



**PROJECT** Dark Milk Chocolate + Black Licorice CollaBARation Bar  
**DESIGN FIRM** Kristina Sacci, Hoboken, NJ; [www.kristinasacci.com](http://www.kristinasacci.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Shawn Askinosie, owner/art director; Lawren Askinosie, director of sales; Kristina Sacci designer  
**CLIENT** Askinosie Chocolate  
**PRINTER/FABRICATOR/PAPER/PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE** Translucent stock, one-color printing, natural twine.  
 Kristina Sacci says, "Shawn gets his sources questioned all the time, but since he works so hard to source his materials and create unique packaging, he prefers to keep it in-house."  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "What I love about this project is that it's not your typical paper-covered chocolate bar. They used a white waxed paper bag that gives the underlying design a cool, chalky/cloudy effect."

As part of its CollaBARation Series, specialty manufacturer Askinosie Chocolate partnered with the Swedish licorice company Lakritsfabriken on a unique dark chocolate bar flavored with the anise candy. Designer Kristina Sacci, who also enjoys a collaborative relationship with the family-owned chocolatier, got the enviable job of creating packaging for the series. Sacci expanded on the brand's stylized packaging and identity, coming up with a translucent outer envelope that contains an inner wrap embracing the bar itself. "Shawn really appreciates unique papers and materials and is really careful about sourcing what he uses," Sacci says, noting that Askinosie bills itself as being "fairer than fair trade." "We both like a lot of vintage-inspired materials and keepsakes like packages and letters. The translucent envelope sleeve is reminiscent of a white Tyvek USPS mailer. At first, we toyed with printing directly on the paper, but when we slipped an insert inside it, we really liked how it puffed up in spots, blurring some of the letters but letting others show through clearly." She notes that the package reveals the text underneath slowly, seductively—much as you'd let a piece of really great chocolate slowly melt on your tongue.

# PACKAGE DEAL 10 TO REMEMBER

BY BRYN MOOTH AND ANDREW GIBBS

Distill the discipline of packaging design to its essence, and you have simple forms: box, bottle, bag. But skilled designers enhance those forms with materials, finishes and flourishes in ways that elevate a package from mundane to memorable. We consulted with Andrew Gibbs, editor/founder of the package design website [TheDieline.com](http://TheDieline.com), to spotlight 10 projects featuring eye-catching paper choices and distinctive production techniques.



**PROJECT** NOOKA Paper Pack  
**FIRM/CLIENT** NOOKA, New York City; [www.nooka.com](http://www.nooka.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Matthew Waldman, creative director; Michael Ubbessen, package designer; Jon Patterson, graphic designer; Alexander Yoo, production manager  
**PAPER** Chipboard  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** Offset printing and die-cutting, folding  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "The Nooka Paper Pack shows us how to use paper to create an eco-friendly, glueless, biodegradable, yet beautiful and functional, package."



NOOKA is a lifestyle brand that's built on the power of design; its approach to the design of its watches, eyewear and tech-savvy accessories is inspired by interactivity and user experience. No surprise, then, that the company's packaging is as streamlined and effective as its products. While such a stripped-down approach creates challenges for retailers, who expect a package to loudly proclaim a product's features and benefits, the NOOKA team stuck to their principles in developing this glue-less paperboard box. "Applying our NOOKAFESTO to all design projects provides a framework for our internal design process and, in this case, to produce a minimal green package that is provocative or at least entertaining," says creative director Matthew Waldman. He describes a "pretty old-school" process of designing and prototyping to develop a box that showcases and protects the product and treads lightly on the environment. Plus, the peekaboo die-cuts and the origami-like structure create an interactive experience as the customer gradually unfolds the package to get at the oversized watch inside.





**PROJECT** Bailey's Biscuits Bag  
**DESIGN FIRM** Miller Creative, Lakewood, NJ; [www.yaelmiller.com](http://www.yaelmiller.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Yael Miller, designer, Reuben Miller, creative director  
**CLIENT** Bunches & Bunches Ltd.  
**PAPER** Ready-made kraft-paper bags with lined interior  
**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** Vote for Letterpress  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** Letterpress printing, rubber stamping  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "What I love about this project is that it uses paper as a part of the brand message, it makes it part of the story. The kraft paper bag, the letterpress printing and [the] lack of 'happy dog on the package' photography makes it unexpectedly elegant for dog treats."

Letterpress printing on kraft paper proved to be the most economical—and, we'd argue, the most aesthetically pleasing—design solution for packaging this line of premium pet treats. Because of the very small print run (just 1,000 bags) designer Yael Miller discovered that prefabricated bags were the only option, as 25,000 was the minimum order to have bags custom-made. And while screen printers scoffed at the notion of applying ink to the bulky paper sacks, Miller says Vote for Letterpress, a shop in Orange, NJ, took on the challenge. "Jon Selikoff, the founder and owner of Vote for Letterpress, was very clever in figuring out how to print on the irregular surface of the bag (due to the folded-up base when the bags are lying flat)," she says. "He created a special platform to help the bag lay flat when it was printed. It's printed on both front and back, which also required some special handling during printing." The client, Tamalpais Roth-McCormick, says the design and printing exceeded all expectations.

**PROJECT** Gaga's Workshop Invitation  
**DESIGN FIRM** Design Packaging Inc., Scottsdale, AZ; [www.designpackaginginc.com](http://www.designpackaginginc.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Evelio Mattos, creative director; Nathan Thomas, designer; George Bernal, production  
**CLIENT** Barneys New York  
**PAPER** Exterior—C1S black artpaper allover debossed chamois pattern; Interior—uncoated white kraft  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** Debossing, foil-stamping, spot gloss varnish, 5-color offset printing  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "What an excellent example of how the creative use of paper can create a beautiful, 3D interactive piece of art."

During the 2011 holiday season, Barneys New York turned an entire floor of its flagship Madison Avenue store over to a collection of merchandise designed in collaboration with Lady Gaga and her creative team.

Positioned as Gaga's vision of Santa's workshop, the fanciful space offered a range of items—think: Christmas stockings styled like outlandish platform-heeled shoes. For a VIP preview party, an equally fanciful invitation was in order. Design Packaging Inc., which specializes in creating innovative retail packaging, developed a simple black box that opened to reveal a spectacular pop-up structure that echoed the geometric shapes and bold colors in the workshop design. On an eight-week timeframe from concept to



delivery, DPI's team comped nearly 30 mock-ups. They experimented extensively with the paper and the fold styles, says creative director Evelio Mattos, who gives this project an 8 on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being super-challenging.

"Luckily, we have several math majors on staff at DPI, which helped with determining the proper angles and directions of folds, but a lot of it was trial and error," Mattos says.



**PROJECT** Monarchs Playing Cards  
**DESIGN FIRM** Neighborhood Studio, Austin, TX; [www.neighborhood-studio.com](http://www.neighborhood-studio.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Curtis Jinkins, Jonathan Bayme, art directors; Evan Hartman, production  
**CLIENT** [www.theory11.com](http://www.theory11.com)  
**PAPER** Curious Skin, Dark Blue 100 lb. cover  
**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** The United States Playing Card Company  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** Gold foil-stamping, embossing  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "When I first saw these cards, I thought they were the most beautiful deck of playing cards I've ever seen. Neighborhood Studio created a stunning deck using gold foil on a navy blue stock."

These aren't your beer-and-Euchre-party playing cards. theory11, a collective of magicians dedicated to teaching and preserving card artistry, works with designers to create super-premium, casino-quality playing cards. For Monarchs' deck, Neighborhood Studio envisioned a luxurious design with a snake/sword/vine motif on the card back and box. (The firm also created the Jokers and Ace of Spades, but because the deck is intended for casino use, the rest of the cards retained the standard face design.) The tuck case is super rich-looking, with velvety Curious Skin stock in a deep blue, and stamped and embossed gold accents. "We spent two weeks examining samples and prototypes before deciding on the Curious Skin Collection, which has this unique, soft, suede-like feel," says art director Curtis Jinkins. "It's so distinctive and different, we knew it was the one." Jinkins says that after the initial run of cards came off the press, designers and client were unhappy with the precise shade of gold, and theory11 CEO Jonathan Bayme made the bold decision to reprint. Only 144 of the imperfect decks made it into circulation; they're selling for \$250 on eBay, but the final version is available at \$6.95 ([www.theory11.com](http://www.theory11.com)).







**PROJECT** NIKKA Whisky Packaging

**DESIGN FIRM** 2S, Paris; [www.2sglobaldesign.com](http://www.2sglobaldesign.com)

**CREATIVE TEAM** Sophie Schott, creative director; Florence Bezies, art director

**CLIENTS** NIKKA, La Maison Du Whisky (distributor)

**PAPER** Sonepro

**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** Sonepro

**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** “Nikka Whisky used a paperboard box to create a special bartender initiation package that introduces bartenders to the art of Japanese whisky. The shape of the box opening itself creates a welcoming invitation to the brand.”

One normally doesn't associate whisky—its distilling or its consumption—with Japan. Working with the NIKKA distillery and its European distributor, Parisian design agency 2S took inspiration from the ancient art of origami to create a package for a modern spirit. “We adapted a more architectural interpretation of the art to illustrate this perfect alliance between modernity and age-old tradition,” says creative director Sophie Schott. While the bottles and labels reference vintage apothecary bottles, 2S's design for the outer wraps is coolly current. NIKKA From the Barrel, a whisky with deep character, is boxed in graphite paperboard with sharp edges; the Pure Malt, a “peaty” blend that's aimed at female whiskey-drinkers, is packaged in a warm chipboard stock with a curved overlay.

**PROJECT** Hortus Honey Packaging

**DESIGN FIRM** phontwerp, Hilversum, The Netherlands; [www.phontwerp.nl](http://www.phontwerp.nl)

**CREATIVE TEAM** Paulien Hassink, art director

**CLIENT** Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam

**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** Spinhex & Industrie

**PAPER** 500g folding board

**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** 4-color offset printing, matte and gloss lamination, die-cutting

**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** “This pack uses paper in a very cool way, to hold, protect and to illuminate the product itself. It features a die-cut window on each side that allows light to flow through and light up the honey jar itself. Brilliant!”

Talk about exclusive (and exquisite): This jar of golden honey is one of just 200 pots made per year. “The Hortus Botanicus Amsterdam is one of the oldest botanic gardens in the world,” explains designer Paulien Hassink. “Today, there are more than 4,000 plant species growing in the garden and greenhouses. The Hortus is one of the few botanic gardens with its own bees. The bees produce their honey with the nectar of a unique collection of flowers, resulting in a very refined taste.” Naturally, Hassink wanted to celebrate the honey's specialness and to create a package that was gift-worthy. The jar itself is simple enough: a globe that lets the honey's golden hue shine through. The outer box features a two-level peekaboo die-cut that's droplet shape wraps from top to bottom. The pack is actually two separate boxes nested together to protect the jar. Hassink engineered and mocked up the design, then worked with the fabricator to finalize the specs. Taken together, the jar and dual box elevate this package beyond ordinary. “When placed in the inner box, the lid becomes invisible,” Hassink says. “For this reason, the jar-ness (as a piece of packaging) virtually disappears, and the idea of a drop of honey takes it over.”

**PROJECT** Baxter of California Candle Packaging

**DESIGN FIRM** Marc Atlan Design, Los Angeles; [www.marcatlan.com](http://www.marcatlan.com)

**CREATIVE TEAM** Marc Atlan, art director

**CLIENT** Baxter of California

**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** Justman Packaging

**PAPER** Recycled chipboard

**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES** Screen printing, die-cutting, cut-scoring

**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** “Baxter of California's White Wood Series candle packaging has a beautiful number-shaped die-cut window to show the product inside and to identify the fragrance.”

Award-winning package designer Marc Atlan recognizes that great design can't overcome a mediocre product. “We believe packaging design is only effective when you are given a great product to work from first,” he says. “It's the packaging design that attracts you to a product, but it is only genuinely unique and interesting content that will make or break it.” In the case of Atlan's ongoing work with Baxter of California, a brand of men's grooming products, both great product and great design come together. Though graphically bold and structurally simple, Atlan's box design for a series of candles challenged everyone involved in the project. The super-thick recycled chipboard was first screen printed (the only process that would work given the paper's heft), then scored with a kiss-cut to allow folding against the grain (resulting in a cool inverse level on the box edges). A die-cut number that reveals the product followed. “The registration of the three techniques used—silkscreening, die-cutting and cut-scoring—was particularly complex and critical to the integrity of the project, so it was a collaborative project with all the partners involved,” Atlan says. The first run sold out rapidly, and Baxter has already launched their second production.



**PROJECT** Golden Road Brewing Cans and Cartons  
**DESIGN FIRM** Gamut, San Francisco; [www.gamutsf.com](http://www.gamutsf.com)  
**CREATIVE TEAM** Shawn Scott, Ian Gordon, designers; Nate Miller, photographer  
**CLIENT** Golden Road Brewing  
**PRINTERS/FABRICATORS** Ball Corp. (cans); Landsberg (carton)  
**PAPER** Corrugated cardboard  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE** Eyeris, Ball Corp.'s proprietary printing technology that allows photos to be reproduced on the cans. "We were one of the first to have the opportunity to use it, and it's something that sets these cans apart," says designer Shawn Scott. "Before Eyeris, trying to achieve any sort of halftone or gradient on a can with multiple colors would quickly become muddy and indistinguishable."  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "This is one of the best uses of kraft paper I've seen. Golden Road is taking specialty craft beer and putting [it] in cans instead of the typical glass. With a technically innovative can design featuring local Los Angeles photography, Gamut SF took the opportunity to use a kraft paper box to continue the local artisanal look and feel of the design."



Think about it: When's the last time you spotted a quality craft beer packaged in cans? Bottles, labeled with personality-driven graphics and stylized typography, are the container of choice for artisan brewers. Despite its lowbrow connotation, a can is actually superior, because its opacity prevents light from entering and altering the brew's taste. Golden Road Brewing became the first Southern California artisanal brewery to package in cans, and designer Shawn Scott predicts a trend. "In 2012 you're going to see a much larger shift to cans happening among other packaged craft breweries in the industry, as we saw first-hand on our visit to Ball's pilot print facility in Denver," he says. "We were most excited about working with cans because you have 100% of the visual surface to work with, as opposed to a paper bottle label." The design team's choice of kraft stock and opaque inks reinforces the beer's artisanal origins. "This packaging is contrary to the high-gloss, plastic sheen associated with Los Angeles and with corporate beer packaging," Scott says. "These are casual beers meant to be taken to the beach or to your friend's backyard barbecue."

## ABOUT THEDIELINE.COM & THE PACKAGE DESIGN CONFERENCE YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Andrew Gibbs, himself a package designer, founded [TheDieline.com](http://TheDieline.com) in 2007 to promote and advocate for the package design field. The site is a must-see showcase featuring the best boxes, bottles, wraps and containers from around the globe, and a virtual directory for leading package-design studios. The projects featured here were selected from the site's online gallery.

The Dieline team authored "Box Bottle Bag" in 2010 ([MyDesignshop.com](http://MyDesignshop.com)) and in 2011 partnered with HOW to launch The Dieline Package Design Conference, which will again be held in conjunction with HOW Design Live ([HOWDesignLive.com](http://HOWDesignLive.com)) in Boston this June. And The Dieline Forum, presented with HOW, is coming in Fall 2012.



**PROJECT** 703 Bankers Box  
**DESIGN FIRM** House Industries, Yorklyn, DE; [www.houseind.com](http://www.houseind.com)  
**CLIENT** The Conran Shop Japan  
**PRINTER/FABRICATOR** Fellowes Japan  
**PAPER** Corrugated cardboard  
**PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE** Flexography  
**ANDREW GIBBS COMMENTS** "To promote the launch event for House Industries' model 703 Bankers Boxes, they commissioned a scaled-down mini version to act as an invitation itself!"

Influential type design studio House Industries seems to be rocking Japan lately, with their eye-grabbing window displays that appeared at Hermes' Tokyo flagship store in January, and an exhibit last fall at the Herman Miller showroom in Tokyo. In another Japan-only appearance, House designers Andy Cruz and crew created an updated take on the essential storage bin for home or office—the banker's box—for The Conran Shop Japan. Cruz calls the traditional cardboard carton "a brilliant canvas—stylish storage units that you're not ashamed to leave outside of the closet." The box is adorned with a groovy black graphic pattern, a repetition of an oversized letter 'H' from House's re-issue of the Photo-Lettering alphabet West Banjo. "When we were beta-testing the alphabet, the 'H' key on my keyboard got stuck and accidentally typed out a long row of capital H characters," Cruz recalls. "The H seemed to disappear, and the counterforms created a geometric positive and negative visual." **HOW**