

AUSTIN SIGNS

George Austin

Austin Signs was formed in some ways due to necessity and in others due to one man's desire to be creative and self-reliant. With a lot of talent and fortitude, George Austin opened the doors to his converted barn and never looked back.

Formerly a barber and a union carpenter, George always had a talent for painting, drawing and creating something from nothing. The year was 1975. Vans and custom cars were the rage, and George found a niche for his airbrush techniques in this venue. Some of the more memorable vans he painted were "Cruisin' Casino", the "Pink Panther", "Dark Side of the Moon", and "The Sugar Shack". He won several awards and trophies, and was featured in magazines for his work. He never turned away from a challenge and his can-do attitude took him far.

After the custom van craze died down, he honed his skills on carving and sandblasting signs. Originally, these signs were made from either mahogany, redwood or cedar. Much of his earlier work is still in use today, such as the "Welcome to Wyoming" sign, Fifer Orchards, Milford Diner, Wesley College, and Jackewicz Farms as well as many others.

Today, new materials have almost completely replaced wood, but the technique and look are still the same. George's signs have that hand-made quality that sets them apart from the mechanized competition, and his vast experience in woodworking and finish carpentry mean the job is done right. When a touch of gold leaf is added, you have a true work of art, not just another sign. At age 78, George is still going strong, and his pride in his work shows.

Bill Austin

Bill began working at Austin Signs in 1986 after moving back to Delaware from Washington D.C. He found himself at a crossroads, and decided to help out around the sign shop until something better came along. It turns out it was a pretty good gig after all, and he decided to stay. He has now been there 20 years.

Bill has a degree in civil engineering and a background in surveying, which has allowed him to work at many exotic locations including Alaska and Saudi Arabia. Those who have met Bill will agree his extraordinary life experience and enthusiasm make him a very unique individual. Combine that with his thirst for knowledge and heart of gold, and you've got someone very special. Bill's attention to detail is unfailing. At Austin Signs, he is the most versatile employee, and can be counted on to do just about everything.

When a client calls Austin Signs, Bill is usually the first person they will meet. He comes to their location to assess their sign needs, furnishes pricing quotes, obtains permits from the city and county, and installs the signs. His vast experience in the sign business is invaluable to customers who aren't familiar with sign codes or how best to install their sign.

Rarely in the shop for very long, Bill can be spotted all around Dover and the vicinity measuring buildings, digging post holes, hanging signs, and talking to customers. He's the engine that drives Austin Signs.

Susan Joiner

Susan is the first official employee of Austin Signs, going back to 1984. Not too long out of high school, Susan came on board to help out in the office and did whatever needed to be done at the time. She soon discovered she had a knack for hand lettering (the only game in town at the time) and sign layout. Unusual circumstances at the time (I'll spare you the long story) led her to soon thereafter take a couple jobs with competing sign shops in the area. A traitor? Of course not! Susan always knew she would end up back at home, and after acquiring a few years of experience did just that. She returned in 1988 with a better understanding of the business. However, in 1994 she decided to pursue a career as a travel agent. A free spirit at heart, Susan had to go out and see the world. In 2001, she returned again to her roots, and decided to get serious. After getting over the initial shock of how much the business had changed during her hiatus, she modernized the office and took on many of the day-to-day responsibilities that take up so much valuable time. Susan does most of the sign design and vinyl lettering, trucks, accounting, scheduling, orders materials, and designs cool web sites like this one! A vital part of Austin Signs, Susan makes everything run smoothly.