



Shop Showcase

with Chasidy Rae Sisk

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Nigro's in Philadelphia Exemplifies the City's Brotherly Love Motto

When William Penn gave Philadelphia its motto as the City of Brotherly Love, he wasn't thinking about auto body shops. It was 1682 after all. But I don't know of any other business in Philly that has embraced that motto to the degree that *Nigro's Auto Body* has. Located at 939 Washington Ave, Nigro's Auto Body has always felt the importance of giving back and fostering the community that surrounds them.

This shop continuously proves its dedication to community by donating time, money and energy to improve the daily lives of their customers, neighbors and the city in general.



Aniello Nigro founded *Nigro's Auto Body* in 1983 after working at several local shops and deciding to provide customers with the quality workmanship he had learned while an apprentice at his uncle's shop in Florence, Italy. He adopted his own motto: "Old World Craftsmanship, New World Technology." Aniello had an auto body shop at a smaller location for about six months before moving to his current location on Washington Avenue. His son and co-owner of the shop, Domenico Nigro, tries to follow the same code of standards and ethics as his father. His goal is not only to make his customers happy but also to provide them with knowledge about their automotive repairs, including a lifetime guarantee on the work done at his shop.

Domenico Nigro explained that the shop's goal is to help the industry and provide customer satisfaction, and he believes one important way to do this is by helping people and disseminating information to other shops. By showing customers that they care, Nigro's plans to build their brand by helping people so customers know they can trust the shop to do what is

best for them and their vehicles. By uniting with other shops, even nationwide, difficult situations become surmountable as another shop has encountered it and can share their experience, whether it be a technical, insurance or customer situation.

Nigro's Auto Body is very active in their community in Philadelphia. Besides donating money to many charities, such as the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and through setting up fundraisers for Holy Spirit Church and their Padre Pio Foundation, they also contribute to Italian-American organizations, churches and rehabilitation centers. One such center is De La Salle Vocational for youths on probation where Nigro's assists with revitalizing the auto body program in particular as well as participating in the program in general. The family has also established the Nigro Family Foundation which benefits women, children and rehabilitation. Nigro's takes the consumers needs seriously, becoming one of the first shops with "Green Technology" and most recently, becoming an 'Ask Patty'-Certified Female Friendly Shop.



AutoTex's PINK Wiper Blades, on sale at Nigro's, benefit the National Breast Cancer Foundation. For more information, visit www.autotexpink.com or call (800) 692-3962

Recently, *Nigro's Auto Body* began selling AutoTex Pink wiper blades which allow customers to follow the shop's example of giving back as the proceeds benefit the National Breast Cancer Foundation. The blades also have a motto: "Change A Blade and Change A Life."

The shop participates in fundraisers and charity walks, as well as various food, phone and blood drives. They also are in the process of establishing sponsorship for annual awards

for those who help the community and are often underappreciated, such as teachers, firefighters, police, doctors and so forth, in addition to offering

Nigro's also reveals a feeling of responsibility toward the environment. Besides being one of the first shops in the area to go green, they



(left to right): Joseph Coulter, Aniello Nigro, Domenico Nigro & Raffaele Mele

scholarships for children's education. Experts at restoring antique and exotic cars, the shop has also contributed efforts to restoring vehicles for the Simeone Foundation Museum.

Additionally, the shop works with a company to install equipment for disabled drivers, and the proceeds of this effort are donated to the Bonnacotti Fund. The shop has received a car seat certificate from Safe Kids so they can teach parents how to properly install their child's car seat, and they plan to participate in a Child Safety program with CHOP to test car seats as well. They are also involved with the Boy and Girl Scouts, allowing children to earn auto body badges at the shop. Nigro's hosts an Ask Patty-certified course to teach women about their vehicles, as well as driving safety classes.

They are also currently developing three phone applications. The first allows the user to contact medical care, the police and emergency contacts as well as sending information directly to the insurance company to help process their claim and show liability in case of an accident. The other two applications are focused on teen driving safety; the first monitors speed and emails parents speed and location information when the teen exceeds a specified speed limit, and the second blocks teens from texting while driving, responding to incoming calls and texts that the recipient is driving and will return the call when available.

also sell Passchal handbags which are made from recyclable materials, the proceeds of which benefit the United Way, DuPont Hospital and the Nigro Family Foundation. They participate in the effort to preserve nature by recycling everything possible, including metals, plastic and fiberglass. They also use Sikkens waterborne paints, by AkzoNobel, and they are currently in the process of researching how they can adopt solar energy power sources.

The shop shows that they care for all aspects of the customer's well-being by offering auto financing and a deductible program to help save money. Additionally, the shop is working on participation in a third-party program called *Don't Pay Us to Fix Your Car* which basically allows customers, subject to credit approval, to use their insurance check to pay off high-interest, long-term debt, giving them up to a year to repay the loan without interest for a small upfront fee.

Visiting the shop's website, potential customers can see further evidence that *Nigro's Auto Body* truly cares about their needs. The site offers information about their many programs as well as resource articles with useful information such as the steps to take if involved in an automobile accident and how to save money on gas, among others. Adding to the site's comprehensiveness is the option of translating it into English, Spanish or

Italian, the three languages spoken in the shop.

Though Nigro's typically utilizes standardized equipment, such as MIG welders, a Chart frame machine and measuring systems, one unique piece of equipment that they rely on is their handmade downdraft spray booth. Aniello Nigro hand-crafted his booth using a design from his uncle's shop in Florence, Italy. The inside of the booth is covered with white ceramic tiles, and according to manager **Wayne Simmons**, their "multi-filter downdraft design provides a perfect airflow, virtually eliminates contaminants, and is heated for baking finishes, basically allowing our painter to create near-flawless finishes."

Nigro's Auto Body employs six workers and encompasses 3000 square feet where they complete approximately twenty-five cars each month. The shop has been certified I-CAR Gold, and by PPG, ASE, ASA, BASF and ADP, in addition to being Esco Institute EPA Certified. In addition to auto body work, Nigro's also engages in some towing and accident-related mechanical repairs.

Domenico Nigro concedes that this is one of the toughest times he has seen in all the years of Nigro's existence. The economy, price of parts, tougher insurance and adjuster relations and regulations, combined with customer demands and the technology of the automobiles all add up to tough times. However, Domenic maintains it does not all have to be doom and gloom. He has compiled several pamphlets specifically for fellow shop owners and is very willing to share them along with other thoughts, ideas, and questions. He urges shop owners to contact him by email at NigroAutoBody@Comcast.net and place Body Shop Magazine Article in the subject line. He regrets that phone calls cannot be handled due to volume.

Nigro's is determined to help unite the body shop industry and share some of the wealth of information they have gleaned from doing business throughout the decades.

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Delphi Files for \$100M Initial IPO

Troy-based Delphi Automotive LLC, riding a wave of Wall Street interest in the auto sector, has filed financial documents in preparation for an initial public stock offering, according to the *Detroit News*.

The former General Motors Co. parts unit emerged from bankruptcy in late 2009 after a four-year restructuring, owned primarily by private equity firms including Elliott Management, Silver Point Capital and Paulson & Co., the investment arm of billionaire **John Paulson**.

In documents submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission late May 27, Delphi filed for a \$100 million IPO—a placeholder figure—but the final amount could be \$1 billion or more. The company will disclose the number of shares, pricing and the amount it expects to raise when it gets closer to launching the offering. Delphi didn't say when it plans to go public.

The maker of fuel-injection systems and other parts said it plans for its stock to trade under the symbol DLPH.

The move toward public ownership follows GM's successful \$23.1 billion IPO in November—the largest ever. Another major supplier, Allison Transmission Holdings, which also was once a GM unit, also plans an IPO. California-EV start-up Tesla Motors Inc. had a successful start-up in June, raising \$226 million. It said this week it is filing for a follow-on stock offering to raise \$200 million or more.

The restructured Delphi is slimmer and more profitable. It eliminated most of its US plants and hourly workers during bankruptcy, along with billions in pension obligations and other debts. It also canceled salaried retiree health care and life in-

surance. When it filed for bankruptcy, Delphi had 50,000 U.S. employees and more than 30 plants. Today, it has about 5,000 at five U.S. factories. Delphi operates 110 manufacturing facilities and 14 major technical centers and employs about 110,000 people worldwide. About 90 percent of Delphi's 100,000 hourly workers worldwide are in low-wage countries and 30 percent of its factory workers are temporary workers.

The company had revenue of \$4 billion in the first quarter, with net income of \$310 million. Last year, it reported \$13.8 billion in revenue and net income of \$703 million.

David Cole, chairman emeritus of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor expects Delphi's IPO to be successful.

"They are positioned to be very profitable, especially as auto sales return to traditional levels," Cole said.

"They've gotten a lot leaner and moved their production to low-cost areas."

Auto sales are still at "depression" levels—still far below the 15-16 million annual vehicles sold. "Investors in an IPO will buy on the expectation that sales will rebound," Cole said. **David Whiston**, an auto analyst at Morningstar Inc. in Chicago, said the key question for Delphi was its customer base.

"Any auto supplier that has a cleaned-up balance sheet from bankruptcy has good prospects given that I expect U.S. auto sales to be several million units a year higher over the next few years than they are today," Whiston said. Delphi has been talking to bankers for months about taking steps to get ready for their IPO. In March, Delphi bought GM's stake for \$3.8 billion.

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CA Domestic Sales

grade. The Dodge Durango and Charger are the two most improved vehicles out of eight new models the auto testing center is rating. All of the automakers new or refreshed vehicles are better than their predecessors, reflecting much better attention to detail, said Consumer Reports' **David Champion**.

Japanese brands took the brunt of the sales hit in May, due in large part to fallout from the earthquake and tsunami that hit the island nation hard

in March of this year. Of the three major Japanese automakers, Toyota was hit the hardest, down over 30 percent. Lexus, Toyota's luxury brand, fared ever worse, down nearly 45 percent from May of last year.

It remains to be seen if rising sales for domestic autos in the US will sustain and if, after the dust settles for Japanese automakers, import sales won't overtake the US market again. Though many domestic automakers have seen increases in California that indicate better prospects for long-term viability, a sustained nationwide sales increase in domestic autos is a much different question.

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