



My Car Club technical day

After much anticipation for me (at least) the day arrived! The Club had arranged a visit to AA Panelcraft (AAPC) at Braemar in the Southern Highlands. Our club was joined by the Italian Made Social Motoring Club. This club has all sorts of Italian vehicles from Italian exotica like Ferrari's to Fiat Bambino's. Personally I'm planning on doing a panel and paint restoration to my 1968 Corvette so the visit was timely for me.

AA Panelcraft was established in 1998 by Andrew Ash to service the specialty market of superior automotive paint work. AAPC is not your average 'body shop'. They are not smash repairers, but rather craftsmen in refinishing high end, classic and collectable cars and motorcycles.

Andrew has son Martin and Aaron Bray working in the business. Martin is the paint expert and Aaron is the body craftsman although, being such a small business all are experts in all facets of the business. AAPC has won numerous industry awards.

On the floor at the time of the visit there was a Porsche coupe, a Land Rover, a Monaro, Austin Healey, a Jaguar and bits and pieces of other cars.

Split into two groups of about 20 members we were open to ask any questions we could think of, and the questions were answered candidly and in detail. From using 600 wet and dry right up to 3000 grit and beyond we learned how to prepare a paint job to the point of final polishing to get a mirror finish (sanding and polishing can take up to a week to do).

We saw an amazing model of a coupe done by Aaron. It was hand formed using aluminium and was done so that his son could sit in it. Amazing workmanship! I suggested to Aaron that he might have been a candidate for some sort of award when he was at TAFE, and so beautifully proud, with his chest thrust out he said he was once apprentice of the year!

There was an English Wheel there that would have not looked out of place in the Powerhouse Museum - except it worked perfectly!

Another tool of the bodybuilding trade was a stand that had numerous slender pieces of metal, each slightly different to the next. To me it was reminiscent of one of those old shopping centre rockets that kids climbed through to get to the top (but stood less than two metres tall. Turned out that the whole setup was for measuring panel shapes so that both sides of a car were exactly the same (hard to explain).

Our visit to AAPC ended and we were off to the Mittagong RSL for lunch and some socialising. Great food but it was the company that was the true winner here.

All in all the day was fantastic! Thanks to one of our members PETER WEINERT, who helped to set the day up.

Chris Jurgeit