

# CRISWELL

## COLLISION CENTER



[www.CriswellCollisionCenter.com](http://www.CriswellCollisionCenter.com)

Click on the link above if you haven't checked out our website recently.

*It is updated regularly to include before and after repair photos, customer testimonials and information about our staff, and more!*

### The Art of Restoration

October 2009

Dear Lori,

This quarter we'll explore the "artistic" side of the auto body repair industry.

It's always fun to watch custom car builders put together automotive works of art on television. What they don't show you may not be as entertaining, but it can provide a reality check for you to any thoughts you may have of breathing new life into an "old friend". You know, the one that has been sitting in your garage or under a cover in the back yard for several years, waiting to become "collectible".

Collision repair technicians are a singular group of individuals who carry technical skills that most vocational training centers only begin to introduce them too. The men and women who have the talent to maintain a successful career in collision repair possess a unique combination of artistic ability and technical proficiency that largely goes unnoticed. After all, the best collision repairs, when completed, leave little or no evidence of ever having been performed in the first place.

Restoration and custom work is a completely different facet of our industry. For the repair facilities that consent to this type of work, the relationship between the shop and the vehicle owner must be established in advance in order to avoid misunderstandings later. Estimating the cost of these kinds of projects in advance is impractical. Labor and materials is usually handled on a "pay as you go" basis and vehicle owners should be prepared for the unexpected. Many times repair facilities leave the customer feeling as though they [the shop] misrepresented themselves. The shop is often remiss in the explanation of the restoration process and the multitude of unforeseen issues that can and usually do manifest themselves along the way. From hidden damage discovered during disassembly and the stripping-off of the old paint, to parts fabrication due to a particular part no longer being available or a client request for a one-of-a-kind customization. Putting a price on this type of work will not be found in any estimating database and clients need to be prepared in advance for the very expensive nature of the journey they are about to embark upon.

Most of what we are exposed too on some of the popular television shows presents custom and restoration projects in an exciting format that results in an impressive before and after scenario with some drama sprinkled in between. The fact of the matter is, none of it is as easy as it looks. It takes hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of hours of labor performed by teams of experienced, artistically talented individuals to produce the results witnessed on these shows.

In reality, depending on the scope of the project, it may take months or years to complete what seems like takes only a fraction of that time on television. What may be built by a team of 10 or more individuals on television is generally the responsibility of one repair tech and one refinish tech in a standard shop environment. In addition to building your dream, these individuals also need to make a living. In the amount of time it might take to fabricate and finish some rust-through damage in the fender of a 1955 Chevrolet, an average repair technician could probably have completed two or three production repairs that would yield him more take home pay than that previously mentioned rust repair.

From a customers perspective, they may feel they are paying a lot of money and seeing painstakingly slow progress being made on their project. From a technicians point of view the restoration work involves a completely different mind-set apart from daily production type work. Only a handful of technicians are capable of shifting between the production, assembly-line frame of mind to the artistic side they need to have in order to complete a restoration project.

As with most artists; when above average restoration work is completed, the technician is usually the hardest individual to satisfy. Not from a financial perspective, but from a critical point of view. Any attempt to put a price on a quality restoration will almost always shortchange the craftsman. Value for the vehicle owner comes from possessing a piece of automotive history or a unique, custom-modified automotive work of art. Properly and effectively completed, a restored automobile or motorcycle should last for years. Today's technology in the hands of qualified technicians can result in a finished project in better condition than when it was new.

Following this article are some photos of a recent project Criswell Collision Center has been involved with. If you would like to explore other areas of the "artistic" side of collision repair, try a few of these links:

[White Post Restorations](#)  
["Big Daddy" Ed Roth](#)  
[George Barris Customs](#)

Cordially,

Kevin Marvin  
Criswell Collision Center

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS...

Here

to

There



Watching custom car builders go from "junk" to "gem" looks easy on T.V. and usually appears to take only about an hour! Reality is often a much different story....



1964 Ferrari 250 Lusso. Aluminum skin over steel door frame needed special skills to effectively repair.

Left rear wheel opening rust cut away and prepped.



Left rear wheel opening with new sheetmetal spot welded in place.

Wheel opening rust replaced with new sheetmetal. Stripping panels revealed pre-existing repairs.



Finishing the fender/hood area and improving the fit and alignment of the hood to the front sheetmetal. The left door and quarter panels are ready to block sand.

Fenders were seamed in at least four places by Pininfarina coach builders in Italy nearly 46 years ago. The original metal work in these cars is amazing.



Finishing work to front end before priming.

Ferrari on paint prep deck after first priming and sanding.



Car will be primed and blocked 3 times to ensure that when color is applied, it's smooth as glass.

Final priming complete. Next step is masking and final prep for refinish top coat.



Masked in paint booth after refinishing. In the booth the finish can be baked at up to 200 degrees. The heat accelerates the curing process and helps flow-out the clear coat.

Clear coat is wet-sanded and polished to remove minor imperfections. This project was brought to shop dis-assembled and will be returned to the vehicle owner for re-assembly.



This 1964 Ferrari 250 Lusso GT/L with the fender vents & rear spoiler is very rare. This one has resided with its current owner for 34 years and is part of their family. Criswell Collision Center is delighted to have played a part in breathing new life into their old friend.

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