



**AUTO-AIR
COLORS**

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Giving the customer what they want is my mission. In addition to wild paintjobs on hot rods and bikes, many of my customers are interested in a cool, kustom kulture paintjob for their daily driven vehicle that still has a professional look.



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A subtle approach to making a mass-produced vehicle stand apart is the use of ghosted graphics which are visible on direct-views but disappear into the base paint on side-cast views. The flames are there but do not over-power the overall paintjob.



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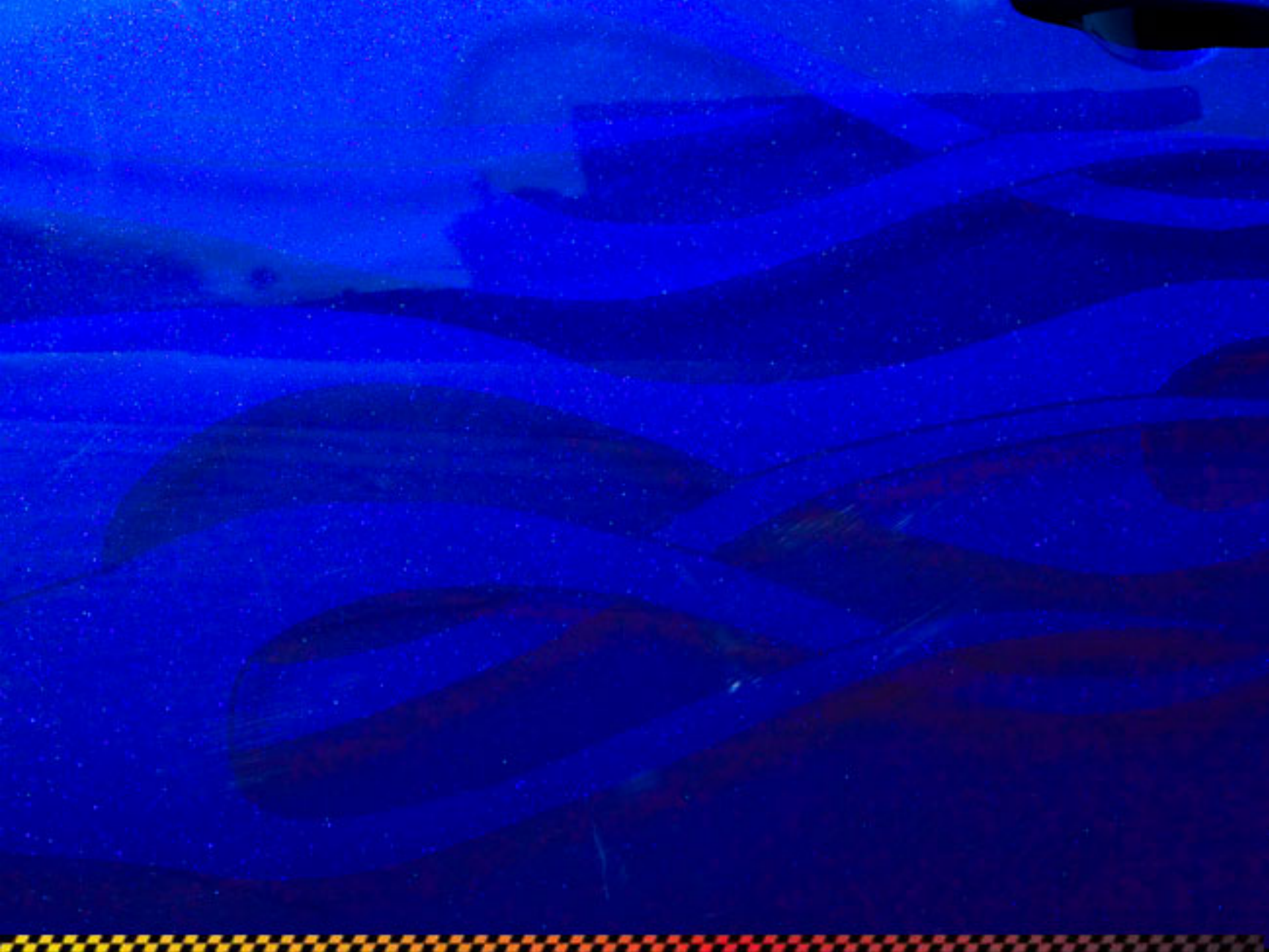
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For this particular paintjob, the customer wanted wild flames over a candied-pearl paintjob.

The customer was open to ideas but stated a liking for the color blue.

I chose Auto Air Sparklescent Nightmare Blue; it's a killer candy-pearl color which works very well as a base for ghosted flames done with Auto Air Gem Sapphire.



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To really trick out the flame job I chose an over-lapping style of flame, something rarely done with ghosted graphics as pinstriping is not used to create separation in the flames.



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The vehicle's existing finish was in great condition allowing for minimal preparation. After cleaning, we simply wet-sanded the finish with 500-grit sandpaper then degreased and masked off. We started off with Auto Air Sealer Dark to create an even, dark base to start from. I reduced the sealer by 10% with 4011 Flash Reducer for improved flow. The sealer has excellent coverage requiring only one quart to cover the entire body and doesn't require scuffing before applying the base color.



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Over the dark sealer, I next applied Auto Air Metallic Midnight Blue for my base which I reduced with the 4011 Flash Reducer. The metallic base will accentuate the Sparklescent's candied effect as light will refract off the metallic back through the Sparklescent's transparent toner for a brighter direct-view and darker side-cast view. The pearl-flakes in the Sparklescent will also have more pop compared to applying over a non-metallic base.



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I apply 4 coats of Sparklescent Nightmare Blue as the mid-coat color spraying in light coats in an even, over-lapping pattern. Just like a candy color a Sparklescent finish will show uneven color build-up and striping if applied unevenly.



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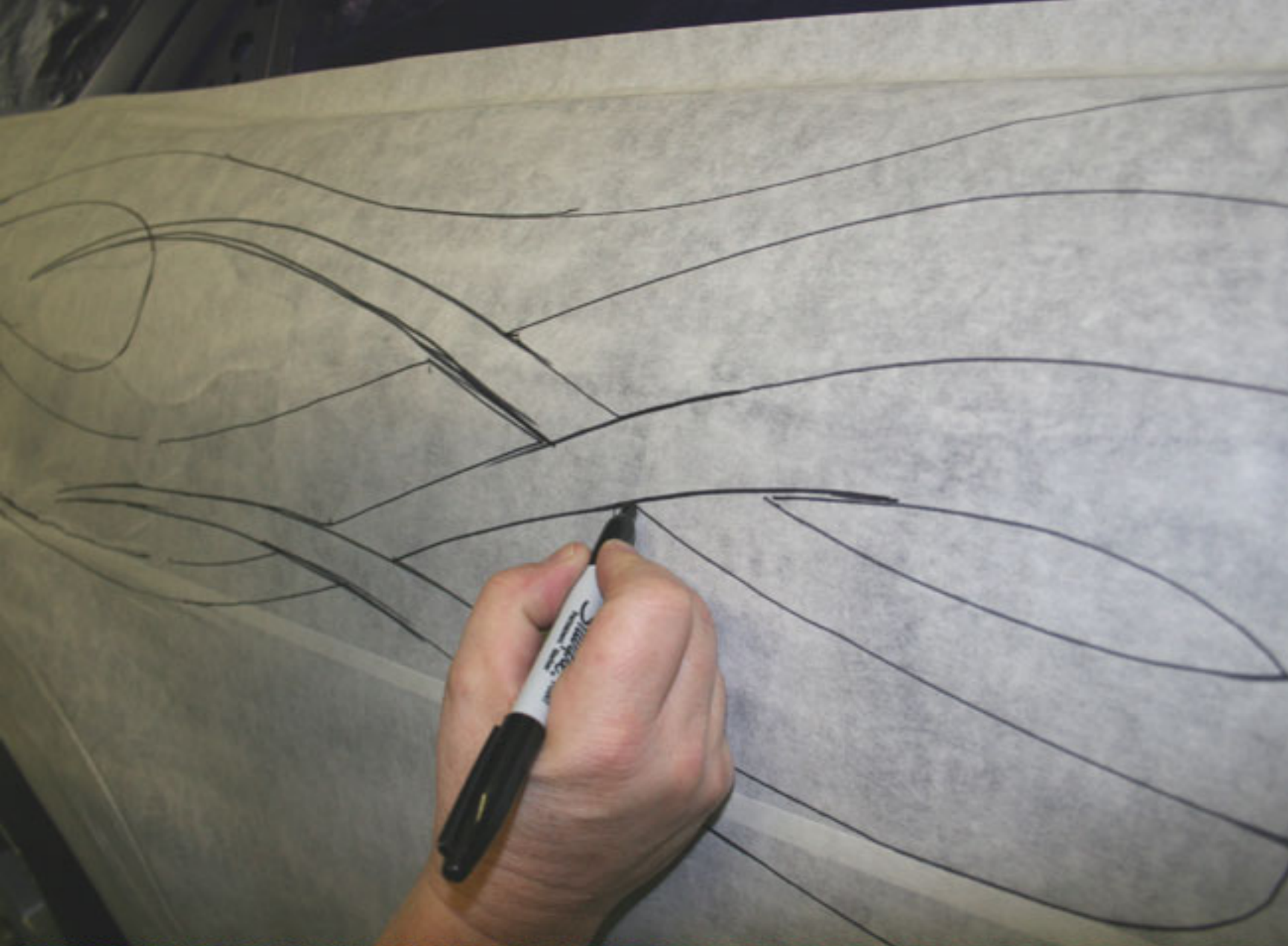
After letting the base paintjob cure overnight at @ 55 degrees F, I apply high-tack masking tape over the areas where I'll apply graphics. Use of an inter-coat clear wasn't necessary; Auto Air can be taped onto directly when cured.



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*Using an overlapping flames stencil design,
I trace the pattern onto the tape.
The flames start just after the front wheel fenders
and travel most of the car's side to match
the long, sleek appearance of the Magnum.*



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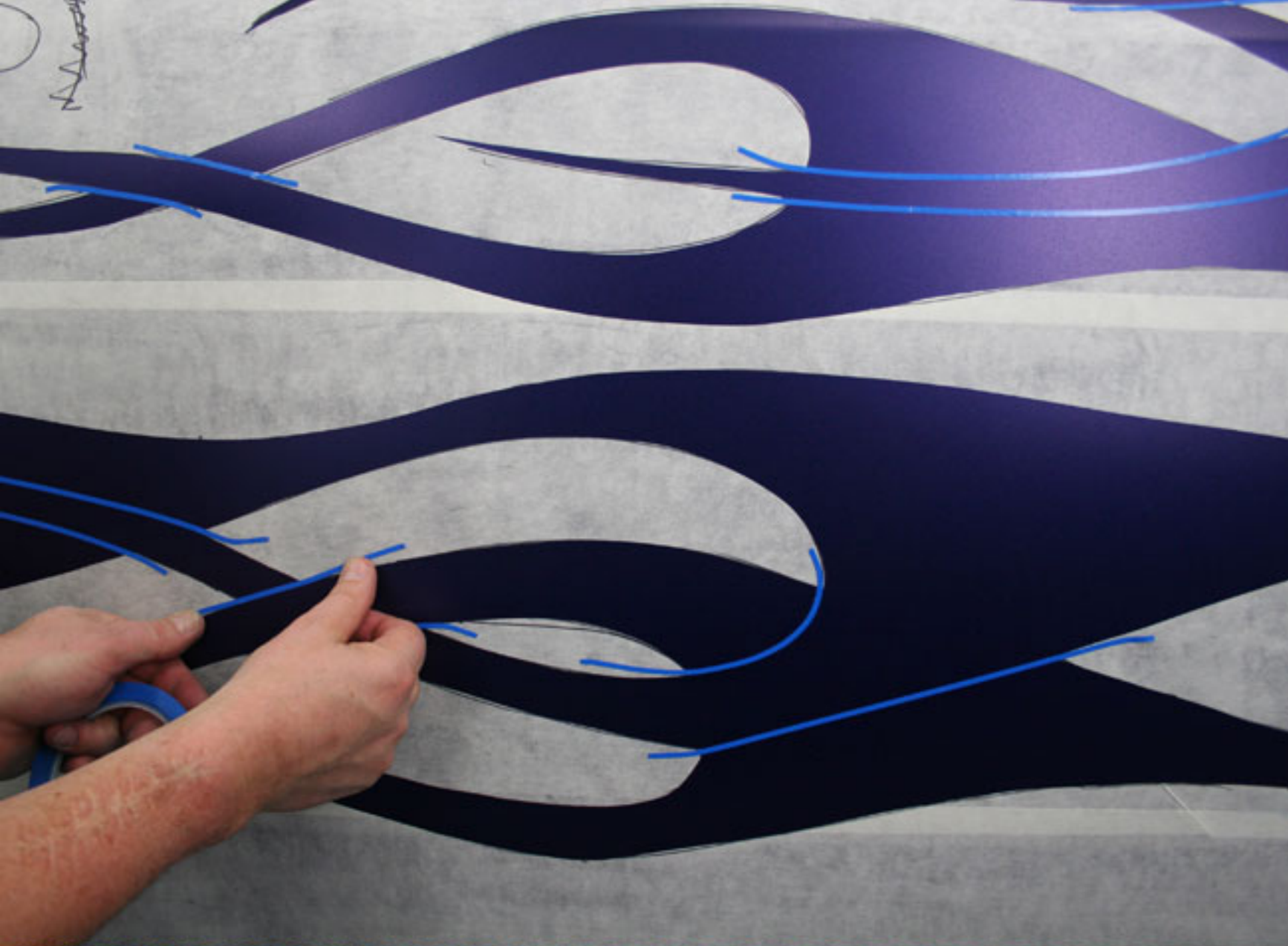
After tracing the stencil's outlines, I connect the lines where the flames overlap. These lines will be cut away too. I'm using a Sharpie pen so the lines show up in pictures. A pencil is normally used as lines can be erased and re-drawn.



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Cut away all lines being careful not to push too hard and cut into the base paint. This can be difficult. Using a sharp blade helps.



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Using 1/8" tape, re-create the overlapping lines within the flame. The underlying base color will create the separation in the ghosted flames and keep the graphics truly ghosted so they are not visible on side-cast views. Pinstriping creates too distinct a separation from the base paint and graphics which loses the ghosted effect.



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3 light coats of Gem Sapphire are applied for the graphics. It's a royal blue - to - nothing holographic pearl-flake which is vibrant and deep on the direct-view and completely disappears on its side-cast view. It's also the pearl used in the Nightmare Blue making the graphics color-key perfectly with the base paint.



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For the dimensional shadowing around the flames, I use Transparent Blue Violet as it is the toner to the Nightmare Blue base color and make it slightly darker by mixing in @ 5% Transparent Black.

This keeps everything working towards the ghosted effect. As with pinstriping, using black alone loses the ghosted effect.



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Working with minimal amounts of material, dimensional shadowing help bring the flames to life and helps with the separation of the cross-over flame licks. The new Auto Air Transparent Colors spray excellent. I reduced a bit with their 4011 Flash Reducer and didn't have any tip-dry after 20 minutes of spraying.



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After letting the paint air cure overnight, I apply a catalyzed, urethane clear with a high temperature reducer. Working with water-based paints, a slower curing clear adheres better than a quick curing clear and has an even flow over the pearl-flakes to help eliminate an orange-peeled finish.