

# 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

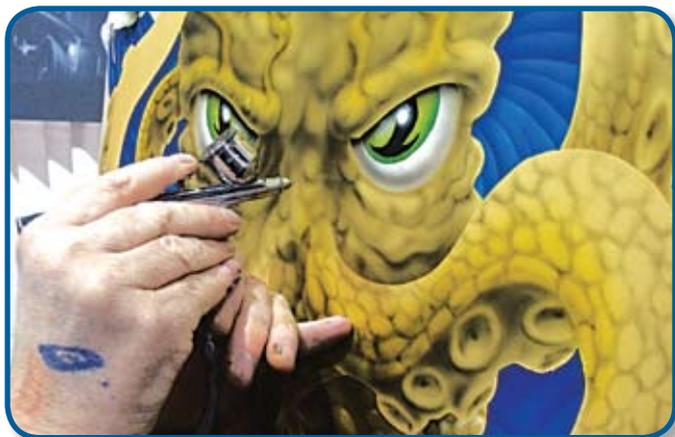
Using a freehand shield cut out of pellon fabric, Terry airbrushed the water effect with Wicked Pthalo Blue.



### 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.



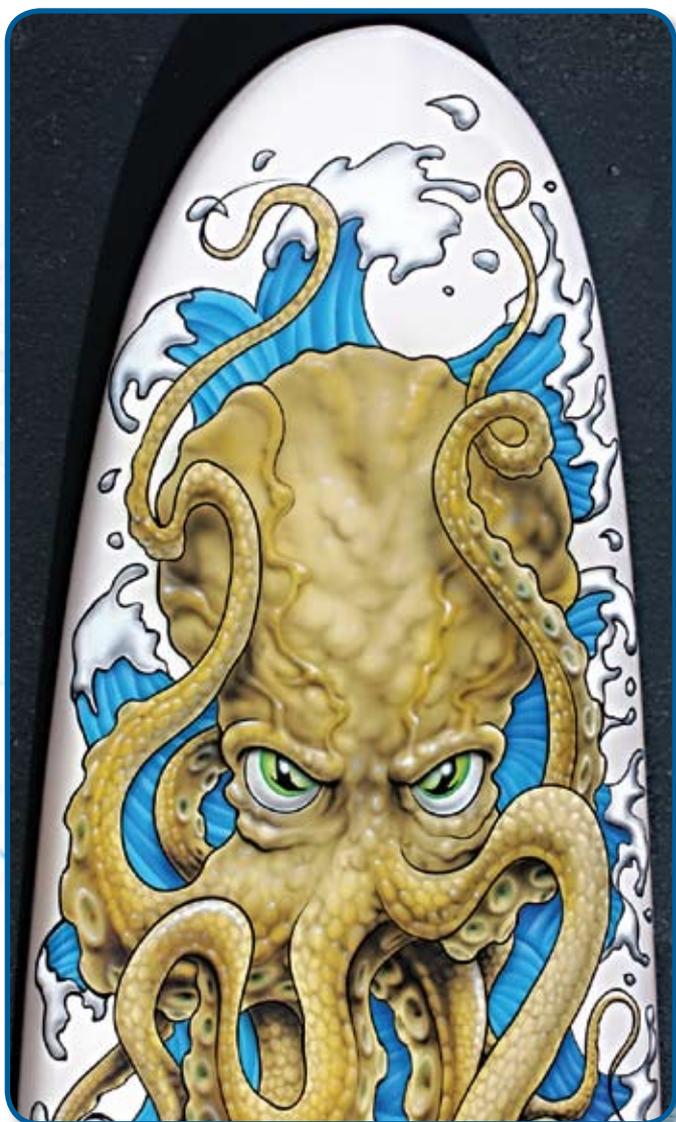
### STEP 15

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. ■