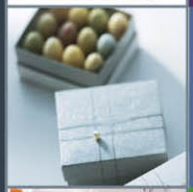
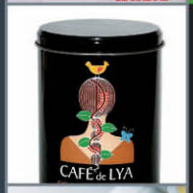
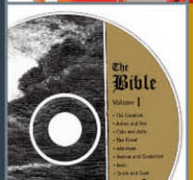
# THE LITTLE BOOK OF BIG PACKAGING IDEAS

by catharine fishel + stacey king gordon








ROCKPORT

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NISSAN

TRAVEL

NISSAN

MOTION

Coconut oil base with pure essential oils of

JET LAG

Coconut oil base with pure essential oils of

# contents

## PART I DESIGNING PACKAGES


# PART II REDESIGNING PACKAGES


fastfood
stucco.


ROLL ON
ANTI-PERSPIRANT
BODY LOTION
BODY CREAM


PAXTON&WHITFIELD
PAXTON&WHITFIELD
Cheddar Truckle
PAXTON&WHITFIELD
Cheddar Pounder


PAXTON&WHITFIELD
Dales Crumbly
PAXTON&WHITFIELD
PAXTON&WHITFIELD
Camembert
PAXTON&WHITFIELD
Pont l'Evêque

# PART I

**Chase Design Group** has been working for **Kama Sutra**—not surprisingly, **a purveyor of sex products**—for eight years; although the company has been in existence **since 1965.**



Chase Design Group was inspired by the challenge to tie together, through packaging design, an almost 40-year-old brand of sex aid products. The new packaging for Kama Sutra was so lush and beautiful that it successfully maneuvered its way into more mainstream retail venues. Previously, it was only sold in sex and head shops.

"Registering the Kama Sutra name internationally was the smartest thing he ever did," says agency executive creative director Margo Chase of her client, Joe Bolstad. "As a result, there are no other competitors in the market with that name. He has competitors in the sex aid market, but none have been able to cross over into the mainstream gift market as successfully."

A great deal of that success is attributable to Chase and her designers, who have taken the products—through gorgeous packaging designs—from items that might be bought furtively at sex or head shops to a line of products that are beautiful enough to sell in all levels of gift and specialty stores. Even more significantly, they look artful enough to leave out on the counter or bedside table at home.

The client had two sets of packaging designs before the work Chase Design Group created. The original packaging was created in 1965. It used brown ribbed paper with a circular logo. These designs were rather dingy looking, but the line also contained a few special packages that used Indian-style illustrations, which Chase thought had potential.

In the 1980s the entire line of packaging was redesigned. All the new containers were matte black with red type and gray stone texture. Chase describes the look as "not very sexy." Part of the redesigned suite included some phallic-looking bottles that—unfortunately—leaked. The client was not happy with the new look, so he let some of the original designs stay on the market. The result was a disjointed brand image.

To make the next step in expanding his line into larger gift and department stores, the client needed packaging that was more palatable to mainstream consumers. Originally, Chase recalls, Bolstad wanted to simply go back to and update the original brown packaging. Chase didn't want to abandon the core of this idea, but felt that bringing in Indian art and more color would give his products more appeal and visual diversity.

This was the genesis of the green ribbed paper that is used throughout Chase's redesign. "The paper is actually just the brown shipping paper they use in Europe. We scanned it and shifted the color to create a rich, jewel-toned green," she explains. On top of the green, the designers added a gold metallic leaf overprint together with a new brand identity. It was important to maintain some elements from the original design, Chase adds, so that long-time customers wouldn't feel as if they had been abandoned.


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The team also explored Indian artwork, frescos, and textiles for inspiration. From these sources, rich, detailed artwork was developed for use on canisters and bottle bellybands. Two different looks were built from the green paper and floral illustrations: The core product line—which includes Oil of Love, Pleasure Balm, and Honey Dust—is wrapped in the green ribbed paper. Each flavor has a different bellyband design to distinguish it and tie it into the second look, which was used on the gift product line. This line is decorated with similarly colored illustrations based on the art of the original Kama Sutra.

"We felt that color was an important aspect that was missing in the old packaging. The Oil of Love is manufactured in various beautiful colors, but they were hidden inside brown or black tubes, which are necessary to keep the glass bottles from breaking. We decided to bring the color to the outside of the containers," Chase says. She notes that the consistent green paper theme gave the client a single, ownable color on store shelves and helped him carve out an identifiable space. "But we wanted to break that up with floral patterns and illustrations to keep everything interesting, inviting, and friendly."

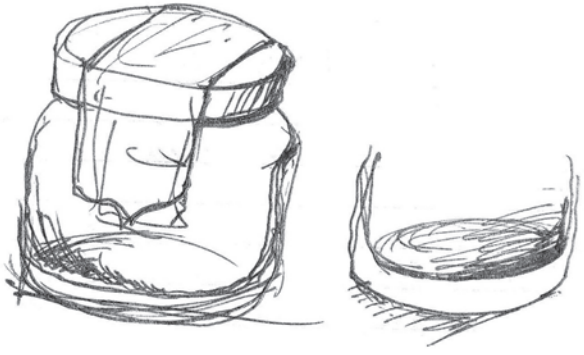
The art served another, more subliminal purpose. Many people are uncomfortable buying sex products. "We hope that the beautiful art would help people feel like they were buying a gift or a piece of art rather than a sex aid. That's one big reason for Kama Sutra's success: It still does a huge amount of business in sex shops because its products are the only ones that look tasteful, and he has been able to break into the mainstream gift market for the same reason," Chase says.

Today, the Kama Sutra product line is found in high-end gift stores all over the world, as well as at mainstream retailers. Its business has grown dramatically every year since Chase Design Group began its work; in 2002 alone, sales doubled.

Chase doesn't claim that the new packaging is the only reason for such impressive improvement, but both she and the client like to think it has had a huge impact. She also credits client Joe Bolstad—the only client she has ever had who graduated from Art Center with a degree in design—with being incredibly receptive to their ideas.

"We often make comps in several versions. He takes them away and sits with them until he's sure which one is right. He'll have thought everything through and offer great input, often making the designs even better than they were," she says.

Rich fabrics from India were one of the visual resources that Margo Chase and her designers studied for guidance on color and illustration.

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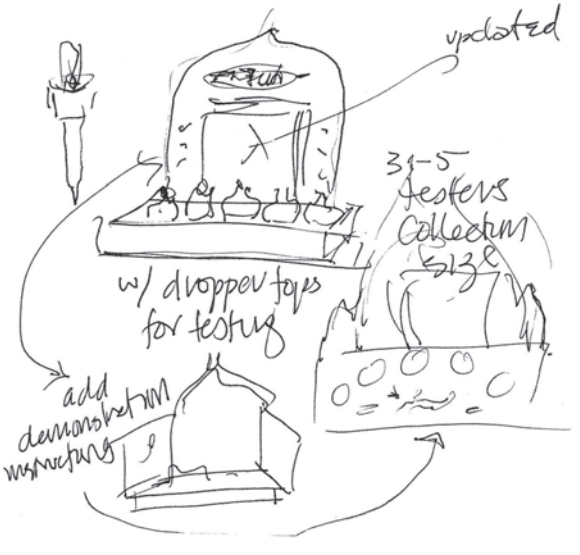
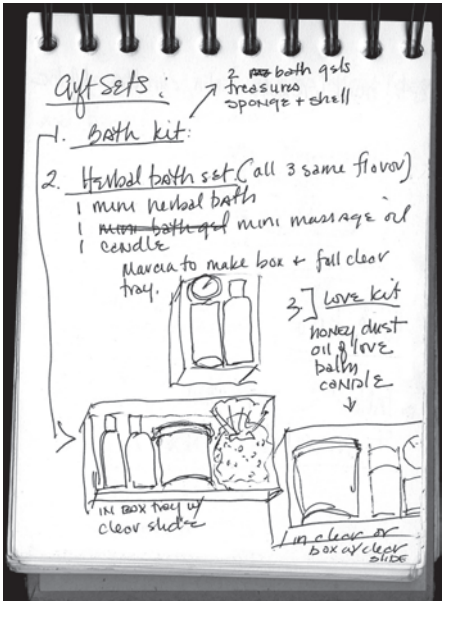
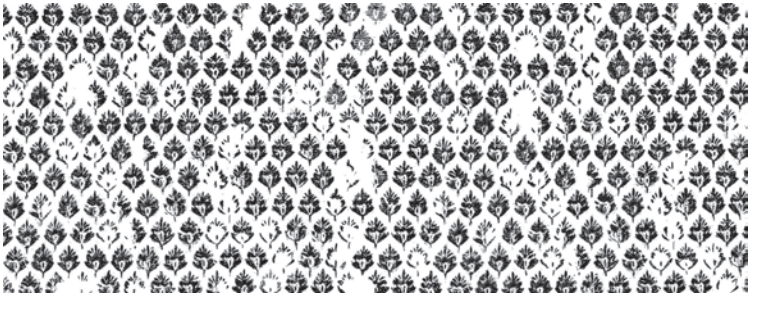



A range of sketches completed during early discussions with the client.


Kama Sutra's original packaging was wrapped in brown ribbed paper, and the client had expressed a desire to return to that look, following an unsuccessful redesign attempt by another design firm in the 1980s and years of a disjointed identity. Chase delivered his wish, with a lovely twist: She used a ribbed paper (actually, a brown shipping paper commonly used in Europe), electronically gave it a rich green color, and added a leaf pattern colored with gold leaf on top. An illustrated bellyband added color. This core design was one of two looks the designers created for their client.





The second look created for the client is shown in the tins the designers created for the Kama Sutra gift product line. These carried more illustration and color. Shown here is the preliminary comp for the Tangerine Gift Tin; the approved art; the final wrap; and finally, photography of the finished product. The inspiration gained from studying Indian artwork, frescos, and textiles is evident.

A brand with **the good bones of heritage** can be a wonderful project for a designer. But a brand with good bones whose owners have a **vision for the future** is even better. Such was the case with **Adnams Brewery** of Southwold in the East Anglia region of England.


Design Bridge of London re-created the identity and packaging for Adnams, a brewery in the East Anglia region of England, founded in 1872. Both the labeling and the bottle shape were reworked.


The company's identity had not been touched in more than 20 years, and each product in the line had a different look.

The company has been in business since 1872 and is among the last of the independent, locally owned breweries left in the country. At one time, hundreds of establishments brewed their own beers and served the beverages in their own pubs. But today, large corporations have swept through the market and have eliminated nearly all these historic companies. Adnams is one of the few strong, independent, regional brands left and is determined to stay that way.

The company's identity had remained essentially untouched for 20 years. Although the company's chair is a progressive thinker who wanted the company to do something different from any other regional brewer, Design Bridge, the London-based company brought on board to handle the ID and packaging redesign, knew that any redesign would have to be done with great care.

"This redesign was a big move for the company," says Jill Marshall, executive chairman for branding and packaging at Design Bridge. "The brewer is rooted in Southwold, a historic and charming part of the English countryside and coastline. It was important for them to feel whomever they entrusted with handling this untouched brand would treat it with a great deal of respect."

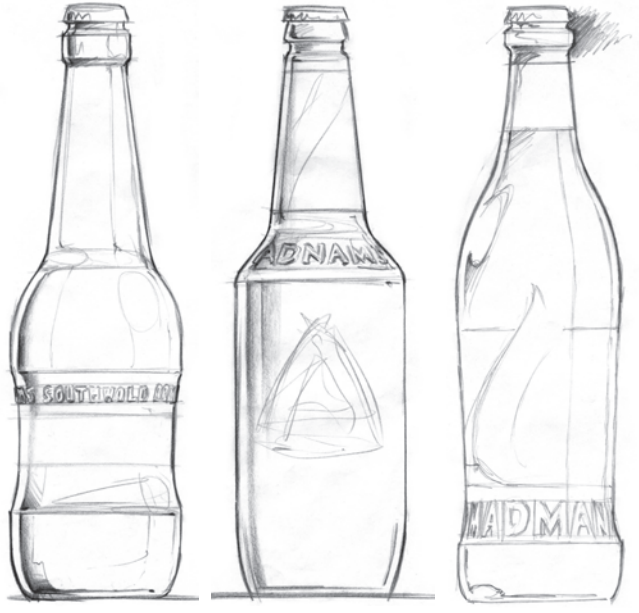
One thing to avoid, Marshall says, was making a patent play on the brewer's history to create an old-world feel. "We had to respect the actual history," Marshall says, "not treat it like it was some sort of bogus version of history."

Adnams' competition could be characterized in one of two ways: those that used the old-world approach (many are as old or older than Adnams) or those that remained completely static. Creative director for the redesign project Graham Shearsby compares the appearance of these identities to the metal badges from old steam engines—cold, unemotional, inflexible. Design Bridge felt that something with more life and movement—something with a more sculptural quality—would be more fitting in Adnams' packaging and mark.

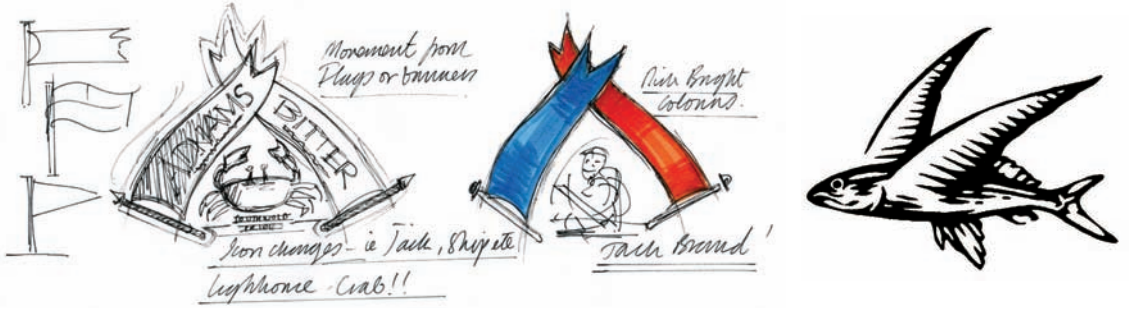
After extensive conversations with the client on what it needed (Adnams includes 90-odd pubs, three hotels, and a wine business, as well as a full suite of beers), Shearsby visited Southwold to get a better feeling for the place. The visit turned out to be a meaningful one.

"It's flat there, with big beaches and big skies. Fishermen bring their boats right up onto the shore. You can imagine the winds coming across the beaches in winter, when you would want to find yourself tucked up in a pub with a pint of beer," he says.

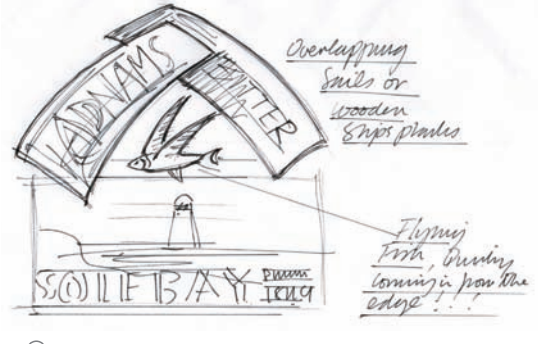

Two unique finds helped to drive the redesign of the new Adnams bottle: While visiting Southwold to get a better feeling for the place, Design Bridge creative director Graham Shearsby took a walk on the beach and found the fragment of thick glass shown here. The bottle was found in a wine cellar beneath the brewery. The appearance and heft of the items were combined in the new bottle shape.



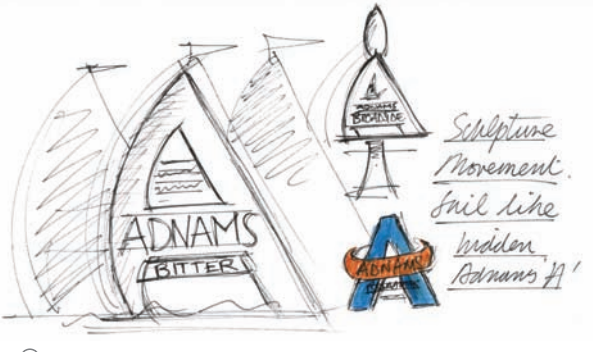

In these sketches, the designers explored the relationship between the bottle shape and the label.




Initial sketches include visual references to flags and include icons that are representative of the area—a lighthouse, a crab, a ship, a flying fish.

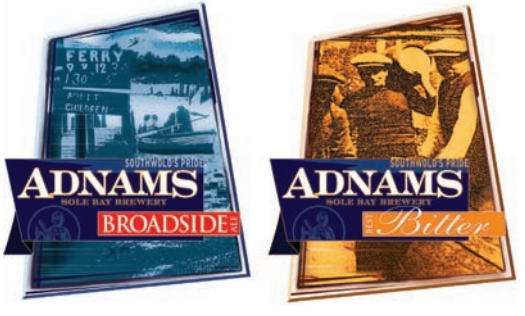



The overlapping sail design eventually won out. It had a three-dimensional feel that was adaptable for other uses.




Here the sail idea moves into a more literal interpretation.


Here the label design has been refined; although the client asked that the crab be replaced with a more local image. The flag design was developed into the sail design.




Another option that the designers explored was photography based.

On a walk on the beach, Shearsby found a thick fragment of old glass. "Inspiration for the entire project came from that piece of glass. It had a timeless feel, like when you pick up shells or pebbles on the beach. They are somehow imbued with memories of other times and places. They tell a story. We felt that we could use those qualities to inspire the redesign."

So the redesign of the core logo began. The old marks (each beer label had its own shape and illustration) had charm, but they also had the feel of a badge removed from an old engine. Shearsby's experiments centered on creating a single distinctive shape that could be used anywhere, from labels to buildings.

One of his first ideas was a pair of crossed flags, which came from the idea of using flags to send signals and was therefore closely linked to the town's maritime history. He chose a small crab, very much part of the company's coastal location, as a potential brand icon and positioned it between the flags. Although Adnams loved the idea of the flags, the company's representatives felt the crab was a step too far away from the brewery's heritage and asked Design Bridge to rethink the symbol.

So the designers delved deep into the history of Southwold and came up with a series of icons and imagery from the area—a ship from a well-known battle right off the coast in 1692, a lighthouse, a longshoreman, and a 500-year-old carved wooden figure named Southwold Jack, who rings the bell at local St. Edmond's Church to announce services.

The latter was chosen as the symbol for the core brand and company identity; the others were used on individual beer products. The images were reproduced as linocut illustrations rendered by Chris Wormwell, an artist who knew and had a passion for the area.

The crossed flags were redrawn with more life and movement so they looked like ribbons, giving them an identifiable shape that would be recognizable on bottles, signage, pump clips, trucks, and more. Even better, the ribbons could be picked up alone and used elsewhere, such as on the company's wine bottles and collateral.

"This mark has movement and color, rather than being flat, dull, and dark. The imagery came from the notion of sails, and their curves suggest motion. When you walk into a pub and see the mark, it almost looks as if it is moving," the designer says.

For the packaging of individual products, Wormwell customized the ribbon with linocut-like illustrations, using the icons and imagery from the Southwold area created before.

The Design Bridge designers commissioned an entire alphabet, based on an old Adnams' font, for the new identity.



The new (above left) and old (above right) pump handles reveal how progressive the new identity is.


The contained, two-sail design is used on trucks, signage, pump clips, and other places where a defined shape is necessary.


The one-sail design is used on cans and bottles, where the shape of the package is well defined. Just using one sail allowed the designers to make the name of the brand and the product larger.

Also part of the new packaging is a special Adnams' font, designed by freelancer Ken Wilson, especially for the company's new identity. The new type is based on the original Adnams' font, only crisper and more contemporary.

A new bottle was also created for the rejuvenated brand. Its shape was based on the strength and curve of an old beer bottle that the design team found while looking at old Burgundy wine bottles in a wine cellar beneath the Adnams' brewhouse.

Once the new core mark—the crossed flags—was designed, it had to be translated for use onto bottles and cans. The pump clips needed to be contained in their shape, but the designers had some freedom interpreting the mark for individual containers. So they decided to use only one flag for these applications, which allowed them to make the Adnams' name as large as possible and give the individual product names more prominence.

"It's almost as if you are taking a close-up, cropped view of the pump clip. It really emphasizes the movement and three-dimensional qualities of the identity," says Marshall.

The final packaging and logo work as well in a cozy country pub as they do in a smart city bar, says Shearsby, but the proof is in the business sense of the solution. Adnams reports that even with only limited advertising in the East Anglia region, sales have risen more than 30 percent. Sales of the Broadside beer alone have increased as much as 67 percent.

Shearsby is pleased with the outcome of the project for these and other reasons. "Together, Design Bridge and Adnams have challenged conventions and still captured the spirit of this unique area of England. These people love what they do—this isn't just some industrial project. This solution reflects their passion and involvement, as well as the human element of an independent company," he says.

What kind of packaging **appeals to consumers** for whom money is no object? Is it better to go **over the top** in terms of **opulence and quantity** of materials? Or is an **understated** approach more engaging? **Philip B** could go either way.



AdamsMorioka's bottle design for Philip B was understated to the extreme, but at $50-plus per bottle, it is sold to people who don't need to be sold to. The tube design took the concept to the next level: The clear containers carried more elaborate patterning, still in black and white. The product color showed through, which added yet another dimension.

Designers at AdamsMorioka (Los Angeles) believed in the latter philosophy when they created an extremely minimal packaging system for Philip B, a high-end line of shampoo and other personal care products that can cost up to $65 per container.

"The people we are talking to don't need to be sold to: They are already in the mode of wanting an understated product for their bath," explains principal Sean Adams. He compares the Philip B experience to patronizing the most exclusive restaurant in LA. "It's a sushi place that is not advertised and doesn't even have a sign on the door. You just have to know about it."

When AdamsMorioka began working with the client, the product had been in existence for several years and was selling well, but in limited venues. The client, who had designed the original packaging himself, was frustrated by not being able to convince high-end retailers such as Barney's or Sak's to carry his lines.

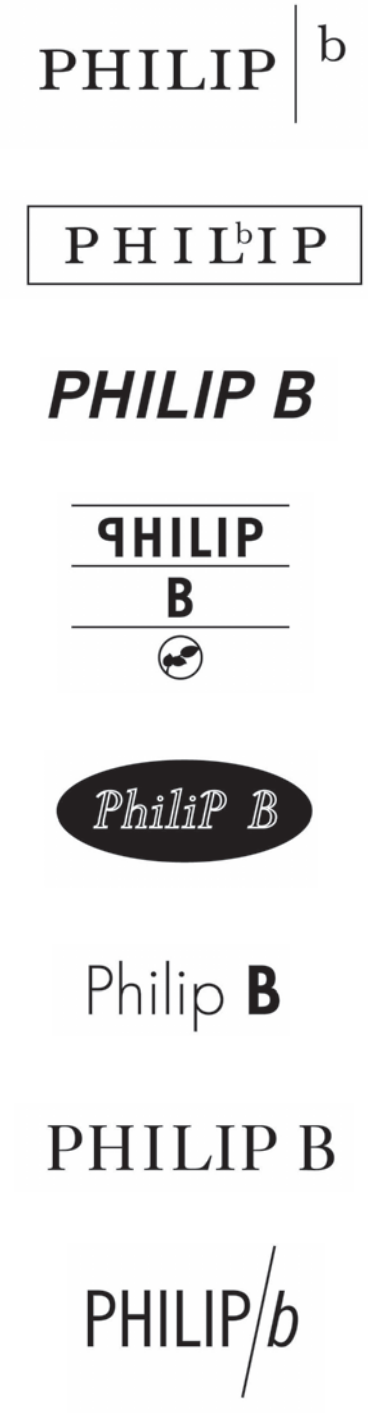
Adams felt that the original packaging design might be a liability: It just didn't speak to consumers on the shelf, so the store's buyers would not place orders. Clearly, a revamp was needed.

The design team began by doing an audit of many different hair care and personal care systems, from pricey to discount levels.

"We found out that the cheaper the brand was, the more flashy it became, with silver and pink and fancy bottles. One thing we knew about Philip B was that it was an honest product. He really used organic ingredients: When the label said 'avocado' or 'peppermint,' those things really were in the product. It was important to communicate that authenticity in the package design," explains Adams. "When you try too hard, it just ends up looking cheap."

He felt that this quality could be conveyed through good typography, decent but simple materials, and a basic design. The designers went out of their way to select the most generic bottle form available. This also conveyed the idea that the spending went into the product and did not need disguising. Adams says that he is highly annoyed by bottles that are shaped like flying saucers or anything other than what they are supposed to be. They smack of people trying too hard to be hip and get attention.

The formal elements of the packaging, although minimal, were chosen carefully. The typefaces Mrs. Eaves was chosen as the basis for the Philip B word mark; Avenir is the primary font used for all applications. In both instances, these faces are warmer and more casual than other traditional fonts like Bembo or Futura, Adams explains.




Because the word mark would be the centerpiece of the package design, the designers spent a great deal of time experimenting with different personalities.

The black-and-white color palette was a nod to the client's previous packaging, but it was also chosen for its strength. The client had also alluded early on in the project to the essential nature of Fornasetti plates and Aubrey Beardsley prints. "Although most of us think of black and white as being basic, how often does it get used in a final product?" Adam asks. "This combination stood off the shelf amid the sea of color and became proprietary." Another consideration in selecting black and white, although minor, was that the bottles look good in any bathroom, regardless of tile color or decor.

The iconic system was set up to delineate the products in a subtle way. The icons were designed not to be literal—as in showing a white truffle for the White Truffle shampoo—but were organized by inspiration and spirit. For example, when developing the Chai Latte Body Wash, the client had been inspired by Eastern thought. So a lotus leaf was used as the basis for its icon.

The bottle's cap is nothing out of the ordinary—just a functional stock item. Used on a white bottle, the cap is like the classic Chanel suit that stands the test of time, as other products are repeatedly recreating themselves in fashionable colors and typography.

Almost immediately after the new packaging was launched, the client sales leaped nearly 300 percent, due in large part to new distribution agreements with Barney's, Sak's, Fred Segal, and selected high-end beauty supply stores, as well as an hour-long segment on QVC. From this strong foothold, the client was able to develop and release new product lines: lotions, styling gels, body washes, and more, many of which would be packaged in tubes.

Carrying the black and white scheme through on the tubes would be important, Adams recalls. The typography and graphics were simple enough to translate well to the new package shape. And what initially looked like a production problem turned out to be a design opportunity that opened up the project in unexpected ways.

Tubes usually have some sort of graphics covering their sealed end that hide the portion of the tube that is not filled: Some air is necessarily left in the tube to allow for natural expansion of the product due to changes in temperature or atmospheric pressure. The designers felt that, in keeping with the product's philosophy of complete honesty, it would be better to leave the area completely clear. But the manufacturer prevailed.

The result was a compromise: a series of black and white stripes that partially obscured and partially revealed the end area. The stripes inspired additional designs for other products, including dots, Kanji characters, and a dot pattern inspired by a Thai textile.

"The patterns match the personality of the product," Adams explains. The Thai pattern was obviously designed for the Thai Tea Body Wash, the falling drops worked with the Chai Latte Body Wash, and the simple stripe was appropriate for a base product like the conditioner. Says Adams, "I can only explain that if you use the Body Wash, you'll understand why the drops slowly and quietly disappear."




The simple bottle designs not only looked elegant but were also basic enough to be combined with other patterning and effects, some of which were quite exotic. Various marketing materials picked up on the patterning, some in dramatic ways.

Each package design was minimal from the start.


Where the design of the Philip B packaging is extremely simple, the materials that support sales of the products—ads, postcards, and other marketing materials—go in a completely different graphic direction. A postcard designed for a new body wash, for example, has everything in it but the kitchen sink, Adams says—lots of color, Asian cues, photos, different patterns, even the word "new" called out in small bursts. It is decidedly more forward.

"In the store, the products need to look consistent and clean," Adams says, "but in the home environment, the products need more sales support." The combination of simple and complex also reflects the client's personality: He is completely serious and committed to the integrity of the product, but he is also one of the most unique and exuberant people Adams knows. The client embraces the dichotomy of this situation and pushed the designers to explore it.

The whole system is essentially contradictory, Adams says. It is not an approach a designer could get away with for a Fortune 500 company product, but it has worked for Philip B, which had at this writing just opened its own store on très chic Robertson Boulevard in Los Angeles.

"When we first started working with the client, he was still working out of his living room, so to see his growth is really wonderful. He already had a really good product: We just made it possible for people to notice it," Adams says.


The various products carried many symbols that were representative of the personality of the package's contents. These symbols formed yet another design resource for the client. Here the designers used the symbols to form a mandala on the storefront window of the client's new store in Los Angles, California.

**Blue—as a color** and a distinguishing product characteristic—was important to the **Pepsi-Cola Company** for a number of reasons.


MLR Design combined many visual cues from youth culture for a new Pepsi soft drink, Pepsi Blue. Tattoos, snowboard graphics, neon lighting, and more all lent their influence.

First, it was a revolutionary color for the cola category, and it scored well with the 16-year-old male target customer the company wanted to woo with a line extension of its Pepsi product. But perhaps even more important, it gave the company a chance to integrate its own brand color right into the product itself.

After focus testing confirmed that the bottler was on the right track, Pepsi contacted MLR Design (Chicago) to collaborate with the Pepsi Design Group on the development of Pepsi Blue. Christy Russell, director of business development for MLR, explains what happened next.

"The proposed product had tested well, and now it needed some imagery," Russell recalls. "With the packaging design, Pepsi wanted to focus on the independent personality and on self-expression. The product was to be a celebration of independence—that drove our entire creative exploration."

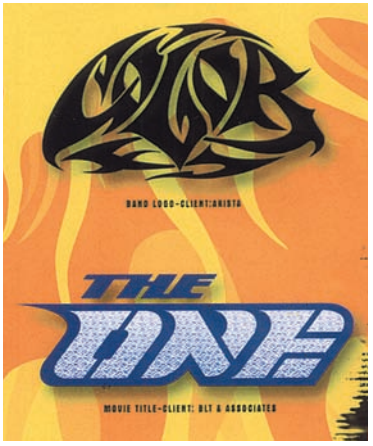
Because the shape of the bottle itself was already dictated by pre-existing market requirements, the design team focused on the label. They began by studying imagery from extreme sports such as snowboarding and skateboarding and from youth magazines, the music field, and MTV. Another visual angle that they studied was the tattoo, which combines the notion of art and self-expression.

The designers created a diverse range of presentation roughs. Some early trials expressed the notion of nightlife or night energy by means of neonlike graphics. These had a sense of electric energy, and they also appealed to the 16-year-old's sense of wanting to be part of an older crowd with a later curfew.

Another direction had a definite extreme sports inspiration behind it. "Any activity that is a bit left of center appeals to this age-group," Russell says. "The drink itself has that quality, so visually tying it to alternate activities neatly connects the product to excitement for the buyer."

A third direction tapped into the notion of standing out in the crowd, as members of the less than mainstream youth culture would. Tattoos are a natural visual for this group. "Tattoos are a bold, personal identity—not like the rest of the crowd," says Jones.

One trial used the familiar Pepsi ball as a globe element. "The Pepsi Blue world is a different kind of place," Russell says. "Things are unexpected there, and there's a lot more energy." Another trial along these same lines used a background pattern to suggest a crowd of people in a cityscape.









To find inspiration for the packaging design for the new Pepsi Blue product, targeted directly at 16-year-old males, MLR designers studied imagery from extreme sports, tattoos, youth publications, and the music field.

The Pepsi ball showed up in other experiments as well. One of Russell's favorites placed the ball so that it looked like the center of a throbbing speaker: This exploration suggested its own beat, but it also offered a subtle refreshment cue: The ripples surrounding the art could also suggest the product's liquid, thirst-quenching possibilities.

In all of the Pepsi Blue studies MLR presented to its client, the design team viewed the beverage product as a fashion statement. With a consumer profile that included the words "hip, edgy, bold, and independent," the energy level had to be high, says the project's creative director, Thomas E. Jones.

"A soft drink becomes a self-identity piece because we consume it in public. It's the same in the gum and mint category. Anything you consume in public is a statement of fashion, especially with kids who are so concerned with their images," Russell explains.

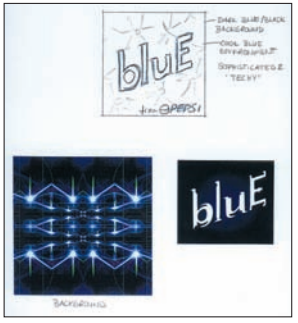
The comps created in this first stage of the project went into customer testing. Two strong directions emerged: tattoos and neon.

With the tattoo effect, the question was whether to make the name of the product a tattoo or to incorporate the name into tattoolike artwork. At this stage, the designers are developing the entire label. To up the impact of these new branding statements, they decided to make the graphics on the front larger and more prominent.

The neon studies tested very well, but in the end they were deemed to not contain enough action, even with lively backgrounds that added dimension to the designs. The tattoo approach eventually won out.

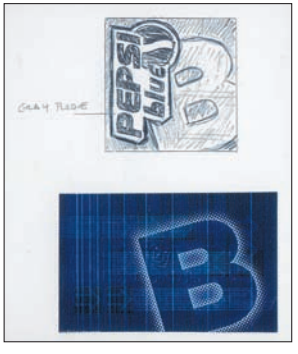
The time span for the project was extremely brief—only six weeks. Russell says that because the in-house design team at Pepsi is a very collaborative group, her firm had plenty of support. Also adding to the energy level is the fact that working on such a high-profile project is an enormous morale booster to her staff.

"The only way you end up having work like this in-house is to get through some very stiff competition," she says. "The huge boost we get from a project like Pepsi Blue helps us do that."



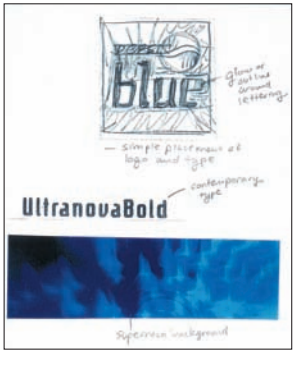


This trial expressed the notion of nightlife or night energy. The neon-like background and the neon-inspired logo communicate an electric energy.





Here the designers looked at taking the "B" from "Blue" and turning it into a large icon. It is a hip look, inspired by logos on the labels of urban-styled clothing as well as on the large initial caps commonly used on sports clothing.



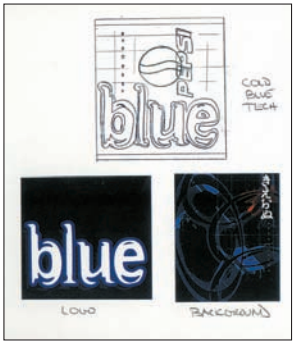


Cool and refreshing: That's the basis for this design. Although introducing the notion of water as a refreshment cue is visually effective, focus group studies revealed that this approach was far too sedate for the target audience.



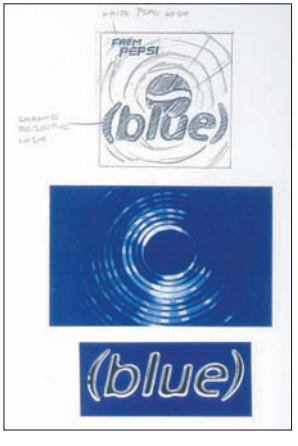
A background full of shapes and patterns suggests an urban landscape, bustling with crowds and energy. Blue, the color of both the product and the Pepsi brand, is also integrated right into the logo here, connecting the brand with the subbrand.


There was no sketch for this comp, because it was done entirely on the computer. The designers mimicked the Pepsi ball, but they used it here as more of a globe. The suggestion was that this is the "Pepsi Blue world," an unexpected place full of energy. The blue, frost-like background is a definite refreshment cue.



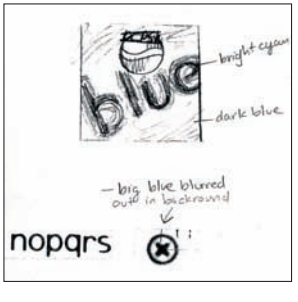


This comp was inspired by the club and nightlife scene. The designers reasoned that most 16-year-olds aspire to be older and take part in more mature activities, but this sophisticated approach also proved to be too subdued for the target audience.





This trial emerged as a favorite with the design team: Viewed as the center of a speaker, it is a visual expression of a beat. This touched on the teenager's interest in music, especially loud, exciting music. But the circling rings can also be viewed as ripples in water, a refreshment cue.





This design is another one that refers to the notion of staying up late and having fun. The logo almost looks like it is being viewed from the outside through a bubbled glass window: Inside, something fun is going on.

During the second stage of trials, the designers began developing complete labels for the client's review. These five comps are five different spins on tattoos. In some cases, the product name is the tattoo; in others, a tattoo-like form embraces the name. This was the direction that was eventually refined for the final design.






Another sketch done entirely on the computer. Here the ideas of extreme sports, music, and tattoos are combined. It was chosen as one of the initial ideas to be taken to the next level of exploration.



These glowing designs tested well with customers and received positive feedback from the client. In the first, a background dot pattern adds action to the design; in the second, the tunnel of lights is augmented by a tattoo element.

So many **package designs** are about "making the product hero." Is there ever a time to **make the packaging the star** of the show? David Richmond, principal of the London-based design firm, R Design, decided **the time was right for Selfridges,**


The Selfridges' packaging redesign project certainly makes the packaging—not the product—hero. R Design of London created a system that is sleek, elegant, and modern.

an enormous UK department store that sells high-end goods, including its own line of quality packaged foods. For the most part, consumers did not realize this, though. The store's products lacked impact on the shelves or its packaging mimicked other, better-known brands.

"Selfridges has a good reputation for fresh foods, but most shoppers didn't know that the store had its own packaged goods," Richmond explains. Not having a package design with impact was somewhat of an anomaly for the brand, because everything from the architecture of its buildings to the layout of its stores on down is all carefully planned to improve the shopping experience. Selfridges, as one of the most prestigious shops in London, usually paves the way for other retailers.

Another unusual twist to the project, according to Richmond: "They asked us for our opinion. Most clients just tell you what they want. Here Selfridges asked us to start fresh."

The client's forward-thinking request would be limited by only one thing: R designers would have to use stock containers.

The first design that Richmond's team developed was his favorite from the start. The store was one of the few around that could get away with a strong, modern statement, he reasoned. Simplicity could provide that message through design. From this evolved a concept in which all of the packaging was the same color—black—with no product showing and flavor insinuated through type and color. Given contemporary standards, the design was almost antipackaging.

The typography used would also be simple, restricted to a grid and kept at the same point size no matter what the size of the package was. The size and shape of the physical pack would play off of consumer's preexisting knowledge of packaging and let the shopper figure out what he or she was looking at—a bottle of wine or a package of coffee, for example.

Black felt timeless and classic to Richmond, but it is also a signature color for the store. "Color coding everything in black would make an incredible statement," he says. "Just the type would reflect what was inside—for example, strawberry jam would have pink type. People already believe in the store and its quality, so it is not necessary to show pictures of the product on a label or even show the product through clear glass or plastic."

Furthermore, because the black had such impact, the products would be easy to pick out, even if they were not displayed together in the store or were mixed among competitors' brands.


The first set of experiments that David Richmond and his designers created turned out to be everyone's favorite in the end. No product shows. The type is extremely simple. Everything but the type would be black, and the color of the words would offer flavor or product cues.

The design brief called for three designs, so Richmond's team continued with their explorations. Another idea was to design packages that people would treasure and keep. This concept would involve frosted, acid-etched containers—which turned out to be prohibitively expensive—with all of the product's information printed on an intriguing swing tag. Bottled water, for instance, would have a swing tag that carried the image of a rubber duck: The connection to water is immediate.

"Although the concept behind this was nice—that you could keep the jar or pack once it was empty—this design did not have the same impact as the black range. It just wasn't Selfridges," Richmond says.

Another concept brought the store itself onto the labels. They would photograph products that in some way related to the product in the package—for example, a high-end toaster that the store carried could be pictured on the jam label. Each label would end up being a mini-advertisement for something else that was for sale at Selfridges. However, the logistics of matching up 70 different product pairs in this way would be a challenge. Plus if the store dropped the toaster shown on the jam label from its stock, the label would have to be redone.

The all-black idea won out. Originally, the designers envisioned that the graphics would be silk-screened onto black glass or tubes, but this proved to be cost prohibitive. The alternative, though, created what was an even more significant design statement: Graphics were printed onto plastic, which in turn was shrink wrapped onto all containers. The effect is complete uniformity in color and surface texture.

As of this writing, the new packaging has been out only a few months, but already it has been a smashing success: All holiday goods for the 2002-2003 season completely sold out.

A second set of trials was very different from the first. White or frosted containers would carry the product. A related product—actually, another Selfridges' offering—would be shown on the label. For instance, a refrigerator would be shown on a bottle of spring water. The client liked this approach, but it proved to be impractical: What if the store decided to drop that certain line of refrigerators? Visions of reprints followed by more reprints stopped this design.







A third approach could have used any color of container: It incorporated tags that carried images with themes related to the product. The spring water bottle would have a tag with a rubber duck printed on it, for example. The designers imagined that the containers used in this scheme would be attractive enough that consumers would want to keep them for reuse.


Black coats all packaging in the new line. Color as well as texture is similar across all SKUs. The type does change in color, but it is always positioned in the same place. There is no doubt that these products are from the same Selfridges family.

**Floris is the oldest perfumer in London.** Founded in 1730 by Juan Famenias Floris, it is now **being run by the eighth generation** of the Floris family from the fashionable address of

"To take a project with a fantastic name, which no one had really looked at graphically for 20-plus years, was a challenge," says Peter Windett, creative director for the entire Floris rebranding project, which included bags, men's products, home accessories, candles, and more. Trickett & Webb handled the redesign of the women's fragrances.

89 Jermyn Street, London, where it has sold fragrances since its founding. In fact, up until the 1960s, the company handcrafted and packaged all of its products in the basement of the elegantly appointed shop.

Among the company's more notable customers over the years have been Florence Nightingale, Mary Shelley, Beau Brummell, and even the fictional James Bond, who always wore Floris No. 89. Al Pacino's character in the movie, "The Scent of a Woman," said he could always "sight" a woman wearing a Floris fragrance.

All this heritage had served the company well until recently. The effects of the "Cool Britannia" movement had been hard on Floris. The brand was feeling stuffy and out-of-date, and its aging clientele base wasn't being topped off with new and younger customers.

Floris had other difficulties as well, reports Brian Webb of Trickett & Webb, London, the design firm who worked with Floris' creative director, Peter Windett, of Peter Windett Associates to ultimately give Floris an entirely new presence, mainly through its packaging.

"Their original packaging was as dreary as you could imagine," says Webb, "just a standard blue box stamped with their name. Each box had a gold fragrance label that was often stuck on inconsistently."


The original Floris packaging had a distinctively dated look and did not attract younger customers.

Floris wanted to increase its sales in Great Britain and the United States, but the big department stores either would not carry the product or they would not place the fragrances in the perfumery department. The packages' ho-hum appearance, combined with the brand's lack of apparent cache, was confining it to the toiletries department, a decided step down for a company whose home shop is outfitted with luxurious mahogany cabinets and shelving brought back from the Crystal Palace at the Hyde Park International Exhibition in 1851.

Heidi Lightfoot, director with Trickett & Webb, points out another serious problem with Floris' original packaging. "As the range of fragrances had expanded, it had become more and more difficult to tell what you were buying off of the shelf. You would come into the store and be faced with a huge bank of navy blue packs, each with only a tiny gold seal to differentiate it from the others. About the only thing you could tell from the box was whether it held a lotion or a fragrance," she explains.

The Trickett & Webb and Peter Windett Associates' designers were fortunate in their initial explorations for the client in that the original Floris shop has tucked behind it a museum of sorts, full of glass cabinets that contain samples of earlier versions of Floris packaging. The older labels were a great source of inspiration for the creative team.

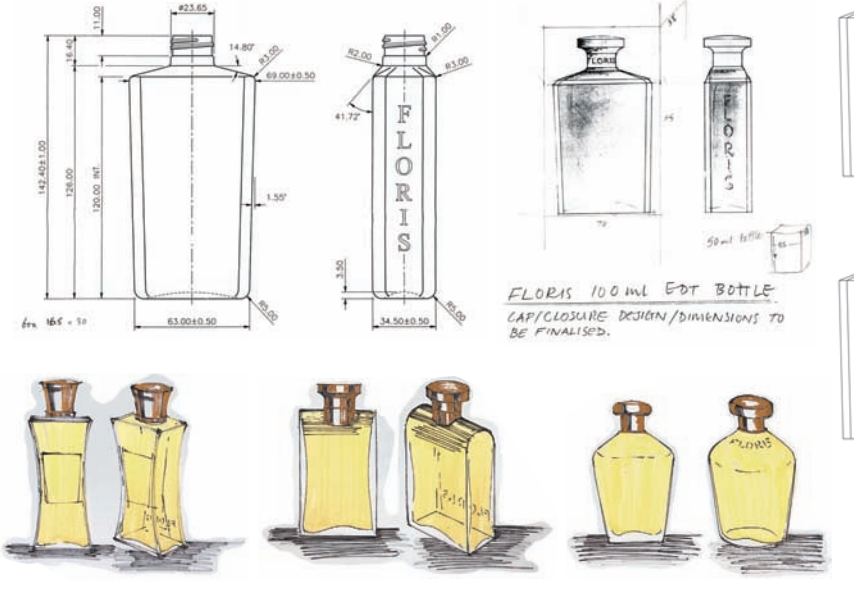

The Trickett & Webb design team discussed for a time maintaining some continuity with the client's original packaging, basically blue boxes with gold stickers. After experimenting with a number of constructions and shapes, the approach was abandoned.


In their new approach, the designers considered fragrances separately. For traditional scents, they looked at imagery from the 1920s and 1930s.


Peter Windett & Associates were developing a new logotype and new bottle shapes, which allowed the Trickett & Webb designers to settle on a box shape and size, as well as concentrate on graphics. The decision to use simple graphics was the next step.


Stephanotis is a traditional fragrance, but it is also closely associated with weddings and young love. So its design was something of a crossover creature, based on the product's original design but with a decidedly modern appeal.


Several sheets similar to this one were produced by the Trickett & Webb team to not only finalize images, color, and typography but also compare one label to the others. All labels had to look independent, but still work together as a unit. Each fragrance has about a dozen product variants, so achieving the right mix was a bit of a challenge.




Bottle production studies produced by Peter Windett & Associates.


The finished set of package designs works well together as a unit, even though some are traditional and others are contemporary, appealing to customers young and old.

"Some of the fragrances, such as rose and rose geranium, have been around for many years and have gone through many evolutions. We could look back at all of their old labels," Lightfoot recalls.

This archive became especially useful for the designers as they considered the personality of each fragrance. (Ultimately, Trickett & Webb created packaging for 10 fragrances and more than 100 products.) Some fragrances, like rose, were very traditional. Some scents were brand-new, created expressly to appeal to a younger audience. Each of these categories could be further subdivided into daytime or evening products.

The design team toyed briefly with the idea of sticking with the navy-and-gold color scheme and changing the product box's shape and construction. But the old colors were somber and masculine: The client wanted to bring back a sense of femininity, so pastels and other design cues were explored.

With the traditional scents in the line, the designers could hark back to older labels for visual cues. For one fragrance, they had metal type set to inspire an Edwardian feel. For others, they looked for archived images or borders to suggest tradition and, in part, keep existing and loyal customers comfortable with the products.

For the newer scents, abstracted art or photography could be used, and the type treatment for the scent's name could be decidedly more contemporary. Some fragrances, like lavender, are particularly traditional scents, but Floris wanted to give lavender a more contemporary feel for modern customers. So it is a mix of old and new elements.

The color treatment for all products was made decidedly more modern, so that it would be more eye-catching in the department-store setting.

To tie modern and traditional together, the designers created a simple layout scheme. At the top front of each pack is the Floris name. At the bottom is the product variety name—eau de toilette, bath oil, and so on. But at each box's visual center is a different sticker-like element. Another connecting element: Each daytime scent box has a white border, whereas each nighttime scent box has a rich gold border.

"While we were working on the individual labels, we kept looking at the range as a whole. We needed a range of shapes [at the center of the boxes] to keep it interesting, but we still had to have balance among all of the packages," Lightfoot says. "It turned into a real melting pot of photography, illustration, type, takes from old artwork, and retouching."

The final suite of designs hangs together well as a block of products, much better for the retail environment found in large department stores today where "villages" of product lines are grouped tightly together on the shelves.

The original Floris bottles were square; the new molded bottles were designed with a wide front face to give greater shelf presence for pack graphics.

The end result is that sales and outlets for the products have increased enormously, reports Webb. "Saks, Nieman Marcus, Harrods, and other high-end stores, as well as specialty chemists are picking up the products for their perfume sections," he says.

Peter Windett says that the redirection of sales efforts has been a huge boon to the brand, which had been sold in less-than-high-end stores in the United States: Distribution to these destinations was closed down immediately.

The redesign grabbed the attention of the right people. "Floris got the product range and distribution corrected at the same time," Windett says.

**Design Edge** is an Austin (Texas)-based product development company that **normally does plenty of high-tech design** for clients such as Dell, Compaq, and 3M. But with **Wetnoz,** a project **released in late 2002,** the company's designers had a chance to **get in touch with their more animal instincts.**

The packaging for Wetnoz, a high-end line of products for pets, protects the stainless steel and rubber offerings, while communicating their design and uniqueness. Repeated color, pattern, and photos are hallmarks of the package design.

The owners of Design Edge, Mark Kimbrough and Pearce Jones, got an itch to do a self-initiated special project. A quick look around their homes and local stores revealed that there was a distinct lack of well-designed products for pets available. With people spending more and more time at home, as well as more and more money on their faithful companions—almost treating them like children, in some cases—it seemed to be an idea with enormous potential.

"A pet has its own toys, bed, and dishes. People want more interesting products in their homes today, even for their animals," explains Design Edge designer Lauren Sanders. She and her teammates went on to create a new brand—Wetnoz (pronounced "wet nose")—which was launched with a line of wonderfully sculptural pet dishes, as well as brand packaging that is one of a kind for the product category.

Wetnoz is "dedicated to producing innovative pet products with soul," according to its mission statement. Its pet bowls come in two varieties: plastic for the economy line, and stainless steel and rubber for the premium line. From a practical standpoint, the latter product would require some protection from scratching in the retail setting. From an aesthetic standpoint, because the other products on the shelves would have no packaging or unsophisticated graphics, the design team knew that their product would immediately feel special. They wanted to give the products a gift-like feel and special appeal to the upscale buyer.

The designers' goal for this project was to look at how the consumer experiences packaging. What does a customer see from the time of entering the store, be it a tier-one PetSmart retail outlet or a high-end specialty shop, to the time when he or she picks up a box, to the time when the box is taken home and opened? The experience had to be a consistent and unique one if the brand was to grow.

The WetNoz logo is decidedly unique: One company founder applied ink to his own dog's nose and applied a print of the nose to a piece of paper.