



# Fontographer: Practical Font Design for Graphic Designers

*David Bergsland*

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Why do you want to use Fontographer? For the fun of it! When I received the opportunity to go back to my roots, and see what the new Fontographer was like, I was a little concerned. I had just spent nine years painfully teaching myself to letterspace by hand, to write OpenType features, and to become accustomed to the tool set of FontLab. Don't get me wrong, FontLab is a great program and I am grateful for what I have learned. There are still a few features of FontLab that, as a professional font designer, I cannot do without. But I was taken by surprise. Fontographer brought the fun back! It is still the same marvelous program with which I first learned to design fonts. The drawing interface is still clean, clear, and elegant. I still works the way I have learned to work over the past two decades of digital graphic design. I found pure joy in drawing again. Fontographer is a wonderful drawing experience. It has been a real joy to experience that fun again. After nearly a decade in FontLab, font design is fun again. To quote from the book: "Fontographer is an application which appeals to experienced graphics designers with a background in PostScript illustration... The majority of designers working in the mid-1990s had a copy of Fontographer...and everyone probably used it [at least a little]. Fontographer had [and still has] a unique and intuitive set of drawing tools that enable amateurs of that era to enter the world of font design. I'm talking amateurs in the sense that John Baskerville considered himself an amateur—as I also consider myself, though I am certainly not in Baskerville's league. For me, font design is a beloved sideline with which I indulge myself. It's become a treasured tool I use in my current trade—book writing, designing, and production." Welcome! ...to an experiment in font design Not a horribly auspicious way to start out a book is it? It is the way I start out my FontLab book, but things have changed since then. I had lost my experimental, creative edge—entering into font production as a career. Now after writing this book, I find that I really do not like font design as a career (writing and book design do that for me), but I still love it as a creative expression. Nevertheless, it is still an experiment. All of my font designs are experiments. Honestly, as a font designer, my only credentials are experience and practice tied to a growing body of customers who have purchased my experiments. Since going full-time with Hackberry Font Foundry and the RadiqX Press publishing house in 2009 I have learned a lot. Mainly I have learned that my personal vision is simply that—personal. I am not claiming superiority to anyone. In fact, I am an amateur in the old British sense of the word. I'm really into it. I've gotten quite experienced. But I have no interest in what the industry says must be done. Most of the modern fashionable font designs seem far too overdone and nearly pretentious to my eye. Showing off is for kids. My focus is simply on getting good fonts I can use and which meet my needs. They are designed as simply and easily as possible. I am merely sharing what I have learned as an alternative to design school training. For me, self-taught is not a hostile epithet but a way of life.

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