

DESIGN[®]

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Design Background

It is always asked (1) what the inspiration was behind any given design and (2) what sets your design above the rest? Well each playing card design is unique whether it be with its suit or pip design, its choice of typeface, and its court cards. In this section, I'll discuss these 3 properties of the Design Classic Paisley[®] playing cards as well as do a brief summary of my inspiration behind the design.

Pips (Suits)

The pips, or suits, are quite fascinating to be so diversified in their design from deck to deck. In fact, one might question how many designs could one come up with for these simple shapes. The Classic Paisley deck features a heart that bulges more at the top as it descends to its bottom tip. The spade mimics this pattern as it is flipped, but unlike most other decks, the stem isn't connected to main graphic. The club also has a non-connected stem, however its 4 distinct circles to make up its clover shape gets its inspiration from the Hoyle[®] deck of playing cards. The fourth pip, the diamond, is probably the most unique of the diamond designs as it is more square and the quarter-moon angles of the shape convey even more its uniqueness.

Typeface

Typically, playing cards have a slab or sans serif typeface or font for the indices. This type of font makes it easier to view the cards from a distance no matter where players sit at a poker or blackjack table. A serif denotes "feet" in any given letter form. The typeface I use has more of a serif feel to it but is still bolder, classy, and slightly bigger than most other decks for easier readability from afar.

Court Cards

Now this category defines any playing card design, look, and feel. I quite enjoy seeing so many designs of the kings, queens, and jacks; their nuances, poses, distinctions, etc. I took a lot of time to research and see as many different designs as I could from some of the major playing card brands out on the market like Hoyle, Bicycle[®], KEM[®], A Plus[®], Copag[®], Congress[®], and Gemaco[®]. I also took a look at the reproduced Civil War deck and received some added insight. I will address several qualities on the court cards and will do so in this order for better understanding of my design and thinking process: poses, traits, and added nuances.

Court Card Poses

The first deck of cards I remember seeing when I was young was the Hoyle brand. My immediate favorite suit was spades since the court cards were looking to their left whereas every other court card (except the Jack of Clubs) was looking to their right. This I thought was always the standard in court card poses (Bicycle and Copag do this standard as well), but I found that it was far from what was pictured in the Civil War reproduction deck and popular decks of today like KEM, Congress, Gemaco, and A Plus. KEM and these other brands differ from this standard pattern in that (1) the red and black jacks are switched (the black jacks look to their right and the red jacks look to their left); and (2) the Queen of Spades looks to her right and the Queens of Diamonds and Clubs, look to their left. The Civil War deck has one slight difference from the KEM and others: The Jack of Spades isn't switched and continues to follow the standard pose looking to his left. This allows for the court cards to be evenly set with 6 facing to their right and the other 6 to face their left. It is interesting to note that in all of the decks mentioned that the Kings have always remained the same in pose: the King of Spades always looks to his left and the other three look to their right.

Designs pay homage to the Civil War deck in its poses so that it is an equal number of left/right poses. It does differ in that the Queens of Hearts and Spades face to their left (the other two face to their right); and that The Jack of Diamonds replaces the lone jack that faces to his right (it is the Jack of Clubs that does this in the Civil War deck) with the rest facing to their left. I must note here that I have never liked when a deck has the Queen of Spades looking to her right. It undermines her position as the only armed and more powerful queen.

Traits

It's nice to compare and contrast the traits and personalities portrayed in any given playing card deck. The Classic Paisley deck continues this with each card having unique traits and personalities. First, however, the traits have followed the same patterns as in any other decks: (1) Queen of Spades is the only armed queen with a scepter; (2) the Jacks of Hearts and Spades and the King of Diamonds are the only 3 shown in profile; (3) Kings of Spades and Clubs hold swords while the King of Hearts wields his behind his head (giving him the dubious title of "Suicide King"); (4) All four queens hold flowers; (5) Jack of Clubs holds a spear or lance and has a feather in his cap/béret; (6) Jack of Spades, although unknown what he holds (although in earlier decks, it appears to have been a sword handle), I like to refer to it as a jeweled baton; (7) Jack of Hearts has an axe and holds a leaf; (8) and the Jack of Diamonds holds a sword; (9) King of Diamonds has an axe.

With the typical traits in mind, I added a few nuances as well: (1) Jack of Hearts has his second hand showing, holding his axe, which is a tribute to early playing cards; (2) I have seen it only twice in the past (occurring in the Hoyle decks as well as the cards used in the old 70s/80s game show called Card Sharks): the Queen of Spades has her hair down, not tucked inside her headdress, so I repeat it my design and is nice to see; (3) I play off

of paradoxes with some of the cards, such as the Queen of Spades holding a white rose (a symbol of peace) and the Queen of Hearts holding a black one (love can be fatal).

Finally, the number cards and the Aces have a dramatic change to them, but not so dramatic to throw the card player off. Now, I do realize in creating a new layout for these cards is a gamble, but I feel that it was necessary to think very much out of the box and set this deck apart from all the rest. True, some may be put off by the change, but I've received more positive comments than negative.

Basically the change centers around giving the number cards more symmetry and/or character. The pips on the 2 and the 3 are more centered and closer in proximity on the card; the 4 is a pleasant change with the pips lined up vertically instead of forming the 4-point square; the 5 and 6, although are traditional in their layout, have their pips closer in proximity to each other; the 7 is distinguished with its symmetry and is more pleasant to look at as well as are the 8 and 9 layout of pips; the 10 is just as beautiful with 4 pips going down the center with a column of 3 on either side. The Aces simply have a larger pip in the center while the Ace of Spades continues in its more decorative trademark.

Design Updates

After the release of the Classic Paisleys, there was quite a number of feedback comments left about the confusion with the 3 and 4 vertical placement of their respective pips for some players. Others simply wanted a more standard pip formation, while others loved the new arrangements and weren't bothered at all by them. With the arrival of the Classic Culture decks in October 2008, I tried to give the best of both worlds and both sides now seem happy. The only changes implemented included reverting back to the standard layout for the 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and keeping the 7, 9, 10 Design layout as is. I also updated the Ace of Spades and the 8, lowering the 4 outside pips and aligning them with the other rows of pips.

Further design updates were made to the court cards upon the release of the Classic Victorians. I wanted to make the crowns more regal/royal with a few color modifications. I also varied the flowers given to each of the queens. I am quite please with these modifications and design updates and feel that Desjgn has one of the nicest set of court card designs on the market.