

BLUE IS THE COLOUR

PAINTING IS BRIAN WEST'S GAME AND GUESS WHICH COLOUR HE ALWAYS RUNS OUT OF FIRST?

Ever since he can remember Chelsea fan Brian West knew he wanted to be an artist. But not for him bowls of fruit, bunches of sunflowers or well-endowed nudes. No, the only thing Brian West ever wanted to paint was footballers.

At the age of nine Brian won a competition in *The Daily Express* for a painting of former Wolves goalkeeper Bert Williams. Now his football paintings are world-renowned, and he can list the likes of Sir Alex Ferguson and Gary Lineker among his satisfied customers.

"Sir Alex has a painting of mine in his snooker room," Brian explains, "it's of the first Scotland v England game he ever went to. And I've done paintings for Peter Shilton, John Barnes, Danny Murphy and Graeme Le Saux – although unfortunately it shows him playing for Blackburn."

As a Chelsea fan, however, Brian's first love is capturing the mighty Blues on canvas. Some of his most striking works feature Chelsea heroes in action, like Peter Osgood's brilliant header to equalise against Leeds in the 1970 FA Cup Final replay at Old Trafford.

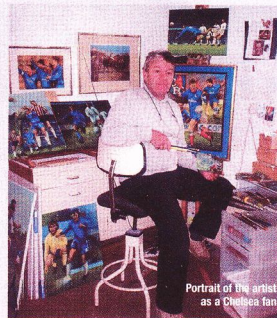
"That's one of my favourite paintings," says Brian. "I wasn't commissioned to do that one, I did it for myself. It's such an acrobatic header. What a player he was."

Another Chelsea hero to get the West treatment is league title-winning hero Roy Bentley. Indeed his picture, which captures Bentley leading the team out at the Bridge for the penultimate and title-deciding game of the 1955 season against Sheffield Wednesday, currently hangs on our legendary ex-skipper's wall.

"He told me he loves the painting," says Brian, "but that his greatest moment was leading the team out at Old Trafford the following week when the United players formed a guard of honour as Chelsea, the champions, ran out onto the pitch. I'm planning to paint that soon."

Brian's line-up of Chelsea heroes immortalised on canvas also includes Glenn Hoddle, Alan Hudson, Ron Harris and Peter Bonetti, a montage of Dennis Wise, Mark Stein, Gavin Peacock and Craig Burley back in the 'Amiga' days, and a cracker featuring Ron Harris as he powers away from ex-Blues Jimmy Greaves and Terry Venables of Spurs.

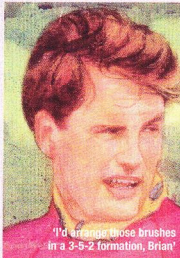
Most of these are up for sale (prices vary from £300-£1000), and Brian also sells limited edition prints which cost about £30. You can even commission him to paint a picture of your favourite Blues player or Chelsea moment. So far he has yet to tackle any of the current squad, but he has plans to do so soon.



Portrait of the artist as a Chelsea fan

"I am really looking forward to doing Marcel Desailly and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink," he explains. "Some players just have an aura about them, their own magnetism and my challenge is to capture that on canvas."

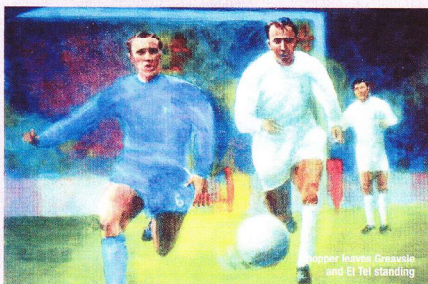
■ For more information get your mouse over to www.brianwestart.com



'I'd use a range of brushes in a 3-5-2 formation, Brian'



A great goal by Osgood in the 1970 FA Cup final replay



Osgood leaves Graeme Le Saux and El Tet standing



Brian captures the joy of the Chelsea boys in 1994