

Helfman Collision Center Uses PPG's Newest Color Matching and Mixing Tools to Shoot for Success



by Autobody News Staff

To achieve precision color matches, Helfman Collision Center in Houston, TX, uses PPG's tools for amazing results. Shop Director **Greg Luther** recently acquired PPG's MOONWALK® automated paint mixing machine, in conjunction with PPG's VISUALIZID™ 3D visualization software, which takes information from the DIGIMATCH™ spectrophotometer to help users find dead-on color matches from PPG's extensive color portfolio.

Helfman Collision Center is a part of the Helfman dealership group, a respected family owned and operated car dealer serving Houston and the surrounding area since 1959. The collision center is certified by Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram, FIAT, Alfa Romeo and Maserati, making Helfman the only Maserati Alfa Romeo FIAT dealership in Houston to offer a certified body shop on site.

In 2002, the company established the Helfman Collision Center with Luther at the helm. Luther has more than 30 years of industry experience—he entered the business in 1992 right after graduating from high school by working for a tire retailer, working his way up to management.

Luther is confident his team of 28 people is a strong unit because he hired all of them himself. By treating them right and proactively pursuing things such as training and cutting-edge equipment and processes, Luther has built a crew producing high-quality repairs at the rate of 200-plus vehicles monthly.

The crew's PPG DigiMatch multi-angle spectrophotometer helps them to match colors easier and faster. It features a lightweight, ergonomic design that can be used with one hand. The camera's six imaging angles and six reflectance angles provide color and texture information to help retrieve the correct formula matches quickly and efficiently.

PPG VisualizID software takes information from PPG DigiMatch or PPG's other spectrophotometers to help users find the best color match. It is the first software of its kind in the industry, digitizing a process



Helfman Collision Center in Houston, TX, uses PPG's MOONWALK® and VISUALIZID™ 3D visualization software with the DIGIMATCH™ spectrophotometer.

that used to involve trial and error, resulting in reduced waste.

The PPG MoonWalk system is an automated refinish paint mixing system for the ENVIROBASE® High Performance waterborne toners that saves labor time, reduces waste and creates a clean and safe mixing environment. Paint technicians and body shop managers benefit from the extreme accuracy coming from the automation of the mixing process, improving speed, quality and color consistency.

PPG and its ENVIROBASE® High Performance waterborne paint line has played a huge role since Helfman converted from solvent in 2015 in its high-production shop, where their paint has to perform seamlessly at a high level at all times. Luther has streamlined the color matching process by making sure everyone plays a specific role.

"First, our blueprinter takes the photo with the spectrophotometer and then the painter reviews the software and usually does just one spray-out to dial it in," Luther said. "Then our production manager or a porter does the mix at the MoonWalk mixing system and delivers it to the painter. It works out well, and the fact that we don't have to do multiple spray-outs surely helps. We're definitely saving time by using PPG's tools."

By wasting considerably less product, Luther's new equipment can pay for itself very quickly.

"You can waste as much as 7 to 8 ounces of paint every time doing multiple spray-outs, so doing just one to succeed is a big deal," he

said. He estimates he is saving at least \$500 of product every month by cutting down on spray-outs, without even factoring in the time element.

Using all of the paint in the bottle is also a huge plus, Luther said. "Previously, a lot of the extra paint and toners were wasted, but not anymore. Now we are getting paid for the paint and it is going on the car and staying out of the waste stream."

Earlier this year, PPG came to Helfman Collision Center for a two-day training that set up everyone for success using the mixing and color matching system.

"Six of our people went through the training and it was surprisingly easy," he said. "We've integrated it into our production system well, and we know that we will get better the more we do it."

The crew has been cross-trained on every aspect of the PPG VisualizID software, DigiMatch spectrophotometer and MoonWalk mixing system, so anyone can step up when needed.

Helfman has been an I-CAR certified shop since day one. Luther said PPG's mixing and color matching tools keep his customers happy with a great finished product every time. The shop will also benefit from increased efficiency and a crew that is set up for ongoing success.

"It's worked very well and we are pleased with the results," he said. "Our goal is to give our people the right tools so that they can do the best job they can."

Helfman Collision Center

Houston, TX

877-599-3919

www.houstonbodyshop.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 28

In Business Since: 2002

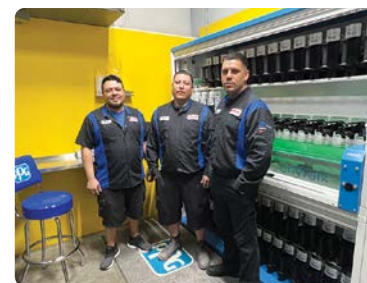
Number of Locations: One

Production Space:

25,000 square feet



Body Shop Director Greg Luther is delighted with the system's efficiency and accuracy.



Pictured left to right are painters Mike Ayala, Jahmar Suarez and Milky Ramos at Helfman Collision Center, who love PPG too.

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