

Autowave Ambassadors

Leaders of the New Business Environment

Branning Auto Body Catches the Wave

Shop leads the way with environmentally friendly waterborne finish.

For Paul Branning, owner of Branning Auto Body in New Jersey, "catching the wave" is simply a way to stay on the leading edge of collision repair. His three shops are switching to the Autowave waterborne refinishing system, the premier refinishing system from Akzo Nobel.

Branning has worked in the collision repair business for more than thirty years. His first job was helping his brother, working as an insurance adjuster. Branning started his first shop around 25 years ago, and his business ventures have grown to include three collision repair shops, a towing company, a salvage yard and a car rental company.

Branning Auto Body's headquarters is a showplace in Freehold, New Jersey located on twelve acres, and the exterior looks nothing like what most people expect for a collision repair shop. "Some people drive right by," said Branning. Guests are greeted in the lobby reception area that's beautifully designed with a crystal chandelier, marble floors, a 500-gallon fish tank, and a plasma TV. The 22,000 square foot facility includes a drive-in estimating area, an expansive shop area with all the equipment raised off the floor on trolleys, two downdraft prep booths and one spray booth.



Taking a Green Approach

Staying ahead of environmental regulations is very important to Branning, but he's also concerned about making positive moves to protect the environment and the health and safety of employees and the community. "We've always tried to be as green as we can be, by recycling water and other materials, and using the most efficient equipment, so it made sense to switch to waterborne paint."

"At the Twenty Group meetings I attend, we discussed how shops in California and in Canada are making the switch, and I decided that I wanted to be ahead of the curve," said Branning. "I visited several shops to learn how they had made the switch successfully."

Akzo Nobel's Waterborne Basecoat System

With global commitment to the environment at an all-time high, Akzo Nobel's Sikkens offers the very best waterborne refinish system on the market.

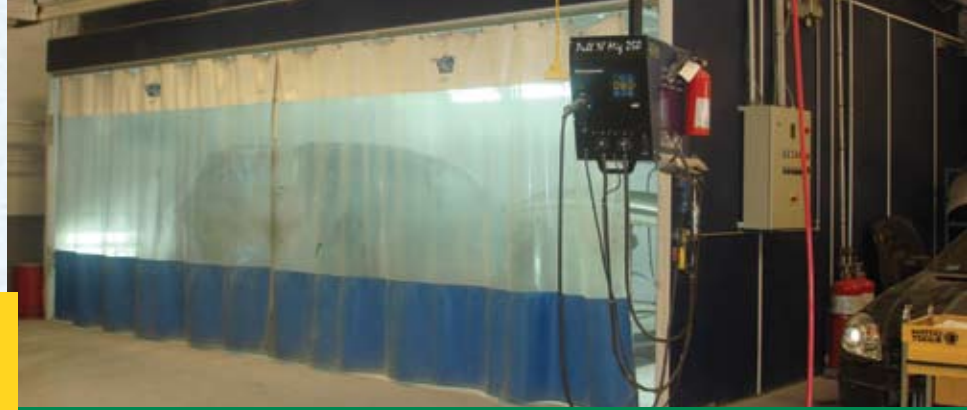
In extensive tests with comparable products, the Sikkens system has proven to have excellent color accuracy, ease of application, good covering power, fade-out and cost effectiveness.





“We’ve always tried to be as green as we can be, by recycling water and other materials, and using the most efficient equipment, so it made sense to switch to waterborne paint.”

–Paul Branning



Change for the Better

Branning recalls a Canadian shop where the owner had warned him about the skepticism of one particular painter. The painter later confided to Branning that he was in his late fifties, had no plans to retire, and was petrified of learning something new. “After using waterborne for a couple of weeks, the painter said he’d never go back to a solvent based system.”

“When you’re trying to make changes, no one likes the unknown. The learning process can slow down procedures, but once you get the hang of it, the change is worthwhile,” Branning says.

Branning chose the Autowave solution from Akzo Nobel because of its excellent color match, beautiful finish, and the training and support that he knew he could count on. “As an Akzo Nobel customer for the past sixteen years, I know I can count on them to stand by us and make the process as seamless as possible.”

Branning started the conversion process at his shop in East Windsor. After spending one day in training, the switch was made. “As with anything new, there is an adjustment period. After working with Autowave for a while, painters love the way it applies and blends. Most colors cover in one or two coats.”

The painters also appreciate the fact that Autowave is almost odorless. Its low solvent emissions are less harmful to the environment. Akzo Nobel developed the product in the 1990s in response to the environmental controls in Europe, where shops have now been using Autowave for more than fifteen years. In North America, collision repair shops in California and Canada are now coming under regulations that require a switch to waterborne, and forward-thinking shops across the country are also making the move.

“If our early results hold, we’re going to be using less materials with the Autowave system. And when everything is said and done, drying times are as fast if not faster,” said Branning. He’s trying out several different drying systems in his shops to identify the one that works best for him, including handheld air amplifiers, ceiling mounted fans, and an overhead loop system with high pressure air connectors.

A Fresh Start

Branning is in the process of building a new facility in Princeton that’s scheduled to open at the end of March, and it will be completely green from day one. State-of-the-art spray booths were selected to enhance the way product is applied, and special drains were installed to collect particles. “Plus, we’ll be spraying Autowave the day we open,” says Branning.

Branning says his customers are pleased that the shop has made the switch to waterborne. “People are very conscious of green businesses, and any way that we can do our part to protect the environment and the health and safety of others is crucial.”



Sikkens car refinishes are designed for professional use only.

Akzo Nobel Car Refinishes

5555 Spalding Dr.

Norcross, GA 30092

www.AkzoNobelCarRefinishes.net