

The results of the UK's Sewells Bodyshop Opinion Survey for 2007 are out and Spies Hecker UK has been ranked No. 1 in the overall rating of the Major Paint Companies segment in several key categories of the survey.

Sewells Information and Research started the Bodyshop Opinion Survey in 1996 and with the exception of 2002 and 2003 it has been an annual survey since then. The opinion survey is a combination of primary and attitudinal research. All the information and data is obtained first hand and its main objective is to poll the views of body shop owners and managers about their everyday relationships with work providers and suppliers.

Taking paint companies as an example, respondents were asked to tell Sewells the name of the main refinish paint used and then, the names of two other paint brands that they might use.

For the main brand of paint, respondents were then asked to rate the paint company on a scale of 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor' or 'very poor'. Every aspect of the relationship between a bodyshop and paint company was broken down using 19 detailed rating questions about products, staff, technical back-up, valued-added services and business areas.

Spies Hecker scored highest in the following Paint Companies sub-categories – each a key element in the automotive paint process and product supply chain:

- Ease of use: At 86.5%, Spies Hecker was almost four percentage points up on its closest competitor
- Colour range: At 85.5%, close to three percentage points higher than the company ranked second
- Colour accuracy: At 74.5%, Spies Hecker's rating was 1.2% up on its rivals
- Range/amount of stock: At 78.4%,

close to four percentage points up on competitor brands

### Spies Hecker Colours SA

With colouristics a core element of every professional automotive paint brand, Spies Hecker UK's top ratings reflect well on the brand both in the UK and internationally.

In South Africa, Spies Hecker is also at the forefront of automotive paint technology and colouristics is a cornerstone of the brand. Its latest Colour & IT News has just been distributed and is available for view by Spies Hecker distributors and refinishers on-line at [www.spieshecker.co.za](http://www.spieshecker.co.za).

In addition to this, the SA Car Colour Index Update 34 is available for downloading off the website. All South African motor manufacturers' colours for the past 15 years are included in this innovative colour tool. It is a highly flexible system and can easily be updated and maintained by refinishers.

### Body Shop Closures Slowing Down

In addition to Sewells 'satisfaction ratings', the UK company also collects data about the marketplace and bodyshops. Taking into account the number of bodyshops operating in the UK, the survey reflects a case of 'good news' and 'bad news'. Bad news first - while UK bodyshops continue to close down, the good news is that the rate of closure has slowed down considerably.

While the fall in bodyshop numbers overall, might seem ultimately damaging, it is the fortunes of primary body shops that really matter. Primary bodyshops are those where body repairs are the main



business focus, although it is traditional to include franchised body shops and exclude commercial vehicle and motorcycle bodyshops. These primary shops are the backbone of the industry and carry out over 80% of the work.

Sewells reports that while there were 6 300 primary bodyshops operating in the UK in 1996/97, they estimate that currently there are around 4 070 primary bodyshops in operation - 3 080 independents and 990 franchised.

However, the survey reflects that closure rate of primaries has slowed considerably. Taking this into account, the fact that their numbers will probably fall to 3 480 by 2012, might not prove to be a problem.

South Africa is experiencing a similar trend regarding bodyshops with many of its smaller, independent body shops having been swallowed up or making way for large and very often, corporate-funded consortiums.

Spies Hecker serves over 160 000 customers in 55 countries around the world. Internationally, it regards its body shop customers - both big and small - as being equally important and its commitment to providing refinishing solutions to body shops across-the-board, remains absolute.

## Driveway to highway

by Denis Woods

In 1998 Moeneeb and Shamiieg Fataar started off repairing cars in their fathers' driveway with a staff complement of three. In 2000 they decided to rent premises in the heart of Athlone, Industria.

With the vision of expanding their business and owning their own premises, they decided to purchase their own building.

With great pride both men sat down and developed a layout which would suit both themselves and most manufacturers' requirements.

Now with a complement of 20 qualified staff and the latest in equipment and machinery, they have their goals firmly in place.

They receive ongoing training in all the various fields of car refinish from their paint supplier Cape Paint and Panel. Spies Hecker has been their choice of paint from the start and with its numerous paint approvals, colouristics and back-up service; it is and will always be their brand

of choice.

To celebrate their success, they held a successful party with 80 guests attending. All effort was made to transform the shop into a banquet hall. No expense was spared when it came to catering, and all guests received a complimentary gift from

**The proud owners of Alpha Panelbeaters Shamiieg and Moeneeb Fataar, are looking forward to an expansive future along with their team of suppliers and staff.**

