

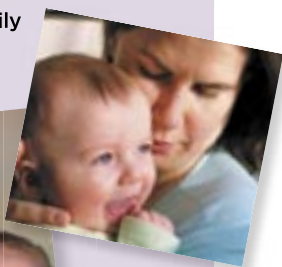
A

audience

ISSUE 4 ■ WINTER 2005 ■ WWW.AURAS.COM

AURAS Keeps Growing — In Lots of Different Ways

SOMETIMES THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAN DESIGN Giving priority to a life-event as significant as the birth of one's first child is important at AURAS. Recently, two of our staff took the beginning of that long roller coaster ride called parenthood. Now we are just as proud as the parents to add to our extended family by welcoming respectively Marco Alemán—son of Maureen Gregory and Rick Alemán—and Maxwell Roberts—son of Jeff Roberts and Amanda Cameron. While it wasn't nearly as exciting watching Jeff come closer and closer to the due date as Maureen, we still take our parenting seriously at AURAS. Maternity and paternity leave up to three months are part of our philosophy as well as liberal leave to take care of the kids, no matter how old they are. Family comes first.



Maureen & Marco



Jeff & Max

We are going to have another kind of addition in a few months. Construction is scheduled to begin soon on a new plaza in front of the AURAS BUILDING. It's a little "pocket park" created in conjunction with Montgomery County that will feature a commissioned sculpture and add a strong artistic flair to the front of our studio. Watch this space for pictures. 📷

Cover Charge

NOTHING DEFINES THE PERSONALITY OF A PUBLICATION like the cover, which explains why there is so much angst about what goes onto it each month. "Cover gurus" explore the nuances of cover lines and their effect on newsstand sales—trying to define what cover elements are responsible for their monthly variations. Put a dozen of 'em in a room and you'll probably come up with twelve different "expert" opinions on how your covers could be improved. Maybe it's time to take a more sensible approach.

All magazine covers have three interlocked priorities: 1) to communicate the personality or tone of the magazine's content; 2) to provide unique branding for the product, and 3) to clearly categorize the publication's *archetype* and promote its mission. It goes without saying that the cover should promote the content inside, but it's not so much *what* it communicates as *how* it does it.

Magazines are built on theme and variation, and covers are no exception. Your cover needs to look like *your cover*; creating a sophisticated template is the theme that allows endless creative variation.

Build a Template...

There are some givens—most magazines have nameplates, cover lines, images, periodical info; others add taglines, inset secondary images, content flags and banners and have dedicated ornamentation. The best cover designs use these chosen elements deliberately and consistently to enhance the branding and the mission of the publication.

Consider the red border of *Time* or the yellow border of *National Geographic*—a simple ornament so visually powerful it serves as the logo of the organization.

A sustainable cover template is more than just graphics, it should include a viable editorial direction—one you can actually produce—that creates a distinctive combination of image and typography for your title. The covers

of *Real Simple* are just that. *Men's Health* has created a distinctive look with monochromatic models on a white background. Imagine *O* without Oprah on the cover.

Many designers have the misguided impression that a cover ought to be a special opportunity for Art Directors to really show their chops; a platform for creative visual metaphors and striking imagery. Referring to the work of George Lois at *Esquire* in the '60s, Milton Glaser at *New York Magazine* in the '70s, or more recently, the covers of *Texas Monthly* in the '90s under the direction of DJ Stout, designers often lament the sorry state of current magazine covers.

This not-undeserved criticism misses the point—not all magazines need, or even find appropriate, those kind of high-concept editorial cover treatments—and even fewer magazines have the budget to really execute them with style. So if the editorial decision *is* made to go in that direction, the appropriate budget and talent needs to be available to pull off professional-caliber covers. Nothing is so obvious to readers as overreaching on your cover.

...and Covers Are Easier and Better

Another less-obvious benefit of perfecting your cover template is the easing of angst that often accompanies the creative process each issue. Eliminating the need to reinvent the

CONTINUES ON BACK ▶



► “COVER CHARGE” FROM FRONT

cover “wheel” every time a new cover concept comes due lets you focus on finding a better variation to your theme—and ultimately produces a cover that extends your publication’s personality, branding and mission.

Deconstructing a Cover Template

THE ARCHETYPE J-Vibe probably won’t be on a newsstand near you anytime soon, but that doesn’t mean it shouldn’t follow the teen-magazine archetype. Splashy blurbs, celebrity portraits, bright colors and trendy typography are all part of the mix that readers associate with publications in this category. Following the archetype provides direction for the cover design, and just like any other branding project, the success of the cover depends on how well it hews to the tropes of the genre while still establishing its own visual vocabulary.

THEME Like many teen publications, celebrity images or teen models are standard fodder. Availability of high quality promotional photography from actors, musicians and other *fashionistas* make them excellent choices for J-Vibe’s limited art budget.

NAMEPLATE Funky and deliberately chunky, the J-Vibe nameplate distances itself from VIBE magazine and emphasizes the J (for Jewish) to promote the mission. Magazine nameplates don’t always have to be the equivalent of logotypes, but even the simplest usage should have a visual distinctiveness that raises the nameplate above a simple typographic sample.

TAG LINE Maybe “The New Magazine for Jewish Teens” lacks a little, uh, pizzazz. But at least it tells a potential reader whom the

magazine is for. While cleverness is an asset, subtlety isn’t real helpful. AURAS produced a short-lived men’s magazine a few years ago called *ADAM*; it had a neat tagline: “For the Original Man.” On the other hand, another magazine for the Jewish market called *Moment* had a tagline “The Jewish Magazine for the ‘90s.” We used to joke that it described the age of the average reader. When redesigned, *Moment* changed its tagline to “A Conversation on Jewish Culture, Politics and Religion.”

COVER LINES Emphasizing buzzwords and creating a lively interplay between font size, face and color is the strategy behind the cover blurbs. The fonts randomly transition among the three families that are central to the interior type, but items remain visually connected through color. Blurbs are grouped newsstand-style up left on the page, despite the fact that the title isn’t actually sold on newsstands—it just has to *look* as if it is.

COVER CAPTION Distinguishing the cover caption from the other cutlines makes possible a different tone and a chance to promote more broadly the magazine’s mission.

INSET IMAGE Adding an inset provides a visual opportunity to expose an important story. In this case, the basketball story was chosen for an inset to add something of interest to guys. The inset on this template can float in the cover blurbs, but other cover templates work better when the inset has a fixed position on the cover.

SECONDARY LINES Secondary lines can promote departments or regular features that build reader loyalty or promote story types as well as specific content. These short lines are a “second effort” at getting readers into the magazine. 🗨️

What’s New on auras.com:

QUARKXPRESS 6 FREE XTENSIONS. We’ve scoured the web to find useful XTensions to add to your new Quark 6.5. Like the ones for the earlier versions, these XTensions give you valuable capability that’s not part of Quark out-of-the-box. Considering the mess that Quark’s made of their “big-deal” QuarkVistas and PSD Import, it’s nice to have some XTensions that really do work, even if they only are one-trick ponies.

PHOTOGRAPHER GUIDELINES 1.0 This pdf document explains the basics of digital photography specifically as it relates to taking photographs for print reproduction. Useful charts show how much resolution is needed and why white balance is important, and the real story behind JPEG compression, color space and RAW files.

TWO NEW FONTS More than 2,000 people have downloaded our exclusive fonts. Check out two new fonts for your pleasure: AuRoyale and AuGold.

Questions, Comments, Criticisms?

Do you have a question about design and production you’d like answered in *AuDience*? Next issue is “Big Questions—Better Pubs.” Send your Qs or Cs to robsugar@auras.com.

If you liked this, check out www.auras.com for back issues.

AuDience is AURAS’s quarterly newsletter full of ideas, opinions and inspiration for improving your publication. Back issues of *AuDience* are downloadable from our website, along with free fonts, workforms, design and production presentations and session notes. If you want to keep getting *AuDience*, or make a comment or suggestion, email robsugar@auras.com! 🗨️

AURAS DESIGN CREATES AND PRODUCES magazines, marketing materials, and corporate identity programs. We believe great design depends on both close client interaction and a mastery of production tools. We are just as proud of the way we work as of what we make.



StudioTalk



How to Avoid a GI-GOplex Your Photographers Need Guidelines to Shoot Better Digital Pictures

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY HAS BEGUN to elbow out film-based imaging even in higher-end publications. Just as we bid *adieu* to our imagesetter a year ago, it won't be long before our expensive film scanners are gathering dust. The current generation of pro cameras can easily capture enough resolution for double-page images. Even consumer cameras can produce satisfactory images for smaller size use.

The simplest of these cameras has extensive control over how the picture is recorded. If the camera isn't set up for capturing images suitable for print reproduction, the maxim "*garbage in-garbage out*" really applies. It's easy to misconfigure the camera, and images saved with the wrong settings, are difficult, if not impossible, to fix.

Here is a quick guide for optimizing camera settings to produce the best print images.

Digital Photography Checklist

❑ Use the highest resolution setting.

This seems like a no-brainer, but many casual users don't realize *what* their setting is, or why it matters. Here's a quick rule of thumb: You need *at least* 5 megapixels to come even close to having enough data for a full-page image.

❑ Use highest-quality JPEG setting on consumer cameras.

While many users get the idea of resolution, some don't realize that saving data as JPEGs can have a deleterious effect on images depending on the amount of lossy compression. Camera manufacturers do a poor job of explaining this, using settings like "fine," "standard" or "basic" to describe increasingly larger amounts of compression. High-compression JPEG artifacts are more destructive than low resolution, so use the set-

ting with the least compression when saving JPEG files. Sure, they take up more space, but memory cards are now so inexpensive that recording space should be the last concern.

❑ Use the RAW setting if it is an available option.

Some cameras—especially higher-end models—have the ability to save the raw data right from the sensor. This data has a higher bit-depth and avoids the pitfalls of lossy compression and processing artifacts, and gives the production artist the best images to manipulate.

❑ Use auto white balance on consumer cameras.

Digital camera sensors need to be calibrated to show correct color using *white balance*. It's all very technical, but there are only two things to know: auto white balance usually works better than other scene-specific settings, and the white balance is corrected by processing in-camera the sensor's data—so if you are using the RAW setting it's *usually* not important (see below.)

❑ Set white balance manually for set-ups and studio shots.

At a more professional level, white balance can be adjusted manually using a white card and the camera's manual white balance controls. This is the most accurate way to correct the color, but it rates high in PITA factor. The newest pro cameras adjust white balance *before* it becomes digitized, so adjusting for the best color captures the most data even in RAW format.

❑ Bracket photos one stop above and below meter setting.

Most cameras can be set to automatically fire off three or four bracketed exposures. Capturing a few exposure variations insures that you have not lost data in shadows or blown it out of the highlights. And, with digital data, if it's not there, it's not there.

❑ Shoot an ideal histogram exposure.

Some of the "prosumer" cameras will display a histogram—a chart of the data captured by the sensor. Regardless of what the exposure *looks like* in the viewfinder (a notoriously inaccurate gauge anyway) or what the metering measures, making an exposure that captures the widest amount of histogram width without

over or under-shooting the graph will create an image that can be most effectively corrected.

❑ Use a color calibration card in the test image for each set up as a reference for later color correction

Inexpensive color cards, like these from Kodak, placed in a few frames are invaluable when color-correcting images in prepress.



❑ Set ISO settings for automatic or between 50-200

Raising the ISO setting may seem to make the camera more sensitive, but it's similar to turning up the gain on a microphone—you get louder sound but also lots more noise.

❑ Use minimal processing settings in the camera menus.

You may like the way pictures look when adding saturation, sharpness and contrast in the camera, but these are tweaks best left to production technicians using your images. The less the data is manipulated by the simple camera firmware, the more natural the image will look when finally corrected by far more sophisticated controls available in a powerful image-manipulation program on a computer workstation.

❑ Don't post-process the images; deliver the original files from the camera.

It isn't beneficial to try to "fix" images yourself, or (aak!) convert the native RGB to CMYK. The unaltered images from your camera are *always* preferred.

AURAS has produced a detailed explanation of the way digital cameras work and why carefully setting up the camera is critical for best results. You can download our [Digital Camera Guidelines 1.0](#) from our web site, and use them to help your photographers understand what kind of pictures will—at least technically—make the best printed images. 📷



Lossy leader. These enlarged images show how an uncompressed TIFF file (*left*) holds up better than a highly-compressed JPEG (*right*) at the same resolution.

AURASworks

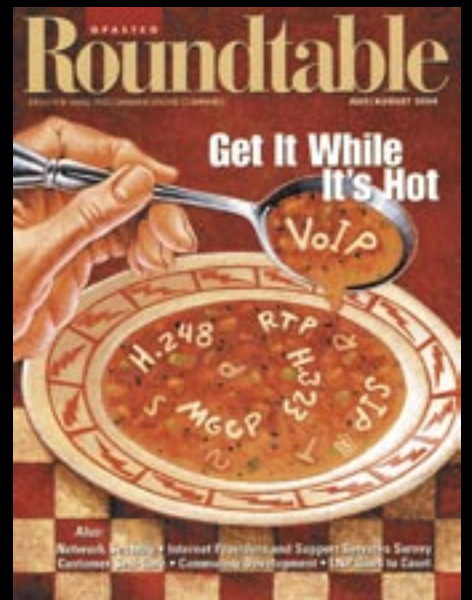
COVER STORY We've chosen some favorites from magazines we have produced to show how visual consistency and a clear editorial direction make interesting covers that exude brand identity and establish the personality of the publication. None of these magazines has a large art budget, but creativity and a tight template make it possible to produce compelling product.



ROUNDTABLE A simple idea works here—technical stuff is more accessible if you use humor. These covers deal with thorny technology issues for small telephone companies; they're made more accessible by funny metaphors.



MOMENT After a redesign aimed at lowering the readership age, we opted for edgy, provocative covers that would cause controversy and ruffle some feathers—a perhaps too-successful approach. The high-concept covers were expensive to produce and difficult to greenlight, causing no end of *tsuris*. Later, when we switched to newsy, journalistic covers, readers thought we'd gone dull.



FOOD MANAGEMENT B-to-B pubs usually don't have a lot of money to lavish on covers, so, staying true to the magazine's mission, FM covers rotated among expensive high-concept metaphors, less expensive location portraits and free promotional food shots.



▷ REINVIGORATE YOUR PUBLICATION ▷ ENERGIZE STAFF

▷ GET A FREE CRITIQUE ▷ SUPERCHARGE WORKFLOW

AURAS Master Classes

ON MAGAZINE
CREATIVITY, DESIGN
& PRODUCTION

Register
Early and
Receive
a FREE
Publication
Critique

AURAS Master Classes Give Maximum Value

Busy magazine pros have a hard time finding the time or money to take professional enrichment sessions. AURAS Master Classes are designed to be convenient to attend and a clearly justifiable investment:

COMPLETE TRANSFERABILITY & FLEXIBILITY. Full-session attendees can share their registration, so the most appropriate person can attend each class. (See the reverse for a full description of the classes)

MULTIPLE DISCOUNTS FOR STAFF ATTENDANCE. Additional registrations from the same company are discounted a generous 40 percent.

LIMITED SIZE FOR UNLIMITED ACCESS. Only 40 registrants will be accepted (first come, first served!) Each class also includes a catered lunch, as well as plenty of time for questions and conversation.

SIX MONTHS OF "TECH SUPPORT." The entire staff of AURAS will be available to help with your design and production issues.

A FREE CRITIQUE. Register for a full session by April 15th and you'll save money AND be eligible for a great opportunity: A magazine critique from AURAS. Over 50 publications have received critiques from AURAS in the last three years. Those critiques, normally incurring a \$2K fee, cover every aspect of the publication's design and even answers specific questions posed by staff. Early registrants will get similar treatment—plus a face-to-face "debriefing" during the session dates. Go to www.auras.com/masterclass for full details.

For more information or to register, go to www.auras.com

Your publication will benefit from Master Classes if you want to:

- ▷ Produce a livelier, more engaging magazine
- ▷ Increase reader loyalty and satisfaction
- ▷ Save money on production
- ▷ Have a happier, more productive staff

Two-Day Intensive Workshop

- ▷ Four classes/two days: June 9 & 10, 2005
- ▷ In Washington, DC, the Nation's Capital

“Clear, engaging presentations of real-life problems and how to solve them... Good examples of before-and-after. I really enjoyed the sessions, and got a lot out of them. Excellent from both a design and production standpoint.”

— RICHARD ZOEHRER, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, PRIMEDIA BUSINESS MAGAZINES & MEDIA

Do You Know...

- ▷ What's the **WEAKEST PART** of your publication—and how you can improve it?
- ▷ What are the **FOUR DIMENSIONS** of design?
- ▷ How **ARCHETYPES** can give your pub more credibility?
- ▷ Why "**TENT POLES**" make your title more interesting?
- ▷ How you can **SAVE THOUSANDS** without compromising quality?
- ▷ What you should **DEMAND** from any firm doing a **REDESIGN**?
- ▷ How you can **INCREASE** your publication's "**Q**"?
- ▷ What your readership **REALLY WANTS**?
- ▷ How come it's so dang hard getting every issue **OUT THE DOOR**?

If you *don't* know the answers to these questions—or worse—didn't even know to ask them, AURAS Master Classes could be the best investment your publication has ever made.

Seasoned publishers, editors and designers who work in associations, corporate communications, or small publication companies can benefit from sessions with Robert Sugar, whose company—AURAS Design—has designed over 70 publications of all types over the past two decades.

Rob has taught thousands of publication professionals at conferences such as Folio: Show. His unique perspective on magazine design and production was developed through the ongoing design and production of hundreds of magazine issues.

AURAS Master Classes have been expanded with longer sessions, more interactivity, and free critiques for early registrants. **SIGN UP TODAY!**

ABOUT Rob Sugar

Robert Sugar conducts the **Master Classes**. As principal and creative director of AURAS, Rob has designed or redesigned over 70 titles in nearly twenty years. From its building in downtown Silver Spring, Md., his studio currently provides on-going design and production support for a dozen publications, as well as producing corporate identity, marketing and collateral materials for a variety of businesses.

Rob taught Publication Design at The American University for nine years, and is a sought-after speaker for corporate and industry audiences at conferences around the country. A pioneer in Digital Workflow, Rob was a founding member of the International Design by Electronics Association (IDEA) in the early '90s—one of the first designer-originated associations working to improve process and product in the emerging desktop publishing industry.

AURAS started using an all-digital workflow in 1992. Beyond excellent design, AURAS became one of the few design studios to incorporate film output and color separation in-house. Through 15 years AURAS has become expert in both design and digital production.

“I love this guy! Sugar is good at breaking a large subject into bite-size and definable pieces. [He] has a true understanding of the art and editorial relationship.”

FROM FOLIO:SHOW
EVALUATION SHEETS

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

A Four-Class Session Pass is only \$1100. Individual Classes are \$350. Each class is four hours long, including a networking lunch. A second registrant for the entire session from the same company is only \$600. Registration is fully transferable.

EARLY REGISTER

Paid session registrations by April 15 are only \$900. Save 15% over the regular registration fee. Additional registrations are only \$500. Individual classes are \$275 by April 15.

LOCATION

All classes will be held at the AURAS Conference Facility, 8435 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland, Second Floor. Convenient lodging is located nearby. Call Ted Bonar at 301-587-4300 for help arranging a reservation.

FOR MORE INFO

ON THE WEB: Go to www.auras.com/masterclass for additional information, downloadable study sheets or to sign up online.

VIA EMAIL: You can always send questions via e-mail to Robsugar@auras.com.

BY PHONE: Call AURAS at 301-587-4300 and ask for Ted Bonar for help with any questions or phone registration.

Four Insightful Classes

CLASS ONE Magazine Design: What Works & Why

MD:WW&W is only available here this year. It has excited thousands of industry professionals for more than a decade at conferences such as Folio:Show. Not just for designers, but an excellent way for everyone who works on a magazine to see how design and editorial work together. This class can help your entire staff “get on the same page.”

MD:WW&W presents new fundamentals of magazine design that lead to sophisticated techniques for improving the look, content, and process of your magazine. Review dozens of examples of redesign, and put everything together during a group wrap-up where your own publication problems can be evaluated and discussed.

Examine these critical issues:

- ▷ The three types of design and why each is important
- ▷ The “basics” of design, why they are often ignored and why getting them right is crucial for success
- ▷ Mission statements and business plans as the fundamentals for design
- ▷ Use “archetypes” to engage the reader
- ▷ Prioritization and navigation ideas help your reader “get it”
- ▷ Leverage the competition
- ▷ The Four Dimensions of Design
- ▷ Get the most from covers and contents

CLASS TWO The Ten-Step Magazine Self-Critique

Evaluating your own publication can be an impossible task. Day-to-day production and getting the latest issue out the door get in the way of “big picture” thinking for you and your staff. This class provides the resources and process to conduct a critique that analyzes every major aspect of your title, from design to editorial content to production values.

During the class, we will go through a sample critique demonstrating the evaluation criteria and the focus of each step. Following a break, we will conduct short exercises using your own publications to prepare for a fuller, in-house critique that you will then be qualified to conduct yourself.

The critique can answer these questions:

- ▷ Is your mission statement well-formed and reflected in your magazine's content?
- ▷ How effective is your template?
- ▷ Is your editorial calendar improving your publication?
- ▷ Do the navigational elements in your magazine help readers?
- ▷ Do your contents page and cover work as hard as they should?
- ▷ Are your production standards high enough?
- ▷ How can you fine-tune your redesign?

CLASS THREE Essential Production Techniques

Discover design and production tips and tricks learned through 14 years of digital design at AURAS. QuarkXPress, Microsoft Word and Adobe Photoshop have been *defacto* industry-standards for every magazine publisher. Learn how to use these programs to maximize the productivity and creativity of your staff, and what new choices—like Adobe InDesign—could mean for you.

This class will explore workflow techniques to maximize efficiency, maintain quality and consistency, and improve the creativity of editors, designers and production artists. We might even find ways to eliminate your worst production bottlenecks and cut costs!

These topics will improve your productivity:

- ▷ Create a “Standard Operating Procedure”
- ▷ Quark or InDesign?
- ▷ OSX Migration issues
- ▷ Valuable XTensions that increase productivity and creativity
- ▷ Optimize your Mac for greatest productivity and reliability
- ▷ Get the most from Acrobat and Distiller
- ▷ Proofing strategies
- ▷ In-house ad trafficking strategies
- ▷ Photoshop as the ultimate prepress tool
- ▷ Improve in-house scanning quality

CLASS FOUR Trade and Association Publications

B-to-B and Association titles have their own unique editorial and design issues. Producing a quality publication in an environment of controlled expenditures and competing with titles produced by larger publishers present formidable challenges to these niche magazines.

Explore techniques that make your magazine a stronger asset for your organization and an information vehicle that becomes a necessity for your readership. Review redesigns of these types of titles and the philosophies behind their editorial structure and design priorities.

Your publication will benefit from these areas:

- ▷ Design counts: easy ways to make your publication more interesting, your readership excited and your management happier.
- ▷ Examine the calendar: make the year special
- ▷ Ten editorial and design strategies for improving your publication
- ▷ Covers, contents pages and issue flow: the keys to reader interest.
- ▷ Celebrate the esoteric for maximum benefit
- ▷ Become the 800-pound gorilla in your industry
- ▷ Politics and value: positioning your publication as an essential value-added benefit in your organization beyond the bottom line

PLEASE FILL OUT A SEPARATE REGISTRATION FOR EACH ATTENDEE

YES! I WANT TO ATTEND...

FULL SESSION JUNE 9&10 2005:

- Four-Class Session Pass
- Additional Pass from same company

INDIVIDUAL CLASSES:

- JUNE 9 Magazine Design: What Works & Why
- JUNE 9 The Ten-Step Magazine Self-Critique
- JUNE 10 Essential Production Techniques
- JUNE 10 Trade and Association Publications

FEE

\$1,100
\$600

EARLY REGISTRATION

\$900 BY 4/15/05
\$500 BY 4/15/05

\$275 BY 4/15/05
\$275 BY 4/15/05
\$275 BY 4/15/05
\$275 BY 4/15/05



TOTAL CLASS FEES _____

MARYLAND REEGRISTRANTS MUST ADD 5% TAX _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED (Make check payable to AURAS) _____

NAME _____

TITLE _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Mail paid registrations to:
AURAS MASTER CLASSES • 8435 Georgia Avenue, Third Floor • Silver Spring, MD 20910
or fax registration to 301-587-6836