

Today's Auto Repair

with Chip Stewart

-Searching for a Pro, Part 2-

Last time, I discussed the search for a good automotive repair facility and the advantage of finding one that employs ASE certified technicians. This time let's look at other things you should look for in your quest.

Don't ever pick a facility strictly by a telephone book advertisement. There is no such thing as phone book police and what you read may not necessarily be true. (What? A phony advertisement? What will the tooth fairy say?) Go check the place out. How's its appearance? Does it look like a junkyard or is it reasonably neat and clean? The appearance of the shop and its technicians is generally a reflection of the quality of repairs you can expect to get there.

Does the facility have any affiliations? Look for signage that indicates they belong to professional organizations that are beneficial to consumers. (Examples: BBB, Chamber of Commerce, ASE, ASA, ATRA, ATSG, MAP, ASIA, APRA, etc.)

Find out if they are insured. Seldom does a car get damaged while at a repair facility but accidents do happen. The chances of getting reimbursed by an uninsured shop are slim to none. It's also nice to know that the facility could be financially responsible in case of liability resulting from repair errors.

What kinds of warranties do they offer? The only ones that count in court are warranties that comply with the Magnuson-Moss Federal Warranty Act of 1975. So, get it in writing but get it wrote right [sic]. Good facilities have a standing customer satisfaction ruling that many times outweighs any written warranty. A good reputation should not be ignored.

Look for a good shop library. Good technical information and a lot of it is an absolute must for today's technician. Some shops are computer on-line with technical help services. That's a big plus when dealing with particularly difficult problems such as intermittent drivability complaints.

A good facility cares about the environment and its employees so EPA and OSHA compliance is a must. Look for a safe working area and the lack of oil and/or hazardous waste spills.

Finally, I've mentioned this before and I'll mention it again - ask around. If you get several recommendations to a particular facility, chances are you'll be pleased with the service you receive.

