

# How to set a text-only logotype

Key is to work with the  
natural pattern of your  
letters. Here's how.

*Continued* ►

**Nagano**  
Urban  
Grill

# How to set a text-only logotype

Key is to work with the natural pattern of your letters. Here's how.



Welcome to Nagano Urban Grill, a popular midtown hang-out. Our project is

to design its logotype. A logo is a company's signature; it's a distinctive way of writing its name. Some logos include graphics, but most do not. A good logo is bold, clear and attractive, and it conveys an appropriate sense of the company. These qualities can be difficult to combine in one word. The place to start on a text-only logo is with the natural pattern of its letters. It goes like this:



**Every word has a natural pattern.** Before setting type, take a visual inventory. Even handwritten (left), we can see a descending **g** loop and repeating **a**'s, which form a trio of roundish shapes more or less in the middle. Nagano starts with an angle (**N**) and ends with a circle (**o**), both of which have open ends that lead the eye outward. It has six letters. Visually, Nagano is an average word. It's easy to say (NOG-uh-no), and it has strong Japanese associations. These qualities will form the foundation of our designs.



## A logotype starts with the alphabet

Letters have distinct shapes. *Get familiar with these shapes.* Each has its own kind of expressiveness. The shapes will also determine what you can do with your design.

**Circles** are soft, serene, enclosing

a c e o

**Circles** with straights or hoops (the g)

b d g p q

**Hoops** are lively, playful

h m n u

**Straights**

i l t

**Curls** and half-circles

f j r s

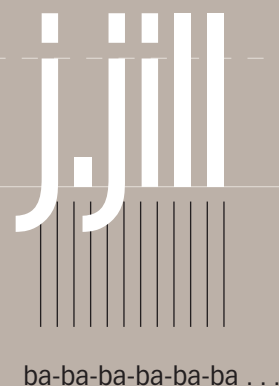
**Angles** are unstable, edgy, restless

k v w x y z

Typeface **Avant Garde** (shown here), which consists mainly of simple straights and circles, is especially good at revealing letter shapes. Shown are the main groups; different fonts will have small variations.

**For example . . .**

The name *j.jill* consists solely of straight letters that do not convey softness like round letters do. Conversely, round *pod* is not naturally sharp and edgy.



A word's pattern can be expressed rhythmically. Rhythm is an unseen factor that affects how we perceive a word.

## Find your pattern

Start by setting your name in uppercase and lowercase, and notice the pattern that forms, even if it's subtle. Pay special attention to repetitive lines and shapes.

### Uppercase

NAGANO

Two angled

One round

Two angled

One round

### Lowercase

nagano

All round

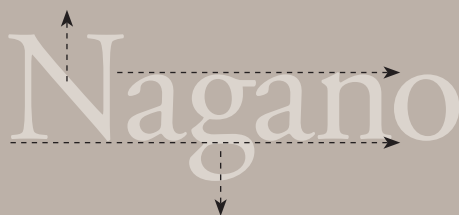
Nagano in uppercase **Futura Book** (above) has two groups of mirrored angles (NA-AN) alternating with two round letters, a rhythmic but subtle pattern. Lowercase **Avant Garde** (right) forms a line of all-round letters, a strong and interesting pattern.

## Pattern breakers

Your name in some typefaces will not form a pattern.



**Letters that look alike** in Avant Garde look different in Adobe Garamond (above), and the pattern disappears. The **g** that before was a circle is now a snaking, twisting line. As a rule, the more detailed the typeface—details include serifs, terminals, filets, varying stroke widths and so on—the less visible the pattern will be.



**Shape** Related to pattern is *shape*, which refers to the overall form of the word.



**Texture** Patterns are big. When repetitive elements are small (common in detailed typefaces like Adobe Garamond), they make *texture*. Above, you can see four circular counters and other repetitive shapes in the middle of the word.

## Pattern makers

Your name can be given a pattern by the typeface. Pattern-making is the main function of most decorative type.



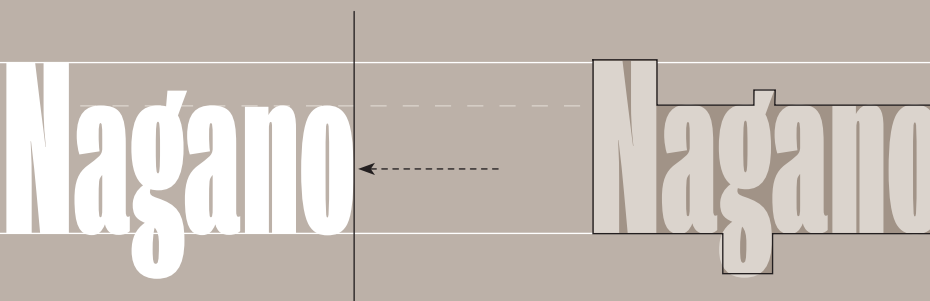
Calligraphic **Sloop** has a strong, graceful pattern—its letters arc and flow smoothly from thick to thin and have common angles and loops. Extra swashes—notice the **N**—create similarity with other letters where none exists naturally. Any word set in Sloop will automatically have a pattern and will always be beautiful.

## Shape makers

Similarly, your name can be forced to take shape. The two easiest techniques are *expansion*—spread your name out—and *compression*—squeeze it together.



**Expansion** (Above) Spreading your name way out disconnects its letters from each other. This breaks whatever pattern may be present and creates a new one—a neat row of dots. The panoramic result conveys a sense of grandeur both understated and elegant. Very popular in movie titles. The technique works with almost any typeface; set all caps for the cleanest line.



**Compression** (Above) Conversely, setting your name in a highly condensed typeface, then packing it tightly together, yields a dense, powerful block. This technique is also popular in the movies, because it can convey a massive, overwhelming presence, especially in all caps. At small sizes its dense shape carves a distinctive silhouette that's easy to work with.



### Next, design a card

So far, we've seen that the letters in a name can form a pattern. The typeface can make or break the pattern. The typeface can impose a pattern of its own. In every case, the typeface also *adds meaning*. The key to a great logotype is to find a typeface that makes the name look good *and* conveys the appropriate meaning.

To see this at work, we'll next set the name on a business card in nine different typefaces. The card will give us the added tools of color and layout. We will use only type, with no graphics of any kind. Pay special attention to this, and you'll see how clearly—and beautifully—type alone can communicate.

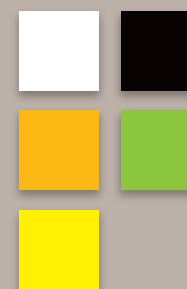
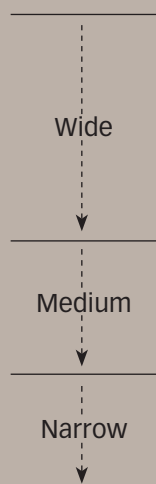


**Standard U.S. business card** is 3½" x 2".

For this demonstration we'll put the name on the front and ignore the contact info, which in real life would be put on the back.

## Avant Garde

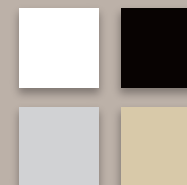
brings out Nagano's natural pattern. Simple shapes are bold and youthful, especially in lowercase. Colors are interchangeable. This would be a fun, trendy place.



Bright chain of hoops and circles runs edge to edge and can be seen from across the room! Urban grill subtitle is also in Avant Garde. Green and yellow are fresh, *secondary* colors that can easily be swapped (right) with equally bold results. Single-line design conveys restraint, a counterpoint to the exuberant circles. Note the letters are very close but not touching. Asymmetrical divisions of space—wide, medium, narrow (above)—keep the design active.

## Sloop

has airy, sweeping lines that convey grace, elegance and taste appropriate for a visit from the Queen (really). Centered layout and light, metallic colors add formality.

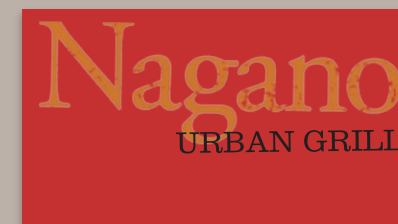
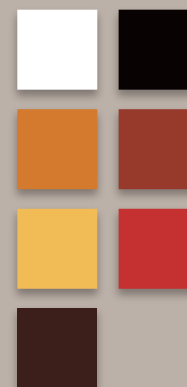
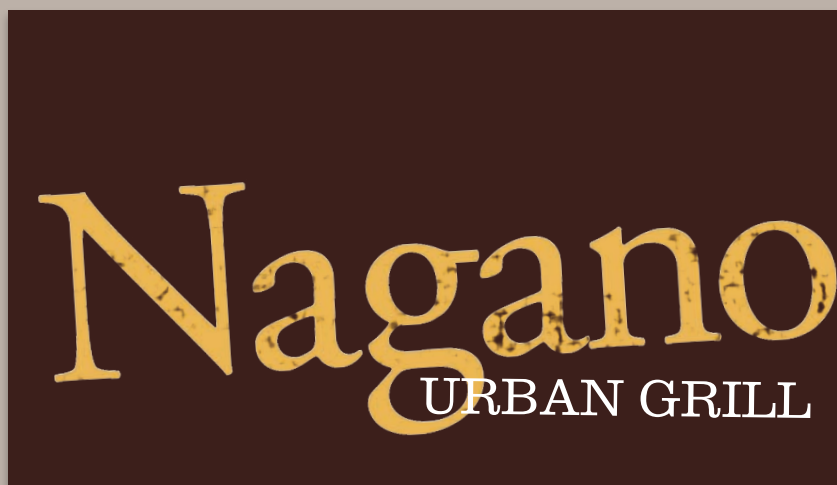


Center the layout in both directions.

Real power always appears natural and unforced, as if it simply required no effort. (If it looks like you're trying, it doesn't work!) To project this, you want a centered layout, which has no motion; it is calm and at rest. Silver and gold colors suggest wealth, but here they're light, quiet, discreet. Superlight subtitle (Helvetica Neue Ultra Light) is *barely there*; its tiny size and contrasting Roman style supports without competing. What's interesting is that for all this formality, Nagano is a boisterous midtown GRILL, a juxtaposition of name and image that would probably work just fine.

## Adobe Garamond

is a text face in which Nagano has no pattern but a small amount of texture. Go with what it has, and add more texture! Cockeyed setting is correspondingly *rough*.



Distressed serif typeface looks rough, weathered and crate-stamped, opposite the hard-edged minimalism of its urban environment. Earthy colors add warmth. The words can be put just about anywhere except straight and aligned; you want it to look a little thrown together. This technique looks espe-

**NAGANO**

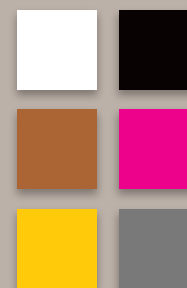
cially authentic in a stenciled typeface (inset), which hints of cargo, military, nautical, safari and so on.

## Copperplate Gothic 32BC

has tiny, straight serifs that give it old, industrial-era overtones suitable for an urban environment. Its clear, wide body makes it good choice for panorama.



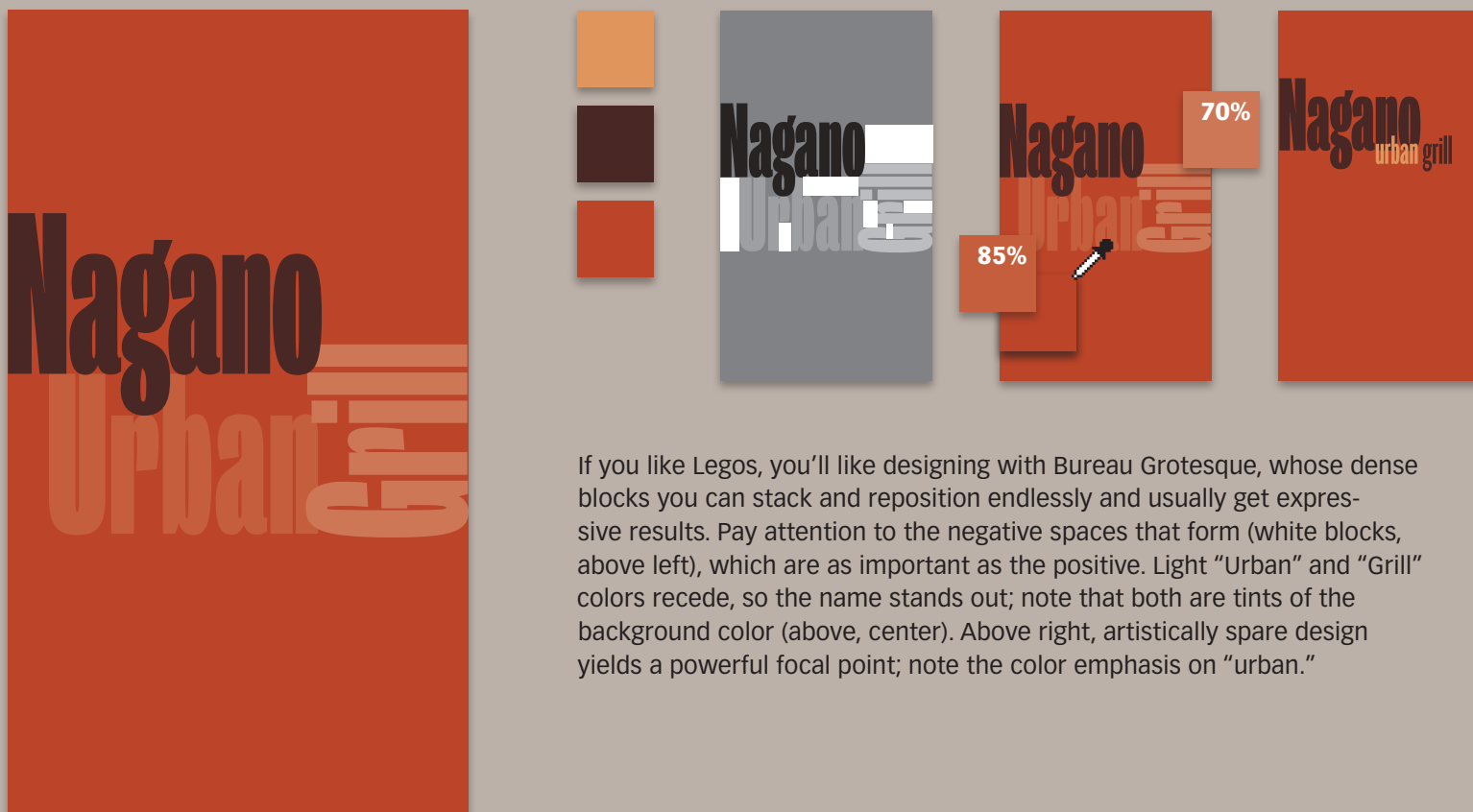
Even in very small sizes, a panoramic setting projects a wide-screen image and conveys feelings associated with spaciousness and grandeur. It's quiet, too; the centered setting is motionless and stately. Below, Copperplate's tiny serifs help the eye span the gaps between the widely spaced letters.



Any color—like hot magenta!—works in panorama because there's so little of it. Dark background adds class; for a party look, make it bright.

## Bureau Grotesque Extra Compressed Black

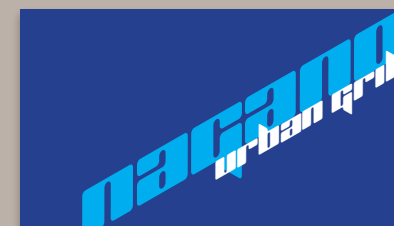
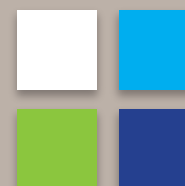
forces words into blocks that can be fit together like masonry. Brick-wall colors and artistic composition are right for an artsy, jazzy, bluesy, midtown hangout.



If you like Legos, you'll like designing with Bureau Grotesque, whose dense blocks you can stack and reposition endlessly and usually get expressive results. Pay attention to the negative spaces that form (white blocks, above left), which are as important as the positive. Light "Urban" and "Grill" colors recede, so the name stands out; note that both are tints of the background color (above, center). Above right, artistically spare design yields a powerful focal point; note the color emphasis on "urban."

## Planet Kosmos

is an alphabet of nearly identical characters that hints of Japanese animation. It looks fast (the italics), edgy (its angles), youthful (cartoons) and clean (simple lines).



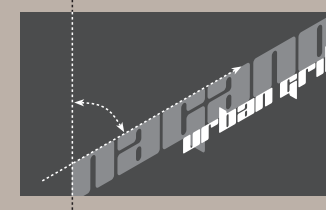
**Rad** Angled setting is edgy, vibrant; it says the restaurant is full of young energy but is probably not a place you'd go to relax. Use the angle of the italics (below) rather than a random angle.



**Faster** For maximum speed the name touches both ends; the eye moves straight along the name and off the page.

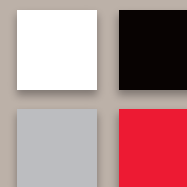


**Slower** Smaller name creates an enclosing frame that the eye unconsciously traces, which slows it slightly.



**HTF Didot**

is the look of New York city—all *glamour*, a beautiful choice for a chic, cosmopolitan restaurant. With its fashion-model overtones, this would be a place to *be seen*.



HTF Didot in lipstick red on white will stop traffic, and in this case, because of the name, it also has Japanese overtones. Didot's superfine lines make the presentation unusually striking. An ideal complement is Helvetica Ultra Light, whose line weight matches Didot's serifs (inset). Red, gray, black and white are always powerful together.

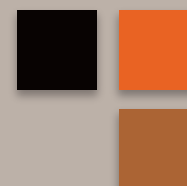


Didot's pattern is seen in its repetitive vertical strokes—they're not even slightly slanted, a trait shared by other typefaces but not often so obviously. Curvy **a**'s and **g**—note the beautifully undulating thicks and thins—sweeten the middle of the name.



## Lettrés Eclatées

is a mangy but oddly cheerful typeface full of repetitive elements that have both pattern and texture. The two-color setting adds class. Sublimely funky.



The scraggly typeface has the street look you want, but how do you keep it from making a scraggly card? By centering it in a single line on rich black. The result is artistic and textured, framed like art in a gallery; slight color difference is just enough to set Nagano apart yet keep the line intact.



Not a straight line anywhere, angles and ovals give Lettres Eclatees its texture and our name something of a pattern, which may be easier to see if it's reversed:

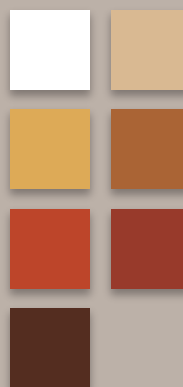


## Helvetica Neue

imparts a look of Swiss minimalism wherever it appears. Graceful, geometric and ice cold, it is one of the world's most famous typefaces. Expect stainless steel and glass.

Note tight letterspacing,  
line spacing and  
upper-left alignment.

Nagano  
Urban  
Grill



Nagano  
Urban  
Grill

Nagano  
Urban  
Grill



Helvetica is the look of the modern, mechanized world—beautiful, controlled and *aloof*. You can use it for anything, as long as it's tightly aligned, usually to the top and left. Helvetica looks best tightly set and in a single size; differentiate words only with weight and color. It's a cold typeface; you'll need fire-on-the-grill colors to warm it up.

Nagano Urban Grill

## Article resources



1a

1b



4

5

6

7



2

3



4

8

9

### Typefaces

#### 1 (a–b) [ITC Avant Garde Gothic Book](#)

a) 73 pt, –80 letterspacing

b) 17.5 pt, –10 letterspacing

#### 2 [Sloop Script One](#) | 80 pt

#### 3 [Helvetica Neue Ultra Std Light](#) | 8 pt

### Colors

4 C30 M30 Y30 K100

5 C0 M30 Y100 K0

6 C50 M0 Y100 K0

7 C0 M0 Y100 K0

8 C0 M0 Y0 K20

9 C15 M17 Y35 K0

## Article resources



### Typefaces

- 1 [Adobe Garamond Regular](#) | a) 84 pt, –30 letterspacing (Distressed in Photoshop using the Eraser tool)
- 2 (a–b) [Clarendon Light](#) | a) 16 pt, –10 letterspacing; b) 20.5 pt, –15 letterspacing
- 3 City Stencil D Medium (Distressed in Photoshop using the Eraser tool)
- 4 [Lettrés Eclatées](#) | 34 pt

### Logo

- 5 [Jjill.com](http://Jjill.com)

### Colors

- |           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| <b>6</b>  | C0 M0 Y0 K100    |
| <b>7</b>  | C14 M62 Y96 K2   |
| <b>8</b>  | C40 M90 Y100 K10 |
| <b>9</b>  | C0 M25 Y75 K5    |
| <b>10</b> | C0 M90 Y80 K20   |
| <b>11</b> | C51 M73 Y71 K69  |
| <b>12</b> | C30 M30 Y30 K100 |
| <b>13</b> | C4 M75 Y100 K0   |
| <b>14</b> | C23 M64 Y87 K16  |

## Article resources



### Typefaces

**1 (a–b)** [Copperplate Gothic 32BC](#)

a) 18.5 pt, b) 8.5 pt

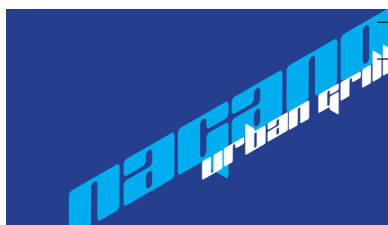
**2** [Bureau Grottesque Extra](#)  
[Compressed Black](#) | 64 pt

**3** [OL Franklin Triple Condensed](#)  
25 pt, +10 letterspacing

### Colors

<b>4</b>	C0 M0 Y0 K30
<b>5</b>	C23 M64 Y87 K16
<b>6</b>	C0 M100 Y0 K0
<b>7</b>	C0 M20 Y100 K0
<b>8</b>	C5 M5 Y5 K60
<b>9</b>	C9 M46 Y69 K2
<b>10</b>	C40 M68 Y62 K67
<b>11</b>	C19 M86 Y97 K8

## Article resources



1a

1b

5

6

7



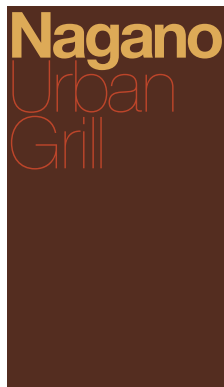
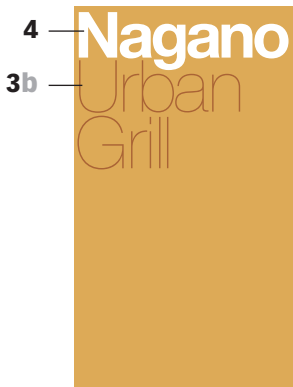
8

9

10

3a

2



11

12

13

14

15

16

### Typefaces

1 (a–b) [Planet Kosmos](#) | a) 50 pt, b) 20 pt

2 [HTF Didot](#) | 80 pt

3 (a–b) [Helvetica Neue Std Ultra Light](#)

a) 24 pt, –30 letterspacing;

b) 47 pt, –30 letterspacing

4 [Helvetica Neue Std Bold](#) | 47 pt

–60 letterspacing

### Colors

5 C100 M0 Y0 K0

6 C50 M0 Y100 K0

7 C100 M90 Y10 K10

8 C0 M0 Y0 K100

9 C0 M100 Y85 K0

10 C0 M0 Y0 K30

11 C13 M25 Y44 K2

12 C13 M34 Y76 K0

13 C23 M64 Y87 K16

14 C19 M86 Y87 K8

15 C40 M90 Y100 K10

16 C36 M70 Y73 K61

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**Telephone** 916-784-3880

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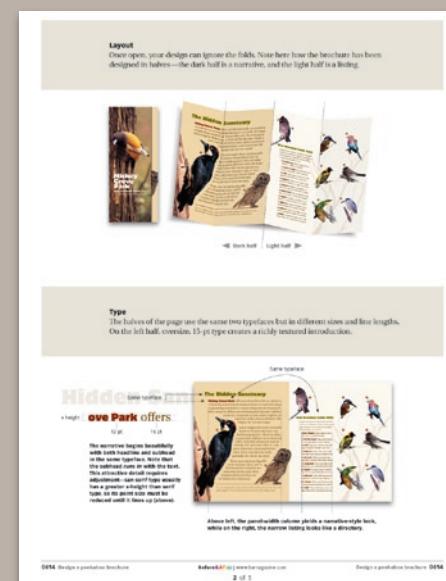


### Save

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Paper-saver format

### For paper-saver format

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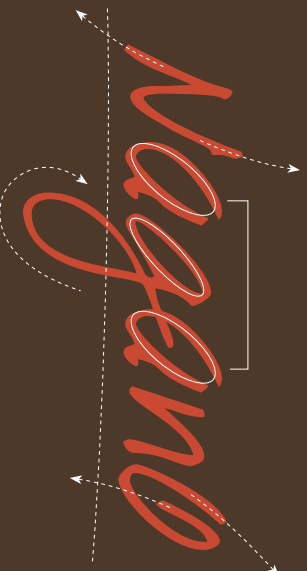
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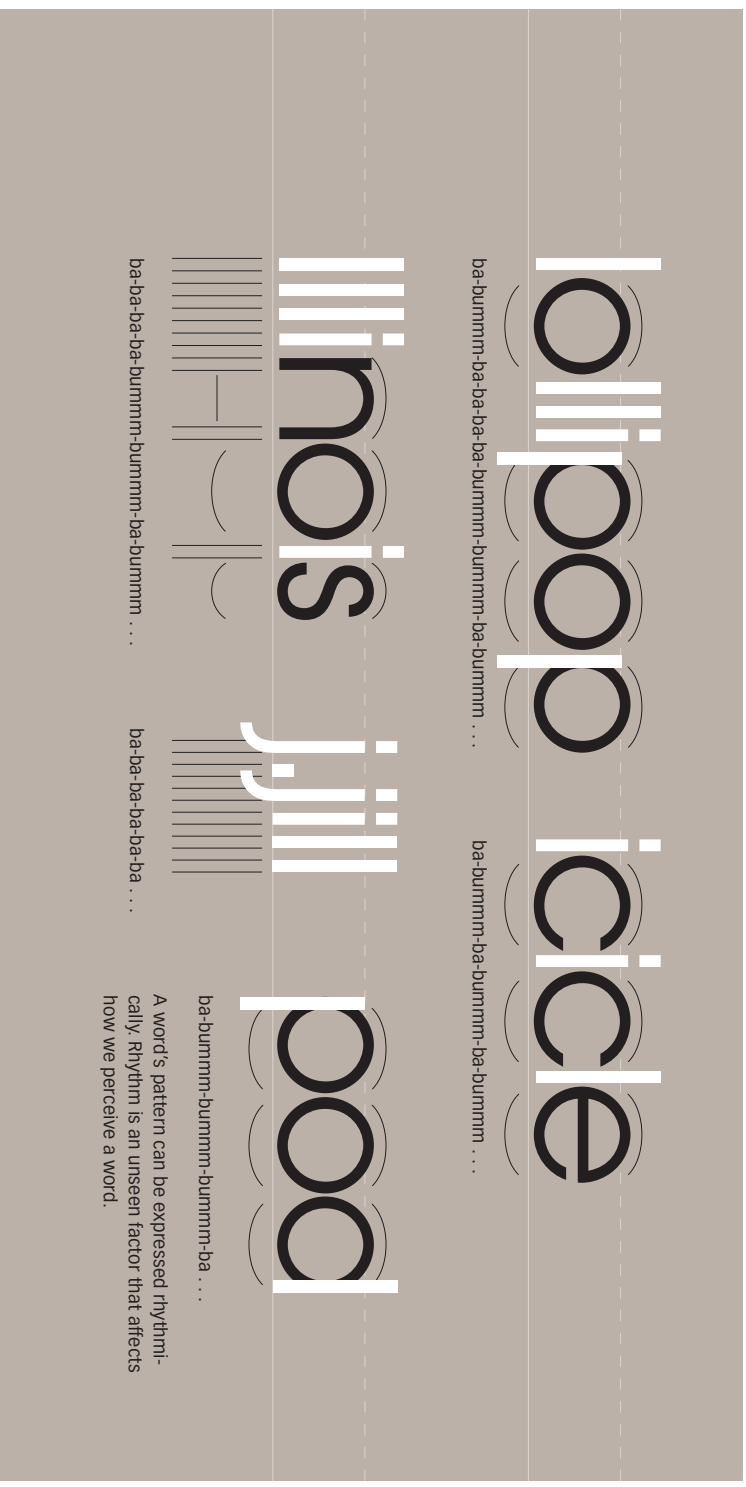
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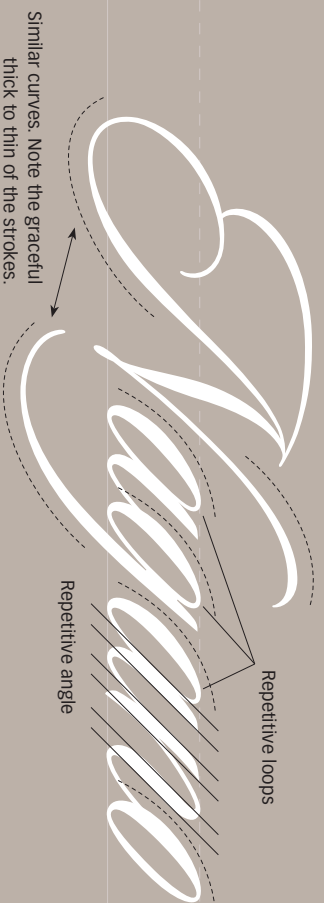
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N A G A N O

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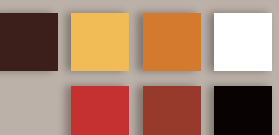


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## Adobe Garamond

is a text face in which Nagano has no pattern but a small amount of texture. Go with what it has, and add more texture! Cockeyed setting is correspondingly *rough*.



Distressed serif typeface looks rough, weathered and crate-stamped, opposite the hard-edged minimalism of its urban environment. Earthy colors add warmth. The words can be put just about anywhere except straight and aligned; you want it to look a little thrown together. This technique looks especially authentic in a stenciled typeface (inset), which hints of cargo, military, nautical, safari and so on.

**NAGANO**

## Copperplate Gothic 32BC

has tiny, straight serifs that give it old, industrial-era overtones suitable for an urban environment. Its clear, wide body makes it good choice for panorama.



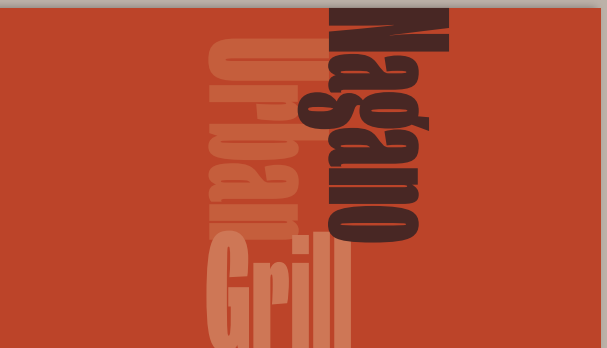
Even in very small sizes, a panoramic setting projects a wide-screen image and conveys feelings associated with spaciousness and grandeur. It's quiet, too; the centered setting is motionless and stately. Below, Copperplate's tiny serifs help the eye span the gaps between the widely spaced letters.



Any color—like hot magenta!—works in panorama because there's so little of it. Dark background adds class, for a party look, make it bright.

## Bureau Grotesque Extra Compressed Black

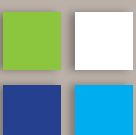
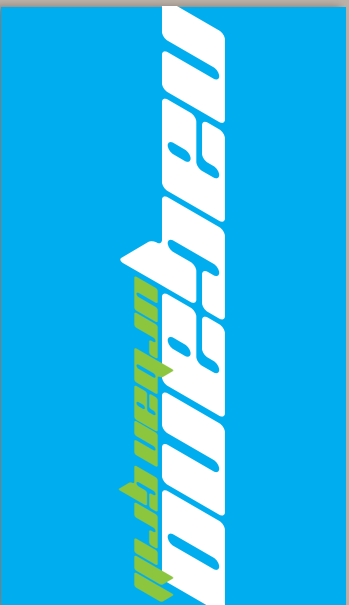
forces words into blocks that can be fit together like masonry. Brick-wall colors and artistic composition are right for an artsy, jazzy, bluesy, midtown hangout.



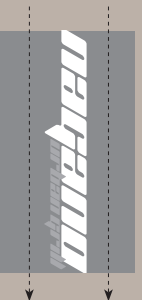
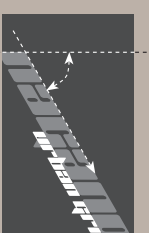
If you like Legos, you'll like designing with Bureau Grotesque, whose dense blocks you can stack and reposition endlessly and usually get expressive results. Pay attention to the negative spaces that form (white blocks, above left), which are as important as the positive. Light "Urban" and "Grill" colors recede, so the name stands out; note that both are tints of the background color (above, center). Above right, artistically spare design yields a powerful focal point; note the color emphasis on "Urban."

## Planet Kosmos

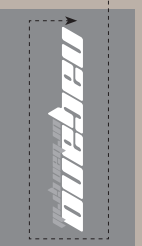
is an alphabet of nearly identical characters that hints of Japanese animation. It looks fast (the italics), edgy (its angles), youthful (cartoons) and clean (simple lines).



**Rad** Angled setting is edgy, vibrant; it says the restaurant is full of young energy but is probably not a place you'd go to relax. Use the angle of the italics (below) rather than a random angle.



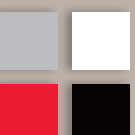
**Faster** For maximum speed the name touches both ends, the eye moves straight along the name and off the page.



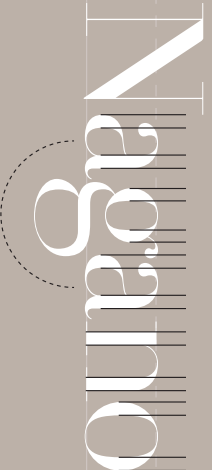
**Slower** Smaller name creates an enclosing frame that the eye unconsciously traces, which slows it slightly.

## HTF Didot

is the look of New York city—all *glamour*, a beautiful choice for a chic, cosmopolitan restaurant. With its fashion-model overtones, this would be a place to *be seen*.



HTF Didot in lipstick red on white will stop traffic, and in this case, because of the name, it also has Japanese overtones. Didot's superline lines make the presentation unusually striking. An ideal complement is Helvetica Ultra Light, whose line weight matches Didot's serifs (inset). Red, gray, black and white are always powerful together.

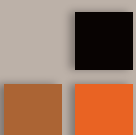


Didot's pattern is seen in its repetitive vertical strokes—they're not even slightly slanted, a trait shared by other typefaces but not often so obviously. Curvy **a**'s and **g**—note the beautifully undulating thicks and thins—sweeten the middle of the name.



## Lettrés Eclatées

is a mangy but oddly cheerful typeface full of repetitive elements that have both pattern and texture. The two-color setting adds class. Sublimely funky.



The scraggly typeface has the street look you want, but how do you keep it from making a scraggly card? By centering it in a single line on rich black. The result is artistic and textured, framed like art in a gallery; slight color difference is just enough to set Nagano apart yet keep the line intact.

Nagano

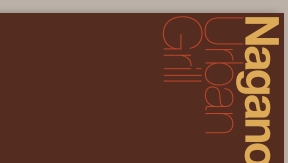
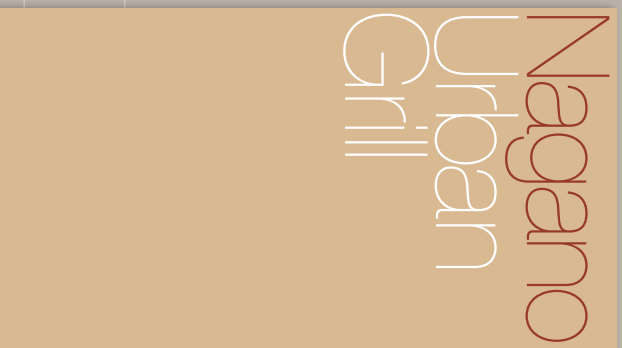
Not a straight line anywhere, angles and ovals give Lettres Eclatees its texture and our name something of a pattern, which may be easier to see if it's reversed:

oXpooX

## Helvetica Neue

imparts a look of Swiss minimalism wherever it appears. Graceful, geometric and ice cold, it is one of the world's most famous typefaces. Expect stainless steel and glass.



















Note tight letterspacing,  
line spacing and  
upper-left alignment.
















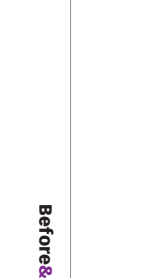


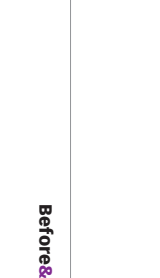


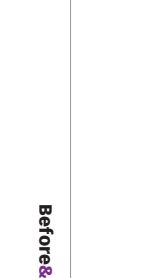


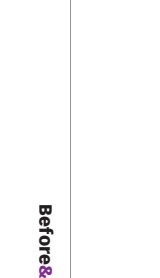


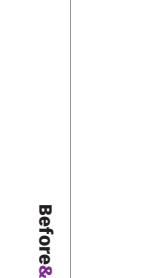

Helvetica is the look of the modern, mechanized world—beautiful, controlled and aloof. You can use it for anything, as long as it's tightly aligned, usually to the top and left. Helvetica looks best tightly set and in a single size; differentiate words only with weight and color. It's a cold typeface; you'll need fire-on-the-grill colors to warm it up.

Nagano Urban Grill

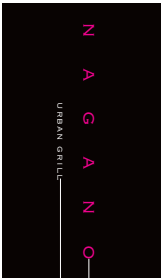
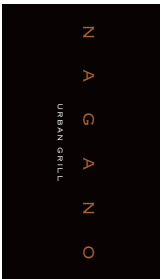
Article resources

		<b>1 (a-b) ITC Avant Garde Gothic Book</b> a) 73 pt, –80 letterspacing b) 17.5 pt, –10 letterspacing		<b>C30 M30 Y30 K100</b>
		<b>2 Sloop Script One</b>   80 pt		<b>C0 M30 Y100 K0</b>
		<b>3 Helvetica Neue Ultra Std Light</b>   8 pt		<b>C50 M0 Y100 K0</b>
				<b>C0 M0 Y100 K0</b>
				<b>C0 M0 Y0 K20</b>
				<b>C15 M17 Y35 K0</b>

Article resources

		<b>1 Adobe Garamond Regular</b>   a) 84 pt, –30 letterspacing (Distressed in Photoshop using the Eraser tool)		<b>C0 M0 Y0 K100</b>
		<b>2 (a-b) Clarendon Light</b>   a) 16 pt, –10 letterspacing; b) 20.5 pt, –15 letterspacing		<b>C14 M62 Y96 K2</b>
		<b>3 City Stencil D Medium</b> (Distressed in Photoshop using the Eraser tool)		<b>C40 M90 Y100 K10</b>
		<b>4 Lettrés Éclatées</b>   34 pt		<b>C0 M25 Y75 K5</b>
		<b>Logo</b> <a href="http://Jill.com">Jill.com</a>		<b>C0 M90 Y80 K20</b>
				<b>C51 M73 Y71 K69</b>
				<b>C30 M30 Y30 K100</b>
				<b>C4 M75 Y100 K0</b>
				<b>C23 M64 Y87 K16</b>

Article resources

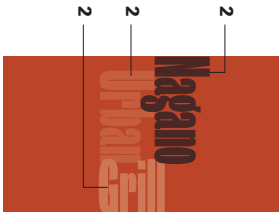


Typefaces

- 1 (a–b)** [Copperplate Gothic 32BC](#)  
a) 18.5 pt, b) 8.5 pt
- 2** [Bureau Grottesque Extra Compressed Black](#) | 64 pt
- 3** [OL Franklin Triple Condensed](#)  
25 pt, +10 letterspacing

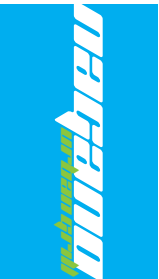
Colors

- 4** C0 M0 Y0 K30
- 5** C23 M64 Y87 K16
- 6** C0 M100 Y0 K0
- 7** C0 M20 Y100 K0
- 8** C5 M5 Y5 K60
- 9** C9 M46 Y69 K2
- 10** C40 M68 Y62 K67
- 11** C19 M86 Y97 K8



- 2
- 2
- 3
- 9
- 10
- 11

Article resources



- 1a
- 1b
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 3a
- 2
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16

Typefaces

- 1 (a–b)** [Planet Kosmos](#) | a) 50 pt, b) 20 pt
- 2** [HTE Didot](#) | 80 pt
- 3 (a–b)** [Helvetica Neue Std Ultra Light](#)  
a) 24 pt, –30 letterspacing;  
b) 47 pt, –30 letterspacing
- 4** [Helvetica Neue Std Bold](#) | 47 pt  
–60 letterspacing

Colors

- 5** C100 M0 Y0 K0
- 6** C50 M0 Y100 K0
- 7** C100 M90 Y10 K10
- 8** C0 M0 Y0 K100
- 9** C0 M100 Y85 K0
- 10** C0 M0 Y0 K30
- 11** C13 M25 Y44 K2
- 12** C13 M34 Y76 K0
- 13** C23 M64 Y87 K16
- 14** C19 M86 Y87 K8
- 15** C40 M90 Y100 K10
- 16** C36 M70 Y73 K61

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323 Lincoln Street, Roseville, CA 95678

Telephone 916-784-3880

Fax 916-784-3995

E-mail [mailbox@bamagazine.com](mailto:mailbox@bamagazine.com)

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