

SPECIALIST SPOTLIGHT

Body beautiful



Alex Fletcher has his roots in car bodywork after being trained in the industry in every aspect of the trade. In due course he established a fine reputation, gaining significant positions in some well-respected companies, where he worked on cars like the Maserati 250F and Alvis Speed 20. In time he chose to share his knowledge and took to teaching at Wolverhampton College. Soon, though, he decided to put everything on the line and he set up a business in Bridgnorth: Body Beautiful.

Alex invested in the very latest equipment, including a state-of-the-art low bake spray-booth and two in-house paint mixing schemes – Spies Hecker and Lechler – allowing any shade of any type of paint to be accurately matched under a daylight lighting system. Turning out excellent work, word soon spread and some top cars have been seen in the workshop. Alex didn't set out to concentrate on Jaguar but these things are often inevitable, especially as some of the country's top restorers chose to use Body Beautiful.

But Alex is anxious not to be snobbish about his work and prides himself on applying the same standards to any make. There's even been a Metro in the workshop. Other cars include all of the Jaguar classics – E-type, XK and Mk 2, as well as Ferrari 250GT, Aston Martin and Lola. The Jaguar Heritage Trust chose Body Beautiful to carry out the refinishing of the record-breaking XK 120, LJK 707 (below), while awards were won for some stunning work on custom cars. It's not just standard paintwork, special effects like marble, metal flake and airbrushing are offered too.

Alex is assisted in the workshop by Mark Collins and Stephen James, both fully qualified and experienced in this type of work. Everything is done to a set standard, whether it is an MGB, XJ40, Porsche or E-type – and we saw all of these in the workshop during our visit. To aid the work process a moisture removing heating system operates to allow any bare metal to remain bare metal. Each car goes through its set procedures to ensure that the body is gun-barrel straight and panel gaps even. This is achieved by applying black and flattening off until all low or high spots are removed. Then the whole job is left to 'settle' before proceeding further. During the whole process there is absolutely no water ingress that might threaten the integrity of the final product.

To assist customers, a collection/delivery service in covered trailers is available while a free photographic record is also supplied. Body Beautiful can also operate on extended hours if that helps any visiting clients. In fact customers are positively welcome to see the progress of their car.

Jim Patten



Data file

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