

South of England bodyshops triumph in debut "Oscars"

South of England bodyshops have claimed two of the top three awards in accident management specialist WNS Assistance's debut repairer awards.

Premier Panel Skills of Aldershot, Hampshire, won the top prize at a black tie, Oscars-style ceremony targeting the 40 most exceptional bodyshops in WNS's network of 330 repairers, with Highdown Coachworks Ltd of Lancing, West Sussex, taking second prize.

Third prize went to Perdal Body Repair Centre of Cramlington, Northumberland.

BBC TV snooker celebrity John Parrott MBE presented the awards at a ceremony held at Birmingham NEC's Crowne Plaza on Friday the 11th of April 2008 attended by owners and their bodyshop managers as well as key suppliers to the WNS repair process.

The annual bodyshop Oscars are intended to draw attention to WNS's development of an internal standard for its repairers that rewards quality of service and delivery to the customer with increased workflow. This divides bodyshops according to a gold, silver, and bronze standard.

The system measures several elements of each repair such as average downtime, overall repair life cycles and customer satisfaction.

All 40 bodyshops invited to the awards ceremony received a 'Premier gold repairer' award, and have been gold standard repairers for the last 12 months at a time when WNS repairers have continued to raise the standard. With the top three also receiving individual trophies announced at the event, which involved a five-course dinner and free overnight accommodation at the venue.

Although South of England bodyshops took the two top prizes, the largest single representations came from the West Country and Yorkshire, which had five each, while Essex also featured strongly, with four.

"Our gold standard guarantees a high level of work as we currently carry out well over 150,000 repairs per annum," explained WNS contracts director Dave Butler. "This has enabled our star performers to plan and invest in their business for the future. This star status has now been confirmed through these debut awards, which we hope will increase competition between the UK's most outstanding repairers to the benefit of both themselves and our customers.

"Those repairers who were nominated for the top awards were those who consistently hit the highest criteria measured over a certain volume of repairs per month, which ensures a fair assessment of performance. We are now looking at how we can channel even more work to our top performing repairers and allow them to benchmark every year against this annual event.

"We already use our purchasing power to obtain preferential rates for our network repairers such as beneficial paint terms, but, in addition, we shall now be looking to extend such rates to such things as equipment and manufacturer parts.

"We want to be thoroughly fair to our bodyshops. We make no apologies for the fact that we expect the highest standards of repair from them, but we also want to make sure that excellence is rewarded with an ever-increasing flow of work as well as highly beneficial supplier deals to maximise the profitability of our star performers."



Pictured from left: Ted Hobden of Highdown Coachworks, celebrity guest John Parrott, Ian and Lynne Wallis of Premier Panel Skills, WNS Assistance contracts director Dave Butler, and Ian Brown of Perdal Body Repair Centre

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