

ROBIN HOWIE —————

AN INTERVIEW WITH
ANNA LISA REYNOLDS
ABOUT THE **REVIVAL** IDENTITY,
AN EDITED VERSION OF THIS
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How did the project come about – can you give me a bit of background to the work?

Revival is a new company with a passion for the 1930s and 40s. They love the music, the fashions, the films and most of all the dancing. Revival sells the very best in modern day reproductions and reinterpretations of original 30's and 40's fashions; primarily Revival caters for dedicated Swing dance groups which have been rapidly spreading across London, it's also finding a growing niche of customers interested in looking fabulous in 30's and 40's clothing.

What was the brief?

Revival approached me to create a striking identity for the company. Whilst the new company's interests are rooted in the 30's & 40's the company also has the potential to expand into other areas away from it's original Swing demographic, the identity needed to have a similar adaptability.

What were your initial design considerations?

Revival is steeped in nostalgia which is a precarious position for a new design. It struck me from the start that the identity has to carefully handle the element of nostalgia in Revival's interests and operations; if the balance was wrong Revival could carve out far too narrow a niche for itself.

How did the project evolve - were there any turning points in the design?

From the outset I wanted to play with this nostalgia, but not rely on it too much, the company isn't about reliving the 30's and 40's but reviving certain elements from the period, the decadence a certain charm and sense of style, an emphasis on real customer service etc. Essentially Revival is about putting elements of one era into dialogue with the present day. Instead of an emphasis on a 'logo' I created an illustration style which acts as the key driver of the identity. As a flexible element it allows the identity and

company to constantly evolve, season by season, year by year. At the heart of the illustrations is a common theme: *projecting the glamour and nostalgia of days gone by into contemporary dialogues*. What I like about the illustrations is that to a certain extent the idea allows them to get away with being a bit ugly, the audience interested in Revival already have an interest in the era, maybe it's for a bit of escapism: So I quite like being able to juxtapose the decadence of years gone by with a present day dull high street, kebab shop or suburban life; I'm really excited about what this might evolve into in the future.

Any special font / type issues?

After researching the era it became evident that the fantastic original typography from the swing era is sadly nowadays not all that far from the murky world of Microsoft clip or word art. The illustrations where the key ingredient to the identity but there had to be some sort of typographic anchor to the identity, only because the illustrations will take effect in forming an identity fairly slowly over time as they evolve and customers come back. Having some sort of crude Desktop Publishing typographic feel just wasn't going to cut it, so I designed a bespoke typeface that offers a new dialect within this era's vernacular. It was based partly on a German typeface called 'Nobel' that has a lot of characteristics of the eras vernacular; it capture the spirit of the age perfectly but at the same time Nobel itself wasn't quite right for the job. The new typeface I designed is called *Decadedance* Regular (a play on decadence & decades of dance).

Any special print considerations?

Revival places a special emphasis on a unique personal experience when it comes to customer service. The growth of the company depends almost entirely on personal encounters and recommendations. The stationery has to be appropriate for this level of service, a little unique and special. It has to be a bit on the ephemeral

side with beautiful production and finishing. I wanted to get a tactile and classic feel that could capture Revival's ethos. Each encounter is bespoke tailored with the identity illustrations for extra charm and a personal touch.

How does the project fit into your current portfolio?

Great... I hope! The client and I are both really happy with how it turned out, I've never really explored illustration or type design before so that was all new exciting territory for me personally. In terms of portfolio I'm not bound to any particular discipline or style. It's all about ideas, and every brief is a different opportunity.

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www.revival-retro.com

Revival has just opened it's first boutique in Kingly Court just off of Carnaby Street. Come down and say hello.