



TSUNAMI

AUTO AIR SURFBOARD

BY STEVE VANDEMON

Recently I was asked by Auto-Air Colors to help out with their booth at the Grand National Roadster Show in Los Angeles, California (January 28–30, 2011). We wanted to paint a piece to attract attention to the booth. To avoid your typical sign-blank painting, I came up with the idea of airbrushing a surfboard (hey, what says California better than surfboards?).

I made sure we had a good start ahead of time because most people at a show are only going to see the painting once or twice and I like to present at least partial completion. My partner on this project was Terry “Kiwi” Stephens, airbrusher extraordinaire.



STEP 1

After I applied three heavy coats of House of Kolor KD3000 primer with an Iwata LPH440 spray gun, I let Terry do the honor of wet-sanding with 500-grit sandpaper to level out the board. Doesn't he look happy?



STEP 2

Then, I applied a special mix of Auto-Air Gold Metallic with a bit of Hotrod Sparkle for extra kick.



STEP 3

Making sure the base was fully cured, I applied Coast Auto-Mask for the initial drawing.



STEP 4

After penciling a rough draft of the image, I finalized it with a black Sharpie pen. I only use a Sharpie for step-by-steps because the lines are much easier to see in the photos.



STEP 5

Here's the drawing before cutting.



STEP 6a & b

I cut out the design with a #11 X-Acto razor knife. Other than the perimeter, I also cut the overlapping tentacles. Doing this aids in shading and differentiating the foreground from the background later.



STEP 7a & b

I shot the background with a mix of Auto-Air Fine Metallic White with about 10% reducer. If you don't go too heavy with the white, this color over the gold creates a sort of champagne tone.

STEP 8

Terry re-masked the entire board—eliminating any bubbles with a squeegee—so I could draw the background artwork.





STEP 9

Returning to the Sharpie, I drew a sort of Asian wave/splash design. By the way, this entire piece was painted impromptu because I didn't have the luxury of time to think about it! Sometimes things end up way cooler that way.



STEP 10

Terry cut out the waves, leaving the part that will remain white covered.



STEP 11

Using a freehand shield cut out of pellon fabric, Terry airbrushed the water effect with Wicked Pthalo Blue.



STEP 12a & b

Terry shaded the "frothy" part of the water with Wicked Black to give it shape. Step 12B Shows the results after un-masking.





STEP 13

Terry detailed with Wicked Sepia and shaded with Transparent Sunset.



STEP 14

For the highlights, Terry used straight Wicked White reduced a bit for greater transparency.



STEP 15

I decided that I didn't like the "froth" being the same tone as the background, so I added a mottled effect with the same white mixture to give it some separation.



STEP 16

Keeping with the Asian feel of the painting I wanted to give everything a nice heavy black outline. I accomplished this with 1-Shot mixed two parts black to one part red with a bit of catalyst added to enable clear-coating later. You may have noticed the banner at the bottom right of the octopus. My good friend Hitoshi Umekage was nice enough to translate Auto-Air Colors into Japanese for me.



FINAL

After a few coats of House of Kolor UC-35 clear, you can see how nice this piece looks. This painting was performed in front of literally thousands of people, and I had a blast working on this project with Terry. ■