



# Practical Font Design, Third Edition

*David Bergsland*

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## Practical Font Design, Third Edition David Bergsland

Practical Font Design The Revised and Expanded Third Edition A rewritten, expanded 3rd edition including the second edition of part one and part two (on building book font families) plus new materials giving a practical walk through the process of designing a font and families. This is not about artistic considerations, but the practicalities of putting a font together. On the other hand, the design approach is fine art. David's training is as a fine art printmaker: etchings & stone lithography. The basic procedure we use for font design is found in this book. It is a step by step following of new font designs with tips and comments along the way. A book to help graphic designers design fonts Here at the foundry we use FontLab 5 in the production of our fonts. Over the years we have developed over a hundred fonts. In the process we have picked up a lot of experience in the process of designing a font efficiently. This is not a book for programmers and scripters. This is a book for graphic designers and typographers who love type and want to make their own fonts—either for themselves or to sell. In the process of writing this book several things were developed that you might find useful in your design process. In general these are pieces of copy or FontLab files that will save you the time required to make your own. There are lists of composite glyphs to generate, and OpenType features file, and a text file to use when generating metrics and kerning tables. You can find them on this page. Here's a condensed table of contents for you to see what is in the book Why a 3rd edition? xv Because I've learned so much since I wrote the first two xv This is a small one-person low budget operation xvi Welcome! To the 3rd edition of practical font design 1 Defining typography 2 A Practical Approach To Classifying Fonts 9 Type drawing tools 33 The creation of a font 47 A step by step procedure 47 A new unilateral serif font 49 Begin with a new or base font 50 Scan & trace 67 Letterspacing 109 Some definitions 109 The decisions needed for good letter fit 110 Basic methodology 110 FontLab's Metrics panel 111 Typical adjustments to spacing 115 Display or Text? 118 For Practical Font Design: Part Two I went much more traditional 118 Generating fonts for testing 123 Making composite glyphs 127 Generating the basic characters 127 Adding OpenType Features 133 What is an OpenType feature? 133 Writing an OpenType feature 134 How a feature works 135 Using classes 136 Adding features to our new font 138 Ligatures 146 Kerning your new font 151 The Metrics window 151 The need for a kerning text document 152 The kerning process 154 what to kern & by how much? 156 Using real words 159 Classes 160 Tracing drawings & artwork 163 Placing into Illustrator 164 Make sure the scan is clean 164 Live Trace in Illustrator 166 Designing font families 171 Let's start traditional 171 Book font family characteristics 175 Text versus display 175 The need for text and display versions 180 The need for a sans version 180 Kerning & Assembling the family 237 Generating the fonts 241



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