

Never Forget

BY JULIAN "MR. J" BRAET



Basically, a how-to project you will always remember.

THIS ARTICLE may seem very basic to most of you, but sometimes these are really the best jobs. Yeah, it's great to do the type of job that challenges every part of your abilities. But, sometimes you get to do some work that's just fun! This was that type of job.

The customer was great to work for. I didn't have to sell him on anything. He just wanted his *hot rod* lettered.

I started this project by using my LXi software and new Panther 30" plotter from Sign Warehouse. Boy, this baby cooks.

To paint the lettering I cut a paint mask and roller coat the 1 Shot lettering enamel over the mask. Next I wait about 15 minutes and begin airbrushing the enamel *wet on wet*. This means that I airbrush right onto (or into) the paint while it is still a little tacky. I've been airbrushing like this for the past 20 plus years without any problems.

After the mask is removed, I outline and shade the lettering. Next I added some blue highlights to the shadows.

The last thing I do is add some process blue pinstriping to bring the cool paint and graphics together.

Well I gotta go, time to letter that pick-up with vinyl in two colors. Hey, it all can't be fun and games.

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 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 finished racer, complete with airbrush lettering and custom pinstriping.



1) Here's our race car, nice red paint and some cool graphics, but needs a little lettering to make it a real "racer", right? Let's see what we can do. This customer has had the car for a while, but kept putting off lettering it. The last time I did some work for him was probably five years ago. He told me he just wanted to letter the front fenders, add his name and class numbers. I suggested a little pin-striping to spice it up.



2) The first thing that I did was to create a layout for the front fenders. It was to say "Never Forget" (9-11 of course). I could use any colors I thought would work with the car's paint job. Using my new LXi 6.6v software from Sign Warehouse, I decided to use a bouncy speed stroke letter. In this photo I've already cut out the copy, using my Vinyl Express Panther plotter. I use the yellow custom paint mask. I'm dusting the mask with charcoal to help me see the cut marks. (This makes it easier to weed.)



3) I pre-clean all the surfaces that I will work on. I'll use a Windex-type cleaner first and follow it with Rapid Prep to remove any wax or grease. I use R Tape's Conform application tape to apply the paint mask. I also use Rapid Tac application fluid to make it easier to apply and remove the paint mask after the painting.



4) As you can see, I take over spray seriously. It takes a lot less time to mask off the surrounding areas, than it will to clean all the over spray off the car. (Use auto body tape and quality masking paper for this.)



5) Now I take out my trusty 3" foam roller, and apply some 1 Shot ivory lettering enamel. I add only a few drops of high temp reducer and a couple drops of 1 Shot's hardener for extra durability. (Note: apply the ivory evenly, and go back over the paint using just the weight of the roller.)



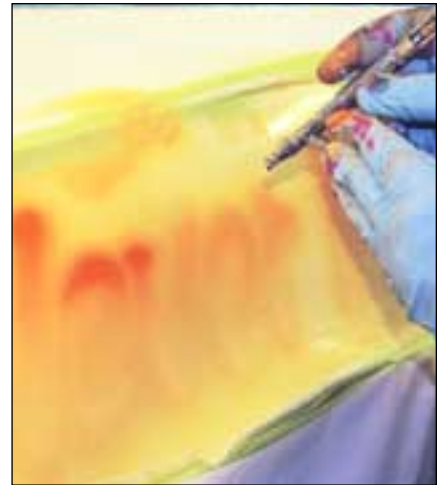
6) I mix lemon yellow with high temp reducer (about 60 percent reducer), and using my Iwata Eclipse I airbrush the color over the entire mask. I work "wet on wet", that is, I do not let the enamel dry. I allow it to tack up for about 15 minutes, and begin to airbrush right onto the base color. I will spray at about 35 lbs. psi. The airbrushing that I do will now become a part of the lettering and will eliminate the need for clear coating.



7) The next color is chrome yellow. I really don't wait too long for the next colors to tack up, I airbrush as soon as the next color is mixed. As you can see, I'm wearing latex gloves. What you can't see is that I'm also wearing a charcoal respirator for extra protection.



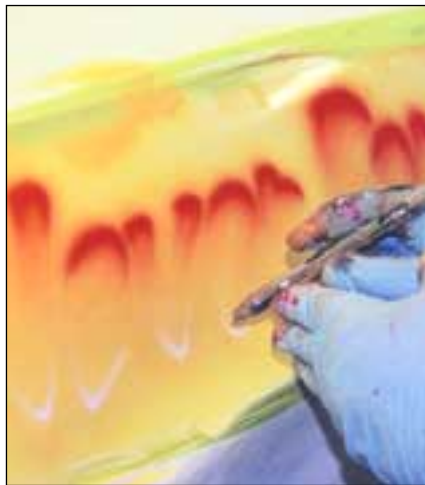
8) This color is chrome yellow with some medium orange added. I'm working my way down from the top. I stop about half way down.



9) This is medium orange being airbrushed on the tops of the letters. Start off with light coats and darken the edges of the letters.



10) I use rubine red to really "punch out" the tops of the letters. Don't overdo this step.



11) Now, I thoroughly clean the airbrush out, so I can add the white highlights to the bottom of the letters.



12) This shows you how easy it is to use the paint mask — "no muss-no fuss". I usually wait about 20-25 minutes to remove the paint mask. DO NOT allow the paint to dry completely! If you allow this to happen, the paint will form a "bridge" over the mask and the airbrushing will tear off when you remove the mask.



13) I'm applying a black outline and shadow, using a No. 6 brown hair quill, from Xcaliber. It's been trimmed slightly around the ferrule. "Hey I wonder if that could work for me?"



14) The lettering is finished. Well, almost.



15) I add some process blue to the shadowing.



16) Now it's done! Just like the way we used to do it. Well, almost. (The small amount of blue over spray will be cleaned off before the customer picks up the car.) The remaining copy is all vinyl.



17) I thought I would show you a little pinstriping technique here. Using a "00" Xcaliber striping brush, I add some designs to the side of the roof. I'm using process blue. Note the positions of my hands. The second part of the design connects at the top, and runs parallel with the first part. Check out my pinky, it's like an outrigger used to steady my hand.



18) The third and last stripe starts a little lower and connects to the other two.



19) Now I fill in a fourth stripe for some weight and add the "tail". If you look close you can see that I used a Stabilo pencil to lay out the stripes. This is a water-based pencil that washes off easily with water and will not affect the paint.



20) I wanted to show you how I striped the sides. Here I used a "0" Xcaliber striper, and process blue again.



The finished pinstripe design.

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