

HP220 Unpunched Vinyl Takes Off

You've heard that applications for Gerber High Performance (HP) 24 & 48-inch vinyls are limited only by your imagination. The imagination of Joel "Smiley" Freeland of Delta Airlines was sparked by Gerber 48-inch unpunched vinyl when he was tasked to design an historic graphic—the logo which is riding high on a 757 to celebrate the career of Yankee Pitcher Mariano Rivera.

In July, the New York Yankees pitcher was honored with a Delta plane dedication at New York's JFK International Airport. The Delta Air Lines 757 aircraft features a seven-foot graphic with Rivera's NY Yankees No. 42 jersey and his signature. The ceremony represented the first time ever that Delta had dedicated an aircraft in New York. Even more significant, Delta executive Gail Grimmett reported that she can count on one hand the number of times in the past ten years that the company has dedicated an aircraft to an individual.

The fact that the first plane goes to Rivera is no surprise to Freeland. "Mariano Rivera is such a great player, and he's retiring at the end of the season," points out Freeland. Delta recognizes several sports teams every year, and Joel has grown accustomed to exciting rush jobs for high-profile clients. But the Rivera graphic is different. "This one's super-special; so many of our graphics are for one-run flights. This one will fly 'til the end of October." So keep your eyes on the sky!

Although the Delta graphic will be installed for just a few months, Gerber 220 vinyl is designed to last for many years. Gerber HP 220 vinyl is recognized for its durability, color consistency, and exceptional performance over a range of environments. It is the vinyl of choice for applications which range from vehicle graphics to labels & decals, sports & recreation equipment, and industrial signage of all varieties.

All set to take off! The Mariano Rivera graphic on the Delta 757 will remain installed through October.





Joel "Smiley" Freeland.

Throughout his 22-year career in technical airline graphics, Joel has helped develop designs for all kinds of special initiatives. His first big project was the Spirit of Delta for the Atlanta Olympics. "Each special event calls for new livery," Freeland explains, who hastens to add that bringing a design to life in the airline industry has one or two special challenges. "Designers & marketing folks come up with great concepts, but we have to bring them to life. I have fun at my job as the liaison between marketing & implementation—I'm the bridge between two worlds," he adds. "When you are dealing with airplanes, **everything**—including exterior graphics—is highly regulated. Technical documentation is required before you can install any graphics on an airplane, and it's a super-exact process. That means our designs need to be super-exact, too."

According to Freeland, that's another place where Gerber comes in. "Gerber gives me all the tools to work in any environment. All designs need to be full-scale for the review process. That's just one reason I love OMEGA—no design limitations. The 1:1 scale factor is HUGE: literally and figuratively!"

The turn-around for the River graphic was ultra-quick. "I'd planned to take off a couple of days to visit with the grandkids, but to do that, I had to rush the design to get approval through the technical group. I was pretty chagrined when I realized that there wouldn't be enough time to digitally print a graphic." That's when Freeland realized that Yankee blue was one of the colors in Gerber's expanded 54-color range for 24/48-inch. In Freeland's words, "Gerber was a lifesaver. Honestly, without Gerber I would have struggled to finish this project on time."



NY Yankees Manager Joe Girardi and Pitcher Mariano Rivera