

Stawell Panel & Paint is the creation of car enthusiast Peter. He and wife Suzette have been operating since 2006 and now have six employees.

What does Stawell Panel & Paint do? Peter describes it as ANYTHING to do with cars. Suzette says anything but the motor component of a car. Stawell Panel & Paint complete restorations, repair cars that are involved in accidents, respray cars, replace windscreens, sandblasting and chassis straightening. Using the Car-O-Liner to measure and pull vehicles to their correct measurements is highly satisfying for Peter. He has an amazing passion for watching the transformations a car goes through to reach the finished product.

Since the age of 12 Peter has had an interest in cars and always wanted to be a mechanic. However the man that lived over the road was a panel beater so he just fell into this line of work. Although Peter has 40 years experience in the industry he also never intended to open a business. It just happened. He was doing hobby work from within his shed and one day an employee from an insurance company visited the premises and said there was a market to fill in Stawell and that he should consider filling it. When the shed across the road from the house became vacant they moved quickly and that so called 'accident' became bigger than expected.

Having a business that ended up being something bigger than they could have ever imagined stands out as an achievement for both Peter and Suzette. This new space means that around 20 cars can be floating around the premises at one time. Another achievement was completing the restoration of a 1952 Hudson Wasp. When Peter saw the vehicle the only original component of the car was the Hudson name. Overall the restoration took 3-4 years at the hobby shed. Countless hours were spent to restore the Hudson Wasp to its former glory. These are projects of passion. Performing these restorations is what motivates Peter to operate the business and seeing the owners face once a restoration is completed, is the best gratification Peter can receive from a client. Last week after unveiling a car they nearly had to pick the man off the floor.

As you may be aware, the Australian automotive industry has experienced many changes recently. Peter has seen them all, in the beginning paint technicians didn't have to wear masks and there were definitely no spray booths. Sourcing parts of cars is difficult now. Previously you had parts of cars on the shelf ready to go. Getting a product from France can take up to three months. This has affected their business as they are constrained by these sourcing timelines.

Peter and Suzette believe that a thank you is all that is necessary. They like to help people out and they don't like to see people in sticky situations. Their business has helped them to develop relationships with new people that wouldn't have developed otherwise. A prior client calls in for a meal and says hello whenever he is in Stawell. One happy customer posted on the Stawell Panel & Paint Facebook the following : "I can't say thank you enough. The customer service was 110%, nice, friendly and easy to talk to. SO helpful will recommend you ALWAYS." Customers mention that they have selected Stawell Panel & Paint because of the positive comments they have seen on their Facebook page. Facebook can be a huge asset to any business and this demonstrates another example of how the business has changed since they first opened in 2006.

Stawell Panel & Paint is a benefit to the community as they provide a service that is not always found in local communities. They are able to make many people's dreams into realities. These restorations that feature in magazines, also put Stawell on the map. They encourage people to visit the area whilst also visiting this exceptional business. And to the wider community, their works within restoration are actually assisting to preserve history.

Owning this business, has allowed Peter to teach the young kids the tricks of the trade. Seeing them practice the skills and be able to move through the ranks is very satisfying. It is even better when you get to watch these employees be rewarded for the quality of their skills. Money cannot buy this experience.

In the future they hope to establish their reputation and brand further, sell the business and travel around Australia while they are still young. Which sounds like a very good plan!

For those of you wanting to find out more about Stawell Panel & Paint you can get in contact with them via:
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