WEST COAST STYLE

COAST SHOWBOAT

COLOR COMBOS AND PATIENCE WITH AUTO-AIR

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I wanted to do a fairly simple step-by-step to demonstrate the use of Auto-Air colors on a model boat. I field a lot of questions about Auto-Air, and yes, it does work! However, a bit of patience is necessary because most people expect the colors to work just like automotive urethanes. For example, Auto-Air requires longer drying times between coats. However, with a heat gun or hair dryer you can cut dying times in half in most cases.

I have tested Auto-Air in many different temperatures and conditions, and typically, given standard room temperature with slight air movement, it's best to wait ten minutes between coats to play it safe. That's about twice as long as urethanes, but I don't have to wear a mask, which, personally, is a big plus for me. There are tradeoffs to everything, I guess. And with Auto-Air's new 4010 and 4011 reducers, your region of the country or world, with it's given climatic conditions, will determine your optimal dry times. >>

STEP 1

First, I primed all of the boat kit's fiberglass and plastic parts, and then used SEM's aerosol Flexible Primer Surfacer (39133), which also acts as an adhesion promoter. I like using SEM when the bodywork is in rather good condition because it's not too heavy of a primer and it keeps the surface very flexible. After four hours of drying, I sanded the parts with 3M 600-grit wet sandpaper, and then wiped with Five Star wax-and-grease remover to eliminate any residual oils and sanding debris.

STEP 2

Using an Iwata W-101 spray gun with a 1.0-mm nozzle, I applied Auto-Air Base Coat White Sealer. Proper reduction of the color is very important, so I made sure not to add more than ten-percent of the 4011 reducer to the basecoat. I sprayed four coats (always attempting nice, smooth passes) to obtain even coverage, waiting ten minutes between coats. The importance of waiting is to avoid any air bubbles or pin holes.

STEP 3

I used Sparklescent Tequila Yellow (#4582) for my second color. This light color required six coats to achieve the coverage I wanted. It's not uncommon to perform more passes with light colors of any brand. Again, patience is a virtue between coats. In the past, I've had problems with Tequila Yellow with pinholes and beading up if I didn't wait long enough between coats.

STEP 4

For this fade, I airbrushed Sparklescent Mango (#4580) thinned 25-percent with the 4011 reducer. I wanted the color to really blend, and I was very careful not to spray wet-on-wet.

Because I was running out of time, I used House of Kolor's SG-100 intercoat clear to protect what I had just done (I hope you water-based purists don't gasp). Of course you may use Auto-Air's Transparent Base, but the SG-100 dries in about five minutes. Then, I scuffed it with a gray Scotch-Brite pad, precleaned it with 5-Star 5900 wax-and-grease remover, and was ready to move on to the graphics phase.

STEP 6

Notice that I followed the contours of the boat with 3M 1/8-inch green fine-line masking tape. This should serve to add a sense of speed and movement to enhance the already fast look of the boat.

STEP 7 & 8

7. To duplicate and transfer the design pattern to the flip side of the boat, I made a pounce pattern by rubbing a crayon (charcoal also works) over green masking paper applied to the surface to make an impression of the tape lines.
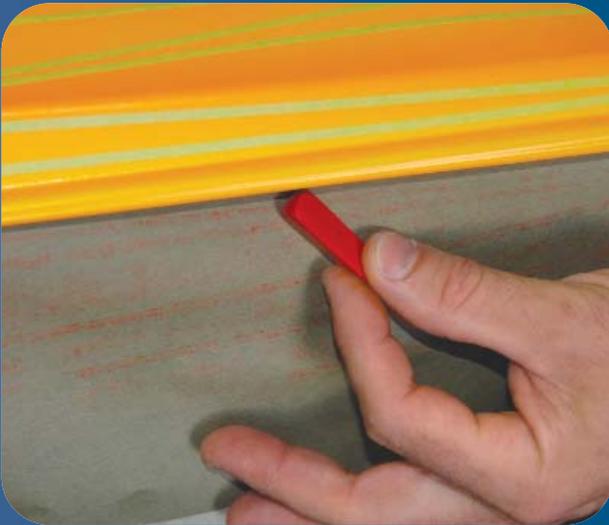
8. I removed the paper, placed it on a semi soft surface, and produced holes on the inside track of the tape with a fine pounce wheel.

STEP 9

I flipped the paper over, lined up the design to the other side, and used a pounce pad filled with blue chalk to pat over the holes created by the pounce wheel. I removed the paper and followed the blue chalk dots with 1/8-inch fine-line tape.

STEP 10
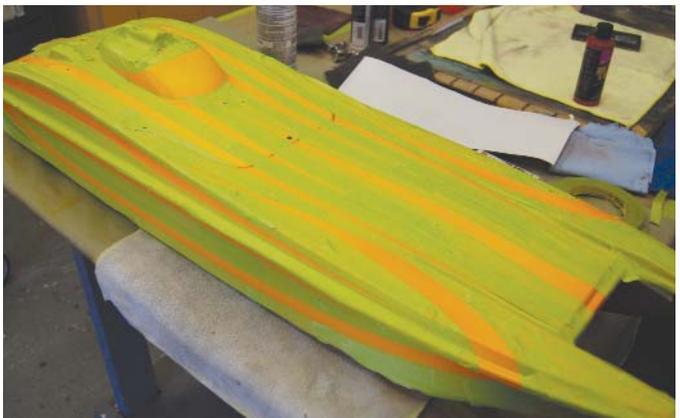
Will all my graphics established, I used 2-inch, 1/2-inch, and 3/4-inch tapes to fill in the spots I wanted covered before airbrushing. I always double-check my work to avoid overlooking any open areas.

I airbrushed Sparklescent Rock Star Red (#4585), thinned 25-percent with Auto-Air 4011 reducer, into the open areas of the graphic. I saved steps by not masking off the areas targeted for Fine Aluminum (#4101) in the next step. I used green masking paper and pieces of 2-inch tape to protect some close areas (the Aluminum will cover any light overspray with ease). To give the graphic some dimension, I faded around the edges of the red with Sparklescent Fine Wine (#4588), also reduced 25-percent with the 4011. I love the dark red it produces. It's not too noticeable, but it makes the boat appear a bit more "mean."

Before spraying Auto-Air's Fine Aluminum (#4101), I covered all the red areas to avoid contamination. Then, I airbrushed Semi Opaque Black (#4220), thinned 50-percent, to achieve a very light fade around the edges of the Aluminum. I'm just off the tape's edge, allowing the overspray to do the fade. This adds more dimension to the job.

I clear-coated the boat with Allchem's Virtus 276 two-part clear, which works great for heavy graphics with a high film build. Make sure that the clear is completely cured—not just dry—before you wet-sand with 600-grit sandpaper.

Wow! Way cool! Look who stopped by just in time to pinstripe some lines for me: Doug Dorr! I selected white because I knew it would really set off the design, followed by red to outline the Aluminum.

Here's the boat with its final clear coat (I used a total of four coats of the Virtus 276). After complete curing, I wet-sanded it with 1500-grit sandpaper, and polished with System One.

Again, when painting with water-based paints, never forget your mantra: "PATIENCE."