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BY JULIAN "MR. J" BRAET



For this article I thought that you might like to see that, "Yes, I can still hand letter."

IHAVE DONE WORK for this company before. I've lettered a van, and another pick-up truck. Both of these vehicles were lettered using paint and vinyl. The difference is that on those, I used a combination of paint mask and hand lettering for the copy that was airbrushed. For this one, I thought it would be fun to get a little paint on my hands — using a brush, not a foam roller.

After I created a sketch for the client to approve, I plotted it on paper. I then used a pretty cool feature that my VE Panther plotter from Sign Warehouse has: I pounced the pattern while it was still in the plotter.

If you are not familiar with the term *pounce*, I'll explain. If you are going to hand letter something you'll need to create a pattern. The pattern needs to have some holes put in it so that either charcoal powder or talcum powder can pass through, creating a layout for you to follow. You can put holes in the paper using a *pounce wheel*, (a tool that resembles a cowboy's spur). I also have an *electric pounce* machine that actually burns tiny holes in the paper. But, of course this is the age of computers, so I'll let mine do the pouncing, thank you!

With the door and the tailgate layouts pounced, I can now begin to letter. The lettering took a little over an hour to do. This is not a race, so if you're new at hand lettering, take your time. Remember it's the end result that counts.

When all the lettering is dry, I clean off all the over spray. I *always* clean any over spray before I outline, etc.

The blue vinyl stripe is just a little extra touch (instead of a pinstripe) that I sold the client. I think it helps to bring the copy together.

So the next time you have to do a truck or a sign, why not add some *hand lettering* to it. *Sometimes it just feels good to create something by hand.*

*Keep your brush wet
— Julian*

Julian "Mr. J" Braet owns Mr. J's Signs and Graphics in Lyndhurst, N.J., and is the creator of Xcaliber striping brushes and preservative. For more methods to the madness, visit Mr. J's Web site at www.xcaliberart.com or check out his three-volume Video Classroom series, Jersey Style Airbrush and Lettering. Send comments to Mr. J at jxcal@aol.com.





1 I created the layouts in my computer using Vinyl Express LXI 6.6 sign-making software. The file was then pen-plotted and pounced, using the pounce option in my new VE Panther, from Sign Warehouse. Here, I'm, pouncing charcoal powder through the holes in the paper that the plotter made. This will allow me to see the layout that I will paint on the doors.



2 I mix 1 Shot bright red (lettering enamel) with some magenta to give it a little more punch. I also add a couple of drops of 1 Shot hardener, for extra strength. High temp reducer is in an Art-Kup, along with the paint. I'm using a No. 6 lettering quill. My trusty Mahl stick helps to steady my hand.



3 After the top line is finished, I move down to the next line of copy. I apply some blue fine line tape, on top and bottom. I use the same lettering brush for this copy.



4 Now I mix up some maroon with the High-temp reducer (about 60% reducer to 40% paint) and apply my highlights, using my Iwata Eclipse airbrush at 45 psi. Notice that I'm using latex gloves for protection.



5 Here I'm using 1 Shot white on the opposite side of the script, to create highlights and give the script a rounded look. Also you can see that I'm wearing a charcoal respirator.



6 I allow the lettering to dry. This can take anywhere from an hour to several hours, depending upon your shop conditions, but the longer you wait the better. Now you can see the overspray that will have to be cleaned off before I can outline the copy.

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7 I use paper towels moistened with a mixture of mineral spirits and a little water to clean off the overspray.



8 A brilliant blue and process blue are mixed for a great covering outline. I use a No. 3 outliner.



9 The finished doors with their outlines.



10 This close-up shows the outline and the gray shadow. A mixture of white, imitation gold and a drop of black makes a great shadow. I use blue fine line tape on the bottom of the letters and create the shadow using a No. 6 lettering quill. The phone number is painted on using a paint mask that I cut out using my plotter.



11 The remaining copy is Oracal's black high performance vinyl.



12 The last thing I do is add a 4" Intense Blue stripe down the sides of the pickup, using Oracal's high performance vinyl. I lettered the tailgate to match the doors.

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