LOOKING FOR A PRINTER WHO CAN PULL OFF MIRACLES?

A DESIGNER'S BEST FRIEND

NEARLY ALL DESIGNERS CAN TELL YOU STORIES ABOUT HOW A PRINTER "SAVED THEIR LIVES" AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. FOR THAT REASON, HOW MAGAZINE DECIDED TO FIND THOSE PRINTERS ACROSS THE NATION WHO ARE NOTED FOR GOING THAT EXTRA MILE FOR THEIR DESIGNER CLIENTS. • WHILE WE CAME UP WITH A NUMBER OF WORTHY CANDIDATES (SEE SIDEBAR FOR LISTING), A FEW EMERGED AS CONSISTENTLY GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO GET THE PROJECT DONE PERFECTLY. • THOSE SEVEN "WINNERS" OF THE DESIGNER'S BEST FRIEND COMPETITION STRESS ONE WORD—TEAMWORK. THE WINNERS REINFORCE THE IDEA THAT THE BEST-EXECUTED PROJECTS ARE THE RESULT OF A TEAM THAT WORKS TOGETHER WELL. EACH MEMBER OF THE TEAM KNOWS HOW TO DO HIS OR HER JOB AND UNDERSTANDS HOW IT AFFECTS EVERYONE ELSE'S. • FOR THIS COMPETITION, DESIGNERS NOMINATED PRINTERS WHO HEROICALLY MET TIGHT DEADLINES, PROVIDED RARE PAPER STOCKS, USED EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUES, OR JUST WENT THE EXTRA MILE TO GET A COMPLEX JOB PRINTED RIGHT. THE JUDGES WERE FACED WITH SOME DIFFICULT DECISIONS. THE WINNERS WERE NOT NECESSARILY THE MOST COMPLICATED OR HIGH-BUDGET PIECES, BUT THEY DID SHOW HOW PRINTERS MADE THE DIFFERENCE IN GETTING THE JOB PRINTED RIGHT. IT WAS ALSO DIFFICULT TO SELECT WHICH PROJECT TO FEATURE FROM THE MANY SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF TWO PRINTERS, DIVERSIFIED GRAPHICS WITH 13 AND PRINT CRAFT WITH 10. EACH PIECE SHOWED OUTSTANDING QUALITY, BUT IT WAS THE STORY BEHIND THEM THAT SWUNG THE VOTE. • MOST VOTES WERE CAST FOR A BROCHURE FOR A COMPANY THAT PRODUCES HANDCRAFTED, METALLIC-CLAD FURNITURE AND ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENTS, SUBMITTED BY DESIGNER BENNETT PEJI. IN MATCHING PEJI'S CONCEPT FOR THE PIECE, PRINTER IN TO INK TRIED AN EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUE ON PRESS AND THREW IN EXTRA TOUCHES AT NO EXTRA COST. PEJI, WHO REGULARLY WORKS WITH THE SAN DIEGO-BASED PRINTER, SAYS: "ONLY A PRINTER TRULY DEDICATED TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CREATIVITY AS WELL AS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE WOULD GO TO THAT EXTENT! SUCH A PRINTER IS IN TO INK." • THE SIX OTHER WINNERS RECEIVED THE SAME TYPE OF PRAISE FROM THEIR NOMINATORS. READ ON ABOUT THESE PREVIOUSLY UNSUNG HEROES OF DESIGN.

BY SUSAN CONNER

OUR READERS TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND HIM.

A Unanimous Choice

In To Ink • Bennett Peji

"Designer's Choice" is the name of a company that produces a line of handcrafted, copper-clad furniture and architectural components. It is also designer Bennett Peji's designation for his printer, In To Ink, which printed the furniture company's sales folder that he designed. Because of its willingness to experiment with printing techniques and its commitment to quality, the San Diego printing company has befriended many other designers.

Peji, also based in San Diego, specializes in collateral and identity. He has won several awards, including those from *Graphis*, *Print*, the New York Type Director's Club, Beckett Paper and the Art Directors Club of Los Angeles. Peji says he has worked with the specialty printer for three of his four years in business because they collaborate as a team from concept to finish. "We share a common goal, to create the best possible piece. They never scoff at your ideas, no matter how far-fetched they may seem. They take the attitude that we'll work together to accomplish this in the most efficient way."

When Peji received the brochure assignment from Designer's Choice, he first drew a comp. He wanted to reproduce the patina that appears on all of the company's products. Peji consulted with In To Ink's representative, Theresa Pyle. She suggested rubbing metal powder into the paper, which recreated the effect perfectly.

The only way to recreate the same effect on press, however, was to alter the blanket pressure. "We needed varying thicknesses under the blanket," explains Pyle. "We tried everything, even popcorn." Printing on Speckletone Cordtone, pressman/co-owner Larry Pyle achieved the desired effect after hours of tests using a combination of spray adhesive and anti-offset spray powder sandwiched between two pieces of mylar to create the unique surface. Then the sandwiched piece was placed between a blanket cylinder and blanket the same way normal packing is done. The folder itself opens to reveal postcards showing a range of furniture and components. The furniture company wanted to insert up to 24 postcards in the folder, but had only four available at the time. So Peji devised an ingenious pleat that could accommodate any number of cards. In assembling the pleats, the glue had to be applied in exactly the right spots at the top and bottom corners; this was closely supervised on site by the printer.

The company's logo, which represents two furniture handles, presented a logistical problem. One handle appears on uncoated stock, while the other overprints two layers of ink. To eliminate any contrast between the two, In To Ink applied a varnish over them (at no extra charge).

Peji merits such extra touches from In To Ink because of his team approach. "He has respect throughout the entire shop because he treats everybody with respect," says Pyle.Pyle suggests that designers involve their printer from the onset of a project so that their budgets are realistic and their materials are on hand. "We need to look for potential problems from the beginning so that they can be solved," she advises.

PHOTOS: PAMELA MONFORT