparable Red Arrows to show off their amazing routine on the 61st anniversary session of the Show where they introduced some new and exciting manoeuvres – along with a host of classic crowd-pleasing stunts.

All this provided a picture-perfect British air show experience and fuelled the memory bank of my 80 years of existence on this fast trip through planet earth, that we all experience.

To sum up my day, my life's motto has always been: "live every day of your life as if it is your last," for one day you are sure to be right. And for me this was an absolute pearler of a great day.



Spitfires are always much revered at these occasions.



A whispering Avro Lancaster bomber, one of only two in the world, was accompanied by a Spitfire and Hurricane fighter team.



With seven display hangars packed full of aviation history. The RAF Cosford was well worth visiting.



The Euro fighter Polish airforce display was an impressive airborne treat.



This squadron of USA F35 jets saw action just one week after this exhibition.



The latest virtual lift aircraft demonstration blew away noise levels during its Vertical Take Off (VTO).

NEW PRODUCTS



KYOTO ORBITAL SANDER SELF VACUUM 6 INCH FROM LUXOR PAINTS

The central vacuum ready 150mm Orbital Palm Sander features a durable, one-piece speed control lever and a hardened steel alloy cylinder for long-lasting performance. Its random orbital motion - combining disc rotation with elliptical movement - delivers a smooth, swirl-free finish on wood, metal, and composites. Lightweight with rear exhaust, this sander operates quietly and with minimal vibration for enhanced comfort and control.

It's available with a large range of body shop hand tools from Luxor Paints or one of their nearest distributors.

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Everything you need for SMART repairs in one cost effective kit. Contact Adrian at aharvey@sagola.com or call him on +27 (0)83 488 1865 for further information.



OCTORAL C600 RAPID PRODUCTION CLEAR

The C600 Rapid Production Clear is the latest innovation from Octoral. Where other fast-drying clears are limited to small spot repairs, the C600 can be used on fast repairs to medium-sized repairs – up to 5 panels, the complete side or front end, without compromising on the quality of the finish. The one visit application increases spray booth throughput allowing body shops to save time, materials, and energy.

The Rapid Production Clear can be forced dried at 60°C for enhanced drying, as well as low baked at 40°C, drying in 25 minutes or for a more energy-efficient solution air-dried with a dry to handle time of just 60 minutes. Its fast-drying properties and versatility mean body shops can rely on a single clear for multiple repair jobs, helping to reduce stock holding.

Available in both 1L and 5L packaging, this product comes with two dedicated hardeners - H60 Rapid Production Hardener Fast and H61 Rapid Production Hardener Slow, giving you the flexibility to choose what works best for your body shop.

The H61 Slow variant offers extended drying times, providing painters with more working time to achieve a flawless finish. Meanwhile, the H60 Fast option enables quicker turnaround.

For more information on the C600 Rapid Production Clear, H60 Rapid Production Hardener Fast and H61 Rapid Production Hardener Slow, visit www.octoral.com.

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DAZE DEFENDER AIR POWERED PURIFYING RESPIRATOR

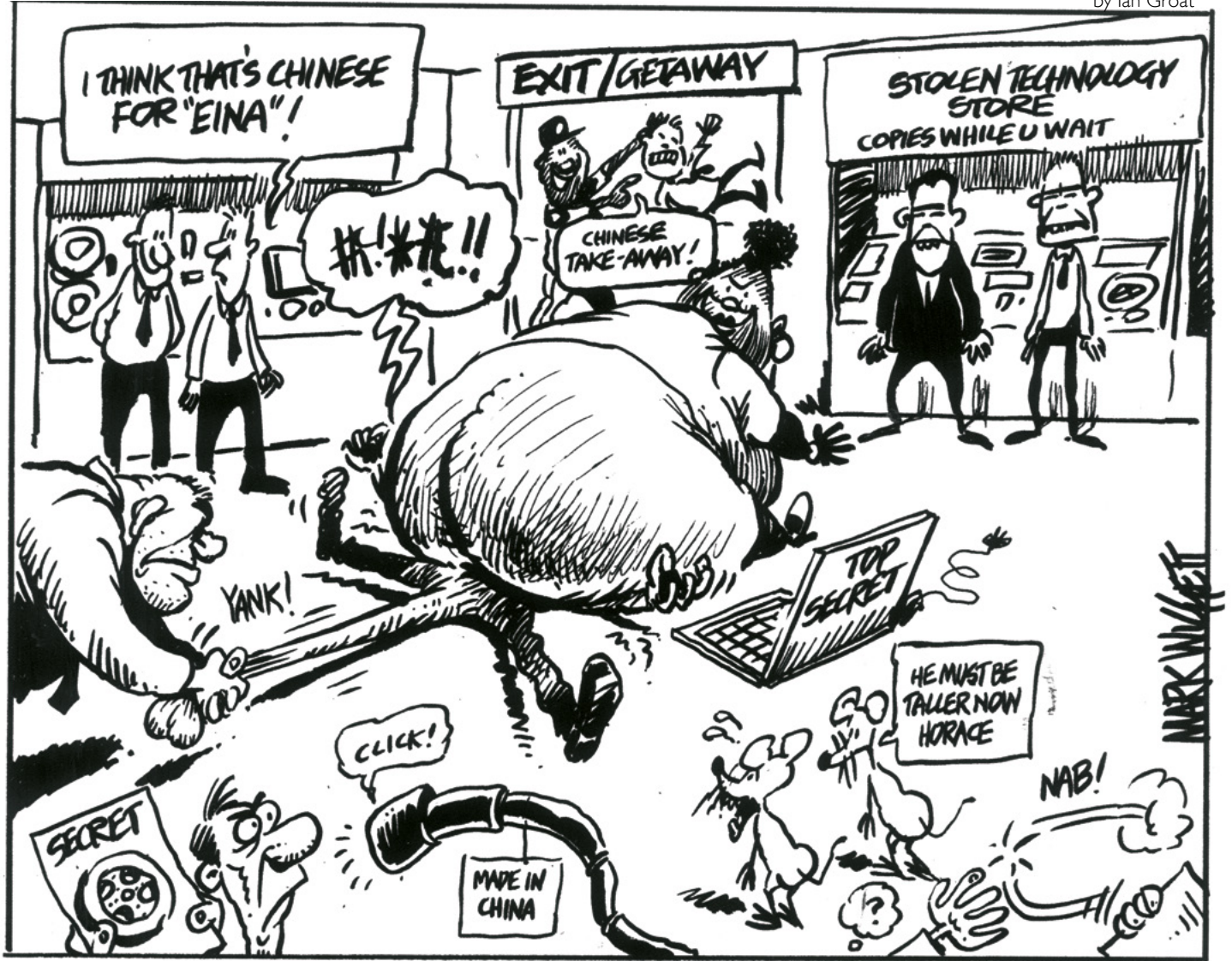
The Daze Defender is new respiratory protection package. It features an operation system that is portable, so no trailing airline complications. It supplies clean air to operators with long-term durability. This fits many specialist applications and is designed for spray painting use with vehicle refinishing, aircraft respraying, industrial and commercial vehicle manufacture.

The lightweight PAPR eliminates toxic particulate overspray hazards with its versatile lightweight design, which features components that are lightweight. It is versatile and comfortable design, with a backpack turbo air filter that is attached to the waist belt.

The digital read-out shows the lithium battery conditions at all times. The Defender purchase includes a specifically designed carry bag, filter covers, spark arrestors, pre-filter spare parts and a special air flow tester.

It is made to the top-level protection standards of CE 2834, it features a full 12-month guarantee. Dealer enquires are invited. Contact Neil Butterworth for price and availability via WhatsApp +44 793 617 9561.





In a way “Big” Mary Nkosi was good at her job. As a trade show security officer she made sure no one ever got into the expo one minute early. On the downside that made the oriental stand holder’s invasion of exhibitors a bit mad as they would arrive early by the bus load all dressed in black suits and juggling their very own packed lunches – probably supplied by their ambitious communist government to keep them alert to commercial gain opportunities at every moment.

"Big" Mary would have them all lined up and quietly whispering with dissent at not being able to get out of the crisp winter morning sun until she could look at her watch and declare the show open. She would also get her knickers in a twist if one of the stand holders wanted to take out any product without the right paperwork from the organisers office at the exit door.

This all resulted in “Big” Mary sliding down the popularity stakes with Wang and Wang and Poo – yes that was the company name – for their stand was right next to the door. Their product line-up of brake shoes, clutch plates and shining mag wheels fell into place with another 300 motor parts or so, making hopefuls from across the other side of the world in China.

Anyway, Frikkie, "Big" Mary's security controller, had laid down the law concerning these demanding oriental visitors who often did not understand her way of speaking English with a Zulu accent, but finally understood her clenched fist and flared nostrils and the word 'no' when her anger was up.

Things were progressing very well on the final day with "Big" Mary in position and enduring a phenomenal amount of nonsense from the Chinese contingent, who always wanted the hall rear door opened to nip out to use the phone or light up a cigarette.

Wang, whose work experience had seen him spend a fair amount of time in jail back home, was dreaming up a scheme to advance their global operation success by knocking off a number of samples

of products from a well-known American competitor's product range which was just visible from their stand. His plan was a simple one. He would run up to their stand and remove all the new laptops and do a runner as the show closed, while escaping to a waiting bus.

However, another stand holder saw this adventurous little tyke and his shenanigans as Wang pocketed their laptop full of company secrets under his jacket. Fired up with a bucket load of testosterone he swiftly dashed off in hot pursuit of the light-fingered lad.

With cries of "Stop thief!" coming from some distance away, "Big" Mary swung into action by throwing Wang to the ground and sitting on him as he shouted, grunting and groaning. She rode him like a practised rodeo champ as the theft was unveiled. Frikkie, and his huge muscles, appeared next to them and snatched up Wang holding him up by the neck and giving him a firm tug to his nuts. He quickly stopped screaming and shouting which by then had been going on for some time.

Everyone waited for the cops to arrive and the Chinese contingent, who were standing shoulder to shoulder waiting to leave looked on quizzically at the unfolding events. Wang was a total disgrace to his nation especially after being caught in the act. He was last seen spotted entering the cop's open doors of the prison van to enjoy an evening in Booyens holding cells where he truly belonged.

For "Big" Mary there were no whoopee cheerios from the expo visitors as she congratulated herself on a job well done. The American company were thrilled to bits at being able to keep their laptops packed with company Intel. To end it all after things went quiet, "Big" Mary and Frikkie simply congratulated themselves and went off muttering about nabbing the thief as "Big" Mary's weight had come in handy for the ordeal.

As for Wang and his dash for freedom, he got a short custodial sentence in jail, which is about the same as being in hell for any foreigner.



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Our objectives are issues the proactive body shop owner does not really have the time to concentrate on to ensure the optimisation of their business. As with any Association annual membership fees are payable to cover administration costs and our membership is based on grading status. We provide an on-line E Procure business data profile of members to support recognition for independent role players in every area of activity in the collision repair industry.

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