

HALL OF FAME

IN-LINE CONVERTING

TECH. INNOVATION

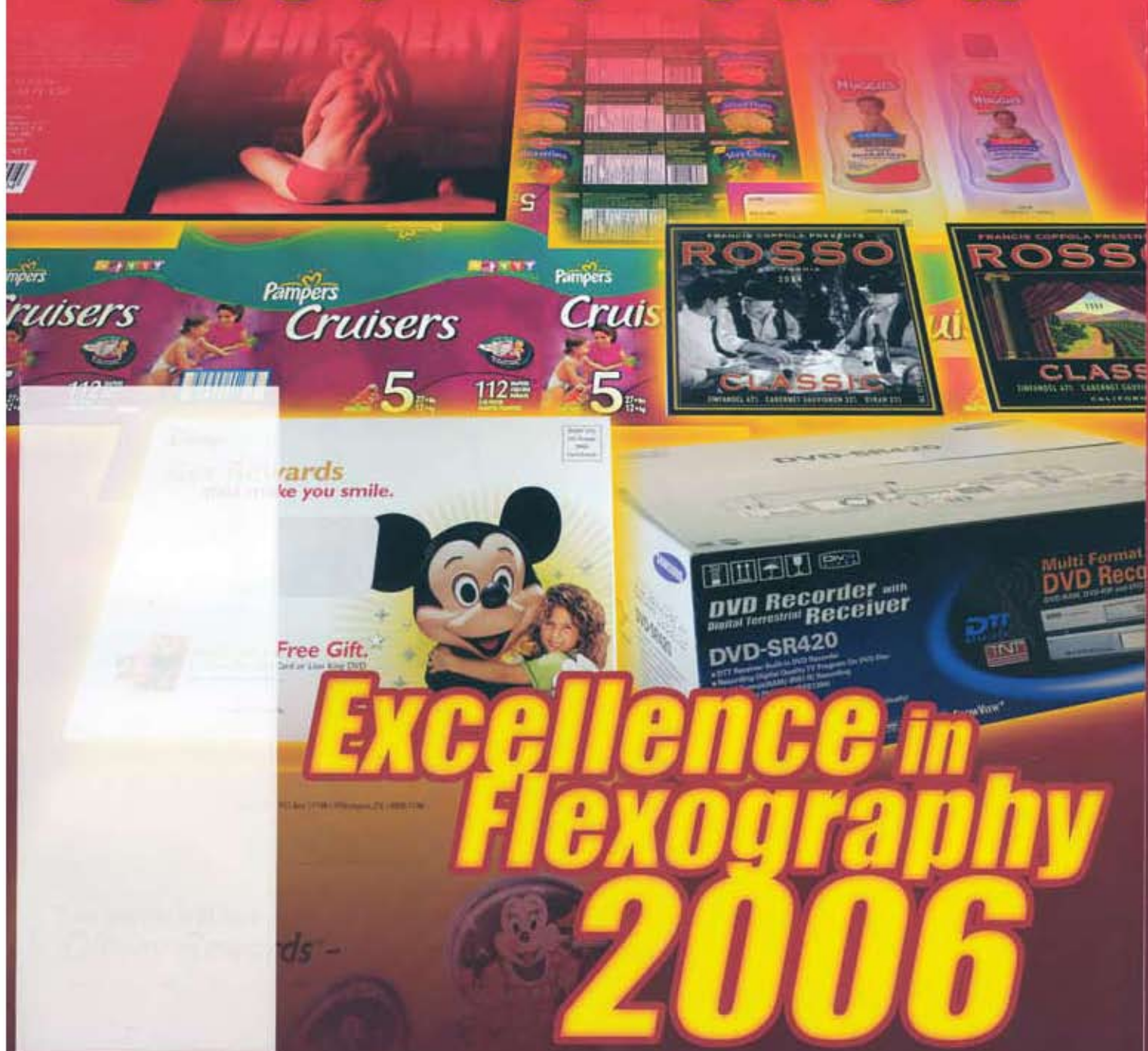
FLEXO



MAY 2006

THE FLEXOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY SOURCE

BEST OF SHOW



Excellence in Flexography 2006

Narrow-web judges (left to right) Ben Gasparick, Roy Mackura, Ian Hole, Dan Muthig, Peter Gretzinger and Cary Peterson.



Winning Colors

Best of Show Praised for Combining Grayscale & CMYK

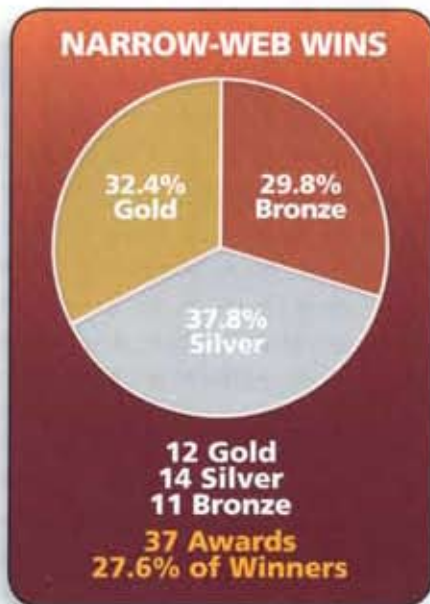
It is one of the largest and most diverse categories in Flexographic Technical Association's (FTA's) Excellence in Flexography Awards competition. Entries run the gamut from shampoo labels to scratch-offs, from UV shrink sleeves to foil-stamped and embossed wine labels. Best-of-show winners have included underwear packaging and microwavable folding cartons, although the latter is now judged in its own category.

Judges often remark that the narrow-web category of the awards competition showcases the most creative and cutting-edge designs and technologies. This year was no different. "We saw more than 10 entries printed at 200 line screen," proclaimed Cary Peterson, Solo Cup Co., a degree-of-difficulty judge. "It was difficult in some cases to find defects in such fine line-screen work."

"The quality steadily improves each year in narrow web," observed Dan Muthig, Fox Valley Technical College, also a degree-of-difficulty judge. "It's an industry that will run you over if you do not get up to speed."

This, Muthig went on to explain, is a direct result of demands placed on narrow-web printers by their customer base. Peterson added, "Our customers expect us to improve to meet and exceed their demands in order for them to compete in the marketplace."

"Printers entering these samples are



clearly stepping outside their comfort zones when it comes to using finer line screens and attempting a greater level of printing complexity," he continued. "We saw 23-color, two-sided designs as well as the use of glitter coating. This shows that printers are pushing for greater achievement to get results for their customers."

Big Wins

During the two-day judging process, 37 awards were distributed to 19 narrow-web printers / converters in 13 sub-categories. Twelve golds, 14 silvers and 11 bronzes were given out. Adams

Labels (Surrey, BC, Canada), Corporate Express (Wichita, KS), Dow Industries (Wilmington, MA), Labelsco Ltd. (Leicestershire, UK) and LSK Label Co. (El Dorado Hills, CA) grabbed two medals apiece.

G-3 Enterprises (Modesto, CA) managed four medals—one gold and three silvers. OPM Labels Ltd. (West Yorkshire, UK) pulled in a staggering seven prizes: a bronze, four silvers and two golds. Paragon Label of Petaluma, CA, walked away with the top honor, best of show, for its Frances Coppola Presents Rosso Classic Wine Label; as well as a bronze, two silver and two gold awards.

Latest & Greatest

As was the case in other categories, some judges in narrow web saw a boost in the usage of advanced technologies, especially in platemaking and prepress. "There seems to be a steady rise in digital plates and different screening technologies," noted Muthig. Peterson concurred, saying, "We saw very few analog plates used; the majority were digital."

He went on to say, "The prepress materials that will achieve these much higher-quality printed designs are available to printers. Digital plates, seamless print sleeves, laser-imaged digital polymer in the round and custom laser-engraved anilox rolls have all contributed to the success that was not achievable even a few years ago. We saw some of



the smallest printed dots we have ever observed on the 200-line-screen jobs."

In addition, Muthig spoke to combination print technologies. "We saw printers customizing presses by adding rotary screen or litho stations to accommodate challenges from customers."

Back in Black . . . & White

Would you expect a label printed in grayscale to beat out all others and receive best-of-show honors in the narrow-web category? One did this year—sort of. Frances Coppola Presents Rosso Classic Wine Label displayed two images, one wholly in gray tones, the other in process color. Both pictures were printed multiples across and repeated on the same plate. This caught the attention of narrow-web judges.

"The Frances Coppola Presents job won because of its difficulty to achieve consistency across two different images on the same plate," said Ben Gasparick, Belmark Inc., a level-of-execution judge. "The highlights and the reversed text were done beautifully."

"The key was having the black-and-white graphic along with a color graphic on the same sheet," agreed Ray Makura, Avery Dennison, also a level-of-execution judge. "Any time you have a grayscale image right next to a color image, it's difficult to maintain both registration and the correct impression. The level of execution was high, too, especially compared to other entries. A best of show should be top-notch—and this was."

Muthig also appreciated the challenge inherent in the piece. "What really stood out to me was the degree of difficulty required in this case to achieve this type of quality," he said. Peterson commented, "The registration and clean print quality was superb on such a fine line-screen reproduction."

Most judges said the best of show exhibited an unusual level of quality compared to much of what is produced in the industry today. "It's rare that you see this type of graphic. Normally they are repeats," said Makura. "I would compare this to something that was printed using multiple print methods. People like the feel of a screen-printed image or a hot-foil stamp. That's hard to compete against in one print method. But this does that."

"The best of show really demonstrates what flexo printing can achieve," insisted Gasparick. Muthig declared, "It was special. I'm sure printing like this is not uncommon, but it would be unfair to say this is typical."

Peterson summarized, "The narrow-web best of show demonstrates a level of printing control that can be difficult to maintain day after day in the pressroom. It takes tight ink viscosity and pH controls, correct anilox selection and press maintenance—as well as consistent substrate surfaces and plate-material exposures—to produce flexo-printed pieces at this level. Paragon Label should be applauded for using press condition controls that resulted in this quality." ■

NARROW-WEB WINNERS BY COMPANY

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
Adams Labels	*		*
Banta Specialty Converting			*
Belmark Inc.	*		
Corporate Express		*	*
Diverse Labelling Consultants (Pty.) Ltd.	*		
Dow Industries			**
G-3 Enterprises	*	***	
Industrial Label Corp.			*
JSC "Tafflex"		*	
Label Technology Inc.		*	
Labelsco Ltd.	*	*	
LSK Label Co.	*	*	
McDowell Label			*
OPM Labels Ltd.	**	*****	*
Paragon Label	+*	**	*
Regency Labels Inc.			*
Smyth Co.	*		
Spectral Inc.	*		
Spectrum Label Corp.			*

+ = Best of Show

NARROW-WEB WINNERS BY PROCESS

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
Line, Film		**	
Line, Metallized	*		**
Line, Coated	*	*	*
Line, Uncoated	*	*	*
Screen, Film	*	*	*
Screen, Metallized	**	**	
Screen, Coated	*	*	**
Screen, Uncoated		**	
Process, Film	*	**	
Process, Metallized	*		**
Process, Coated	+		**
Process, Uncoated	*	**	
Process, Paperboard	*		

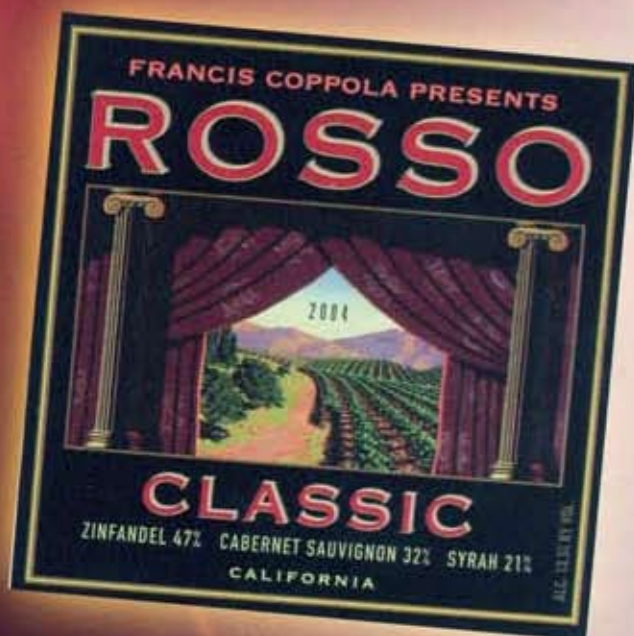
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"Any time you have a grayscale image right next to a color image, it's difficult to maintain both registration and the correct impression." –Ray Mackura, level-of-execution judge

"The best of show really shows what flexo printing can achieve." –Ben Gasparick, level-of-execution judge





PROCESS, COATED
Gold & Best of Show

Paragon Label
Frances Coppola Presents Rosso Classic
Wine Label

Comments: Customer requested no additional information be printed.



SCREEN, UNCOATED
Silver

Paragon Label
Robert Sinskey Vineyards Abraxas-Vin De
Terrior 2004 Wine Label

Comments: Customer requested no additional information be printed.



LINE, COATED
Gold

Paragon Label
Benson Ferry Vineyards Port Wine Label

Comments: Customer requested no additional information be printed.



SCREEN, COATED
Bronze

Paragon Label
Parks Vineyards 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon
Wine Label

Comments: Customer requested no additional information be printed.



LINE, COATED
Silver

Paragon Label
Wildhurst Vineyards 2003 Reserve Zinfandel
Wine Label

Comments: Customer requested no additional information be printed.

