

Research Week Submission

How many people actually know about the true benefits of Tea. Most people when they hear about tea they just think about some leaves floating in water. Of course, there are some who know that chamomile is calming or that green tea is good for digestion. But, it's much more than that, tea has been used for centuries to cure sicknesses, every day issues such as insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and much more. But mostly, tea can be used in the same way as coffee, simply for energy and it has a healthier and safer effect on the human body. On top of all of that, there are thousands of flavors of tea that are unknown to most of the population between the ages of 17-24 and that's due to the lack of tea shops and the higher rates of Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts around the entire U.S. Within Lynchburg Virginia alone there are only 2 tea rooms or shops. Good Karma Tea and Wellness, and Ploughcroft Tea Room. Whereas there are 35 coffee shops across Lynchburg alone. This only furthered my research on tea and wellness in general for the following project.

My goal was to create a publication that simply only had tea within the entire publication. When looking around Barnes n Nobles a very popular book store across the U.S often having a very large selection of Publications, their food and drink section is often filled with levels of publications. To my surprise there were many that had tea on the cover or in the name but often had very little if not none about what tea actually is or the flavors involved within different blends. For example, when reading through some of the publications there was one by the name of Tea Time; a very well-known publication that has been around for at least 2 decades. Within the publication though it was mostly about table placements, and specific snacks that could be served within a tea party if you will. Within my specific goal in my mind I wanted my publication to visually stand out but to be filled with information about teas from across the world that are easily accessible to the average consumer. When read about, the consumer can read on that season's specific tea blend and what the medicinal purposes of that tea and what it is used for.

This brought me to my visual solution and how I was going to execute that. After trying to come up with names that were not too elementary, I came up with the concept of Steep Street. If unfamiliar with the process of making tea, you have to steep it first within hot water to extract the flavors at the proper temperature. To make sure the publication stood out on the racks, it had to have bright colors but not to the point that it was unappealing to the human eye and not harmonious with what the publication was about. With calming colors that still had a high saturation, these choices laid the foundation for what types of teas would be found within the publication. One thing that was very important to the design of Steep Street was making sure that enough white space was throughout the publication so that the consumer would not be overwhelmed with information that they could read about through the publication. This specific edition of Steep Street goes over 5 different locations across the world and the specific teas that are grown within that location. It also includes all of the information the consumer would need to know about the tea and what it does. Below the information the consumer will find a link that they can type into their phone to purchase that specific tea and brewing instructions below the link once the tea is in hand.

This brings me to how I was able to design and produce Steep Street. Steep Street started as just a simple idea for a tea leaf. Within the first week of the assignment I had to order from the Art of Tea, and a pop up lighting studio to be able to get the shots necessary for the publication to be successful. Using my Canon 5D Mark iii and a 35mm with a macro lens converter from Lens Baby, I used mainly close up detail shots of the tea for the spreads that talked about that specific tea. I also used Illustrator and Photoshop to mask out the specific places for example, you will find Tuscany Tea within Steep Street. There is a small illustration of the outline of Tuscany but instead of a map of Tuscany it is filled with a low opacity version of the full photo of the tea within the outline of Tuscany. Throughout the publication the consumer will find full spreads of different teas and tea tins to allow the consumer to have a break from text. The consumer will also see ads from Lipton, Art of Tea, and Live and Tiesta Tea. Finally there is a feature article that will always be shown within Steep Street. For this edition the feature article is all about Blooming Tea which most tea drinkers do not even know that. These two spread uses similar techniques with the macro lens to show the beauty of blooming a long with an article about blooming tea and what it can be used for when you are enjoying a pot. The feature article is used on the cover of the publication for its unique look and eye catching colors to keep consumers more interesting in blooming tea and tea in general.