

# PARTS & PEOPLE

The Monthly Publication  
to Automotive Parts &  
Service Specialists

Automotive Counseling and Publishing Co. Inc.  
899 Logan St., Suite 311 • Denver, CO 80203  
800-530-8557 • 303-765-4664

www.partsandpeople.com

DECEMBER 2015

## Investments in equipment is investment in future

*Modesti's Car Care invests  
in new technology to grow business and  
streamline shop management*

by Dick DeLoach

Culver City, Calif.—John Modesti, president of Modesti's Car Care Center, has been a car guy since he was 15 years old and purchased his first vehicle, a used Model A Ford stored in a garage "in boxes" for \$25.

Reprinted from Parts & People,  
Southern California Edition, December 2015

"Getting it running took a while but the hands-on and hard-knocks education I got was worth it," he said. "My second car was a 1940 Ford panel truck, which I did as a frame-off hot rod."

The experience Modesti acquired working on those vehicles helped him start a career in automotive repair, becoming a Honda motorcycle technician in 1964 and attending Honda's first car clinic in 1969.

"It was on the Honda N600, a 600cc, two-cylinder air-cooled car with a 4-speed transmission, he said.

A couple years later, Modesti and his wife, Colette, opened their first shop, which eventually became Modesti's Independent Honda Repair.

"Honda discontinued the N600 and Z600 in 1973 and came out with the 4-cylinder water-cooled Civic," he said. "Fewer 600s were around and more Civics were coming in for service, so I decided to expand the focus on general auto repair."

In 1975, he opened his second shop in Culver City, Modesti's Car Care Center, across the street from its present location.

Modesti's son, Nick, who joined the family business 29 years, has worked in every position in the shop, and is now general manager.

As the business grew, Modesti started making plans in the mid-1990s to build a new facility.

"It took almost three years to obtain the loans, purchase the land, and build the building," Modesti said, a 9,000-square-foot, two-story building with a repair shop on the lower floor and offices above.

The shop has eight bays with four single-post and four double-post lifts, and Modesti has just purchased a new Multi-Tek portable alignment system from Car-Tek, the first in the U.S.

"We wanted to add alignment service but we don't



Three generations at family-owned Modesti's Car Care Center, from r., founder John Modesti; his granddaughter, Melanie, part-time service advisor; and her father, Nick, general manager, say they are constantly trying new strategies and technologies to make the customer experience better.

have room to install a conventional alignment rack, so after talking to shop owners in Canada who are using the Multi-Tek, it seemed like a perfect solution," Nick Modesti said.

The Multi-Tek features the latest processor technology that allows the technician to perform full alignment procedures at an arm's distance, via a wrist-mounted wireless controller, thus eliminating the need for computers and/or platforms around the shop.

The shop also has a full complement of diagnostic tools including an E-Scope eight-channel oscilloscope, E-scan, AutoEnginuity, Ross-Tech, Drew Tech Cardaq-M, MaxiDAS, Genisys Evo, Master-tech, the Snap-on "brick," and considering buying a new Autologic.

"We're seeing scan tools that integrate with information systems such as AllData that combines their info system with the ability to access scan data through an iPad or other mobile device," he said.

"Every year we send techs to the Automotive Training Expo (ATE) in Seattle, and this year we sent a tech to Automechanika in Chicago," he said. "Some parts vendors such as Completes Plus and Warren offer after-hours classes, too, which we attend if they look good."

Modesti said he sends his techs to a lot of WORLDPAAC training sessions because he finds that they are high-quality, high-level classes.

Modesti said he and his father like to be in a constant state of improvement. "We're always thinking about how can we do something better or more efficiently, or how we can wow our clients even more."

This year the shop started using AutoVitals for digital inspections, including photos of the repair

work, which so far has been received well by his clients, he said.

"It has been challenging converting to digital inspections and we're still working out the kinks, but it's coming along," he said. "We think we might even be paperless by the end of the year."

Nick's wife, Christie, is marketing director and customer-relations manager, and his oldest daughter, Melanie, who recently graduated from the Elite Masters Service Consultant program, "will be helping us with sales and other new things to improve customers' experience," he said. His son, Nicholas, is taking auto and business classes at College of the Canyons, he added.

For many years, Modesti's has been a AAA Approved Auto Repair (AAR) Center, a Bosch Service Center, and an ASE Blue Shield shop, and received Angie's List Super Service Award, all of which has helped the shop bring in new customers, he said.



Technician Carlos Herrera uses the shop's PC-based scan tool to diagnose a rough-running engine problem.

"I'm an active ASCCA member, which allows me to connect with other top shop owners directly at meetings and through TeamTalk, which is the association's e-mail information exchange."

Modesti believes the major challenges are, and will continue to be, keeping his techs up with new technology, tools, and training.

"Cars are becoming more intelligent. We may actually service self-driving cars in my lifetime," Modesti said. "How will we diagnose an intermittent U-turn problem on a self-driving car? I don't know yet but I'm excited to find out."

John Modesti and his wife are still active in the business, but he is 71 and plans to retire in the near future.

"I agreed to give Nick the business over two years ago and we have completed training with ATI, Tumaround Tour's 'Budgeting for Profit' by Gary Gunn and WORLDPAAC Smart Groups," he said. "I am confident Nick has everything needed to run the business into the next decade." ■



Technician Rafael Maravilla uses an iPad, part of AutoVitals' digital inspection system, to take pictures of repair work, which can then be e-mailed to the customer.