

Re-painting Wheel Stripes on a 1947 Ford Tudor

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I've owned my 1947 Ford Super deluxe Tudor for two years now, and have been trying to come up with a way to re-paint the stripes on the wheels to match the original three-stripe pattern. The spare wheel rim in the trunk still had the original maroon paint and three 'Tacoma Cream' stripes intact, so I had a perfect reference of what they should be. I did the Internet searches, reviewed forum postings, and talked with classic car owners on the subject and have determined that there are many methods, techniques, and tools used to accomplish this. There are professional pin stripe painters, which didn't meet my logistics or cost criteria. I found Internet topics that detailed how to use one of the front axel hubs to mount the wheel and allow you to spin the wheel while holding the striping tool or brush. I didn't think I could hold brushes or a stripe painter tool that steady to apply three stripes per wheel using this technique. I ran across a post that said "The guy that did my wheels just put them on an old bar stool, spun the wheel, and held the brush". That one caught my attention. I didn't have any old bar stools, but I liked the approach.

I was in a local harbor Freight store last fall, and spotted a 8" semi-pneumatic, steel wheel with bearings in the hub as a "Closeout" item for \$2.00. It's not that I had a need for a wheel like this, but as I looked at it, the 'bar stool' solution came to mind, and the price was right. I somehow had to get the 8" wheel mounted that would allow the tire and wheel rim from my car to fit over it and spin freely. It would also need some mechanism to attach a paint stripe tool like a record player arm.

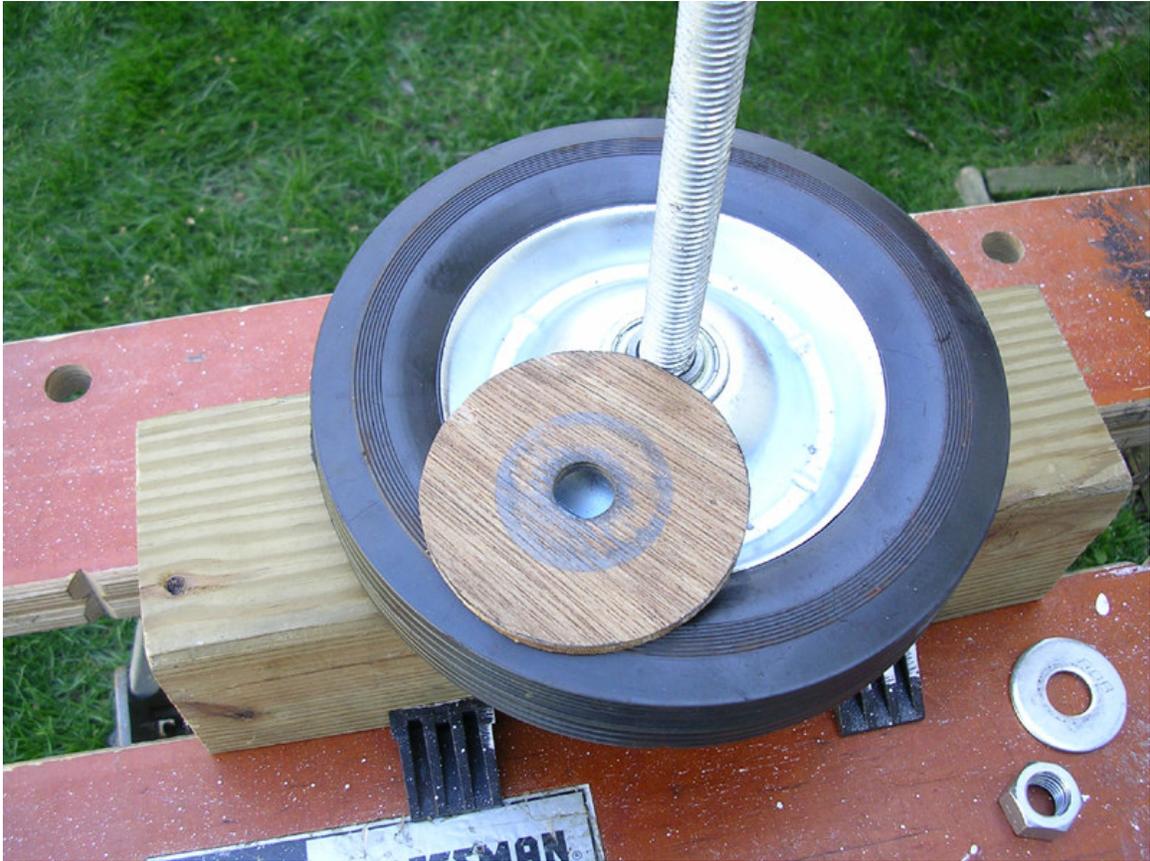
Since the wheel had a 5/8" diameter hub, a trip to my local Home Depot provided a 12" x 5/8" threaded rod, and 5/8" hex nuts and flat washers. I needed to have a base for the threaded rod that would fit inside the rear of the 16" wheel and provide enough height offset to allow it to be clamped into my trusty old Sears Workmate. A 12" piece of 4" x 4" that I had lying around did the job. I drilled a centered countersink hole for the bottom hex nut first, and then the 5/8" hole for the threaded rod. I secured the rod with a flat washer and another hex nut on the top.



The base assembly would now clamp into the Workmate. The 8" wheel would rest on the hex nut, and the wheel rim and tire to would rest on top of that.



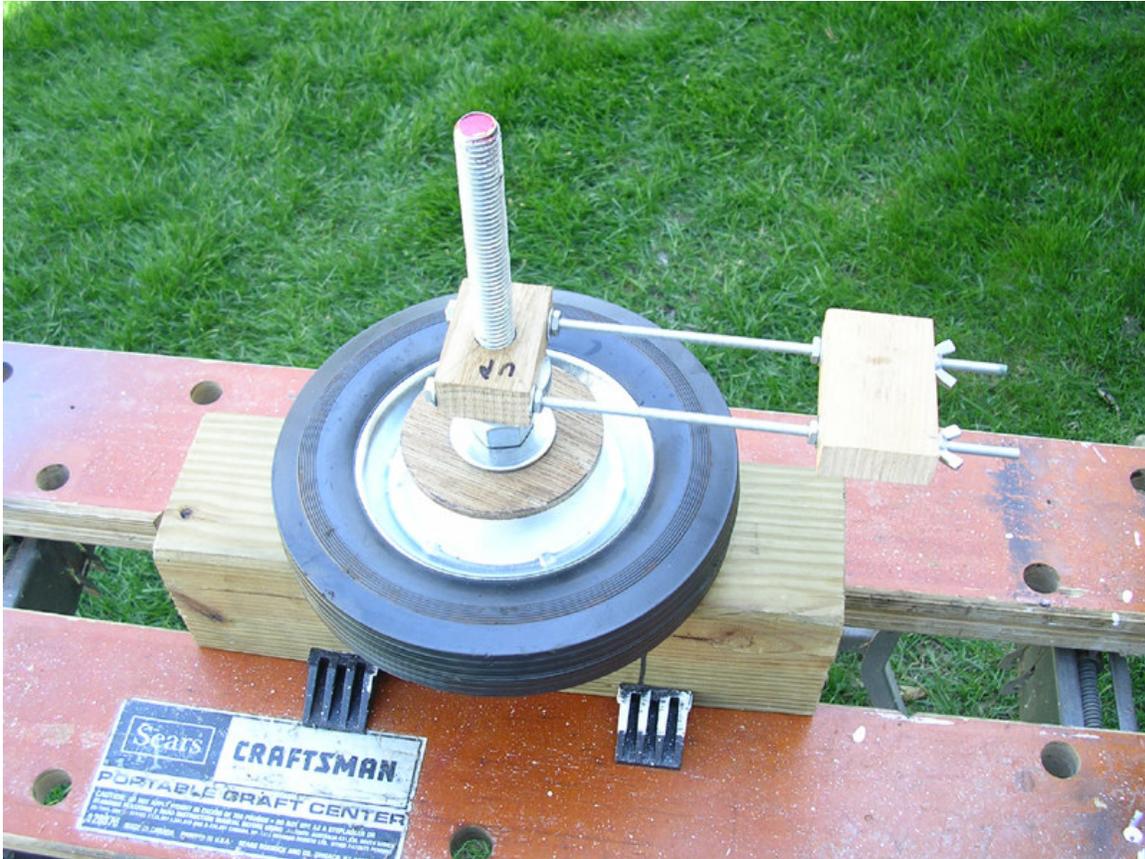
You can do a pretty good job of centering the wheel to be painted by just using the hub bolthole pattern as a guide, but I felt that a more secure centering mechanism was needed. I marked and cut a circle out of 1/4" plywood that just fit into the wheel hub hole, and drilled a 5/8" hole in the center.



The centering piece for the rim is held in place with another 5/8" flat washer and two 5/8" hex nuts. The hex nuts are locked together, and then backed off so that the wheel spins freely and without any wobble. I sprayed a little WD40 at the base of the two locking nuts and the flat washer to help. I also sprayed white lithium grease into the wheel bearings of the 8" wheel.



The original arm design was intended to hold a paint stripe wheel tool, and had adjusting stop nuts and wing nuts as shown in the picture. The outer block was two pieces, with a hole to mount and clamp the stripe tool. I decided that I would use brushes instead. A solid piece of wood could be used for the arm and hand rest with a 5/8" hole instead of the adjustable stops version.



I made a gauge out of cardboard that can be used as a guide to where the outer edge of the wider middle stripe is to start. I placed a small piece of masking tape on the rim just to the outside of the reference point. Also, just to provide another reference point while striping, place the piece of tape on the rim to the right of the valve stem. When you see the stem rotate by, you will know that the stripe starting point will be approaching. When you start the stripe, make sure you don't let the brush come into contact with the tape. For right-handed painters, the wheel is rotated counter clockwise using your left hand. For a consistent speed, I just used my fingertips to 'walk' the wheel around. Make sure there are no binding spots during rotation before you start the stripe. I sprayed WD-40 at the base of the locking hex nut and washer to help reduce any friction.

Qty	Item
1	8" x 1.75" Semi Pneumatic Wheel - 5/8" Hub with Bearings
1	12" x 5/8" Threaded Steel Rod
4	5/8" Hex Nuts
6	5/8" Flat Washers
1	12" x 4" x 4" Wood for base
1	10" x 1" x 2" Wood for Hand Rest
1	6" x 6" x 1/4" Plywood for Wheel Hub Centering
1	One Shot Enamel – "Chamois" color used for the original "Tacoma Cream"
1	One Shot Enamel Reducer
1	Mack '00' Pin striping brush (1/8")
1	Mack '000' Pin striping brush (1/16")



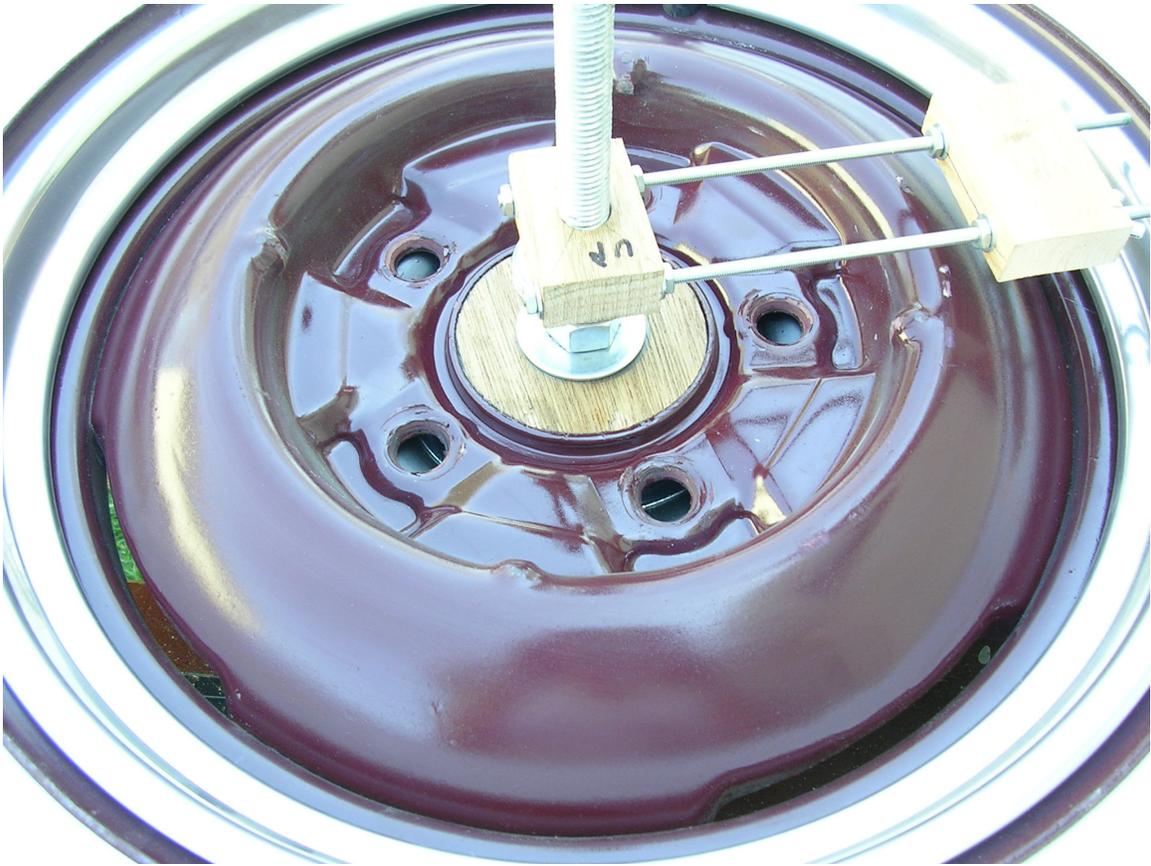


Painting the Stripes

The most difficult part of laying down the stripes is in gauging how much paint to load in the brush. If there is too much paint loaded, the brush will droop when initially set to the wheel rim and will tend to track towards the center as the brush unloads paint. This causes the start and end points not to line up at the finish. The other problem I had to overcome was in keeping the brush perpendicular to the stripe on the curve of the wheel rim. Again, if perpendicular is not maintained, the stripe will wander towards the center. Also, the brush has to be aligned in your hand to be tangent to the stripe, not skewed in or out. Never having done this before, the first wheel took MANY attempts before I got it right. If you make a mistake on any one stripe, you'll probably have to remove all of them to get a fresh start. I used mineral spirits on clean rags to remove the enamel stripes before they set. I got progressively better through the rest of the wheels, and the last wheel (the one pictured) was done in one pass for all three stripes.

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Finished project !!