Grafika

a b c d e f g h i
j k l m n o p q
r s t u v w x y z

Grafika: A Little History

If you've just purchased Grafika, or are just thinking about it – *Thank You!* This brochure will try to explain a little about the background of this font—how it came about, as well as provide you with a complete character set.

To all outward appearances Grafika looks like a 1920s – 1930s era revival font. However appearances can be deceptive: Grafika is a completely new font design. Ironically though, this font _was_ designed many years ago. It began its genesis when I, as a young designer, received a call to work on a feature film. That phonecall came from Ismail Merchant and James Ivory, the reknowned team who have given us such films as "A Room With a View", "Howard's End" and "Remains of the Day". The assignment was to create a title treatment, silent film style title cards, plus opening and end credits for their upcoming film "Savages".
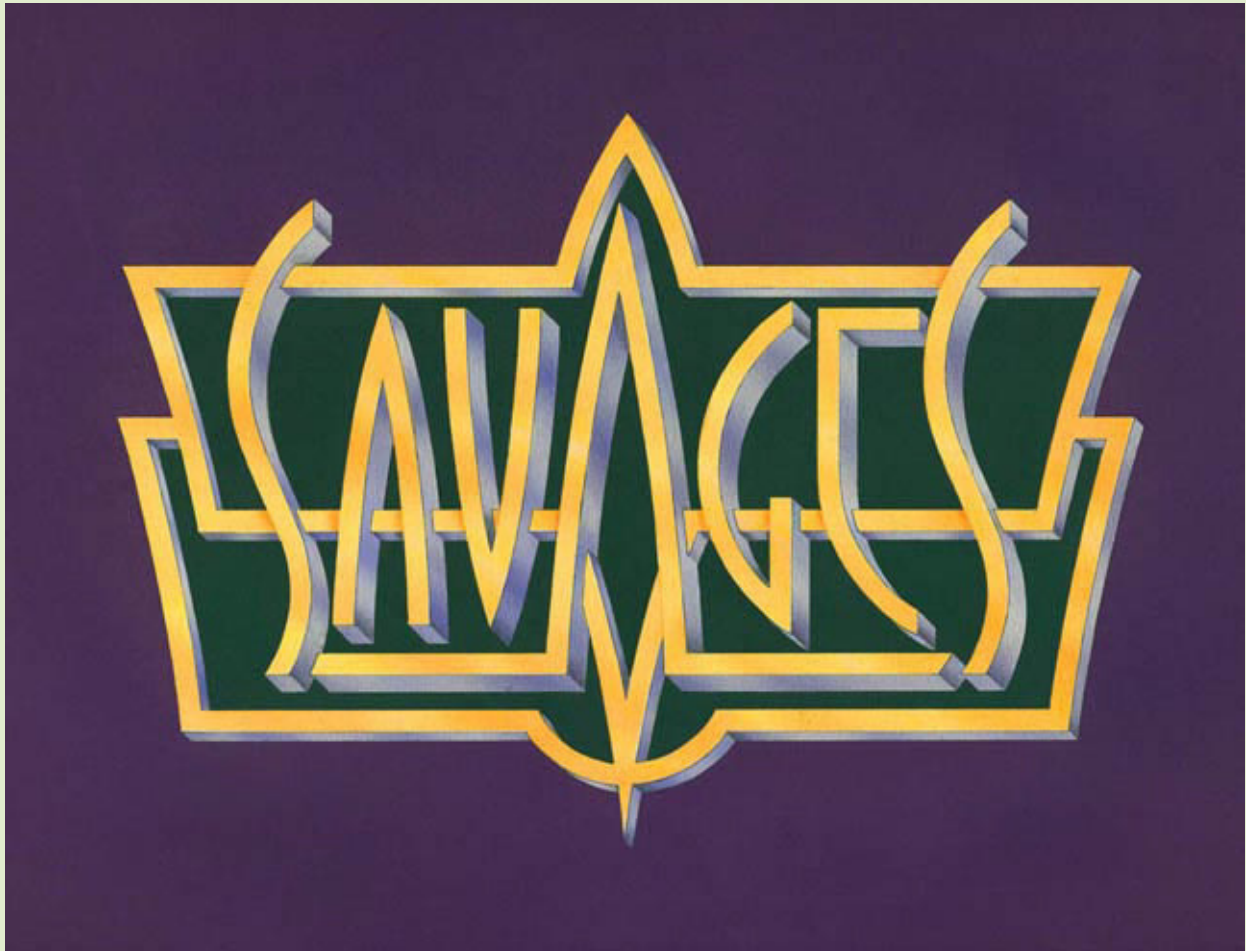
The action takes place in an abandoned mansion in what seems to be the Jazz Age. The title treatment (above) that I created to reflect that sensibility was so well received that it was decided that we would emulate its elegant, elongated look in all the typographic elements of the film. To do that I needed to create what would be my first complete font design.

So taking my design cues from the logo I had created, I put pencil to paper and came up with a very basic character set which, basic as it was, still included characters that wouldn't be needed in the film. I inked it on vellum (which was as hi-tech as it got at that time), and then had it photographed and positioned on a roll of Typositor film. Here's a shot of that art:

And here's a couple of images of how the font was used in the opening and ending credits:

Over the years I had forgotten about this font design. My career became totally about assignment work. I hadn't gone back to designing fonts until recently when I started doing it again under my foundry name Alphabet Soup. Recently I unearthed a poster for Savages which contained all the credits set in that nameless font I had designed for the film. Looking at it again after all these years I realized that for a young designer this hadn't been bad! So I decided to revisit it, and add it to my collection at Alphabet Soup.

The typositor film was long gone, and all that I had left was my original inking (previous page). Modern digital fonts now typically contain far more characters than the measly few I had originally done for this design. So working over my orignal inking, I painstakingly redrew the glyphs faithfully—adding many more that hadn't been part of it. These included many alternates, foreign accented characters, math and monetary symbols, ligatures, punctuation, etc., expanding the original design from 90 glyphs to over 250.

I also needed to make a very important decision. Looking at it with my current sensibility I realized that if I were designing this font now I would probably do it differently. So the question became do I bring in my current sensibility, or do I leave it alone, faithfully re-creating it as it was? I decided for the latter, treating it as if it was an old classic font that just needed a little updating. I did have to fight the urge to change certain things, but in the end pretty much left most things as I had originally intended.

There are certain facets of Grafika I'd like to make you aware of. First of all it is a display font, and should not be used for setting small text sizes. Secondly, it was not originally designed to be set in all caps. The uppercase letters all fall below the baseline. This was to achieve a certain look when set with lowercase letters. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't set in all caps—merely that you should be aware of that baseline anomaly, and that some all caps combinations might look better than others. If setting in all caps please be aware that there is alternate punctuation that should be used:

¿Quando?   Regular punctuation with standard U&LC

¿QUANDO?   Alternate punctuation when using all caps

This alternate punctuation includes the excamation marks, period, comma, colon and semi-colon. I threw in several alternate letters as well to help satisfy my urge to make changes.

It occurred to me after the fact that my first digital font Orion has a lot in common with Grafika. In fact I now like to think of Orion as Grafika's younger (or is it older?) sister. Consider the similarities in weight, geometry, sensibility, and its below the baseline caps:

Typography Brings Alphabetic Change to Modernistic Typographical

The Complete Grafika Character Set

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Extreme Deco...

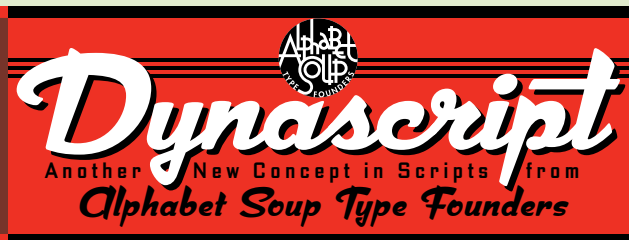**Grafika**

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