

Florida Pneumatic's Line of AIRCAT Professional Tools Help Florida Shop Achieve Higher Standard



by Autobody News Staff

When **Dave Marafino** joined *Gerber Collision & Glass* in Melbourne, FL, three years ago, he understood the importance of having good tooling in the collision repair facility.

He has worked at body shops since he was 16 years old and held a variety of roles, such as painter, heavy line collision technician and general manager.

"Having a good quality tool allows us to fix the cars properly," said Marafino. "When technicians are repairing cars and have tool failure, it stops production and is counterproductive."

The shop's goal is to maintain a three-and-a-half-day cycle time.

"We have to have our cars repaired in the shop fast," said Marafino. "At Gerber, we're held to a different standard than a lot of other body shops."

He recently began using Florida Pneumatic's line of AIRCAT tools and has found that it has helped the facility repair vehicles properly and in a timely manner. Florida Pneumatic is a global manufacturer and distributor of air tools, pipe threading equipment and intake compressor filters. Its U.S. operations, assembly and distribution facility are located in Jupiter, FL. One of the company's primary brands is AIRCAT Pneumatic Tools, which are manufactured and designed for professional automotive technicians.

The tool line was founded in 1998 and designed to have a substantially reduced level of noise while retaining more power and torque. AIRCAT tools have a patented ergonomically engineered handle design, which technicians often find relieves stress and fatigue from their hands, wrists and arms.

Most of the AIRCAT tools have a patented tuned exhaust muffler technology, which allows discharged air to pass without developing back pressure while retaining more power and significantly reducing noise.

Marafino first learned about the company approximately a year ago from **Shawn O'Neil**, a representative of AIRCAT, and was interested in having a demonstration.

"I was game," he said. "I'd never used them before, and I'm always



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interested in trying the latest products and tools on the market."

He received a box of AIRCAT tools for his technicians to test in the shop, including a 6700-6 336-6" Orbital Palm Sander and a 6700-3-332 6" Orbital Palm Sander; a 6350 Low Vibration Saw; a 6520 3" Cut-Off Tool; a 6255 Angle Die Grinder; and a 6320 Spot Sander.

The 6" sander has flexible push button speeds of 10,000, 7,000 and 4,000 RPM for sanding, compounding and polishing. It offers 80 percent energy savings compared to running a compressor to power an air sander. The 20-foot low voltage DC cable allows the sander to be used around vehicles as well as assembly areas.

The Low Vibration Saw comes with 18-, 24- and 32-teeth power saw blades and has a 9,500 stroke/minute motor to provide fast cutting. In addition, the internal damping system reduces the vibration level to 2.5m/sec².

The AIRCAT 6520 impact-resistant Cut-Off Tool has a reverse switch for easy change of direction and can cut 3/8 inch rolled steel or 18-gauge steel sheet. It was also designed to include extra-heavy-duty dual spindle bearings for added reliability.

The Angle Die Grinder includes steel-grade internal bevel gears and a feather trigger for speed control.

"I was very impressed with them," said Marafino. "I was pleasantly surprised [by] how comparable they were to some of the best tools on the market."

O'Neil came into the shop to explain the benefits of the products and demonstrate how they operate.

Marafino soon realized the quality of the AIRCAT tools and how well they seemed to operate.

"We all know [that] as technicians, we spend a lot of money on tools," said Marafino. "When I replace a tool, I'm going to buy one that I feel is the best value for the money."

He said as the industry continues to change, great tools, such as those from Florida Pneumatic, will help the collision repair facility stay up-to-date with the changes in vehicle technology. Working as the general manager at Gerber, Marafino said he has tried to implement new processes, including proper repair planning, tear-downs and the lean process as well as others that will help the shop grow.

As a result, the facility went from bringing in \$250,000 a month to averaging \$350,000 a month. During a recent month, he said they reached \$394,000, which was a record for the county.

Part of the company's success, according to Marafino, is also due to the close relationship the employees have with one another. Over his career, he has worked well with his coworkers.

"I work on the floor with these guys," he said. "We work side-by-side and have become close friends."

Once a month, everyone in the shop gets together to go bowling with their families and they celebrate birthdays together.

"We try to keep a family-oriented shop with no drama," he said. "There are problems from time to time, but we get our differences aired. We have to because we spend more time together than with our families."

Gerber Collision & Glass

Location: Melbourne/Harbor City, FL
(321) 952-0256

<https://www.gerbercollision.com/locations/melbourne-harbor-city-fl>

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 20

In Business Since: 2015

Number of Locations: 200

DRP Programs: Two

Combined Production Space: 6,000 square feet



The AIRCAT tool line was designed to have a substantially reduced level of noise.



Gerber Collision & Glass in Melbourne, FL.

AIRCAT a Division of Florida Pneumatic Mfg. Corporation
(800) 356-3392
www.aircat.com