



Spitfire
Automotive Inc.
Oak Lawn, IL

Century-Young Chitown Dealer

Still Works Hard to Maintain Strong Reputation

By Denise Koeth

While much has changed since 1916, when Frank Malinowski founded Spitfire Automotive on the southeast side of Chicago, one thing has remained the same: the shop retains its reputation by providing expert, specialized vehicle service that often can't be performed elsewhere.

The third-generation family business, owned today by Frank's son, Richard Malinowski Sr., has evolved over the last century to stay competitive. And although Spitfire's \$1.2 million in gross sales in 2015 came from a sales mix that was 95% vehicle service and 5% tires, the shop identifies fully as a tire dealership, according to Malinowski.

As a member of the K&M Tire Mr. Tire dealer program and an ACDelco Professional Service Center, Spitfire Automotive's single location offers the best of both worlds for its customers and its 10 full-time employees. The success of that dual personality was a key reason why judges selected the Oak Lawn, Ill., dealer as a Finalist in the 2015 Mr. Tire/Big 3 Tire Top Shop Awards, sponsored by Hankook Tire America and supported by O'Reilly Auto Parts.

Frank Malinowski was a "pioneer" when it came to rebuilding automotive regulators, says his son, with a great deal of respect. That skill soon evolved into rebuilding generators and starters – and led to the founding of