

# Missouri Collision Veteran Loves GYS Welding USA's Products



by Autobody News Staff

At the peak of his long career, **Rich Lanfersieck**, 72, the owner of *Spirit West Auto Body* with four locations in Missouri, isn't afraid to adapt to new things and ideas and take chances along the way. This collision "lifer" was the first person in the St. Louis area to purchase a backdraft paint booth at the first SEMA Show held in Las Vegas in 1984. He's opened three additional locations as the business grew. Recently he applied his expertise when he bought welding and dent pulling machines from GYS Welding USA.

Each pivotal move Lanfersieck makes, from acquiring new equipment all the way to mentoring young techs and bringing his son Randy into the business is done with careful research and much thought. By making sage decisions, this second-generation shop owner has succeeded in an industry where others would have retired many years ago.

The story goes all the way back to 1960, when Lanfersieck became an apprentice at *Northwest Auto Body & Service* in Bridgeton, MO, to learn the business firsthand. "I was 18 and I was hungry to learn," Lanfersieck said. "I started out washing cars and sweeping floors and eventually they gave me more and more responsibility. The first significant job that they gave me to do was cut a car in half and clip it. Unfortunately the car slid off the rack on me! Seventeen years later I was still there, but now I was managing the shop."

Then the time came for big decision #2. "I knew I was ready, so I opened my own shop and I haven't looked back once," Lanfersieck said. "People ask me when will I retire and I tell them 'never.' I enjoy what I'm doing and I've always been a very hands-on owner, because that's the only way I know."

*Spirit West Auto Body* now has four locations in the Show Me State—one in St. Charles, another in Manchester, a smaller satellite location (*Spirit West Fast Refinish*) and another facility for overflow work. In 1995, Lanfersieck bought a golf course called Meramec Lakes Golf Course in St. Clair, MO, although he says that his friends play there more than he does.

Two years ago, **Mike Hildebrand**, the owner and local distributor of GYS Welding USA and told Lanfersieck about his new line of French welders, dent pullers and associated equipment and he was in-



The Gyspot Inverter BP.LCX-s7-230 V spot welding machine is used on a daily basis at *Spirit West Auto Body* in Missouri. It fulfills all of the requirements for welding on high strength steels and features adjustable currents

stantly impressed. "I've known Mike for many years and he always brings us the best brands out there, because he really does his research and knows the market. The welders and dent puller we purchased from him are excellent and work well, but maybe most importantly, the prices are better than other competing machines, without sacrificing quality or performance."

Specifically, *Spirit West Auto Body* uses two welders from GYS Welding USA—the Gyspot Inverter BP.LCX-s7-230 V and the Gyspot Inverter Evolution PTI-S7. Lanfersieck is pleased with both machines for their performance, ease-of-use and the way they utilize smart technology.

"We're able to work with high-strength steel with these welders and the PTI Evolution is approved by Audi, Volkswagen and Porsche, which is ideal," Lanfersieck said. "These spot welders are just fantastic. The BP.LCX features smart technology, which means it really takes the tech out of the picture. By putting the welder in its Easy Mode, they don't need to re-adjust it, which saves a lot of time and makes it simple for the techs."

The Gyspot Inverter BP.LCX-s7-230 V spot welding machine fulfills all of the requirements for welding on high strength steels and adjustable currents depending on the job. Equipped with two clamps (X and C), this welder provides more access possibilities to the car body, according to GYS USA's web site.

The other resistance welder used at *Spirit West* is the Gyspot Inverter Evolution PTI-S7, which can also allow the shop to weld on high-strength steel. This unit has a welding current that can reach 14 500Amps and also brings a solution to limited power supply issues, by operating with either 32 Amps to 40 Amps fuses only. With an 18-foot cord and 10 arm assemblies, this unit is cutting-edge while cutting costs.

Lanfersieck has seen many dent pullers come and go during his lengthy career in collision, but he's never experienced anything even remotely like the Gysliner, a complete dent pulling workstation that is ideal for repairing small, medium and big dents. "This unit is sophisticated and my veteran tech Mike really likes it, especially on all of the thin metal with these newer vehicles. It is performing as advertised, because it's saving us time and improving our cycle times. We can remove dents without disassembly and that of course is a huge plus."

As new GYS products come into the North American market, Lanfersieck will be embracing those as well, he said. "At this point, I believe in Mike Hildebrand, because he knows these machines and he has definitely proven himself with us, that's for sure. We've already ordered a MIG/MAG pulse in pulse welder from GYS Welding USA and they also have a new mobile lift we're excited about. Mike is an invaluable vendor and these machines are superior and cost less, so it's a win-win!"

## Spirit West Repair

Location: Manchester, MO

(314) 393-5964

[www.spiritwestautobody.com](http://www.spiritwestautobody.com)

### Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair

**Facility Employees:** 45

**In Business Since:** 1962

**Number of Locations:** Four

**Production Space:**  
30,000 square feet (combined)



*Spirit West Auto Body* depends on GYS Welding USA's products to save time and make more money, according to owner **Rich Lanfersieck**



*Spirit West Auto Body* has four locations in Missouri and repairs approximately 100-plus cars every month

## GYS Welding USA

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