

STORY CRAIG PARKER
PHOTOS CLINTON HATFIELD

WAR CHEST

This custom-painted Snap-on roll cab ends all arguments about who's got the best tool kit

FOR the 2011 Apprentice Of The Year (AOTY), Snap-on upped the ante by offering its Classic 78 roll cab as the major prize. At 100cm high, 140cm wide and 61cm deep this is an imposing piece of workshop equipment. Seeing as AOTY rewards excellence, we decided to enhance the prize's prestige and exclusivity by giving the cabinet a Ryan Carter-designed custom paint job.

Turning Ryan's eye-catching design into reality was a task entrusted to the very talented Dan Seddon (no

relation to our editor) from Signs Plus Graphics in Wagga Wagga. Dan has been airbrushing since 1996 and has quite a number of high-profile creations to his credit, including the Gary Myers GM 176 and Silver Bullet Mustangs (see www.signsplusgraphics.com.au).

While we knew he wouldn't disappoint us, the staff at *Street Machine* and Snap-on couldn't help but be blown away by the amazing result he achieved. Watch on while we detail the transformation from workshop icon into a *bona fide* piece of rolling art.



STEP 01 From the outset, Dan knew this was going to be a tricky job due the shape of the 11 drawers and their chrome details — he would have to work around these problems. Before beginning to mask up the roll cab, he took the shine off the powdercoat finish by scuffing it up with red Scotch-Brite to promote maximum paint adhesion.



STEP 02 To faithfully follow Ryan's design, Signs Plus would typically use an overhead projector to transfer the design onto the surface. Given the irregular shape of the fascia, this wasn't going to be possible as there were too many shadows. Dan had no choice but to hand-sketch the design onto the masked cabinet using a Chinagraph (wax) pencil.



STEP 03 Dan used a scalpel to cut out then peel away the first areas of the artwork to be airbrushed. Before any paint was laid on, the cab was meticulously wiped over with wax and grease remover to ensure no contaminants were left on the surface. This was done several times throughout the job, as nobody wanted it all peeling off later on.



STEP 04 Rather than laying graphics over red, areas to be airbrushed were first painted in white base. Doing so gives the colours more body and ensures their full vibrancy comes through — especially the yellows and greens. Dan used an airbrush to apply the base as it allowed him to get into all the nooks and crannies. It dries quicker as well.



STEP 05 Finally, Dan begins laying on some colour! As you can see, pre-prep for airbrushing is just as time-consuming and laborious as preparing something for a regular paint job. After adding in some of the outlines and shadows, Dan begins filling in the voids, beginning with the Joker's larrikin face and court jester-style hat.



STEP 06 Airbrush work is not all glitz and glamour, as you often have to contort yourself into some very uncomfortable positions. "We couldn't sit the heavy box up high," Dan said. "But hey, it's no worse than airbrushing an ultra-low race car." Where he could (as with the dice dots), Dan made a mask using a computer-controlled plotter printer/cutter.



STEP 07 Signs Plus is a big House Of Kolor fan. "Its colours are clean and vibrant," Dan said. "We use its products exclusively for our airbrush work as they make the graphics really pop." More than 10 different HOK Kandies and Pearls were used here. "None of them were straight colours — I had to custom-mix them all."



STEP 08 Having laid on the bulk of the graphics, they're reverse-masked in readiness for the addition of the blended black highlights. Once again, application tape is laid down and cut around with a scalpel. Application tape is the semi-transparent adhesive backing found on many stickers, which comes in different widths, as seen in Step 04.



STEP 09 Peeling away the reverse mask is the moment of truth — the main artwork is all but finished and it's only now Dan can see whether or not he's added the correct amount of blend and highlight. To create the fine detail in the tachos's numbers and letters Dan used various computer-generated masks. Looks great, doesn't it?



STEP 10 The final piece of the masterpiece to be added was the flag that wraps around the left side of the Classic 78. It was left until last because it runs over the top of the blend. Although it's masked over here, you'll note in Wrap Up that the official *Street Machine*/Snap-on Apprentice Of The Year 2011 logo was also added to both ends.



WRAP UP

WITH all the airbrush work completed, the entire roll cab was given four coats of HOK UFC clear. Because it would be impossible to sand and buff the artwork, Dan thinned out the last coat so that it flowed on nice and easily, giving it a glossy finish straight off the gun. From go to whoa, it took Dan 12 hours of work, which is pretty good going.

As well as having to deal with the Classic 78's irregularities, the other big difficulty was the numerous geometric shapes in Ryan's design. "All the perspectives and proportions have to be spot-on, otherwise it'll look wrong," Dan said. "The hardest parts were the poker chips. They took ages as I was unable to use a computer-generated mask for them."

Not only do we think Dan absolutely nailed it, so did the talented winner, Sav Parseghian. "My heart stopped when I saw the tool box," he said. 🍷

STREET Machine would like to thank Snap-on (www.snapontools.com.au, 1800 810 581); House Of Kolor (www.HouseOfKolor.com.au, 1800 804 182); and Signs Plus (www.signsplusgraphics.com.au, 0412 233 363) for their support.

