

As Time Goes By

BY JULIAN "MR.J" BRAET



Helping a customer progress from plain and simple to shiny and new.

I'LL START THIS ARTICLE a little differently than I usually do. You see, I've known this customer for over 20 years. John, aka "J.J." has always been a great person to work for. From our very first meeting, I could tell that this was a guy that was going to be in business a long time. He knew what he wanted, was open to suggestions, and knew that if he wanted service and quality work, it would cost him but it would be a wise investment.

J.J. came to my shop with a truck that was lettered (it was a great hand lettered job) in imitation silver. He said, "I like this job, but I'd like something a little different." I could change the layout, but had to keep the lettering imitation silver and black.

A couple of days later, I called him and told him that I had a couple of sketches that he could look at and he could make a choice.

I lettered his trucks like this for about 10 years. Then one day, he called for an appointment to letter a new truck. I didn't think much of it; I thought it would be just another job. When he showed up at the shop with the new truck, he said he thought it was time for a change.

He had hired a couple of new workers (young guys) and they told him that he needed to shed the old guy look and get a younger image. I, of course, agreed with them.

He left the truck at my shop and I told him that I would create a couple of sketches for him by the next day (customer loyalty goes a long way with me).

The following day, he chose the new layout and I've been doing the work, complete with graphics and airbrushing ever since. I also suggested that he add some chrome wheels to set off the trucks and he agreed.

When I talk to him or do work for him, we talk about our families, our businesses, our mutual interest in cars and how time flies.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that we tend to forget the really good customers that we work for; our lives have gotten way too busy.

But this year my New Year's resolution is to finally stop and smell the roses.

*Keep your brush wet...
-Julian*



The roll-off is completed with high performance vinyl and some painted graphics. (More on the graphics in another article).

Mr. J 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.



This was the first design I did for J.J. and he kept it for about 10 years.



This is our project vehicle, a new Chevy roll-off, ready for some neat airbrush lettering. Before I begin any layout or painting, I clean all the surfaces of the truck with Rapid-Prep to remove any wax or polish.



I apply the paint mask using some Rapid-Tac so that the mask can be easily removed later. I use a yellow paint mask because it's more flexible than a white mask.



This will show you how I mask off the surrounding areas of the truck to prevent over spray. Note: Only use automotive grade masking tape and paper available in auto body supply shops.



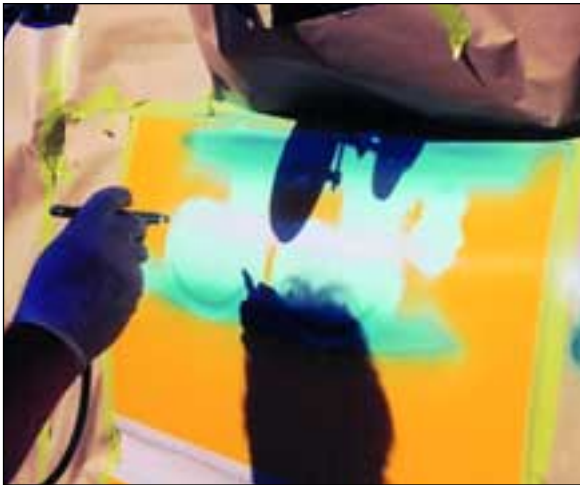
I mix 1 Shot white and a small amount of aqua with some 1 Shot hardener. (For extra durability I add some hi-temp reducer as I go along). I'm using a 1", Jet-Stroke brush. (A foam roller or foam brush could also be used).



Since I am painting outdoors, I don't have to wait to start air brushing. I begin with a mix of 1 Shot Kansas City Teal and some aqua. It's reduced at a ratio of 60% hi-temp reducer to 40% paint. I use an Iwata Eclipse airbrush and spray at 35 lbs. of air pressure. I always use latex gloves when spraying. (When working indoors always wear a respirator).



To the same teal mix, I add more KC teal to create a darker shade on the top and bottom of all the copy.



The final airbrush of 1 Shot white is sprayed through the center of the copy.



I remove the mask as soon as the airbrushing is finished. I remove the outline around the "JJ"; I'll paint it later. Important: Remove ALL paint mask as soon as possible. If you don't, the airbrush colors will dry, form a skin over the mask and could pull off of the base color.



I apply masking paper over the "JJ" to prevent any over spray from sticking to it. I paint the word "Towing" with a mix of 1 Shot coral and white. I'm using a #12 Brown lettering quill and my trusty mahl stick.



I airbrush a mix of 1 Shot coral half way up the copy.



The next color is a mix of 1 Shot rubine red and white.



Here I airbrush 1 Shot rubine red on the bottom of the copy for a bold look. Note: You'll notice the photo of a previous job used as a reference.



The final color airbrushed is 1 Shot polar white across the top and highlights on the bottom.



I remove the mask on the word "Towing". A mix of 1 Shot brilliant blue and process blue is used for the outline. I'm using a #4 Brown lettering quill.



Using the same blue (as the outline) I paint a shadow on the phone number and the truck number, using a #6 Brown lettering quill.



After the blue dried, I added a rubine red outline around the "JJ's", using a cut down #8 Brown lettering quill.



Here I switched brushes; I'm now using an Xcaliber #0 pin striping brush to show you another way to create an outline.

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