

The Chief's Car

BY JULIAN "MR.J" BRAET



Exploring graphic avenues with mixed media.

THIS JOB WAS FOR the volunteer fire department of North Arlington, N.J. This is one of the department's support vehicles assigned to the *Chief*.

After meeting with the members of the fire department and seeing their new Explorer, I took some notes and wrote down the copy they wanted to letter on the vehicle.

This was going to be a fun job to do. First I could take as long as I wanted to do the work (well, within reason of course), and second, they wanted airbrushing and some gold-leaf striping.

We discussed their budget, and I told them to allow me a few days and I would have a layout for them to approve.

In designing this job, I placed more emphasis on the airbrushing rather than the gold leaf. I letter their town's police bikes with airbrush and they wanted that same look.

To create the layouts that I needed, I used my *Sign Warehouse LXI* sign making software, *Pro Vehicle Outlines* CD and *Mr.J's Classic Firehouse Fonts*.

The firemen approved my layout and no changes were made. This seemed too good to be true.

I decided to use enamel receptive vinyl because this would allow me to complete the job in a reasonable amount of time, keeping their budget in mind.

The 1 Shot paint, reduced with 1 Shot's reducer, performed without a hitch.

I used Sign Gold's genuine gold leaf for the striping and ornaments, and sealed the edges with the Sealit pen.

The red graphics are Oracal's high performance vinyl.

I really enjoyed doing this job and on top of that, the firemen were great to work with.

Keep your brush wet...
—Julian

Mr. J owns Mr. J's Sign Service in Patterson, N.J., and is the creator of Xcaliber striping brushes and preservative. For more methods to the madness, visit Mr. J's Website at www.xcaliberart.com or check out his three-volume Video Classroom series, Jersey Style Airbrush and Lettering. Send questions and comments to Mr. J at jxcal@aol.com.



The completed Chief's car.



1 This is a brand new Ford Explorer that the town of North Arlington brought to me to have lettered and striped for their Fire Chief. Since I already have the sketch approved, I can start by prepping all the areas that will be lettered and striped. I use Rapid-Tac's Rapid Remover to remove any wax or other contaminants from the truck's surface.



2 I'm using clear enamel receptive vinyl to paint all of the airbrush lettering. Using my Vinyl Express Panther 30" plotter, I first pen plot the layouts onto the vinyl. Next I cut the layouts going right over the pen plots, so that I can see the layout through the enamel that I'll roll on later. (This will help when I airbrush the vinyl.) A 3" foam roller is all you need to paint with. I add a couple of drops of 1 Shot hardener and a small amount of their low-temp reducer to their imitation gold lettering enamel. Remember to roll out ALL bubbles left by the roller. Take the roller, and using just the weight of it, roll it over the paint to smooth it out. Note: If you look closely, you'll see the pen plot on the bottom of the vinyl.



3 In this photo I thought that I'd show you some of the material and equipment that I used for this project. In the center is the Iwata Eclipse airbrush. To its left is my charcoal respirator that I wear for all airbrushing, at the top is 1 Shot high temp reducer (mix the lettering enamel at a ratio of 60% reducer to 40% enamel) and last but not least are the airbrush colors.



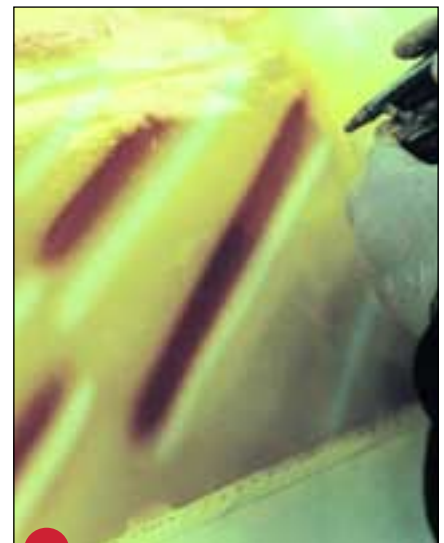
4 I wait about 15 minutes for the enamel to tack up. The first color is a mix of lemon yellow and white. I'm going for a gold metallic effect. Note that I'm wearing my respirator and latex gloves. Not visible is an exhaust fan to eliminate the paint fumes.



5 This color is lemon yellow with some imitation gold added to it.



6 I airbrush white across the vinyl.



7 This color is a mix of medium orange and a small amount of Proper Purple.



8 Here's the last color to be applied. It's straight black.



9 I usually like to wait only about 15 to 20 minutes before I weed out the vinyl. Remember if you wait too long, you run the risk of the paint drying over the cut lines and tearing up the lettering. Never weed the vinyl before all the airbrushing is finished! If you do, the liner will be full of the paint and when you apply the transfer tape it will pick up the paint and put it on the surface of the vehicle or sign. You can see the sketch that I used to sell the job at the top of the photo.



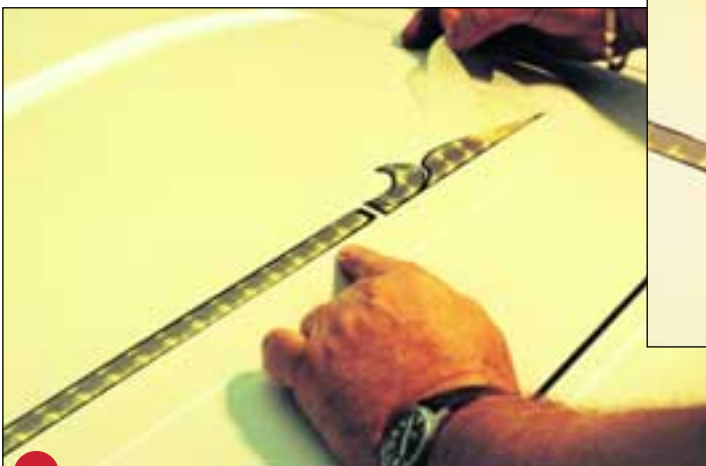
10 I designed a set of stripes for the sides of the vehicle. I used my Pro Vehicle Outline 2003, for the placement and Sign Warehouse's LXI software. I apply the stripes wet, using Rapid-Tac's rapid prep. Here, I'm applying the black outline.



11 The red circle and black outline of the Chief's horns are applied.



12 Now the airbrushed vinyl is applied wet.



13 I'm applying the Sign Gold on top of the black vinyl, using clear transfer tape. I do this dry.



14 Here I'm using my Sealit pen to seal the edges of the Sign Gold. This pen contains 1 Shot acrylic clear. It really works.



The finished doors, complete with air-brushing, and Sign Gold striping.



The completed Chief's car, showing the hood, trunk and side.



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