

AVENIR

A MODERN TAKE ON FUTURA

"to produce an independent alphabet, one that belonged in the present"



-Adrian Frutiger

THE BEGINNING

Adrian Frutiger was born in Unterseen, Canton of Bern in Switzerland on May 24th, 1928. As an early kid, Frutiger had an interest in sculpture and...

"experimenting with stylized handwriting and invented scripts, defying the formal cursive penmanship."

Instead of sculpting, Frutiger instead ended up getting into the world of penmanship, entering an apprenticeship for four years as a compositor to a printer named Otto

Schaeffli. After his apprenticeship, Frutiger went on to begin attending an art school called *untgewerbeschule* in Zürich helping him expand his knowledge on calligraphy and Roman forum rubbings of other things. From this he joined his first type foundry at the French foundry *Deberny Et Peignot* where he created several typefaces. This is where he published his first official typeface, that being *Président*. From here he went on to create several different typefaces such as *Versailles*, *Vector*, *Univers*, *Frutiger* and *Avenir*.

HOW IT STARTED

Frutiger's work with *Avenir* helped make it one of the most versatile fonts out there, with many variations and sub-variations of the different weights in the *Avenir* family. When creating it, he saw similar geometric typefaces lacking in aspects such as not having a way to use it as body text instead of only for display faces. These aspects helped make *Avenir* making it very popular with a large amount of people.

THE BASICS

Avenir is a geometric sans serif font that was intended to have an organic feel to it, which was inspired by other early styles such as *Erbar* and *Futura*. *Avenir* got its name from the French word *future*, which is interesting since it was inspired by *Futura*. Due to being inspired by *Futura*, *Avenir* shares many aspects from *Futura* while at the same time avoiding some of the downsides that *Futura* might have. *Avenir* is thinner in its letterforms and is considered to feel more modern and clean. Allowing it to be used as body copy text, something that *Futura* is generally not something you usually use it for.

The stress in the Q in the bowl of each character in *Avenir*, slowly get thinner as it reaches the tail of each character.

q

Similar to the Q, the D follows the same basic structure when designing the stress of the character.

d

OTHER ASPECTS

THE VARIATIONS

One of the reasons people like it is due to Avenir's modern feel, while still being relatively simple with how stylized the font is compared to other typefaces. Frutiger compared the diversity of Avenir to that of wine, saying that

"All of them were wines but each was different from the others. It's the nuances that are important. The same is true for typefaces."

This being one of the main reasons why Avenir has one of the largest amounts of variations in a typeface so that Avenir has a purpose for every situation.

DIFFERENT STYLES

•Book A B C D E F G H
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! @ # \$ % ^ & * ?

•Black A B C D E F G H
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! @ # \$ % ^ & * ?

•Italic A B C D E F G H
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! @ # \$ % ^ & * ?

•Demi A B C D E F G H
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! @ # \$ % ^ & * ?

Aa Bb Cc

Aa Bb Cc

Aa Bb Cc

OVERALL

Avenir is a truly unique typeface that was created in a time where more modern styled typefaces were being popularized such as Futura. Frutiger created a font that can be used in many situations for body copy or as display text. Creating one of the most influential typefaces out of any that he has created, along with being one of the more well-known typefaces out there. An amazing piece of work for somebody who originally wanted to create sculptures, instead Frutiger sculpted text and ended up creating many popular typefaces, especially Avenir.