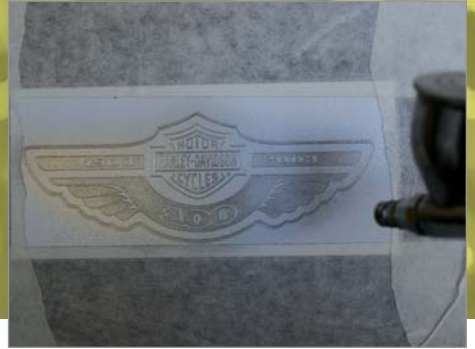
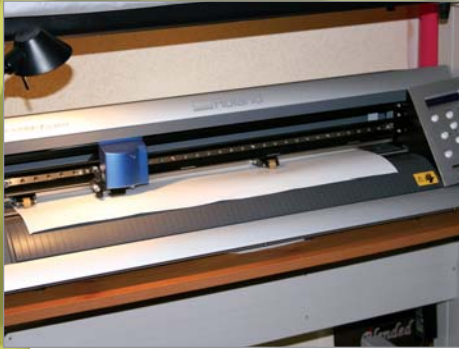


INTRO TO VINYL PLOTTERS

BY KEVIN KIDDER

IN OUR DESIRE TO DELIVER THE LATEST NEWS, UPDATES, TIPS, TRICKS AND EMERGING TRENDS AFFECTING THE CUSTOM PAINT AND AIRBRUSH INDUSTRY, LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT VINYL PLOTTERS.



THOUGH CONSIDERED A STANDARD TOOL IN THE sign business (and a threat to custom painters) with their production of inexpensive signs, lettering, and graphics, plotters are increasingly finding their place in the custom paint and airbrush world. From concept to finish masking, vinyl plotters can greatly increase the efficiency and accuracy of any custom painter.



WHERE TO BEGIN

Let's start with the basics of what a vinyl plotter can do, and how it can benefit your shop.

Plotters are not solely used to cut vinyl for use on signs, windows, and truck doors. They can also cut substrates such as spray (stencil) mask, sandblast mask, Mylar for reusable stencils, and a variety of other materials—with superb precision!

How many times have you had to draw a Harley™ logo, cut it by hand, and then repeat the process for the other side of the motorcycle tank? Chances are good that it took you longer than the five minutes necessary to load and cut a vinyl stencil on a plotter. Did your "stencil" come out crisp and clean? Perfect? Ever cut a little too deep?


Manual cutting is not only time intensive and extremely tedious, but even the smallest flaws will appear in the work. Now, imagine if you had five motorcycles to paint, you could easily spend a whole week just creating the necessary masking. Do you see where I am going?

Vinyl plotters can save enormous time, significantly increase your efficiency, and their precision ensures that your graphics are clean and accurate time after time. And don't worry about stifling your creativity. Whether you draw by hand or design on a computer, your images are convertible to a stencil, saved, and ready to use or modify at a moment's notice.

The bottom line: vinyl plotters are great for productivity, ideal for creating precise, clean details, and huge time-savers for faster turnaround and increased profit. And for some reason, plotters just don't complain when you ask them to redraw and cut the same design ten times.

Did I forget to mention that most plotter software serves as a great tool to most accurately show clients what their design will look like before you begin work, eliminating the need for test panels?

STAY TUNED

For future articles, I'll cover a variety of topics on plotters, including how to choose a plotter and software to create advanced multi-layered graphics, beginning to complex advanced uses, maintenance, where to buy artwork, how to create artwork, tips and tricks to help you get the most out of a vinyl plotter, and more. 

Until then, keep the paint flowing!

(The whole process pictured took about 25 minutes from start to finish!)