



# WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SURVIVE?

BY KENT LIND

PART 2 OF 2

**P**ROBABLY THE BIGGEST BOOST TO MY SALES OVER THE LAST FIVE years has come from peripheral items, those I paint on that aren't shirts. And without doubt the biggest selling item in that category is trucker hats. We carry six different colors and include almost all of the designs we paint on shirts. The hats come with a foam white front, a colored bill, and meshing. The colors are black, white, pink, royal blue, red, and Kelly green. There are many more colors out there, but you have to weigh choice against inventory management. Also, this year we switched our coozie types from the wrap-around to the prefabricated can and zipper bottle types. What an improvement! Not only does this allow for another style choice but they're easier to paint on and just plain work better. Another new item is the lanyard, or as some customers like to call it, the "long keychain." I have them custom manufactured for width and length, and can't keep them in stock. I like the 1-inch wide by 36-inch long all-white lanyard with the swivel hook attachment. We display them with multiple choices for color and lettering. Naturally, they perfectly complement our key chains, which we have been selling for many years. I like the 2-inch by 3 1/2-inch business-card size with thick paper insert. And, as always, we carry license plates to round out our display. Together, these items make for a powerful alternative to the garments and are a must. >>

added choice for customers comes the likelihood they'll want to buy something. The point again is that you must be prepared to be successful and that being prepared means having inventory and choice at your disposal. Too many of you out there don't, and it's hurting your bottom line.

## VEHICLE:

For obvious reasons the car ranks right up there for top displays. It has been a consistent seller for years, and I imagine it will long continue to be. I'm sure I've painted thousands of cars, bikes, snowmobiles, boats, etc. over the last two decades. Anything with wheels or an affinity for speed has at one time or another graced my shirt board. So it is with great pleasure that I bring to you my version of that artifact of Americana, the muscle car.

Again, your reference will make or break the final outcome, so pick a good one. I opted here for the classic Mustang GT 500 in blue, with some modifications. I often tend to go for a 3/4 view because it offers a great look and really brings out the car's power.

## PHOTO 1 (AND CLOSE-UP PHOTO 2)

Again the first step is to get the drawing onto the shirt. I like to draw freehand sometimes; other times I'll opt for projection. I own an Artograph Super Prism, which has proven its worth over and over, as in this demo. It's another necessity for the serious T-shirt artist. The Super Prism has a generous 7-inch by 7-inch projection surface, a reducer lens (or at least it did when I bought mine years ago), and the traditional lens to expand the image. I attach it to a tripod Artograph markets that's adjustable in height and angle. Here

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The next big improvement for me has been the multiple styles of shirts we carry now as opposed to the past. By far the biggest sellers are the rib tanks, or as my customers like to call them, "wife beaters." I keep women's and men's styles in stock in all white (S,M,L,XL) and women's in pink (S,M,L,XL). They are made from 100% cotton—fantastic to own if you live where the weather gets hot. Even here in Minnesota

they are super popular. I also carry a women's cap sleeve in all white (XS,S,M,L,XL) and a raglan cap sleeve in white and black (M,L,XL). For a feminine style, it's a great alternative to the regular T-shirt. I also have in stock camisoles in white (M) and hooded sweats for the fall and winter (M,L,XL,2XL). Of course I also carry a 50/50 T-shirt in white and athletic heather, sizes 2/4 in kids through 3XL adult. With



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close by as you navigate through the application. I like having my initial color be a medium value so I have the flexibility to go light, or fairly dark as shown here.

**PHOTO 5  
(AND CLOSE-UP PHOTO 6)**

Wicked White accounted for much-needed detail here. Keep edges as clean as you can to make that metallic look really pop. The areas for me to focus on most were the rims and tires. They add lots of character to a car. Note, too, the addition of the grill. I do it this

the completed image and initial color have been transferred. I like to start with the medium gray and do everything applicable: anything chrome, the rims, some shading, etc. Study your reference, and it will guide you.

**PHOTO 3**

Here I added depth to already painted areas that needed it. The mixture was 1/3 medium gray and 2/3 Wicked Black. Notice the work in the grill, rims, tires, and windows. Keep checking that reference!

**PHOTO 4**

For the body color I mixed Brite Blue, medium gray, and a bit of violet. I’m not big on exact amounts because everyone looks at color differently. I’m kind of a mad scientist type when mixing colors. But whatever you do, keep that reference





way (as opposed to trying to make thin black lines bring out the white chrome) because it looks more consistent. I also went back into it with darker gray and toned down some areas to make it look more natural.

### PHOTO 7

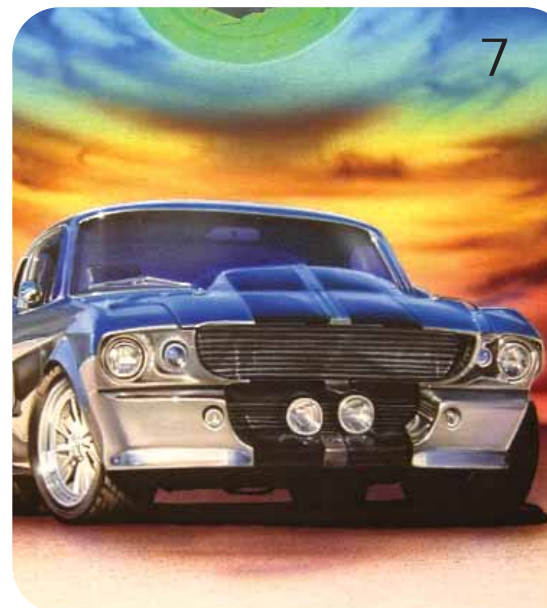
Here the background had been completed. Again, I masked off the car with wax paper and adhesive, then went to town. What I wanted to convey was the feeling

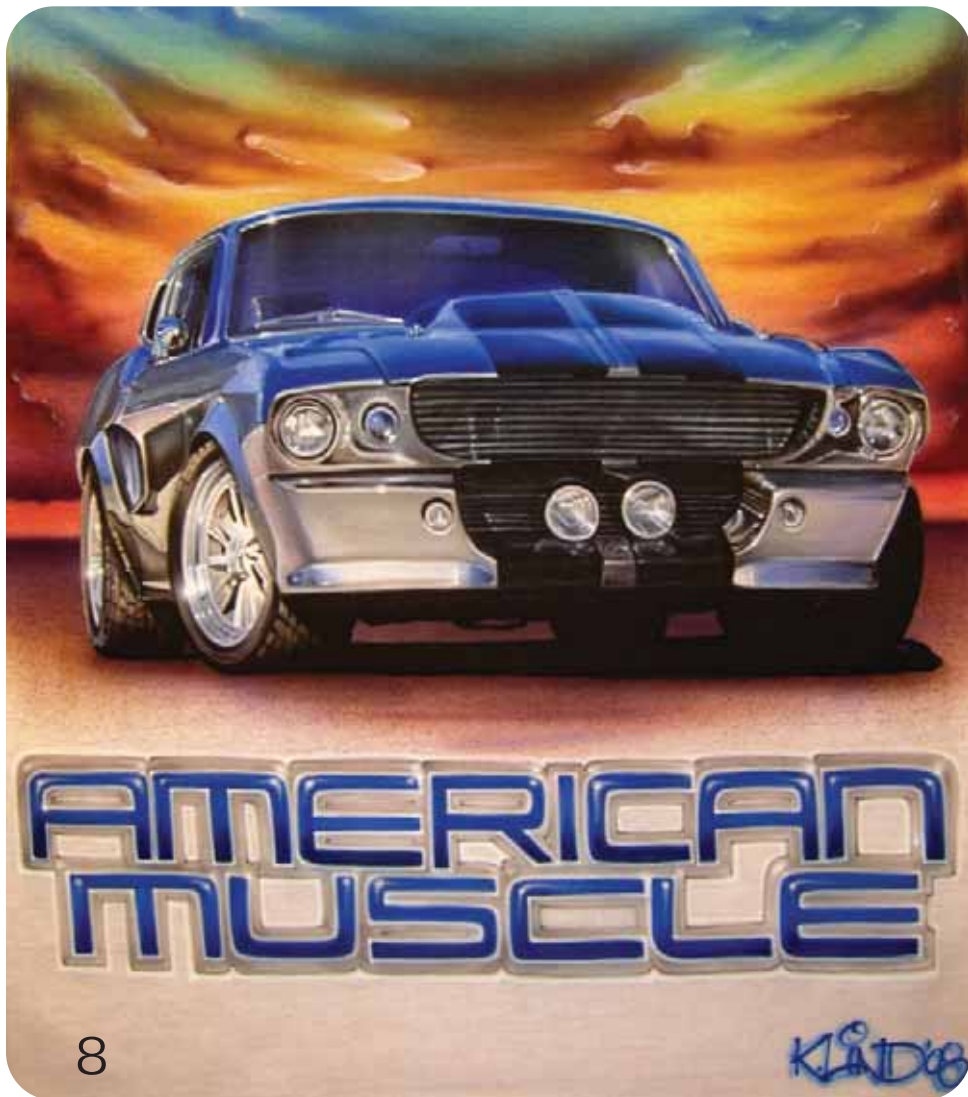
of driving down the open highway at speed; so the cloud look seemed perfect. My color palette is whatever I'm feeling. In this case it was a light/dark brown mix, Golden Yellow, Fluorescent Violet, Brite Blue, Maui Blue, deep blue, violet, and Brite Red.



### PHOTO 8

Here's the finished muscle masterpiece! The lettering was added freehand. I wanted to convey power and precision so I picked a clean, bold font. The initial outline was done in a Brite Blue/medium gray mix, shaded with deep blue. It was then outlined lightly with medium gray and cleanly edged





## LETTERING:

Slash is an excellent style for many reasons. It's got that hardcore look and fits nicely with, say, a skull. It also has the ability to stand alone and still be perceived as a difficult style, though it's extremely easy.

### SLASH STYLE 1

Here I've done the background first, knowing that I was going to overlay the lettering afterwards. So pull out your Pearl Silver and lay down a few soft swatches. Positioning is important here. I like to keep the main part of the name four to five inches from the collar, so I plan accordingly.

### SLASH STYLE 2

I've edged the top and bottom with Wicked Black. The double-edged dagger stroke must be down to do this correctly. Also I used a clothes pin to add some spatter to the background. Simply hold the brush at roughly a 45-degree angle to the clothespin and start spraying. You can adjust the coarseness of the dot pattern by moving back (or farther from the end) on the clothespin, or by increasing the angle, or both. I like a little heavier pattern because subtly, thy name is not T-shirt.

### SLASH STYLE 3

In adding the lettering, keep the lines sharp and jagged. Try for a rough-hewn effect, but keep in mind the overall look and cohesiveness.



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with Wicked White. Highlights were added to allude to a chrome effect and just to make it look cool.

The value of having a car in your display arsenal cannot be overstated. It will translate into virtually thousands of dollars in direct sales to people who'll want paint-

ings of their cars and indirect sales to those who will walk up to your booth because of the car but buy something else. Either way, it's good for you and your business. Try to give them options based on difficulty and content. Prices will generally range from \$65 to \$85. ✨



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### SLASH STYLE 4

Here's the completed design with the white added. We sell this design for \$15 to \$20, depending on the work required to give customers what they want. Very quick, popular, and effective!

Well people, we're well on our way to "doing it all." The next installment will deal

with another set of popular, thus necessary, designs to add to your display. We're going to tackle the animal and person portrait, the cartoon, and the dreaded heart design. I know that this is lots of information, but you're going to need it to thrive; and, thanks to *Airbrush Action*, you'll have it.

**Kent Lind**, who owns and operates air-

brush T-shirt concessions at Nickelodeon Universe, Valleyfair, and Six Flags St. Louis, has been airbrushing for 21 years. He currently lives in Minnesota with his fiancé, Jen Jorstad, and his two awesome children, Sophie and Cooper. To see more of Kent's work, or to ask questions about airbrushing, visit [www.a2bd.com](http://www.a2bd.com). ☒

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