

# type

## A flock of Garamonds

The **Garamond** type family has had many successors over the years.

by **Allan Haley**

Garamond fonts are about as plentiful as turkeys at Thanksgiving. There is an International Typeface Corporation (ITC) version of Garamond, a version developed for Adobe Systems, one produced by Monotype, one for Simoncini, and still another for Berthold. Linotype has two versions (three, if you count the Stempel design). And this doesn't even take into account Garamond designs by different names, such as Sabon and Granjon.

Since Claude Garamond cut his first font over 450 years ago, there have been so many versions of his typestyle that it's hard to know them all without a full-scale database. In foundry type, machine-set type, phototype, and now in digital form, literally hundreds of Garamonds have graced pages over the centuries.

While there are many different Garamond typefaces, they all descend from first 16th century design and they share similar traits. For example, character stroke-weight stress in every Garamond design is canted, with the heaviest parts drawn at approximately the two and eight o'clock positions.

Head serifs (those at the top of character strokes) look like little banners, and baseline serifs tend to be long, slightly cupped, and (in most Garamonds) have soft rounded ends. Another trait that almost every Garamond shares is the bi-

directional serifs on the top of the cap T. (It's a dead giveaway for the design.)

### **GARAMOND FAMILY TREE**

In spite of these similarities, there are two distinct branches to the Garamond family tree: one American and the other European. Typefaces on the American branch are ancestors of the first modern revival of the 16th century design, produced by Morris Fuller Benton for American Type Founders in 1919. Digital descendants of this hand-set metal font are faces like Linotype Garamond No. 3 and ITC Garamond. These are softer designs with larger x-heights than their European cousins.

Berthold, Stempel, and Simoncini Garamond typify faces from the European branch of the family tree. Contrasts in character stroke width tends to be more pronounced in these faces, x-heights are on the diminutive side, and generally the letters appear more angular, as if they were drawn with a chisel-point pen or brush. Comparing the lowercase *a* in ITC Garamond to the same letter in Stempel Garamond provides a concentrated view of the design differences between the American and European type styles.

### **DUAL ANCESTRY GARAMOND**

Adobe Garamond is one of the newest additions to the Garamond family. Drawn

in 1989 by Robert Slimbach, it is a member of the American branch of the family — with hints of European ancestry.

While based on traditional American traits and proportions, the calligraphic suggestions Slimbach incorporated into his design give it this dual heritage. The lowercase *a* is a perfect example of this melding of design traits. It is a soft design, with no sharp edges — and yet has an echo of the calligrapher's brush in its slightly squared ball terminal.

Adobe Garamond is a carefully researched and meticulously rendered design that performs well in just about any application. In fact, the design has only one weakness. It's a little too studied. Adobe Garamond is too carefully rendered, too technically accurate, and as a result, lacks the humanity that gives other Garamonds life and personality.

### **MORE PERFECTION AT A PRICE**

Berthold Garamond is another design that is a little too perfect. Drawn by G.G. Lange for the Berthold foundry in 1972, its obvious calligraphic overtones link this design with other European interpretations of the Garamond typestyle. The problem is that Lange was such a stickler for accuracy and precision in his work that his design lacks the personality and verve of other, less precise, Garamonds.

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  
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

Adobe Garamond Regular, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

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  
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

Adobe Garamond Bold, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

#### OLDEST NEW GARAMOND

Garamond No. 3 is one of the oldest, still available, interpretations of Claude Garamond's original font. Drawn in 1922 for the Linotype Company, this Garamond has served graphic communicators as machine-set metal type, phototype, and now in digital form.

A design from the American branch of the family tree, Garamond No. 3 is marked by relatively open counters, gradual stroke weight changes, and soft curves. In spite of the fact that it has been reinterpreted so many times, this design has warmth and spontaneity. The relatively subtle differences between roman and bold weights is the only drawback to this lively little family. The result is that the bold is not strong enough for most display work and is not a particularly authoritative emphaser in text copy.

ITC Garamond is almost in a class unto itself—it's like a Hummer is to an auto-

mobile. Its gargantuan x-height, wide proportions, and exaggerated character shapes make the design a caricature of more traditional fonts.

Unfortunately, because of this, many designers look down their nose at ITC Garamond. Few realize that the design was never intended to be a classic interpretation of the 16th century font. It was first released in just the book and ultra weights as display complements to existing and more traditional text designs from other foundries.

Public demand forced ITC to release other text-oriented weights. If taken on its own merits ITC Garamond is not a bad design. It's legible, has lots of personality, and benefits from a large family of weights and proportions.

#### A GRACEFUL GARAMOND

Monotype Garamond, another relation to Benton's design, is one of the most elegant

interpretations of the Garamond style. Made fallible only by italics that are almost wispy, it is one of the best text versions of the family. Its marked contrast in stroke weights, open counters, and delicate serifs make this the Gwyneth Paltrow of the Garamond family. It can be set at virtually any size, is exceptionally legible, and benefits from an ideal contrast between the roman and bold weights.

#### A LIVELY EUROPEAN

Stempel Garamond epitomizes the European style of Garamonds. Its strong calligraphic influence, vivid contrast in stroke thickness, small x-height, and traditional wide capitals create a lively texture on the page. Unfortunately, as with Monotype Garamond, the italics are less than perfect. Where the Monotype italics may be too thin for some tastes, the italics in Stempel Garamond are far too wide. This is because the face was first released as a

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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Garamond 3 Regular, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Garamond 3 Bold, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ITC Garamond Light, courtesy of ITC

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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ITC Garamond Bold, courtesy of ITC

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  
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

Monotype Garamond Regular, courtesy of Creative Alliance

*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  
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*

Monotype Garamond Italic, courtesy of Creative Alliance

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  
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

Stempel Garamond Bold, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

machine-set metal type that required the italic and roman designs to share the same widths and proportions. This practice was called duplexing, and while it was convenient to have the roman and italic fonts share the same typesetter magazine, it also ruined the proportions of many italic type designs.

Garamond, in both the American and European flavors, is generally considered to be an ideal book face. And if it is good

for books, then it is also an excellent choice for most other forms of continuous text.

Magazines, newsletters, annual reports, lengthy advertising copy, and similar applications are all naturals for Garamond. Grace, elegance, readability, and legibility are all the benefits.

The only limits to Garamond's use come with the European versions. These, because of their somewhat higher contrast

in stroke thickness and smaller counters, need to be used with a little less abandon than the American designs. And even these have remarkable latitude in their range of applications.

Bottom line: You can't go wrong using Garamond — any Garamond. ■

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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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Stempel Garamond Regular, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

*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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz*

Stempel Garamond Italic, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

**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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz**

Stempel Garamond Bold, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.

***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  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz***

Stempel Garamond Bold Italic, courtesy of Adobe, Inc.