

NJ Shop Is Saving 25% Without Sacrificing Quality With Lusid



by Autobody News Staff

Shop owner **Jerry Strak** has been fixing crashed cars since 1975. Although he is hoping to retire within the next few years, he still loves the industry and is proud of the work he's done at *Parkway Auto Body of Ewing* in Ewing, NJ, since 2006.

To survive in an extremely competitive market, Strak's bread and butter is repeat business and referrals, which is why he wants to use products that save him money without compromising his stellar reputation. He's all about keeping an eye on the bottom line, but is more interested in doing a spectacular job for every customer who comes through his doors.

After coming to America in the late 1980s from his native Poland, Strak worked as a body technician for a series of shops and quickly earned much respect for his outstanding work. Now a U.S. citizen and shop owner, he can look back at his days in Poland and reminisce.

"It is a totally different industry there, with no DRPs for one," Strak said. "The customer settles the claim with the insurance company, and then they have to take the vehicle first to a body shop and then later to a separate paint shop to get the job done. We would work on the car and then send it to the paint shop, and then it would come back for final assembly. It wasn't very efficient, but it seemed to work back then."

Repairing 450–500 vehicles annually with a very talented crew of four employees, Strak is all about quality and won't use any product that doesn't perform well, even if it will save him money. In fact, his paint department is so well-known in his region that he often gets paint work after other shops in his area stumble along the way.

"There are some shops around here that tell customers they can get their car painted for \$300, for example," he said. "But, you get what you pay for. They bring their cars here after the fact and then we have to redo the work. It happens all the time. When they see what we've done to their vehicles, they're delighted and realize you can't get a decent paint job for \$300."



Parkway Auto Body of Ewing is saving 25–35 percent by using Lusid Technology's waterborne GEN20.

After spraying another waterborne product for more than a decade, Strak began to look around for another paint company. The costs were burying him, but he wasn't willing to switch unless he saw a comparable product out there. After meeting with several reps and talking to his jobber, **Brian Elmer** of BKE Distributors, Strak decided to sign on the dotted line with Lusid Technology. He has been enamored with the company ever since for a wide range of reasons.

"When we switched over to the Lusid product, it was seamless because we had been using another waterborne paint already," Strak said. "We stopped using the old product on a Friday and had the Lusid GEN20 here the following Monday; it was that fast. Our veteran painter, **John Wolak**, knew the ins and outs of using it because the application and curing process were somewhat similar. The quality is comparable. The only real difference is the price, so we are making more profit out of our paint department, and that's exceptional."

With any vendor, support is a big deal and responsiveness is key.

"The support we get from Lusid is excellent. If we ever have any questions, they're quick with the answers," Strak said. "We rarely have any issues with the Lusid system, but if we do, there's no problem. We

rely on the people at BKE Distributors and our rep is great, so it's a good relationship."

When it comes to color matching, Parkway is cruising along with a nearly perfect record, Strak said.

"We use their 4 Angle Spectrophotometer to get accurate color matches," he said. "They have a catalog of more than 70,000 formulations, so we can match even the newest colors. By spraying a test panel, we can make sure that we've got it down, but we rarely have to re-paint anything, which of course saves us more money. Comebacks can slow us down, so Lusid's camera system is a lifesaver."

By spraying a waterborne product, Strak can sleep better at night knowing he is using the safest product on the market, he said.

"We switched to a waterborne product back in 1998, long before anyone else was doing it in this area," he said. "New Jersey was talking about mandating waterborne back then, so we wanted to already be using it when the time came. It's better for our employees and I feel better using a product that is better for the environment. We work around a lot of toxic things around here, so using a planet-friendly paint like Lusid's waterborne GEN20 is a big deal, and the fact that we're saving 25–35 percent is also a huge bonus!"

Parkway Auto Body of Ewing

Location: Ewing, NJ
(609) 882-1144

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: Four

In Business Since: 2006

Number of Locations: One

Combined Production Space: 4,000 square feet



Head Painter **John Wolak's** life has been a lot easier since the shop switched to Lusid.



Wolak is highly impressed with the dead-on color matches he's getting with the Lusid Technology system.

Lusid Technologies

(801) 966-5300

www.lusid.biz