

The Red Clay Barn Quilt Trail

Creating a Barn Quilt



Preparation

If this is your first time creating a barn quilt, you may benefit from attending a barn quilt class or helping a friend create a barn quilt. There are plenty of resources that are available to help you become proficient and enjoy the process. We have listed some of the resources at the end of this document that we have found helpful.

Purpose

The title barn quilt is a generic title that covers a lot of different art forms and processes. What you are trying to accomplish with your barn quilt and where you are going to display it will dictate what materials you will need and how you need to design and paint it. In this document we are focused on creating barn quilts that will be displayed outside on buildings and structures and suitable to be added to the Red Clay Barn Quilt Trail. Our process is not the only way to accomplish the design and making of a beautiful barn quilt but it is a way we have found that works.

Assess the Structure

- The first step in designing a barn quilt is determining where you want to display the barn quilt.
- What size quilt will look good on the structure or building? What size will the building handle? Typically we have three sizes available on the Red Clay Trail. Either a 8x8 or 4x4 or 2x2.
- How are you going to attach the quilt to the structure and what equipment will you need to attach it?
- How far from the road is the structure? Structures closer to the road can display more complex patterns, while those farther away should use simpler patterns with more contrasting colors to be seen well.

Select a Barn Quilt Pattern

For inspiration in selecting a pattern there are a number of great resources. You can browse internet sites like Pinterest and Etsy or purchase patterns from www.barnquiltheadquarters.com. Most of the patterns on the Red Clay Trail came from the book "Barn Quilt Addiction" by Talara Parrish. In selecting a pattern you should consider how difficult the pattern is and try to match a pattern to your experience level. You may also want to consider the number of colors required for the pattern and the amount of time you have to complete the project.

Gather Materials

Check the list of materials included in this guide. Of particular importance is the quality of the sign board and paint, as they will determine the quality and longevity of your barn quilt. We are using a light weight aluminum composite board that is used in the sign industry. For paint we recommend a good exterior semi-gloss paint. The only tape we recommend is green or yellow Frog Tape.

Prepare The Aluminum Composite Sheet

The aluminum composite board comes in a 4x8 sheet. If your barn quilt requires a smaller size than the 4x8 sheet, the Alabama Barn Quilt Trail web site has a good video on how to cut the composite sheets.

Once your sheet is the desired size, follow the following steps:

- Remove the protective film from both sides slowly and carefully to avoid static build-up.
- Pre-clean the surface with a non-colored cloth and isopropyl alcohol.
- Scuff the surface with a medium grit sanding block or sand paper then remove the dust with a non-colored cloth and isopropyl alcohol. Repeat this step a second time.
- Apply two coats of primer with a foam roller. Allow plenty of time to dry between coats. We use KILZ 2 for the primer.

Draw the Quilt Block Pattern

- Print a colored copy of the pattern.
- Count the number of squares across and down to determine the grid pattern.
- Draw the grid pattern using Crayola Erasable Colored Pencils.
- Draw the quilt pattern.

Painting the Quilt

- Tape off one colored section at a time with Frog Tape. Trim tape where necessary using an Exacto Knife. Press the tape down firmly using an old credit card or other plastic card. Erase any pencil marks inside the tape with Mr Clean Eraser Sheets.
- Apply a thin coat of paint using a 2-inch foam roller.
- After the first coat has dried repeat the the above step until you have applied 3 or 4 coats of paint.
- While the last coat is still tacky, carefully peel back the Frog Tape by pulling it back on itself at a 45 degree angle, away from the section that was just painted.
- Repeat for each color to finish the quilt then touch up any paint errors using a 1-inch foam brush.
- Foam rollers and brushes can be cleaned with hot water and Blue Dawn dish washing liquid after each color.

Installation

On smooth surfaces the barn quilt may be installed directly to the surface with exterior screws. Be careful not to over tighten the screws as this may cause the aluminum board to bend. On uneven surfaces wood strips may need to be installed on the surface first, then the barn quilt would be screwed to the strips. Once the installation is complete take a picture and text it to Tim Shaver at 615-975-9953 so that it can be added to the Red Clay Trail.

Material List

- Composite aluminum sheet
- Isopropyl alcohol
- Lint free cloths
- Steel wool or medium grit sanding block or sand paper
- Pencils (Crayola Erasable Colored Pencils)
- Mr Clean Eraser Sheets
- 4-foot and 2-foot rulers
- Exacto knife and blades
- Exterior paint primer (KILZ 2)
- Exterior semi-gloss paint. We recommend Valspar Duramax Exterior Latex Semi-Gloss or Behr Ultra Enamel Exterior Paint in satin or semi-gloss
- Whizz 2-inch Touch Up and Samples foam rollers and replacement rollers
- 1-inch foam brushes for touch up and small sections
- Green or Yellow Frog Tape .94 inch wide
- Blue Dawn dish washing liquid to wash rollers and brushes after each use
- Wood screws and wood strips to mount the barn quilt, if necessary

Recommended Resources

- The book Barn Quilt Addiction by Talara Parrish
- www.barnquiltheadquarters.com
- www.alabamabarnquilttrail.org
- www.chatthillsbarnquilttrail.com
- www.barnquiltinfo.com