

Pro Spot's Quality Products Help Illinois Collision Center Achieve Top-Notch Results



by Autobody News Staff

Growing up in Joliet, IL, as one of six siblings whose parents emigrated to America from Slovenia, **Mike Mavec** had little interest in cars. A high school athlete, he enjoyed running track and hanging out with friends. "I was a jock and cars were the furthest thing from my mind," he recalled.

Like many teenagers, however, he needed a summer job. As luck would have it, his track coach's brother-in-law ran a body shop and Mavec was offered a job as a detailer. "I didn't want to work in a body shop, but out of respect for my coach, I said I'd do it for the summer," said Mavec. It was an eye-opening experience.

"I was blown away by the artistry of those technicians, their knowledge of how to take something apart, fix it and put it back together. I knew immediately this was very cool."

Smitten by the work, Mavec continued to hone his skills during summer breaks and while attending Joliet Junior College. "At the time, I didn't know what I wanted to do in the future, but I was progressing in the industry and had a knack for painting."

A semester before graduation, Mavec decided to drop out and work full time at the body shop. "My parents hit the roof," he said. "All of my siblings went to college. My parents saw education as the means to success." Determined nonetheless to give it a go, he soon was promoted to head painter and by age 21 became shop foreman. Three years later, in 1994, he went into partnership with the owner at a second location in Bloomington, where he remained until 2003.

Flash forward to 2005. Mavec and his wife, **Stacy**, broke ground on a 10,000-square-foot facility. Mike's Collision Center opened in early 2006. Over the years, the company has earned a reputation as a top-tier repair center.

The family-owned business churns out more than 100 vehicles monthly. The shop holds



Established in 2006, the I-CAR Gold Class-certified facility boasts OEM certifications from Acura, Honda, Rivian, Subaru and Tesla.

certifications from Acura, Honda, Rivian, Subaru and Tesla, and has earned I-CAR Gold Class certification.

Mavec believes his commitment to continuing education is central to the company's success and has invested heavily in technician training. The six body men he employs are all I-CAR Platinum certified as well as I-CAR welding certified in all levels.

"Not every shop makes this investment — it's very expensive," said Mavec. "A lot of shops have one person who's weld certified. I look at it differently. If a shop only has one person who's welding certified, I have to assume there are others welding on cars who aren't certified."

"We back every repair with our lifetime guarantee. When we return a car to a customer our goal is to [ensure] we meet OEM criteria for a complete, safe and quality repair."

While having skilled technicians is essential, Mavec believes top-notch equipment is equally important. To give his techs a leg up, the shop relies on two Pro Spot welders: the i5 SMART Spot Welder and the SP-5 DP MIG Welder.

"The i5 is a squeeze-resistant welder. It's the most efficient way to join two metals together," said Mavec. "The i5 speeds the process and improves the repair quality. It gives us the capability to ensure the weld is as good as factory."

He said the i5 also eliminates human error by automatically delivering the correct weld power regardless of metal type. "All body men can weld but the quality level will differ.

"Some are very good welders; others shouldn't be welding. With the i5, an audible sound verifies the weld was done precisely and gives us the assurance it's a safe and proper repair."

Given that many of today's vehicles incorporate multiple types of metal, Mavec said having one piece of equipment that can weld aluminum, mild steel and ultra-high tensile steel is a boon to his shop.

"The SP-5 DP is dynamic. It's a multi-head welder with three torches, an aluminum wire and two metal wires. So, on a Honda, for example, I can weld an aluminum outer panel, weld a mild steel outer pillar and MIG braze the UHSS inner structure. It allows one machine to do three levels of welding on one particular vehicle. That's innovative and a good return on investment.

"I really believe equipment is important," he added. "My commitment to my staff is to give them the best tools to do the best job. Being able to partner with a company like Pro Spot gives staff the best opportunity to use their skills to do the best job for the customer."

Mike's Collision Center

Bloomington, IL
309-662-7777
mikescollisioninc.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair
Facility Employees: 18
In Business Since: 2006
Number of Locations: One
Production Space:
10,000 square feet



Pro Spot's three-torch SP-5 DP MIG Welder is capable of welding multiple types of metals on a particular vehicle. Technician Alex Crippen is shown programming the welder.



Tyler Stauffer programs and uses Pro Spot's i5 SMART Spot Welder to achieve a high-quality, safe and proper repair. Both Stauffer and Crippen are I-CAR Platinum certified and I-CAR welding certified in all levels.

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