

STITCH SOLUTIONS

BY JENNIFER COX

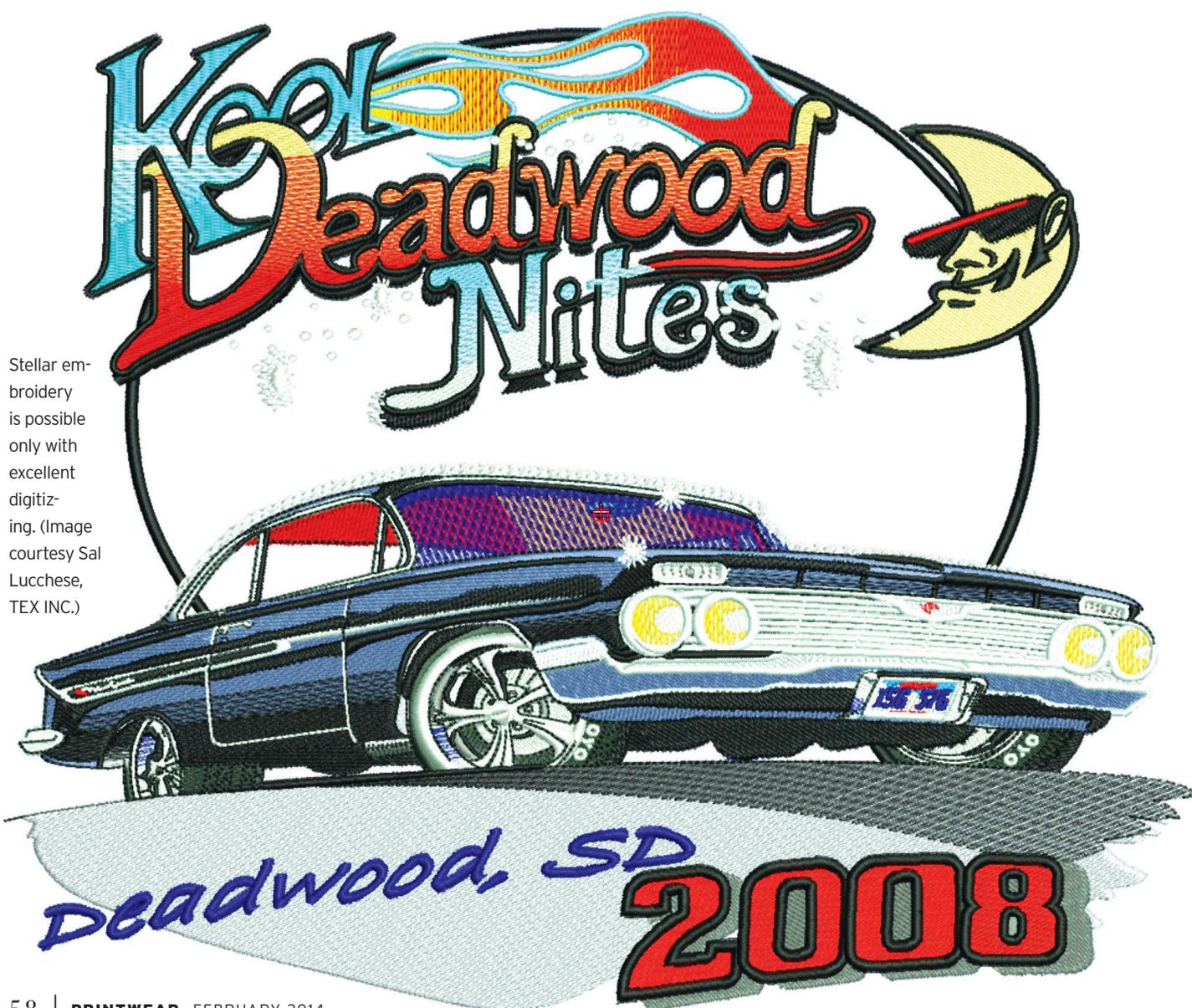
Stellar Stitch Files

What to look for in a digitizer

Excellent embroidery begins and ends with the digitizing that is used to create the embroidery. There, I've said it, in print, in a national trade publication. Yes, creating great embroidery is only possible with excellent digitizing. The expression "garbage in, garbage out" applies in this industry in the truest sense.

While there's a large conversation to be had about whether or not to digitize in-house, right now, I want

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Stellar embroidery is possible only with excellent digitizing. (Image courtesy Sal Lucchese, TEX INC.)

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Excellent digitizing is not the result of point and click software. It is the result of a qualified digitizer using their software to create your designs with expertise that usually comes with time and experience, as well as some degree of passion for this industry. (Image courtesy Sal Luchese, TEX INC.)

letters may need to be adjusted so that the centers of these enclosed spaces look good. The descending or ascending letters—i.e. j, g, y, l, and h—may need a quick peek to make sure that they are not dropping or rising too far, or not far enough. Again, this depends on where they are in the design, if they are on open fabric or on top of an area that has already been stitched.

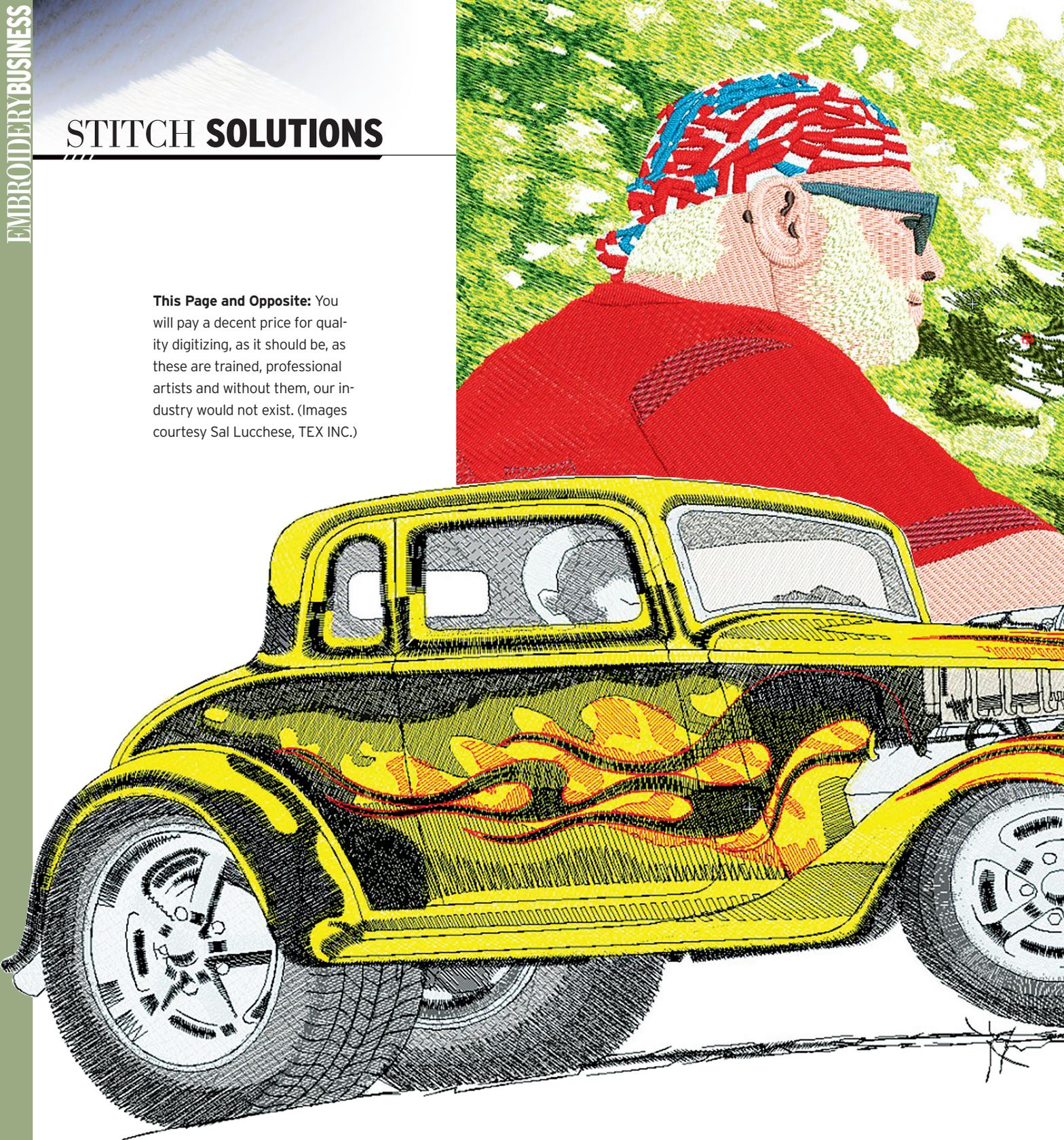
Column stitches that outline fill stitches have a way of getting out of registration, depending on the size and the kind of fill area they are going around. The width of the columns may need a bit of adjustment. The column may need to actually be moved to

compensate for the pull of the filled areas. Or, the column may need to be sewn at a different time in the design, rather than immediately after the fill it is going around.

Underlays, thread changes, and excessive stitches can all be adjusted, depending on the software and the capabilities of the dig-

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This Page and Opposite: You will pay a decent price for quality digitizing, as it should be, as these are trained, professional artists and without them, our industry would not exist. (Images courtesy Sal Lucchese, TEX INC.)

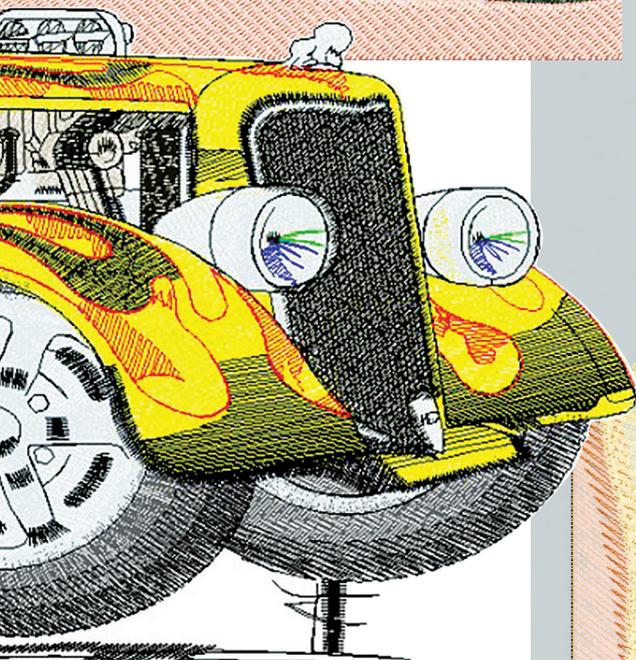


Underlays for designs to be sewn on sweaters are vastly different than underlays for a design sewn on tightly-woven dress shirts. Cap designs are built completely differently than designs sewn on flat goods.

If you anticipate that the customer will want to push the size of the design larger or smaller than the original, the digitizer needs to know. Most designs have some tolerance to be sewn smaller or larger without much editing. But if the design is going to be sewn out at half size or double the size of the original design, it is not reasonable to expect the digitizing to be able to do that far without some editing. And, this is something for which you should pay the digitizer.

If the designs you get are not sewing well, have excessively high stitch counts for the size

of the design, have thread breaks that prevent you from being able to effectively run the design, are out of registration, the lettering is mashed looking, or any number of other issues, it could be the digitizing. A digitizing professional will want to correct their work, and will be available and accessible to you to make these adjustments. Someone that is just putting out designs



may not have the skills or a solid understanding of their software to make the adjustments to the design.

A digitizing professional is worth their weight in gold to you as an embroidery professional. Without them, you have very little chance of creating top-quality embroidery. They are artists in how they can take a photo or a design and know how to recreate

it in thread and fibers in such a way that *wows* customers. That takes digitizing skill, and it is well worth the cost for designs that look amazing, sew well and enable you create embroidered goods that your customers love.

If you are not getting (or creating) top-quality digitizing, feel free to contact me at Jennifer@nnep.com any time and I will be glad to give you recommendations of many highly-qualified digitizers that create amazing embroidery files day after day. Some excel at designs with lifelike fur. Some excel at highly complex designs. Some excel at small lettering. Some excel at clean, classic designs. But all quality digitizers create great embroidery files that you will love to embroider and that your customers will enjoy wearing.

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