

Miranda Auto Body

... a new name and direction

David Newton-Ross met with Bob and Paul Mackay at the formerly named Miranda Body Shop in Sydney. He spoke to them about their name change, the change to a prestige repair shop and the reasons for those changes.

NCR: When did you join the industry?

BM: Straight from school. I became an apprentice panel beater, served my apprenticeship at Taren Point Smash here in the Sutherland Shire. In those days there were only around four shops in the area. I stayed there and finished my apprenticeship.

NCR: Why did you want to get involved in the industry in the first place?

BM: Well I just love working on cars. It is in my blood, I still love it.

NCR: Did you move into your own shop from Taren Point Smash?

BM: No I moved up to Brisbane for 12 months and worked at Story Bridge Body Works for a really switched on guy. He was buying a house a week up there! He did not want me to leave – he told me to get a deposit and buy a house! I came back as I said to Sydney after 12 months but then went back up, took his advice and bought two investment houses there! When we decided to buy our first factory down here at Miranda we were able to do so. We then moved down the road to Taren Point and then up to where we are now but the Miranda in the name stayed with us.

NCR: When was it that you moved to this building? I remember you moving in.

BM: I think it was in 1999.

NCR: When you first started you were doing general smash repairs for insurers until recently when you decided to get into prestige work.

BM: Yes; the change really came about when my son Paul wanted to take over and



BOB (LEFT) AND PAUL MACKAY

move up to the next level. It probably was not the best time to make such a big investment in our facility but after a lot of thought and hard work we decided to make the change to become and be accepted as a Mercedes Benz repair specialist. We also changed the name of the business at that time.

Our team really love the change and the training involved and our customers really appreciate what we now have here.

NCR: Before you made the upgrade, your shop and office was always presentable anyway.

BM: My view of how the shop should look

really started when I joined you on the trips to the US and NACE many years ago. I remember the first trip opened my eyes to shop presentation – it stood out. Customer service also – capture the customer, get the keys! If you just sit in your own shop and do not look around you will not change.

My attitude to the industry has changed over the years and I am pleased with the direction we have now taken.

Paul is really passionate about the industry and that is why we made the change.

NCR: Did you advise Paul to come into the business?

BM: I really had no idea that he wanted to come into the business! We were at his school and the headmaster was interviewing the boys and asking what they wanted to be in life and when it came to Paul he said he wanted to be a panel beater! He had completed work experience with a motor mechanic and I thought that was what he wanted to be. I did not push



him into the trade but as soon as he could walk he would be coming down to the shop so he was used to it.

PM: In the school holidays I was always down at the shop.

BM: It has to be in your blood I think or you would not do it. The investment that you have to make these days to stay up with technology is substantial so you need to have that passion for the industry. You can spend \$40,000 to \$50,000 on a welder and two years later it is out of date!

NCR: Paul, the mechanical side of the industry you decided was not for you?

PM: No. I felt that the panel repair side was more hands on and rewarding.

NCR: You did your apprenticeship here?

PM: Yes and at St George TAFE. I became a tradesman, worked on the floor, drove tow trucks for a while and then came back into the business. I moved into the office to help Dad out.



TERRY FEEHAN, PAUL MACKAY AND GARY WANO

talkingShop

PROFILE OF THE
PROFESSIONAL SHOP
OWNER

NCR: I knew that your Mum and Dad were retiring to Queensland and that you would be managing the business so why the change?

PM: I could see the direction that the industry was taking and spoke to Dad about it. There was really no prestige repairer for Mercedes Benz in this area such as the ones in the city and on the North side so we saw an opportunity for our business. We had to put a business plan and a proposal to Mercedes Benz. There was a set criterion to work to and we had to stay within those criteria. They had their recommendations for shop design and layout etc. We then had to come up with a stage plan and we went over and above what they wanted. We felt if we were going to make the investment then we would go all out. There was a big disruption to our day to day business in the process but it has all been worthwhile.

NCR: You have now made the change and you indicated that there has been a change in the attitude of customers coming into the shop.

BM: Yes, a huge change.

PM: They all make positive comments about the facility and we enjoy showing them around.

NCR: How long have you had the Mercedes Benz badge now?

BM: Around 18 months.

NCR: With this investment you are obviously looking to a future in the industry?

PM: Yes. I am excited about the future.

BM: It is going to get tough but I think with Paul's attitude and the changes we have made we are now in a good position in the industry.

NCR: What do you see as the industry challenges?

PM: Technology is going to be a major challenge and also finding a happy



medium when working with insurers.

NCR: Outside of the business what do you enjoy doing?

PM: Golfing, surfing and spending time with my family.

BM: We will be doing some travelling and taking it easy but be available if Paul needs any help. I still love the industry and have a "shed" where I can do some work of my own when I want to. People ask if I have a hobby – this business is my hobby! **NCR**

Editor: I have known Bob and Paul for many years now and they have always had an excellent business and reputation. The move to prestige repair is certainly a logical one for them and I know that Paul will really excel in that area. Bob is leaving the business in very capable hands and I know that he is very happy to do so. I am very impressed with what I saw and wish them both every success in the future.



Shop Profile – Miranda Auto Body, 64 Captain Cook Drive, Caringbah, NSW

Shop size: 2500 Square meters Employees: 13

Shop Equipment: Two Celette benches, two spray booths, three prep bays, Aluminium Repair room complete to Mercedes Benz specs, Wielander & Schill GT Automatic spot welder, Wielander & Schill Xpress 800 rivet gun, along with an extensive range of Factory Mercedes Benz tooling and equipment and jigs for Mercedes Benz vehicles.

Paint system: Glasurit 90 Line waterborne

Years in business: 42

