

BOOKS
Logo Design



PRICE £24.99
EDITOR Julius Wiedemann
PUBLISHER Taschen + taschen.com
FORMAT Paperback, 384 pages
PROS Lots of logos + In colour
CONS Not much sense

BOOKS
Logo



PRICE £19.95
EDITOR Michael Evamy
PUBLISHER Laurence King + laurenceking.co.uk
FORMAT Paperback, 352 pages
PROS Brilliantly organised and indexed
CONS Black and white? In 2007?

Here we have two new medium-sized softback showcases of logo design. Taschen's is a round-cornered brick bound in stiff card. Its title, *Logo Design*, may not be very imaginative, but to make up for that it's set in half a dozen typefaces, reversed out of purple foil block. Nice. Laurence King's book is wrapped in a glossy paper dustjacket with little except the title, *logo*, on the outside and some classic logos on the inside. All is tastefully monochrome except for a removable pink promotional sticker.



▲ Taschen's *Logo Design* includes several examples of each logo, and even shows them in context.

Round one to Laurence King, then. But the monochromatic theme continues inside, with most of the logos printed in black. Now that it's no longer necessary for most logos to work in mono, let alone be designed as a solid, that's an odd choice.

Most of Taschen's pages are in colour, and a glueless stitched binding allows each spread to open fully. It presents more logos in total, and often more instances of each logo, including a few photos of designs in context; a Martian reading the Laurence King book would never guess that these mysterious symbols are commonly printed on physical objects. Less usefully, Taschen editor Julius Wiedemann has clumped his selections into client categories – institutions, service business, music and so on. There's no information about what each company does, and no index of clients, only

of designers. Still, Wiedemann has turned up some less familiar and more mould-breaking logos. The cover alone, if you look carefully, features a topless girl with pigtails and an ejaculating penis. (That's two items.)

For Laurence King, Michael Evamy has come up with a delicious twist. The logos are grouped by visual concept: 'intertwined characters', 'squares', 'waves', 'eyes and faces', and so on. Not only does this make the book better as a working designer's reference, it also lethally critiques all the qualities that are conventionally claimed for every logo: that it's strikingly original, visually distinctive and expresses something unique about the brand. Can this really be so, you wonder, when almost exactly the same swirls and flashes turn up representing art, science, charity, health, banking, food...?

The Taschen book opens with case studies and designer interviews on 13 major branding projects. These are occasionally interesting, but set in the lumpen style that Taschen seems to have settled on, and chosen with no obvious guiding principle. Bizarrely, one of the featured rebrands is of *The Guardian*. Not last year, but at the turn of the 1990s. In the end, these digressions are not much more enlightening than the one-paragraph summaries that accompany a larger number of Evamy's entries.

Laurence King's indexing delivers the final punch: you can find any entry by designer, client or business sector. Not a knockout, then, but a narrow win on points, with Taschen the romantically bloodied loser who'll drown his sorrows in a cellar bar and stagger home to find the heroine shivering expectantly on his doorstep. Probably.

Adam Banks

◀ *Logo's* monochrome pages may seem out of date, but the book is a great reference resource for designers.

