

JY Alia

A new typeface family by Jack Yan



JACK YAN & ASSOCIATES

Honesty

JY Alia 160 pt

Effortless work

JY Alia Italic 104 pt

Inspirational revival

JY Alia Bold 68 pt

Taking our time

JY Alia Bold Italic 92 pt

DIPLOMATIC FUNCTION

JY Alia Small Caps (included in Roman OpenType) 57 pt

Jack Yan's JY Alia is a follow-up to his successful JY Ætna typeface family of 1994–5. SINCE Ætna's release, the JY&A Fonts range has been missing a classical aldine complement, *something which this latest family finally solves.*

A history of JY Alia

A peek behind the making of Jack Yan's new typeface family—and just who is it named for?

JACK YAN, the first digital typeface designer in New Zealand, built his reputation on classically designed, well kerned fonts. His output in the 1990s was prolific, and his families tended to have a minimum of 2,700 kerning pairs at a time when 1,000 was considered more than sufficient.

In the 1990s, one of his earliest families was JY Ætna, a Bembo revival. He has never credited himself for the work—specimens from JY&A Fonts always gives Francesco Griffo and Giovantonio Tagliente as its designers—but in some ways, he has become associated with it.

The family was best suited for around 14 pt, making it less useful for text settings. Yan himself used it for headings and sub-headings for the most part, complementing it with other aldine cuts. But through the years the omission of a classically designed aldine irked him, and in 2008 he began work on JY Alia, a typeface family that would fill the void.

At its initial launch, the trade mark JY&A Fonts practice of producing a full complement of alternatives has not been followed: it was felt that users should benefit from the family at a reasonable price as soon as possible. However, JY&A Fonts will add to the family, including slightly higher priced versions with small caps and alts. Consumer feedback about which characters to include will be welcome. A JY Alia subfamily will also be released and Yan promises innovations there, too.

Other trade mark cues are there: Alia has 3,200–5,100 kerning pairs, for instance. OpenType and TrueType versions have a full Latin character set, as has been the practice for many JY&A Fonts releases since 1999. For those who require it, Yan has insisted on releasing versions with a smaller character set, and very good hinting, in PostScript Type 1 for Windows.

The design is inspired by his earlier JY Ætna family, but it is not a mere text version of that. As a perfectly suitable Bembo Book from Monotype now exists, Yan saw no need to slavishly follow a historical model: he liberally reinterpreted the aldine style, injecting elements of one of his favourite families, Plantin.

His love of Plantin stems from 1980s' issues of *Autocar*, which adopted the typeface then. (Historically, Plantin had been used by *Autocar* in earlier years.) But the overall skeleton does not detract far from the Bembo style: Alia was conceived to solve a problem, which it does admirably.

As with earlier JY&A Fonts releases

(and the overwhelming majority of Yan's output), JY Alia began as *physical* drawings, not electronic ones. *Desktop* readers in Australia were given a preview in an issue last year of Yan's sketches. It is, by twenty-first-century standards, an "old school" design. A test printing was done in an issue of *Lucire*—handy when one has magazines to try type out in.

'My style has matured since the early days,' says Yan. 'I have been better able to re-create Alia's nuances, sticking to the script and not letting the technology dictate as much. Then, on the other hand, the technology is better at letting me express what I have in mind.'

The design is more monotone than earlier serif work from Yan—a necessity given JY Alia's text ambitions—and more robust. It is a gentler typeface than the romans from his 1995–6 releases, JY Tranquility and JY Pinnacle, though JY Alia has some commonalities with the former.

The italics are closer to the Blado–Bembo model, but again a few glyphs have taken a Plantin path, notably the y, which gives the design more body.

The 'grunt work', as Yan calls it, was still done on Fontographer 3.5, a program dating back to the early 1990s, with weeks of refining and meeting standards done in the much newer FontLab.

It can be set with JY Ætna, such as in this text, where the initial cap is in Ætna Roman 72 pt.

JY Alia is Jack Yan's first public release for several years. He has been working on numerous private accounts, and has spent some time building up the *Lucire* fashion brand as a print magazine and, at one point, the first general consumer title to have used all-New Zealand typefaces. (Yan's own *CAP* in the 1990s was probably the first specialist title to have adopted only New Zealand-produced digital fonts.) His type for *Lucire*, including the Caslon-inspired JY Fiduci and the Swiss-category *Lucire* itself, could be released.

Alia has been named for the first role played by American actress Alicia Witt in *Dune*. (*Alicia* had already been taken by another company.) 'She's one of Hollywood's most intelligent and underrated women, and I think she deserves a typeface named for her,' says Yan.

JY Alia's first four fonts will appear for retail sale on MyFonts.com and Fonts.com in the first half of 2009, and will be sold via other retailers. Additional information will likely appear on Yan's blog at jackyan.com/blog during the year.

JY Alia Roman and scosf

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The Brand Manifesto
September 2002

1. **Branding unites people's passions.** People are not born financial creatures. We recognize that revenue and returns on investment do not concern the majority of people. Branding respects that we are passionate people who are inspired and who have freedom. Therefore, branding activities must be human and humane. Branding, not numbers, provides the interface between organizations and audiences.
2. **Brands must have focus to be relevant.** Branding is not a mere gloss but something that must penetrate the whole organization. If there is a corporate philosophy, everything about that corporation must reflect that. Therefore, there must not be false claims about helping the planet. The philosophy must be focused enough and real enough to be meaningful to people.
3. **Branding is about delivering what you promise.** We believe that every claim the organization makes must be sincere and must be carried out. The strongest brands are promise-keeping ones. Failing to do so leads to an embarrassing exposé. Good branding leads to sincerity while failure to use branding principles leads to collapse.
4. **Good brands should make people happy.** Whatever a brand has to offer to consumers (*whether purely functional, emotional, associative, empathetic*), it must make people happy to part with their (*hard earned*) money and satisfied in the process. A company's employees must understand this and derive their own happiness and satisfaction from this. Shareholders should reward companies that have such brands and we in turn must create them sincerely for our clients.
5. **Finance is broken.** We believe money is a poor snapshot of human value. Brands, however, create value. The branding industry is about creating value for our customers. It makes more sense to measure the ingredients of branding and relationships.
6. **Brands are not advertisements.** Branding is not promotion. Promotion is part of branding, but only a small part. Good brands act, not just speak or sell. Organizations must live the brand, not just in advertising and promotions.
7. **Brands bring humanity to the organization.** Brands are the rallying-point for the positive empowerment of all connected with the organization.
8. **Brands create community.** Brands are not created by a handful of big bosses, but by everyone in a system. A good branding exercise involves and builds a community. They, therefore, have a duty to educate and reinforce positive behaviours, and can even alleviate some of the world's worst problems.

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JY ALIA ITALIC 9/9.5 PT

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Notes, in white on black

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Jack Yan & Associates' website can be found at <http://jya.net>;

Jack Yan's personal website is at <http://jackyan.com>.

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