Overview

Name: Peter Litger, CEO
Company: Car Body and Spray Painting Center in Germany's Rhein-Sieg district
Location: Lohmar, Germany
Industry: Vehicle body construction and spray painting
Product: CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite

Airbrush art goes on the road

Anyone who thinks spray-painting is a quick job that the garage does to disguise a scratch on a car hasn't met Peter Litger. Peter runs a car body and paint workshop that's a bit different from the usual sort. He offers his customers "vehicle art". Want Tutankhamen or Liz Taylor to adorn your vehicle and accompany you on your travels? No problem for Peter Litger. He paints unique designs on cars – with a little help from CorelDRAW Graphics Suite.

When it gets dark and his team of six staff has left for the day, Peter the artist takes the place of Peter the car body shop owner and manager. Turning out the lights in the office, he goes into his large workshop, grabs his spray gun and gets on with the work he's really passionate about: painting breathtaking pictures on trucks, tractors, jeeps and motorbikes, as well as cars. And he's understandably proud of the fact, that he's one of only two people in the whole of Germany who paints by hand, using an airbrush, rather than just sticking on an adhesive film with an imprinted design. His spray gun has two nozzles – a large one for outlines and larger areas, and a small one for details like facial features and strands of hair.

One of Peter Litger's favourite projects: a scene from „American Graffiti"
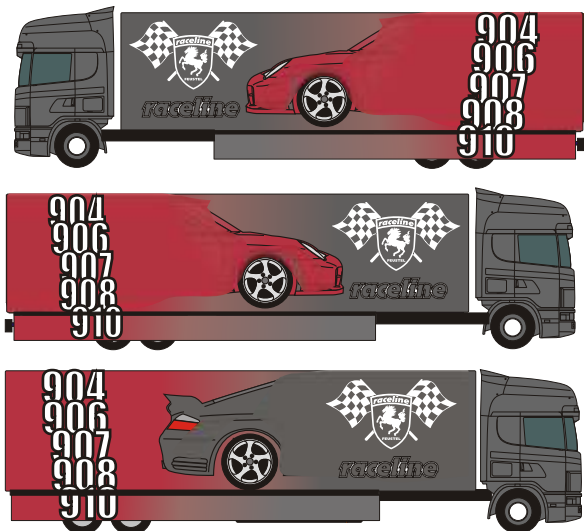

Peter Litger at work. Liz Taylor as Cleopatra displayed on the side of a truck belonging to the NELO-NEUSS fleet

He has depicted scenes from films like American Graffiti and from westerns, such as cowboys and Red Indians. "These are all influences from the established American trucker tradition," smiles Peter Litger. This has a large number of faithful followers in Europe. One of the events they wouldn't dream of missing is the International ADAC Truck Grand Prix, which is held every year in July at the legendary Nürburgring motorsport complex. Litger's artistic creations have won first prize three times at this prestigious event. And HERPA, the maker of miniature cars and trucks, has several of Litger's models in their product range too.

Every vehicle a unique work of art

So how does he organize his work? "I start by taking a photo of the vehicle and scan it into the Corel program. Then I track down ideas for pictures and designs on the web or in books and scan them too. Then I work on the pictures by adapting the color gradients, retouching, expanding or shrinking the contours, and adding lettering or text. „For Peter Litger, the advantages of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite are obvious." As a self-taught graphic designer I need software that's intuitive and easy to use. Another advantage is that the work is faster with this product – in a couple of hours, my graphics file is ready," he says. He finds the vectorization of the scanned pixel graphics particularly useful because he can enlarge or shrink them without changing the proportions of the design. Yet he discovered the graphics software almost by chance. „It was in my very first job – one of my colleagues was using CorelDRAW for lettering and logos on vehicles, so I learned how to use it by looking over his shoulder. That was decades ago and I'm still using CorelDRAW today!" Aside from private individuals, his customers include transport and logistics companies like NELO-NEUSS and Schumacher International Transport.

Once the customer has approved the design, Peter Litger paints it on the vehicle. "I use an overhead projector to project the image onto the truck or trailer, then sketch the contours in black and white. I mask off the area I want to paint first, stick

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GRAPHICS SUITE

Sketch for Raceline using CorelDRAW

Ad designed using CorelDRAW: this appeared in a booklet for a bobbycar-race

a printout of the image next to me with sticky tape and get to work painting." It takes him four weeks to paint a truck and from 8 to 12weeks for a truck with its trailer. Peter's work has brought him admiration, recognition, praise and prizes – as well as between 4,500 and 25,000 euros per order. He doesn't sign his work though. After all, he sees himself as a qualified spray painter, not as an artist.
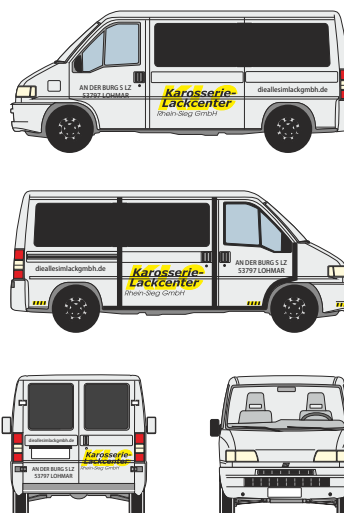
Do good works – and make them known
But CorelDRAW comes into its own in other areas too. Aside from designs on trucks and trailers, it's used for Peter Litger's everyday publicity needs. Business cards, flyers, invitations, newspaper ads – he does them all with CorelDRAW Graphics Suite. "I do the main design and layout, specify the colors to be used, and write the copy. Then I convert the whole thing to a PDF and send it to an external graphic designer who does the detailed work." For smaller vehicle paint jobs like lettering and logos, he uses CorelDRAW and a plotter.

Peter Litger has another talent up his sleeve. As well as his artistic designs and paint jobs on damaged vehicles, he also restores vintage cars. Porsches are his great passion, but he's also enjoyed having classic Mercedes, Midgets and BMWs in his workshop. As he says, his decisive success factor – aside from his talent – is communicating the wide range of services he offers. "I need to do a lot of PR for myself, like emailing PDF ads to all the vintage car clubs in the region. I use CorelDRAW

for those too!" With all this activity, running his business during the day and painting trucks and trailers at night, does he ever have any time to himself? "Of course!" he laughs. "I love taking a spin on my motorbike, eating great Italian food, reading – especially history – and naturally spending time with my family." What does the future hold for him? "I'd like to concentrate mainly on vintage cars – but I still want to carry on painting trucks in showstopping designs." Using CorelDRAW, of course!

Karosserie- und Lackcenter Rhein-Siegen: Advertising on their own van

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