

OLD DAVE/NEW DAVE

The Changing Face of Boyle's Body Works

BY JOEL GAUSTEN

Change isn't always a bad thing.

After several years in the Massachusetts collision repair industry, longtime AASP MA/RI Board member and *New England Automotive Report* columnist David Boyle stepped away from the industry he had known for most of his life and gave himself a brand new title – convenience store operator. Although Boyle's toolbox has been replaced with Twinkies, the Arlington-based body man made sure that his longstanding business, Boyle's Body Works, would continue to prosper in his absence. And with the help of a seasoned industry pro, Boyle has moved on knowing that his celebrated business will carry on into a bright future.

Old Dave

As anyone who's ever read Boyle's popular "Boyle-ing Point" columns in this magazine surely knows, Dave was an often amusing – and always outspoken – advocate for this industry. While not everyone always agreed with what he wrote, no one can deny that Dave is someone willing to say *exactly* what is on his mind. As such, he naturally has more than a few words to say about his impending life away from the auto body business.

"To be honest, I'm not really sure that my brain has fully comprehended that fact that I'm not really in the industry anymore," he says. "In fact, as I await the complete purchase of my new venture, I will start working at a local body shop in my new town, so I guess I'm not really *totally* out just yet. In fact, my blood pressure still rises off the charts during any TV commercials from Progressive or GEICO Insurance. I still take it way too personally, apparently."

These days, Boyle can be found in Brownfield, Me., where he and his fiancée, Lynn, recently plotted a new business. Instead of repairing quarter panels and grappling with insurers, Boyle is now gearing up to launch a combination gas station/convenience store that sells beer, wine, hard liquor, subs and pizza.

"My grandpa on my dad's side had owned a few different businesses, one of which was a convenience store/meat market," he recalls. "After that, my Uncle Jack had opened two convenience store/sub shops – Boyle's Family Market 1 and 2 – in my home town of Arlington. Having worked at all of the above-mentioned stores, I guess it's in my blood. I didn't really work at

Grandpa's store, but as a very young child I got paid to basically make the customers smile at how cute I was trying to help out – of course all the while probably really screwing up my grandpa's day!" In keeping with the family tradition, Boyle's new establishment will carry the name "Boyle's Family Market (North)," or BFM for short.

Looking back at his career in the automotive industry, what is the biggest lesson Boyle learned as a shop owner that he will carry with him in his latest endeavor?

"The biggest lesson I learned is probably more of what *not* to do than anything else," he says. "I guess the most important thing I'm looking for is to have more control over my business in the sense that I will truly be in the free market system with no third party telling me what kind of cheese I must use on my subs – and how much I can charge for said cheese. Get the drift?"

After experiencing all the thrills and spills of his old industry, Boyle's greatest memories of his past profession will always be of the times he spent with his fellow body shop owners.

"Without a doubt, I miss my friends in the industry," he says. "They are irreplaceable."



Dave Boyle (left, pictured with AASP MA/RI President Rick Starbard) was honored for his efforts at the Association's 2007 annual meeting.

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New Dave

Of course, Boyle wasn't about to step out of the auto body world without first making sure the place was left in good hands. Last Spring, he crossed paths with another Dave – longtime industry vet Dave Cusano – who was looking to purchase his first-ever business. A collision repair professional since 1972, Cusano already had an impressive career under his belt long before a supplier referred him to Boyle. The two Daves hit it off immediately.

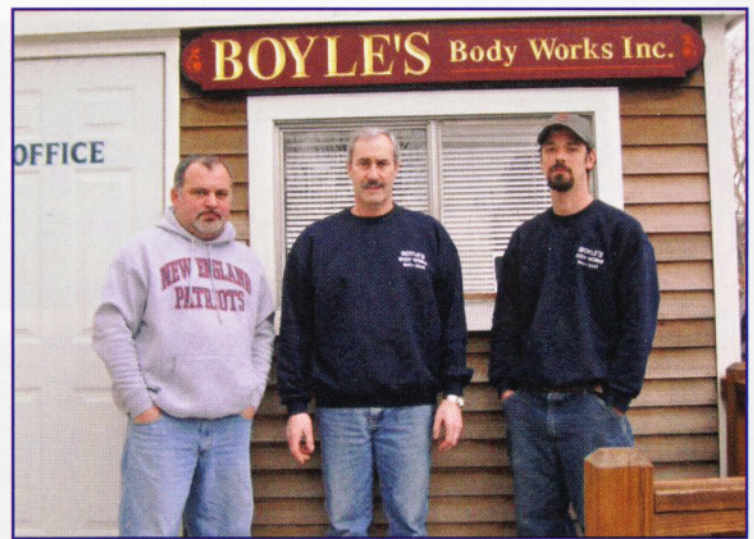
"Dave was very happy to hear about my background, because he wanted to make sure the shop was bought by somebody who knew what they were doing," Cusano says. "He didn't want to get anyone in here who was going to go under in six months."

With the deal set, Boyle stayed on at the shop for two months to ensure that Cusano had a smooth transition. The set-up not only helped Cusano establish his place in the business, but also proved to be a memorable experience for Boyle.

"'New Dave' is an extremely nice guy, maybe a little too nice if that's possible," says Boyle fondly. "I rather enjoyed working for him for the short time that I did. I really enjoyed having someone else being on the front line instead of me, for a change. It kind of made me consider that maybe I should have looked for a partner before selling. Change is hard; that is why most people get stuck in the big ruts in this life. I knew I could have continued with the shop and still have made a decent living, but I got burnt out on it. I'm willing, with Lynn's support and hard work, to try something else for a change."

After graduating from vocational school in 1972, Cusano quickly landed his first job at Cadillac/Pontiac dealer in Waltham. Within a year, he was promoted to manager. Cusano's subsequent career saw him gain tremendous success managing a number of area body shops, most notably his 10-year stint at Hatch & Sons in Wayland. Not surprisingly, Cusano's vast experience allowed him to make a very comfortable transition from manager to owner.

"To be honest, I haven't really seen a big surprise," he says. "I've expected everything that's happened so far. I guess the biggest thing is I'm now seeing the monthly bills come in!"



Dave Cusano, (center), pictured here with technicians Mike Neofotistos and Jeffrey Hernon, already had an impressive industry background before coming to Boyle's Body Works.

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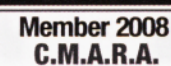
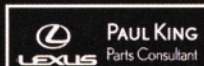
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