Paintless Dent Repair: A Craft in High Demand Amid Hail Damage and a Growing Skills Gap

As hailstorms continue to generate steady demand for auto body repair across the United States, Brazilian technician Marcelo Backaus Ribas brings more than a decade of Paintless Dent Repair experience to a trade facing a shortage of qualified hands.

Boca Raton, Florida Nov 25, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - A Technique Born on the Assembly Line

Paintless Dent Repair (PDR) — known in Brazil as "Martelinho de Ouro" and, in its early Portuguese-language form, as DSP (Desamassamento Sem Pintura) — restores a dented vehicle panel to its original shape without repainting it, using a controlled pulling technique and precision tools rather than body filler or a spray gun. The method traces back roughly four decades to automobile assembly lines, where it was originally used to correct minor sheet-metal imperfections before a vehicle left the factory — a process known internationally as PSSMR (Paintless Shrinking Sheet Metal Repair). It later moved off the assembly line and into independent repair shops, where it became known by its popular Brazilian name and, eventually, by the broader set of specialized tools technicians now use: precision hammers, pry bars, and inspection lights designed to reveal imperfections invisible under normal lighting.

Marcelo Backaus Ribas, owner of the PDR business Backaus Martelinho de Ouro in southern Brazil, has practiced the technique for more than a decade on vehicles spanning compact passenger cars to larger models, across a range of brands. His training consisted of a 40-hour course completed in 2013 and an advanced course with an experienced technician in 2016, built on top of years of direct, repetitive practice.

A Shortage of Skilled Hands

In the United States, demand for PDR services is closely tied to hailstorm activity: a single severe hail event can damage hundreds or thousands of vehicles in a single region, and insurers increasingly favor Paintless Dent Repair over traditional bodywork because it is faster and avoids repainting. That demand, combined with a limited pool of technicians trained to the level required for high-volume, insurance-grade repair work, has created a recurring shortage of qualified PDR specialists in affected markets.

Unlike some trades, PDR has no single standardized licensing path in either Brazil or the United States — technicians are typically trained through short courses and apprenticeships, and their reputations are built almost entirely on the quality of finished work rather than on formal credentials. That is part of what makes a track record like Ribas's relevant to U.S. shops and insurers evaluating technicians from outside the traditional pipeline.

Ribas sees that gap as the natural next step for a career built in Brazil. "I've spent more than ten years perfecting this technique on all kinds of vehicles. I know there's a real need for trained hands in the U.S., especially wherever hail does the most damage," he says.

Positioning for a Bilingual Market

Ribas built his business in Brazil around a direct-to-client "fast delivery" service model — traveling to dealership lots, detailing centers and private driveways instead of requiring vehicles to be dropped off — which helped him form lasting partnerships with established players in the Porto Alegre metropolitan

area, including businesses in operation for over 25 and 40 years. That business, Backaus Martelinho de Ouro, was formally registered in 2021 after years of steady, self-funded growth, including through the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That same history carries formal recognition in Brazil from both local government — a 2024 congratulatory motion from the Cachoeirinha city council — and from ABRAESA, the national trade association for automotive repair, which named him an Honorary Associate in 2025. For insurers and shops vetting technicians trained outside a conventional pipeline, that kind of outside validation can matter as much as hours logged on the job. His company's branding is already presented in both Portuguese and English, reflecting his plans to bring that experience to the U.S. auto repair market.

"I've worked on all kinds of vehicles, from small passenger cars to larger ones, across different brands. I know the technique, and I know there's demand for it," Ribas says. "What I'm looking for now is the right place to put that experience to work."

Media Contact

Machado Life Group

*********@gmail.com

http://machadolifegroup.com

Source : Marcelo Backaus Ribas

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