

Fix Auto Watsonville



USI NORTH AMERICA CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

Fix Auto Watsonville Are All-in with USI Italia

Mike Garland learned the business from his father Ken, who learned it from Russell, /his father. Mike, 43, is continuing the family legacy and taking it tentire different level by owning and operating four Fix Auto shops in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Monterey and Salinas. By carefully vetting any piece of equipment, tool or product before acquiring it, Mike is making all the right moves and this year he's planning to hit his best numbers to-date.

After honing his skills at several body shops in the Monterey Coast area, Mike began working for Watsonville Auto Body. He was making big money as a painter and eventually the shop's



Cardenas (left) and Garland now rely on their USI Italia booth for a spectacular finished product every time.

owner decided to sell the business to Mike in 2002. In 2006, he became affiliated with Fix Auto and now he has three additional shops also within the network.

All of Garland's four stores are different based on regional demographics, but with the support of Fix Auto and with a business slogan that states "go big or go home", he's hitting on all cylinders. "Getting involved with Fix Auto was a really smart move, because they've helped us in so many ways," he said. "I knew that consolidation was on the way, so I aligned myself with the best company I could. I thought I was a pretty good operator, but when I joined Fix



Third-second generation shop owner Mike Garland has four Fix Auto locations throughout the Monterey Coast area.



Head Painter Jose Cardenas (left) is painting as many as two additional vehicles every day with a USI Italia Chronotech booth at Fix Auto Watsonville.

Auto, I realized I need to ramp up my game. I looked at them for several years before I made the move and I'm sure happy I did."

Another recent decision that Garland made after much consideration was his purchase of three USI Italia spray booths, one in Santa Cruz, and two accompanied with prep stations in his Watsonville location.

Garland wanted to improve the efficiencies in his paint department and initially thought that he would need two new paint booths in his Watsonville shop to accommodate his production, he said. So, he began checking out every booth he could find before deciding that USI Italia was his best option.

"I spent two full years researching and checking out every spray booth on the market," he said. "I went to SEMA and talked to everyone and asked a lot of questions. It was a long process, but buying a booth is a big investment, so it was worth it."

After meeting several times with the people at USI Italia and seeing the Chronotech in action, Mike was ready to pull the trigger. "They kept telling me that one USI booth would do the work of two and eventually I could see it was true and it blew my mind," he said. "We invested in their prep stations as well, another good decision, because my guys can work so much faster and effectively now."

After one month, Mike could clearly see that his Chronotechs were more than capable as they seamlessly became an integral part of his production. "We did more than \$400,000 out of just one of our USI booths and I was shocked, to be honest. It all comes down to the the airflow; we never need blowers ever. Our painters are working fewer hours and producing an incredible product each and every time."

The virtual support provided by USI Italia hasn't been required often and one time it did work perfectly and automatically, Garland said. "One day, they called us to tell us that there was something they needed to fix in our booth in Santa Cruz and I wasn't even there at the time. They solved the issue within 45 minutes without charging us anything, and we were back up and running right away. It was so easy and they did it all online, which is a huge timesaver, especially when we're busy. We can't afford to wait 2-3 days, which was the case with our former paint booth, because we were always waiting for their people to show up."

After just one day of training, Garland's painters were able to jump into the booth and go right to work, he said. "It's very simple, because the EPS System does a lot of the work. If we stick to the program, we can't go wrong. You can't paint every car the same way. It's a huge benefit because my painters are working less and doing more."

Garland is also impressed by the Chronotech's construction and durability. "The whole booth is built with quality," he said. "If you look at the hinges and the way the walls are interlinked together, you can see it. With other booths, the panels clip together, but this booth exceeds anything else in the market. I know, because I've seen them all and there isn't anything like a USI Italia booth."



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