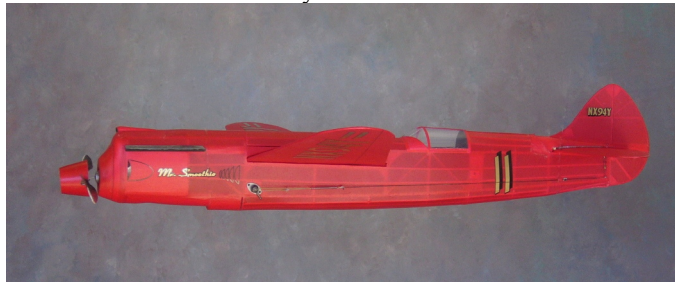


# PIMP UP YOUR MODEL WITH VINYL

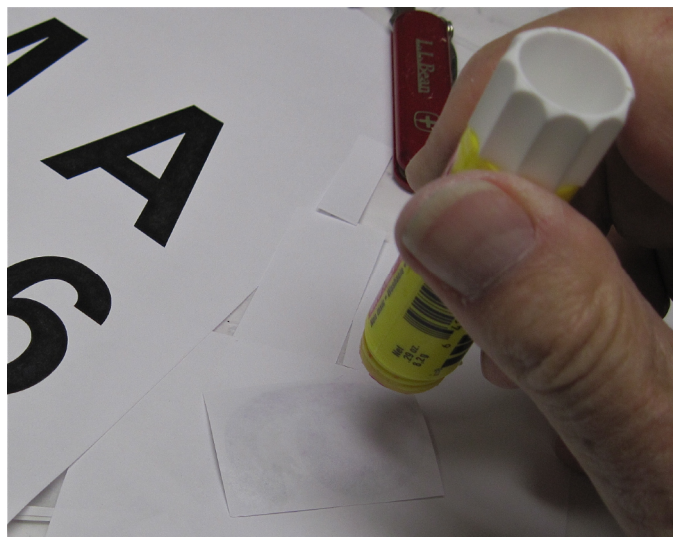
By George White

Tired of the hassle of making decals, only to have them look less than great, or even worse, break up after a bit of hard use? Doing pinstriping using tissue or even plastic covering material, and suffering the enjoyment of that? Modern signmaker's technology has given us a beautiful alternative called "high performance vinyl." It goes by various other names, depending upon the brand. The 3M brand is called "Graphic Film." It's .003" thick and is self adhesive. I've had experience with it on two occasions — one for some fancy markings on a scale model and another for putting the AMA numbers on a SAM Commercial Rubber. My first experience was to get some fancy gold numbers, with black shadows for a Mr. Smoothie racer. Roger Willis, of WestFac fame, highly recommended Callie Graphics ([www.callie-graphics.com](http://www.callie-graphics.com)), who did a beautiful job. Considering the complexity involved, which included some script lettering, she did it at a very reasonable price. All these markings were done on the .003" thick vinyl. The results are shown below.

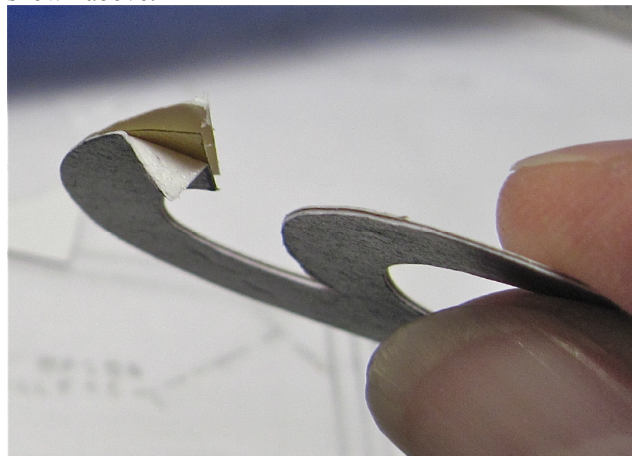


More recently I needed to add my AMA numbers to a Korda Victory, which I've painted blue and gold (old navy colors — surprise!), using Floral Spray. I decided to make the numbers gold for a little panache. I could have painted some tissue with gold paint and glued it on, but decided to give the vinyl thing a try. Based upon a recommendation from Buzz Trabbic, of Rocky Top Models, I went to a local graphic sign shop and purchased some bright gold color high quality graphic sign vinyl. The stuff comes in a large array of colors. A square foot cost me \$5 and that will do a lot of goodies. The vinyl comes attached to a heavy, plastic-coated backing sheet which when peeled off exposes the glue side of the vinyl. The trick to be able to use the stuff is to have a cover sheet of tacky paper on which to draw your pattern and which will allow you to handle the piece you produce while you lay it in place on the model. I had to ask the print shop to place a sheet of that tacky cover paper over the surface of the piece I purchased. You can always beg the shop for pieces of scrap vinyl, but you'll have to come up with your own tacky cover sheet.

The photos below show the sequence of cutting and applying the stuff. The first step is to print or draw on bond paper whatever shape you want the piece to be. Then roughly cut out around the shape, leaving 1/4" or so around the outside. Turn that piece over and rub a good coat of purple colored UHU glue stick to the back of the shape as seen below.



Then glue the pattern piece to the tacky cover sheet. DO NOT glue it to the backing sheet to which the vinyl is attached — if you do, your numbers/letters will be reversed. Ask how I found out!! Put the vinyl on a good cutting surface and use a new #11 Exacto blade or similar and cut the number out as shown above.



As seen in the photo above, take the #11 blade and carefully separate a small amount of BOTH the carrier paper and the tacky cover sheet (which still has your pattern glued to it). Then proceed to remove the backing sheet from the vinyl, leaving the number with the sticky side exposed. Apply the number to the model, ensuring that a small piece of the cover paper has been turned back. If you don't have a small piece of the cover paper turned back with which to grab, you'll have a very difficult time pulling it off once the number is stuck to the model. Peel off the cover paper/pattern as seen below, rub the vinyl gently to seat it and you've got it made. After sitting overnight, you'll not get it off the model. This stuff is so thin and light that I could have made a two layer set of numbers with fancy black, or any other color edging. Putting stripes on a model would be a cinch, and so would insignia. All you've gotta do is draw them.

