Walcom’s Thermodry Technology is a Game Changer for Busy Shop

by Autobody News Staff

By keeping his head on a swivel when it comes to the newest technology out there in the collision world, a forward-thinking body shop owner is using a new paint application tool that’s changing his business in a very positive way.

Jack Lamborghini and his partner Brian Bernard opened Total Care Accident Repair just three years ago in Raynham, MA, but they’re already well-known for top-tier work and thorough customer support. With 35 total years of industry experience and as a national consultant helping body shops with their production processes and financials, Lamborghini started in the automotive business when he bought a MAACO franchise in 1976.

Lamborghini purchased his Walcom Thermodry Technology system (TD3) earlier this year, as part of his ongoing mission to incorporate cutting-edge equipment and techniques into his state-of-the-art facility. The Thermodry Technology heats and maintains set compressed air temperatures, regardless of the climate in the room. It enables the painter to use filtered, heated and thermo regulated compressed air, which saves drying time and requires less paint.

Initially, Lamborghini was skeptical about the TD3, but after seeing it in action, he was sold. “Whatever they call it, I call it magic,” Lamborghini explained. “It allows us to get superior material transfer from the spray gun to the vehicle’s surface by heating the paint. Once we found out what it could do, we were ecstatic, because the results are nothing short of astounding. The solvent and clears just lay out better and issues with things like mottling are less present. And because the paint dries faster, you will encounter less chance of dirt getting into the paint, which equals less buffing. The material savings is also significant, saving 15-20% on our materials usage, and that’s a conservative number. The finished product is exceptional across the board.”

Rob Mercier owns Collision Center Design, the home of Walcom and the North American distributor of the TD3. “Total Care Accident Repair paints all its cars with solvent, but the TD3 can be used with waterborne as well,” Mercier said. “It flashes faster with both types of paint and reduces drying time by 25-30% for waterborne and 30-40% for solvent-based paints. By using less material it leads to accelerated drying times. In addition, the materials will dry faster from within as a result of being applied closer to ambient temperature with no humidity.”

Once Lamborghini’s paint crew became comfortable with the TD3, the magic could begin. “It takes a little effort on behalf of the painter to get it dialed in with the air pressure. When the people from Walcom explained the system to our painters and showed them how to use it, they picked it up rather quickly and were adept with it after a day or two. The learning curve is very short, but I would tell people when you demo it, do it for a full day or even two. That way, you’ll be able to see it used on multiple cars, which is hugely helpful. If you gave this piece of equipment to a painter without at least an initial explanation, he would most likely not get it.

“Craig Denton is my lead painter and he’s a very skilled applicator of product, but he’s also a better thinker,” Lamborghini said. “He’s always thinking about improving his approach and how he can do things more effectively. When he first saw the Thermodry Technology in action, he was lukewarm about it. But as he painted the second and third car and started dialing back on the air pressure, he saw what he could do with this system and his attitude changed rather quickly. The more he used it, the more excited he got. And now he can’t imagine going back to the old way of painting cars! We’re painting roughly 70 cars every month here and we’re using the TD3 on every single one.”

Lamborghini then uttered the three words every body shop wants to hear when they discuss any product or piece of equipment—return on investment. “We’re going to get our money back on this machine within the first 3-4 months, I believe. For shops that paint more cars than we do, obviously it will pay for itself even faster, but in the end it’s an investment rather than an expense, which is key. In addition, it’s been virtually service-free since we purchased it.”

The technology is not rocket science and more and more body shops all over the country are realizing that, according to Mercier. “In simplest terms, the heat atomizes the paint more efficiently than cold compressed air does. Our machine regulates the heat right at the spray gun inlet, so that there’s less static pressure at the spray gun nozzle. When painters find out that our system minimizes die back, alleviates modeling, and saves materials, they like it. And then when they see that their cycle times are reduced significantly, they love it even more.”

What the Walcom Thermodry Technology system can do for any body shop’s painting department is significant, but what it prevents is also just as vital, Mercier said. “By avoiding common issues such as orange peeling of clear coats, and problems associated with fish eyes, die back and/or dirt, the TD3 is a godsend for any painter. Once they learn how to use it, they’ll realize that things they used to have to do—such as denibbing and buffing—are gone, while consistently getting a superior finish on every vehicle.”

Craig Denton, the head painter at Total Care Accident Repair, had to paint a few cars to become comfortable with the Walcom Thermodry Technology system (TD3), but once he dialed it in, he was sold

By embracing the latest technology available in the collision industry, Total Care Accident Repair is becoming more efficient every day

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