

Adobe Illustrator™

for Macintosh®



Thomas-Bradley Illustration & Design



Tom and Brad Neal, founders of Thomas-Bradley Illustration & Design.

Tom Neal admits he's been a car buff for a long time. "I was always drawing cars in high school," he says. "It's likely I would have ended up doing something related to cars, but if it weren't for Adobe Illustrator, I probably wouldn't be in this line of work."

Tom and his brother, Brad, formed Thomas-Bradley Illustration & Design, in Gridley, Illinois, in 1987. The studio employs two other full-time illustrator/designers, and produces artwork for a wide range of product brochures, advertisements and video promotions. Clients include Acura, General Motors, Nike, Inc., Anheuser-Busch, and State Farm Insurance Company.

Much of the studio's output is photo-realistic, halftone art. Thomas-Bradley's clients prefer illustrations to photographs because an illustration can more easily accentuate specific features of a product. In addition, because the studio delivers the artwork as PostScript™ language files, which are device- and resolution-independent, clients can output the illustrations on a range of devices in a range of sizes and resolutions without reducing the quality of the image.

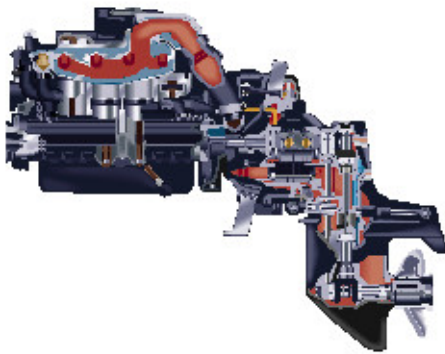
Points for Precision

The Neal brothers began creating illustrations using traditional methods. They originally bought an Apple® Macintosh computer strictly for type-setting. "I wasn't interested in drawing

using a computer," says Tom. "I wanted a paintbrush. But when we realized the potential of Adobe Illustrator, we just took off. The program has proven to be a catalyst for almost everything we do."

In particular, it has enabled the Neals to produce the exact look their clients want. "Cars are symmetrical, so the front wheels, for example, have to look precisely like the back wheels," says Brad. "Getting that symmetry using traditional methods requires more work. But drawing identical ellipses using the precision drawing tools in Adobe Illustrator makes it easy to get the symmetry and precision clients require in our work."

Editing is another area where the computer has a big advantage over traditional methods. "Cars change every year, but often only in details," says Brad. "We can usually take the previous year's illustration and, for example, simply redo the wheels and some other features, and be done. With airbrushed art, which we're mimicking, we'd have to paint out the old wheel and do a new one. Making the changes in Adobe Illustrator is hours faster."



Cutaway of an inboard/outboard marine motor, created for an insurance claims department using Adobe Illustrator software.

The Filter Factor

Plug-in filters, a major innovation in illustration software, appeared for the first time in Adobe Illustrator 5.0. Version 5.5 adds several new filters that give the prod-

uct new power and capabilities. "For the type of work we do, the filters—especially the Pathfinder filters—are a godsend," says Tom. "On a car illustration, they easily save the half an hour I would spend cutting



This photorealistic illustration was created with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator software programs.

and joining paths. Now, I just put one shape on top of another, and select the Unite or Divide command. A process that used to take several minutes now takes half a second."

Tom also cites the example of making changes to a photorealistic illustration of a car interior. He spent 50 hours on the illustration, but the client wanted more contrast and darker tones. "I would have spent an entire day reassigning values," he says, "but instead I just selected the Saturate filter, changed the highlights, and the client loved it."

Among the new filters in version 5.5, Document Info has become an irreplaceable memory jogger, say the brothers, reminding them to include placed images, fonts and other items that the service bureau needs to process their files.

A Paperless Process

The arrival of Adobe Photoshop™ digital image editing software changed the steps the Neal brothers take to create artwork using Adobe Illustrator. Before Adobe Photoshop, they would do a line drawing of a car, scan it in to use as a template, then redraw it using the tools in Adobe Illustrator. Now, they scan a photo of the

car into Adobe Photoshop and use the pen tool to draw the line cell. They then export that drawing into Adobe Illustrator using the Export Paths command, which gives them editable paths to work with. "The new method saves close to two hours by eliminating the steps of drawing on paper, scanning, and redrawing all the lines," says Brad. "And it means we draw the car once, get artwork we can edit and proceed to lay in tones to achieve the photorealistic look we're after, complete with reflections and shading."

The brothers also do text work on headlines and logos in Adobe Illustrator because "you can treat the letters more as art than text," says Brad. "We use the program's features to colorize or distort text to get the effects we want." Before version 5.5, the brothers would create columns of body copy in a page layout program rather than in Adobe Illustrator. "Now," says Brad, "we use the new text features—especially tabs—to do things like brochures from start to finish without leaving the program."

Tom and Brad Neal say Adobe Illustrator, especially version 5.5 with its new features, will continue to be a driving force in their business. Very appropriate for illustrators who spend so much time with cars.

Thomas-Bradley Illustration and Design Systems at-a-glance

Hardware

Two Macintosh Quadra® 800 computers with 20 MB RAM, 230 MB hard drives
Two Macintosh IIfx computers with 8 MB RAM, 100 MB hard drives
Apple LaserWriter® IIg printer
Two Wacom digitizing tablets
Microtek® flatbed scanner®
AppleShare® network
44 MB and 88 MB Syquest drives
Phillips and Club Mac CD-ROM drives
PLI DAT drive

Software

Adobe Illustrator
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Dimensions™
Adobe Streamline™
QuarkXPress®
Aldus® PageMaker®

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