



CRAFTSMAN PURCHASE PROMISES NEW START FOR WEDGE CLAMP REPAIR SYSTEM

For immediate release Sept. 22, 2014

(NORTH VANCOUVER, BC) – He liked the product so much, he bought the company.

“Nothing on the market compares to it for speed, accuracy and ease of operation,” says Bill Hatswell, the new owner and President of Wedge Clamp Systems Inc., manufacturer of an innovative, lightweight and economical autobody repair system.

Despite sales to countries as far as Russian and Japan – and a recent welcome endorsement by U.S. collision repair giant Maaco to its franchisees – Richmond, BC-based Wedge Clamp has concentrated mainly on its home market of Canada because of a lack of resources to achieve more worldwide exposure. Now thanks to its purchase by Hatswell and his Craftsman Group of Companies, Wedge Clamp is poised for a new beginning.

“We’ve been exclusive users of the Wedge Clamp System since it was introduced,” says Hatswell, whose 36-shop Craftsman Collision is the largest privately held bodyshop chain in North America. “It’s years ahead of anything else.”

Wedge Clamp is also the worldwide distributor of NitroHeat, a spray painting system that replaces air with heated nitrogen that is said to dramatically reduce paint consumption and drying times while delivering a more lustrous and durable finish.

“The same holds for NitroHeat,” he says. “It is amazing how much money this system can save. We’ve got Wedge Clamp and NitroHeat in all our shops. I’m very excited about the global potential of both systems. We just have to get the word out.”

The purchase is also good news for Craftsman customers, says Hatswell.

“As an industry leader committed to having the best technology, we know that both Wedge Clamp and NitroHeat add to our advantage over other shops in terms of repair quality and vehicle finish. Our body techs and painters love working with them. And our accountants love the savings.”

“Buying the company also means I can personally ensure the company’s long-term health –

(more)



and parts and equipment supplies for our customers and shops,” he smiles. Craftsman’s purchase of Wedge Clamp includes the firm’s well established Asia headquarters in Suzhou, China, just west of Shanghai. A model training facility showcases the wonders of Wedge Clamp for visiting autobody technicians and teaches them how it can maximize the speed and efficiency of their shops.

Wedge Clamp has been in China since 2008, and opened the facility in 2012 in conjunction with Craftsman’s first Chinese location in the same building.

“Car sales in China are 20 million a year, but after-sales service lags far behind,” says Frank Liu, Wedge Clamp’s General Manager of Business Development in China. “With body shops here now required to have alignment equipment, our recent Level II certification and widespread industry and government acceptance make Wedge Clamp the most obvious and efficient choice. In Suzhou City alone there are 3000 auto repair shops of all levels. The demand for Wedge Clamp in the emerging market is huge. With a successful Craftsman Collision business model and sufficient capital support, Wedge Clamp can boost its sales power and establish its sales distribution network all over China.”

Wedge Clamp will also be establishing an office and showroom in Los Angeles in 2015 to spur U.S. adoption of the system, says Hatswell.

Craftsman’s outright purchase of the company is the result of an amicable agreement with former President and shareholder Desmond Chan, who says he is considering other business opportunities after 11 years at the helm.

Rodica Matei, Wedge Clamp’s newly promoted Chief Operating Officer for Canada, says she is extremely enthusiastic about the ownership change.

“Craftsman’s connections will allow us to reach way higher than we have in the past,” says Matei, whose 16 years at Wedge Clamp were most recently as General Manager. “We’ve barely scratched the surface of the American and international markets. The vast amount of knowledge and experience that Craftsman brings to the table – having been in the autobody industry for over 37 years – will contribute greatly to our research and development of new, innovative products that will help improve efficiencies in the autobody industry.”

For further information about Wedge Clamp or its products, phone 1-800-615-9949, visit www.wedgeclamp.com or email info@wedgeclamp.com.



CRAFTSMAN GROUP



***BILL HATSWELL**, President and Owner of the 36-shop Craftsman Collision bodyshop chain, is the new President and Owner of Wedge Clamp Systems Inc.*



***RODICA MATEI** moves from General Manager of Wedge Clamp Systems Inc. to Chief Operating Officer, Canada.*