



Adobe® Illustrator® CS6 How-To Guide



Looking for Adventure

By Yogesh Sharma

Yogesh Sharma's passion for engineering is rivaled by his passion for motorcycles. As a lead engineer on the Adobe Illustrator Quality Engineering team, Yogesh is intimately familiar with all the power and flexibility Illustrator has to offer. In fact, he often uses his extensive understanding of Adobe software as a jumping off point for his creativity, letting him further express the inspiration he derives from motorcycles in new and varied ways.

"I'm a huge fan of Royal Enfield motorcycles," says Yogesh. "Their inventive designs are unparalleled. The lines of the bike. The look, the outstanding craftsmanship. Each motorcycle really is a work of art. As I was working on Adobe Illustrator CS6, I realized that there would be no better way for me to test some of the latest features than to use one of my own motorcycles as my muse." For Yogesh, that muse turned out to be a Royal Enfield Classic 500.

Royal Enfield Classic 500

A Royal Enfield is a rare breed in an age of mass-produced, user-friendly predictability. This is a mechanical motorcycle, handcrafted with love, engineered with purpose, and designed in a way that gives each machine its own unique character. Armed with a potent fuel injected 500cc engine and clothed in a disarmingly appealing post-war styling, the Classic 500 promises to be the most coveted Royal Enfield in history.

For those who want it all. The power, the fuel efficiency, the reliability and simple, yet drop-dead gorgeous classic styling. The Classic turns heads not because it wants to but because it can't help it. You will appreciate the beat not just for the music it creates but also for the muted feeling of strength and power that it signifies.

The view is simply better when you are astride a Royal Enfield Classic 500—whether moving or still. Nothing more to be said.





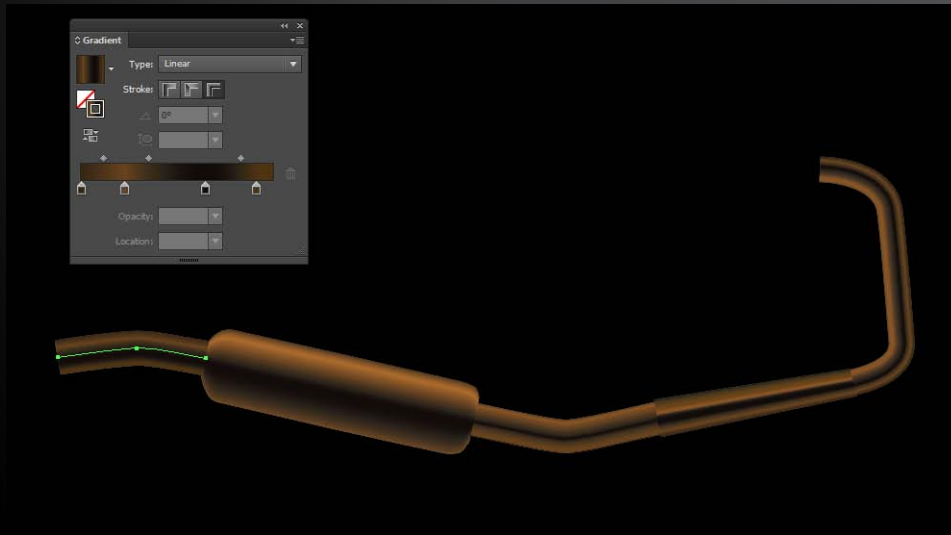
Classically modern

To get started, Yogesh snapped a photo of his Royal Enfield Classic 500. He then took the image into Adobe Photoshop CS5.5 and adjusted some of the colors. For instance, modifying the image to have the chrome parts of the motorcycle convey more golden and brownish hues. He also played with the lighting, changing the direction of light shining on the motorcycle, while giving the light a warmer feel overall.

With Illustrator CS6, Yogesh wanted to explore two newer features in depth: gradients on strokes and variable-width strokes. Gradients on strokes, which is new in Illustrator CS6, expands creative possibilities for users by letting customers create the beautiful, smooth shading of colors, similar to Gradient Mesh, in a fast

and simple way. Gradients can be applied along the length, across the width, or within strokes, providing rich options as gradients can be controlled to flow naturally on curved paths. When combined with variable-width options, the appearance of each stroke can be adjusted and perfected, with the stroke's gradient spreading according to the width profile.

In highlighting his artwork on the following pages, Yogesh outlines how these important Illustrator CS6 features enabled him to quickly and easily express his unique vision of his Royal Enfield Classic 500 motorcycle.



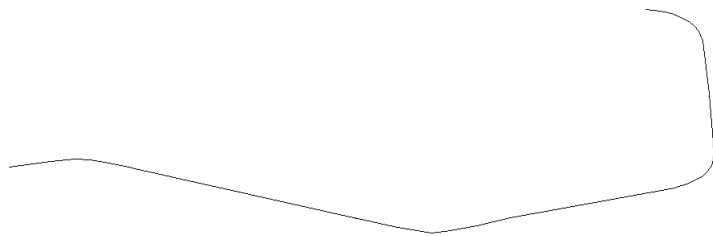
Artwork in Preview mode

Bringing details to life

I started working on the exhaust pipe and silencer, which have different widths at different points. I opted to apply a gradient across the stroke so that the colors of the gradient bend along with the stroke.

Before Illustrator CS6, creating the same artwork would have meant creating several shapes, filling them with linear gradients for straight segments and Gradient Mesh for curved ones. Instead of going through the time-consuming process of creating Gradient Mesh objects and adjusting mesh points, I can now simply create curved paths and apply gradients across them.

As I worked, I also realized that I could use the variable-width stroke feature in combination with gradients on strokes so that the colors would flow according to the width at a given section of the stroke. For example, variable-width strokes came in handy for modeling the shape of the thickest part of the exhaust pipe, giving it roundness at the end points while the gradient near those end points converged in the same manner.



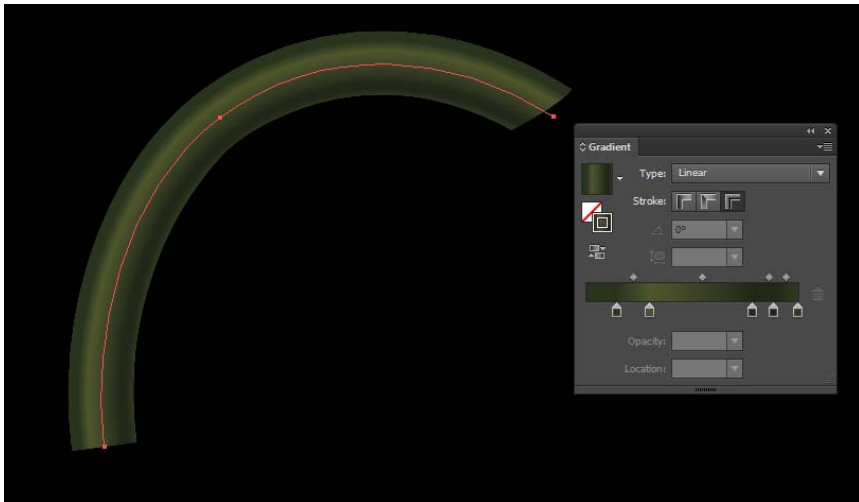
Artwork in Outline mode, showing the simplicity of the underlying paths

“Using Illustrator CS6, I can easily create artwork that looks complicated but has a simple underlying structure that is easy to edit.”

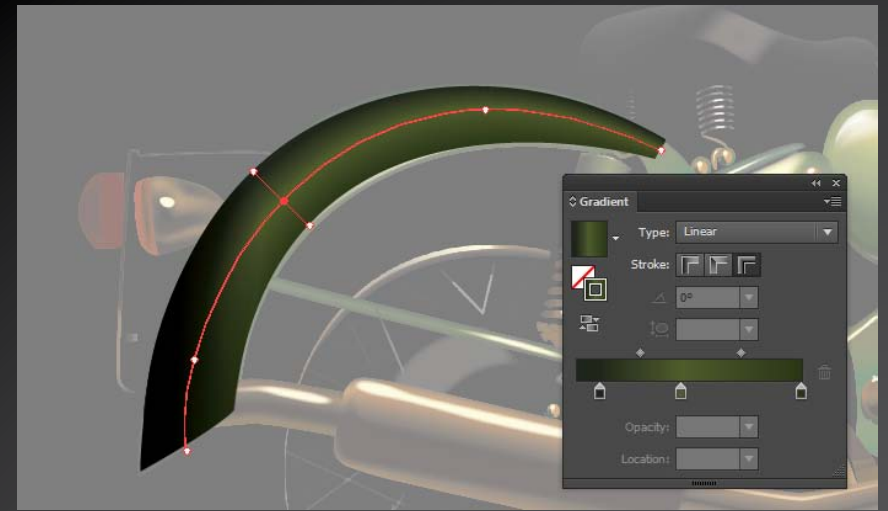
Achieving effects in minutes, not hours

I then moved on to the fenders. The entire green shape of the front and rear fenders is really just a single Illustrator path.

Using variable-width strokes, I could address the fact that the back of the rear fender is wider than the part of the fender closest to the seat. To create the darker shading at the back of the fender, I overlaid the gradient stroke with an object containing a linear gradient that fades from rich black to fully transparent. To get the highlights on the fender, I drew several paths filled with a white-to-gray gradient stroke and applied one of Illustrator's default variable-width profiles to them.

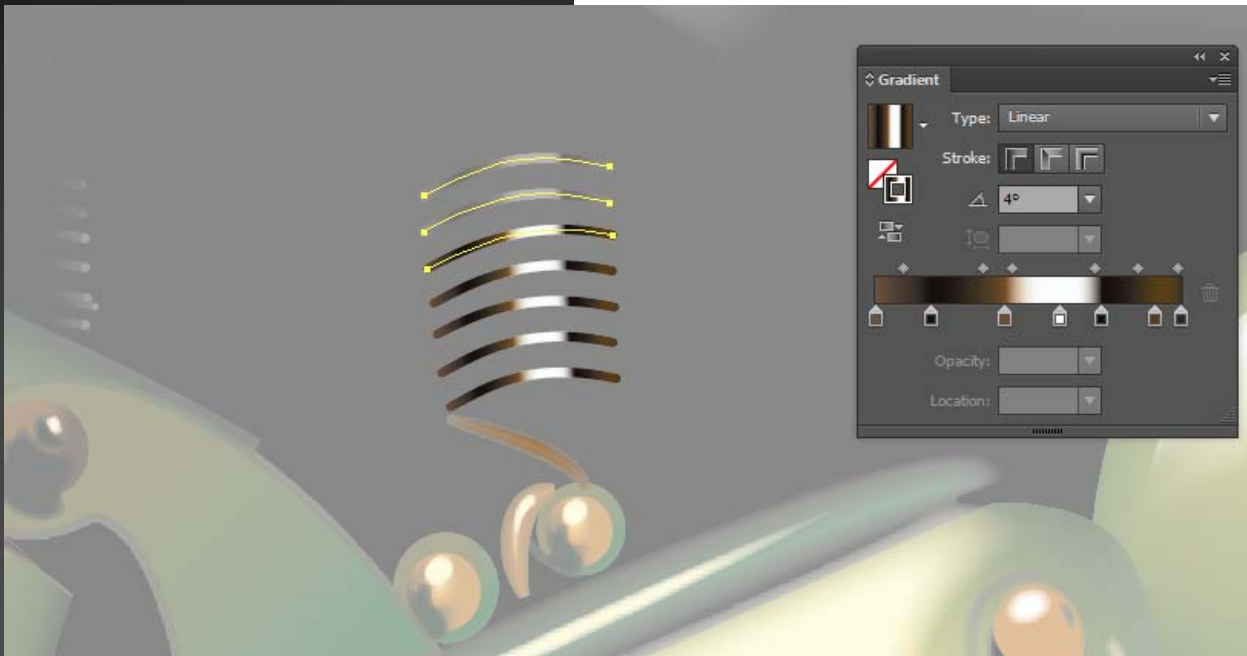


Front fender



Rear fender

“Achieving the desired effects would have taken an hour or more if I tried to create and fine tune them using Gradient Mesh. Now I can do the same thing in five minutes with gradients on strokes.”



Editing made easy

Another interesting part for me was creating the springs under the rider's seat. These turned out to be really easy to create. I drew a curved path with only two anchor points and duplicated it.

I then created a gradient that I applied within the stroke, and along the way, efficiently edited my work. For instance, after adjusting the gradient stops, I had to tweak each curved line slightly. If I had created these paths as filled objects, then adjusting the shape and gradient at the same time would have been a lot more time consuming.

To create the look of the top two "springs" being in the shadow of the seat, I simply lowered the opacity of the top two strokes.



Increased power and control

For the black lines on the tank pads, I drew the strokes using the Pen tool and adjusted the width on parts of the stroke using the Width tool to give an illusion of depth. I then applied a gradient on these strokes that fades to transparent to further refine the look.



Parts of the artwork that were created using gradients on strokes



Final artwork

"I used to struggle with creating complex shapes with lighting effects, but Illustrator CS6 has removed a lot of the complexity for me. I no longer have to worry about the directions from which colors are flowing or manage a lot of other complex details. Using gradients on strokes, I can quickly make my ideas come alive."

Looking for Adventure
by Yogesh Sharma using
Adobe Illustrator CS6.

For more information
Product details:
www.adobe.com/illustrator



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