DESIGN *Tutorial*

New Features

Signlab for VersaWorks

boasts a wealth of design and editing tools that have been developed specifically for the modern sign maker. But what's more when you're done designing, you can simply output directly to VersaWorks for production, there's no saving or exporting, just a seamless workflow from design to output that includes all your cut data. Let's take a look at an example to see just how easy this feature packed product is to use.

This tutorial is bought to you as part of Info Source, CADlink's dedicated online information and training facility. Info source has been created to provide Signlab and other CADlink software users with a wealth of knowledge and advice to enable them to get the most from our industry leading products. Info Source has hours and hours of video and written tutorials available for you to watch or download and what's more this content is updated every month. This unique educational facility is free for all to use, even if you are not yet a Signlab user, Why not check out info source and see what you're missing!

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SIGNLAB

01

Getting started: I have already created the elements needed to complete my new sign for a Pizza restaurant. The text and the circle are all vectored objects and I have imported the photo image. The first task is going to be making the main text a little more exciting, I am going to use one of the built in Eye Candy plug ins to achieve this.
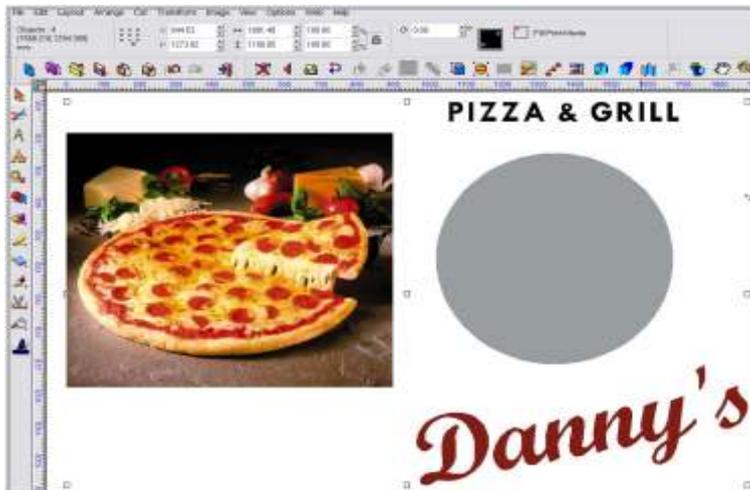
02

Plug Ins: SignLab for VersaWorks is packed full of great design plug-ins, I am using the built in Bevel Boss tool to add some real depth to this lettering, the Bevel Boss tool is launched from the "image" menu. This first dialogue window allows me to control how the effect will be applied to my lettering. I have selected the "inside clipped" option and this will ensure my text edges are kept nice and sharp, regardless of production size. By selecting the "use current fill" my lettering will retain its original colour.
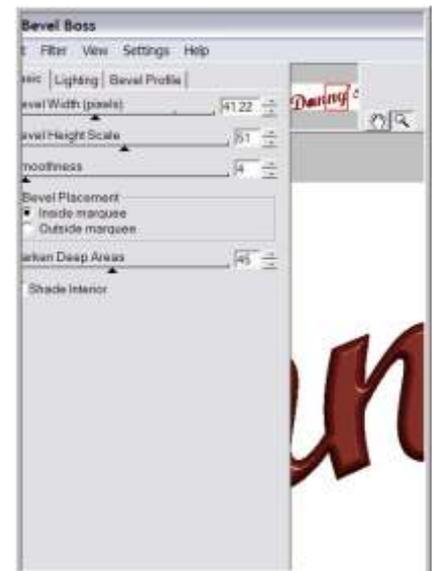
03

Endless choice: This next window let's me control all the parameters of the effect and what's more were adding this bevel directly to a vectored object with out the need to render to a bitmap first. The bevel height and scale and even the light direction can be adjusted to suit your preference. When I have finished, I can click "Ok" to be returned to the main Signlab screen.

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04

Outline:
Next I am going to add an outline to the text. Signlab's outline tool is launched from the "Transform" menu. The thickness of the outline can be controlled with a small on screen handle or by entering a specific value in the numeric box at the top. Any colour from the Roland VersaWorks palette can be used.
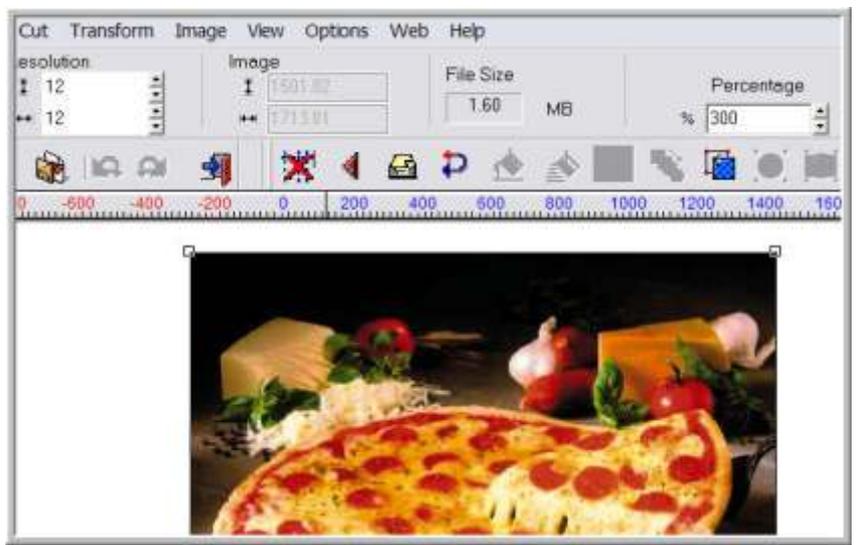
05

RE-Sample: Next I am going to edit the photographic image, the first task is to improve the quality of this picture to make it more suitable for large format reproduction, to achieve this I am going to use the built in "Super Size" feature. This is launched from the "Image" menu. The smart bar will display the current properties of the photo and I can choose to increase the size in one of three ways, I am simply going to increase the overall quality by 300%, when I click "apply" the image is automatically placed in the Supersize dialogue window and from here I can adjust the properties to increase the quality of the image.

06

Super Size Me: The settings made will vary greatly depending on the style of image being re sampled. The CADlink website contains some detailed guidance on using this feature. Once I am happy with my settings I can click "Ok" and the re sampled image will be returned to SignLab. The supersize function is a free module with SignLab for VersaWorks which is a great bonus when you consider a good stand alone image re sampling software can be a sizable outlay just on its own.
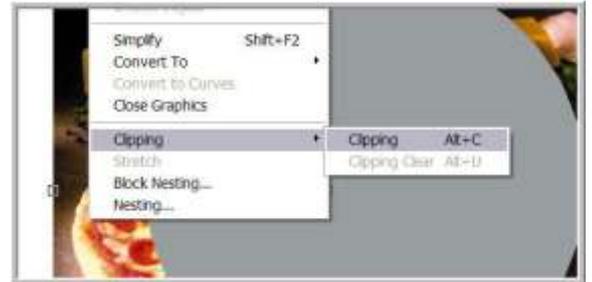
07

Clipping: I am going to use the circle as a clipping path on the photograph that we just resampled to achieve this I will place it on top of the image. With both objects selected I go to the "Arrange" menu and select "Clipping". All parts of the image outside the circle will be discarded.

08

Outline: Remember the outline I applied to my text? well to beef this up a little more I have added another outline in black. The photo image of the pizza now has a vectored clipping path so I have also added two outlines of similar properties to this as well. The text can now be placed on top of the image.
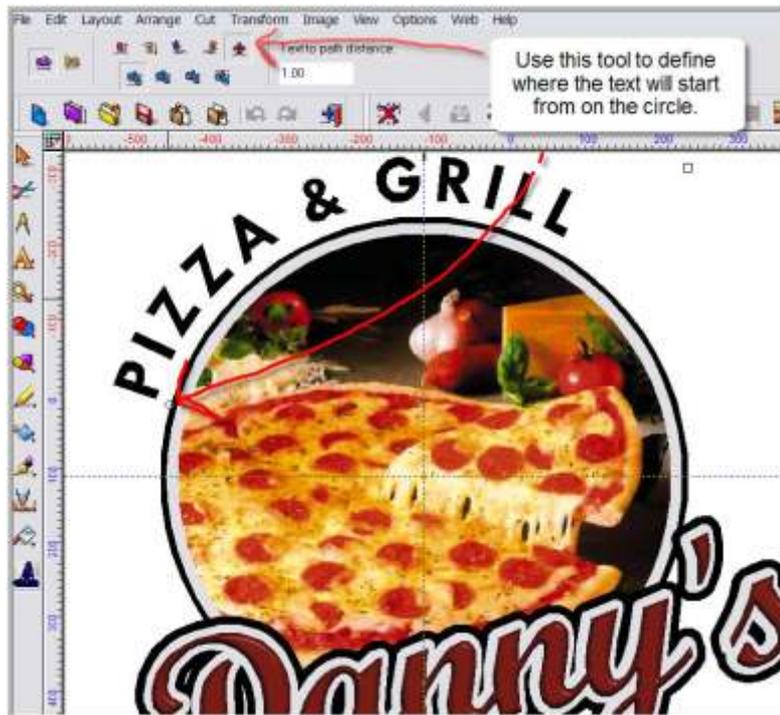
09

Text To Path: To make the "PIZZA & GRILL" text wrap around my clipped photograph I have used "fit text to Path" so with the text and the outer circle selected, I launched this feature from the transform menu. Many options exist here, so that we can make the text wrap left to right upside down inside out and so on. I used the "Pick Tool" to mark a point on the circle from where the text would

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ShadowLab: To finish off this design I am going to use another of the built in plug-in effects called ShadowLab and this is launched from the "Image menu" For this type of feature I need to select "Inside/Outside No Clipping" so that the effect will blend out nicely from my objects.
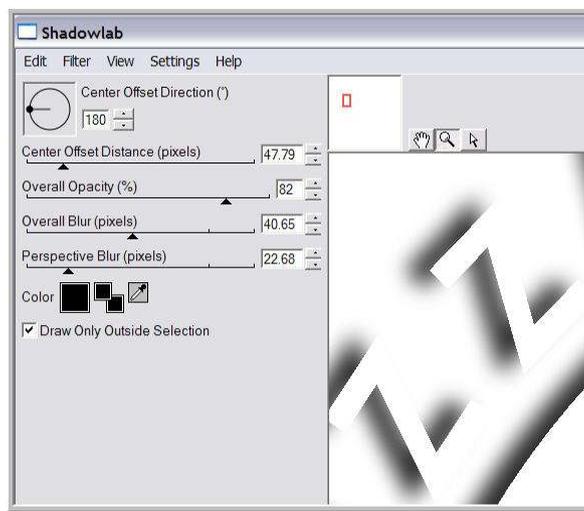
11

Settings: Another simple plug-in interface let's me control the effects and even the direction of the shadow, the preview lets me see exactly what's going on. Ticking "Draw Outside Selection" will enable a better preview but its good practice to de-select this option before the finished effect is applied.

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Contour Cut: The Sign is now finished but before I send this job to VersaWorks I am going to add a contour cut path around all my objects. With all selected I will go to the cut menu and select contour cut, I have an offset of 25 in place here to create a contour path that follows the outside of my objects to create a complete decal, I don't need any specific colours for my contour path so now simply hit apply and then adjust my filter settings so that the white boundaries of the image are easily detected.
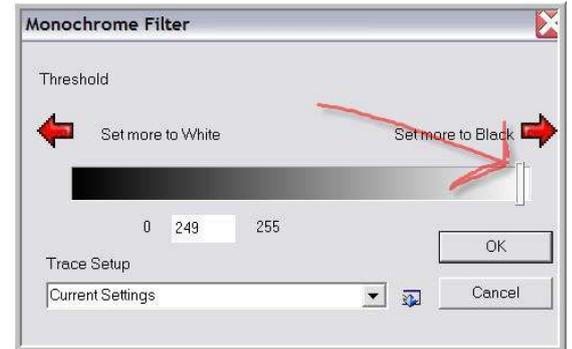
13

Filter Settings: The Monochrome Filter works by detecting the point at which the white of the bitmap background begins. Each image will differ but a good starting point is to reduce the value slightly from 255 (Pure White).
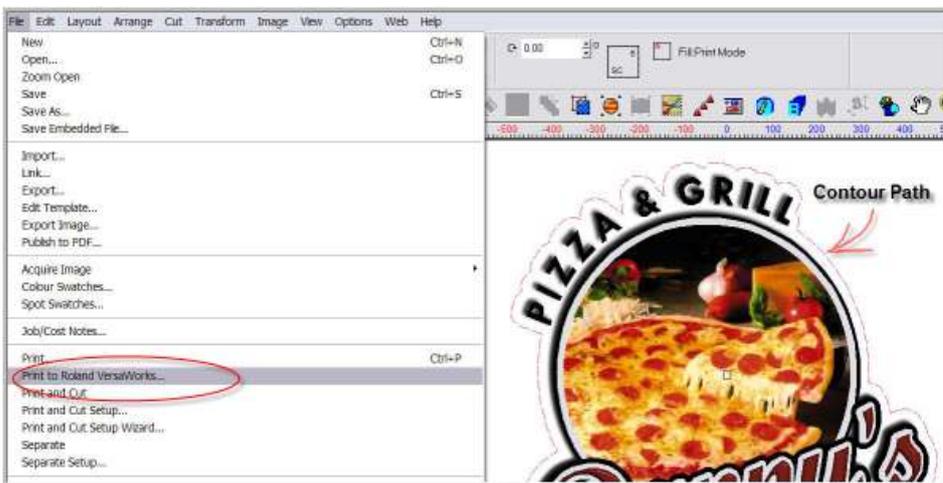
14

VersaWorks: With the contour path applied, the design is complete and ready to send to VersaWorks. This is done by going to the "File" menu and selecting "Print to VersaWorks" Its then simply a choice of which Queue to send the job too.

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Job Done!: In VersaWorks you can see my job has arrived and if I double click on it you can see it in its entirety including the contour cut path, its really that simple. Signlab for VersaWorks is the real professional choice for the sign maker who wants to eliminate complex workflows from every day tasks.

You can find out more about this great new product and also view this tutorial in video format on the cadlink website. www.cadlink.com