



If your favorite road racer wears a lid you long for, chances are good it was designed by either Troy Lee—whose company, Troy Lee Designs, has been in business for 25 years—or relative newcomer Chris Wood (aka AirTriX), who has been on the scene since 1994. To learn more about the men behind the pin-striping madness, we cornered each for this issue's respirator-recommended edition of 2 Tribes.

CHRISWOOD

AIRTRIX

AGE YOU FIRST PICKED UP A PAINTBRUSH?

CW: Kindergarten. That's when I started drawing instead of doing my scholastic work—and getting kicked out of class a lot because of it.

TL: I don't really know, but when I was 2 years old I picked up a can of paint thinner and drank it and had to go to the hospital. My mom was freaked out that I was going to be messed up for life, and maybe I was.

CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE DONE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PAINT FUMES?

CW: Smelled more paint fumes, probably.

TL: I don't know, I still love them. Paint fumes are like my morning coffee.

WHAT SPORTS HAVE YOU PAINTED FOR?

CW: Cars—Daytona prototypes, NASCAR—airplane racing, Supermoto, road racing, little bit of motocross/supercross.... Most sports, actually.

TL: There's probably not any sports we haven't painted for.... But I haven't painted helmets for the astronauts yet, and that's still a goal of mine.

ROAD RACERS YOU'VE PAINTED FOR?

CW: Ben and Eric Bostrom, Jamie Hacking, Jason Pridmore.... I do a lot with Suomy—Barros, Capirossi, and Andrew Pitt replicas, some designing for Biaggi, I paint Troy Corser's helmets, worked with Haga at one time.... A lot of behind-the-scenes design work.

TL: Roger and Tommy Hayden, Jake Zemke, Miguel Duhamel, Wayne Rainey, Eddie Lawson, Daryl Beattie, Max Biaggi, Scott Russell, Kenny Roberts Jr., Kurtis, and so on. Every year we try to paint for five or six top guys in each sport.

FAVORITE PROJECT EVER?

CW: Probably "The Hardway," the first bike I painted for Roland Sands, which got the Chip Foote Award of Design Excellence at Sturgis. And right now I'm working on what's probably the most intricate helmet I've ever done, for actor Nick Cage.

TL: Racing Supermoto and spending time with my kids.

IF YOU HAD TO LOSE A FINGER ON YOUR PAINTING HAND, WHICH WOULD IT BE?

CW: The second one from my pinky.

TL: Probably my pinky, but I'd rather paint with my feet and lose a toe.

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES?

CW: Frederick Remington, a Western artist; Ed Borein, a local artist here; Troy Lee, obviously; and Robert Williams.



TL: It changes all the time, but Tom Fritz is an artist I admire. I just bought a butterfly book, so that's a new influence; Robert Williams, and my dad.

DO YOU RIDE?

CW: I'm on hiatus. I can't afford to break a bone, and it's crazy in California.

TL: I race the Supermoto nationals, race mountain bikes a little bit, and ride motocross.

MOST UNFORTUNATE TREND IN SPORTS GRAPHICS?

CW: The splatter paint from the '80s was pretty frickin' bad.

TL: Bad copies of our graphics.

PROUDEST MOMENT AS A PAINTER?



CW: Every day's a proud moment, doing what I love to do and giving my three employees a paycheck once a week. Also, being a part of the Discovery Channel's *Biker Build-Off* with Roland.

TL: Just my kids, actually. Is that wrong?

GREATEST FEAR?

CW: Losing my right hand.

TL: We're producing our own helmets now, so my greatest fear is lawsuits. No matter how safe you make a helmet, it's inevitable that one day someone's going to die in one of them.

FAVORITE PLACE ON EARTH?

CW: My shop.

TL: Laguna Beach, where I live, and Mammoth Hot Springs.

TROYLEE

TROY LEE DESIGNS

WORST PLACE ON EARTH?

CW: My accountant's office.

TL: Jail.

ONE THING YOU'D WANT WITH YOU ON A DESERT ISLAND?

CW: A pin-striping brush.

TL: A boat, a tank full of gas, a fishing pole, some Moto Brews, and then I'd get out of there.

YOUR HERO?

CW: When I was in the Marine Corps in Desert Storm, it was my regimental commander, Colonel Fulford. He'd been through hell and back and made you feel invincible.

TL: My heroes are still guys like Jeff Ward, Steve McQueen, Doug Henry, Jeremy McGrath....

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING PAINTERS?

CW: Work your ass off. No one owes you anything, and you have to earn every little bit of respect.

TL: If you love it, run with it, no matter what it is. Give 100 percent and something good will come out of it.

CRAPPIEST CAR YOU EVER OWNED?

CW: '76 Honda Civic.

TL: The car I'm driving right now—a '97 white Ford van.

EVER BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW?

CW: Many times. Concealed firearms, arson, and I grew up riding dirt bikes on the mountain, so the sheriff was always after us.

TL: Yeah, I went to jail with Mitch Payton. We were both 21, had had too many drinks, and got arrested for stealing sod from Marie Callender's. We'd both just bought houses but didn't have any lawns, see, so....

HARDEST THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

CW: Creating every day. It takes a lot of mental anguish to be creative.

TL: Knowing when to shut off. There are so many opportunities and great people, but sometimes I just have to turn everything off and play with my kids.

BEST PART ABOUT YOUR JOB?

CW: Doing what I love.

TL: Traveling the world and hanging out with all my racers, who are my friends.

WORDS TO LIVE BY?

CW: Work. Don't be afraid to work.

TL: You know, when I signed my Christmas cards, I just wrote "Peace and wheelies." Have a good time, be a good person, and ride motorcycles.