



STRICTLY COMMERCIAL

By Ron Percell

Making Signs Meat

Integrating numerous components for a striking deli menuboard

I recently received a call from Paul Lucchesi, owner of Petaluma, CA's, Lucchesi's Deli. He was looking for a simple banner to announce his plans to move the restaurant to a new site. I recognized this as an opportunity to showcase my talents in a high-visibility location that could garner more work, so I made him the banner.

A week later, Paul called me to say he liked the banner. He wanted me to come over and discuss menu signage for the deli's new location.

I met Paul at his original location. The store was clean and the food was fragrant, but his menu comprised a handlettered, two-color board.

After I'd introduced myself, we toured his new store. Paul had been working with an interior designer and chosen warm, vibrant colors, sparing no expense to create an inviting place. I convinced him that premium signage would enhance the deli's image.

Satisfied with our first meeting, he agreed to meet at my shop once I'd produced some rough designs and estimates. I wanted him to see sample panels of numerous available materials.



Ron adhered the text and pictorials, made of 15-lb. HDU, to a 12-in.-deep barrel using an aluminum, split-L bracket.



Ron Percell, owner of Percell Signs (Petaluma, CA), fabricated this sign — which incorporates PVC, Sign*Foam® high-density urethane (HDU), Styrofoam® polystyrene foam, digitally imaged vinyl and magnetic materials, and a mixture of lettering enamel and clearcoat — for a local deli moving into new digs.

Brainstorming designs
Excited about the opportunity, I created a few pencil sketches and implemented my designs using CorelDRAW® 8. I began developing a food-themed logo. After all my years in the sign business, I still find the design process stimulating.

I met with Paul the following week, and he approved my designs. Next, I prepared sketches of the menu that incorporated the logo as the centerpiece. My design's color combinations matched the deli's cabinets and interior paint.

When presenting bids, we like to

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Ron and his assistant, Fernando Ocampo, created a frame using PVC, and affixed it to the signface using Weld-On cement, L brackets, double-sided tape and panhead screws.



A close-up of the deli graphic, which Ron made from Precision Board HDU. Note the signmaker's license on the wine bottle.

present multiple pricing tiers to our customers. Paul chose our highest tier. "Letterhead quality."

Juicy creations

I'd proposed a 4 x 12 x 1-ft. pan face with a hidden frame. I constructed the frame using our table saw to cut a slab of Sintra® PVC into 6 in. x 8-ft. horizontal ribs. Then, I cut several 6-in. strips in half, and

added them lengthwise to create 12-ft. ribs. I attached the two pieces with scrap Sintra PVC sheet and 1-in., panhead, galvanized screws.

I used CorelDRAW 8 to create a template and Flexi-Cut® to plot the vinyl, which output on our Roland ColorCMM Pro PC-600, and we applied vinyl to three of the ribs.

Next, I placed the 12-ft. Sintra lengths atop 3-in.-thick polystyrene

foam and used a jigsaw to cut along the template's edge. I set pieces aside as stand-offs for hanging on the menuboards. I then cut out a series of 45-in.-wide, vertical ribs and assembled the frame's edges by countersinking 8 x 1/2-in., wood screws.

Next, I affixed the horizontal rib that held the remaining pieces in position. I marked with a blue Sta-

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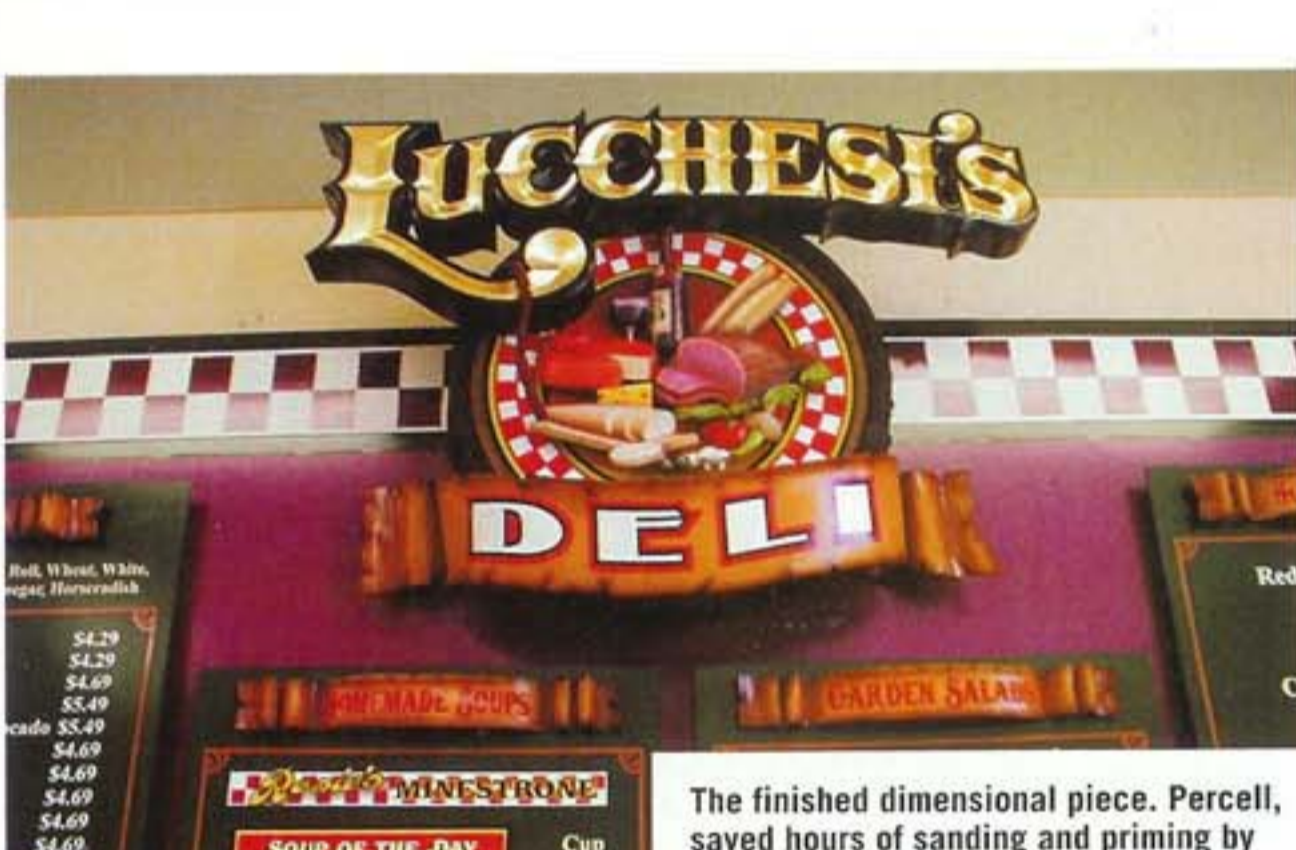
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The finished dimensional piece. Percell, saved hours of sanding and priming by applying his mixture.

bilo® pencil where I cut notches that fit the pieces together for a connected spine. After I'd inserted all the screws, I used Bondo plastic filler to plug the holes. It's important to mask around and minimize holes for a clean, flush finish.

Next, I added the face, which I cut from two Sintra pieces. I made the face 3 in. larger than the frame to hide it. I aligned the face to the

face using Weld-On® cement. The faces aligned to the vertical frame with cement and heat-bent Sintra L-brackets held in place with double-sided tape and attached with 3/8-in., panhead screws.

With the sign lying face up, I placed the 12-ft.-wide Sintra piece on top of the pan face, then cut scrap pieces to match its arch. I cut the Sintra menuboards and posi-

tioned them on the leftover pieces.

Once the menuboards were in place, I marked the scraps before cutting them to make the stand-offs for the menuboards.

Before attaching hanging brackets, I used my plunge-cut router to mill out slots inset 1/2 in., with a 1/2-in. straight bit with bracket slots. Then, I installed standoffs with 1-in. panhead screws.

A raised menuboard across a flat plane adds visual appeal. I made clips using 1/2- and 3/8-in. PVC strips and attached them to the backside with double-sided tape and screws.

I applied heat-bent, PVC scrolls to each menuboard. Then, I air-brushed the scrolls with 1Shot enamel, clearcoated them with Superfrog's Frog Juice and decorated them with Arlon's 2-mil, high-performance vinyl.

The panels included vinyl-wrapped, 6 x 12-in., 0.080 steel fea-

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A pleased Paul Lucchesi, the deli's owner, and his manager, Linda Hill, stand in front of the completed sign. According to Ron, this sign demonstrates the added appeal of dimensional signage.

turing a digitally imaged, magnetic sign that I made using our Roland machine. This piece, which I attached using clear silicone, displayed Lucchesi's soup of the day.

Once I'd finished fabricating the PVC pieces, I sprayed each panel with an equal mixture of 1Shot and Frog Juice Sunscreen Clear 7000.

Extra dimension

I purchased a half of a wine barrel from a local garden shop, cut it to 12 in. tall and added screws to safely reinforce the metal band. I then used my jigsaw to contour-cut the barrel to fit the slots. I cut an 18-in. circle out of 0.080 aluminum and applied a digital print that I screwed to the barrel's face.

I crafted "Lucchesi's Deli" from 15-lb. Sign*Foam® HDU that I cut using a hand saw and handcarved using Stubai chisels. I fabricated an aluminum split-L bracket that formed the barrel's contour, and attached the nameplate with panhead screws staggered in opposing directions.

I lightly filled any minor holes with vinyl spackle, then sanded the Sign*Foam with 220-grit sandpaper. I skipped priming because I get better results by spraying a mixture of seven parts 1Shot and one part each 1Shot Hardener, Frog Juice-Sunscreen Clear 7000 and mineral spirits. I sprayed on 7 to 10 coats, and waited 5 to 10 minutes between each.

The paint soaks in and fills holes like primer, enclosing the Sign*Foam. Further, the bond is superior to any primer because the paint bonds well. For a few more dollars, I saved days of priming, curing and sanding.

I painted the carved letters with 1Shot imitation-gold enamel. Once dry, I rubbed down and dusted the letters with kaolin, a fine powder that marks spots to gild. Next, I oil-based, LeFranc Charbonnel's oil-based, 12-hour size, and gilded with Monarch 23 3/4 goldleaf.

For the logo, I handcarved a 1-in.-thick relief piece from Preci-

sion Board® HDU, which I coated with my 1Shot/Frog Juice mixture. Fernando Ocampo, my assistant, and I finished handpainting the display with 1Shot.

Finally, Ocampo and I mounted 2 x 4 x 8-ft. studs with 4-in. lag

bolts through the wall studs and slipped the sign over the studs. We then affixed the sign into place to the frame to finish the project.

Paul was pleased with the sign, and I was proud to give his deli the image upgrade it deserved. ■

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Equipment and Materials

Adhesive: Weld-On cement, from IPS Corp. (Compton, CA), (800) 421-2677.

Gilding: Oil-based, 12-hour slow size, from LeFranc Charbonnel (Rene, France), available from Accent Arts (Palo Alto, CA), (650) 424-1044; Monarch 23 3/4 ducat goldleaf and shadow kaolin, available from Letterhead Sign Supply (Petaluma, CA), (800) 531-3359 and Sepp Leaf Products (New York City), (212) 683-2840.

Paint: 1Shot signpainters' enamel, from One Shot LLC (Gary, IN), (219) 949-1684 or www.1shot.com; Frog Juice Sunscreen 7000, from Superfrog Signs and Graphics (Moorhead, MN), (218) 236-7000 or www.superfrog.com. Available from Letterhead Sign Supply and McLogan Supply Co. Inc. (Los Angeles), (213) 749-2262.

Plotter/Printer: ColorCMM Pro PC-600, from Roland DGA Corporation (Irvine, CA), (800) 542-2307 or www.rolanddga.com.

Software: CorelDRAW 8 sign-design software, from Corel Corp. (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada), (800) 772-6735; Flexi-Cut software, from Scanvec Amiable (Philadelphia), (800) 229-9066 or www.scanvecamiable.com.

Substrates: Sintra® PVC from Alcan (Montreal), (514) 848-8000 or www.alcan.com. Available from Product Sign Supplies (Sacramento, CA), (800) 660-0553, and Regal Plastics (San Diego), (858) 549-5150; 15-lb. high-density urethane, including Sign*Foam from Sign Arts Products Corp. (Dana Point, CA), (800) 338-4030 or www.signfoam.com, and Precision Board, from Coastal Enterprises (Orange, CA), (800) 845-0745 or www.precisionboard.com.

Tools: Plunge-cut router, from Black & Decker (Towson, MD), (800) 544-6986 or www.blackanddecker.com; Jig and table saws, available from home-improvement and hardware stores.

Vinyl: High-performance, 2000 Series 2-mil vinyl, from Arlon Inc. (Santa Ana, CA), (714) 540-2811 or www.arlon.com.