

Gabe's Collision Remains Loyal to Axalta After 53 Productive Years



by Autobody News Staff

When *Gabe's Collision* owner **Jeff Mucciarelli** finds a product that will help him, he isn't afraid to stick with it.

That's precisely why the MSO has been spraying with Axalta for the past 53 years without interruption. *Gabe's Collision*, a second-generation MSO with three locations near Buffalo, NY, repairs 6,000–7,000 cars annually.

Eight years ago, Mucciarelli switched over to Axalta's Cromax Pro Waterborne basecoat and has been singing its praises ever since for producing a stunning, planet-friendly, finished product.

Mucciarelli was proudly born into the collision repair industry.

"While most kids were out playing after school, my mother used to drop me off at the shop just to hang out with my father, **Gabe Mucciarelli**, while he worked," he said. "It was a one-man shop back then, and my dad was a great combination technician, so it was an education to see him in action. I actually started playing around with cars when I was 10 years old, but when the time came, I went off to college to study business management. I had no doubts about eventually being a part of the family business, and now I've been here a total of 30 years. Dad still comes here regularly and we give him jobs to do, because he still loves this industry as much as I do."

Now with 86 employees and a dozen DRPs, Mucciarelli, 53, still enjoys the industry as much as he did when he was kid, he said.

"I really enjoy watching the cars after we've repaired them and seeing the product we've created," he said. "I still get a rush every time I see the final product and watch the customers' reactions. They often tell us that the new paint job is better than the original paint!"

By switching over to Axalta's Cromax Pro waterborne in 2010, Mucciarelli tried to stay ahead of the local laws that had been forecasted but never came to fruition, he said.

"The State was telling us that all lead-based products were going to be illegal at some point, but to be honest, we're still waiting," he said. "We purchased a sophisticated USI



(l to r) **Gabe Mucciarelli** founded the business 53 years ago. Now his son, **Jeff**, runs the show.

spray booth that is ideal for waterborne paint, so we were moving in that direction already. Creating a safer climate for our employees and cutting down on the smell were two big goals, and we achieved both of them with the Cromax Pro."

After seeing a few cars painted with Axalta's Cromax Pro, Mucciarelli and his paint crew were sold almost instantly, he said.

"When I saw it lay out so beautifully, we fell in love with it," he said. "The color matching is great and we have very few issues dialing them in for every vehicle, even if the color is not mainstream. The cars come out looking great and we've had literally no comebacks, because the finish is impeccable."

As a collision repair veteran, Mucciarelli knows that all products have to come with great customer service in order for him to work with them.

"We call it the service behind the product because anyone can sell us paint, but without support, it just won't work," he said. "The support we get from Axalta is over-the-top, and that's why we've been with them for 53 years. We work with **Rick Rinaldi** from Axalta and our jobber, **Joe Dadario** at *GD Auto Supply* in Niagara Falls, is excellent. If we have any issues, [which] is rare, they are right here giving us answers and treating us like we're their only customer."

Part of the incredible support that Mucciarelli mentioned includes

world-class training provided by both the manufacturer and his jobber.

"When we first made the conversion to waterborne, they sent three people here who worked with our painters and preppers at all of our three locations one-on-one," he said. "They now come back twice a year, and it's great to refresh our skills or learn new things about the product."

They have not had any issues using the Axalta waterborne product, even when the weather changes.

"A first-rate product takes all of the problems right out of the equation, so we have zero problems curing these cars," Mucciarelli said. "It does get humid around here during the summer, but it's never an issue and the finished product is always pristine."

Mucciarelli walks the walk when it comes to being a green member of the three communities where he owns shops.

"A few years back when we were looking to open our third location, the neighborhood surrounding the facility was concerned about the amount of pollutants we were going to send out into the environment," he said. "We did a study and showed the neighbors that the fast food place down the street was producing 90 percent more pollution than we were, and they were surprised. We want to be a good community partner, and spraying a waterborne product is definitely one way to achieve that."

Gabe's Collision and Claims Center

Location: Buffalo, NY

www.gabescollision.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 86

In Business Since: 1964

Number of Locations: Three

Combined Production Space: 76,000 square feet (combined)



Painter **Chris Goff** works in a high-production environment at *Gabe's Collision* and relies on Axalta's Cromax Pro every day.



Gabe's Collision has three locations near Buffalo, NY, and repairs 6,000–7,000 cars annually.

Axalta Coating Systems

Company Contact: Heidi Stilwell

heidi.stilwell@axaltacs.com

(610) 358-5353

www.axaltacs.com/corporate/en_US.html