

Color me Custom

Custom lure painting has become a growing trend. We asked five of the best lure painters in the business to create a FIELD & STREAM version of a classic Rat-L-Trap. Here's what they made for us:

WIN
A CUSTOM CRANKBAIT!

Log on to [Facebook.com/fieldandstream](https://www.facebook.com/fieldandstream) and tell us what you'd name these artist-crafted Rat-L-Traps. The most creative entries will win a lure



3 Ryan Smith

R.M. Smith

Custom Lures have a reputation among salt-water striper anglers for hooking big fish. "I prefer to look at the paint patterns like I'm doing a caricature of a baitfish," says Smith. "I'm essentially incorporating some of the notable features in a bit of an exaggerated manner. This scale pattern looks sort of bunkerish, but would be a nice crossover color for herring or alewives."

ryan1@netsync.net

4 Mike Bromelow

Bromelow is the mastermind behind Musky Snax, his line of incredibly realistic baits that swim like the real thing. Bromelow painted a trout on one side and a goose head on the other. Such a FIELD & STREAM design is effective, says Bromelow: "A pink stripe works very well in my local Ontario waters for spring smallmouths."

muskysnax.com

1 Casey Sobczak

Sobczak started painting lures in college with some guidance from bass pro Scott Rook. He has since become known for creating finishes fish can't resist, striving for realism and originality. "Bluegills are a forage larger bass key in on," Sobczak says. "It boosts angler confidence because it's not a color you see on many stock lures."

6thsenselures.com

2 Dwain Batey

Batey owns the Arkansas-based paint shop Bait Werks. Several bass tournament professionals—such as Clark Reehm and Anthony Hunt—favor his patterns. "I call this color Melorite," says Batey. "It doesn't match a particular baitfish, but it works really well in clear or dirty water. It's one of my top sellers, and it's caught me lots of fish in deep water, where a Rat-L-Trap is designed to go."

baitwerks.com

5 Larry LaRue

An Oregon

native, LaRue custom-paints salmon lures and sells them under the moniker Looney Lures. One specialty is matching the subtle colors of local forage. "Sand shrimp are deadly for salmon," LaRue says. "But they also catch steelhead and sturgeon. I'd never seen a sand shrimp pattern on a Rat-L-Trap." larry.larue@us.army.mil

—J.C.