




f ff f

Absara

FFONTEONT FOCUS





FF ABSARA is Xavier Dupré's fourth text typeface, and the first one equipped with a matching sans-serif. In his earlier text faces, Dupré examined aspects of the French typographic tradition: echoes of the Garamond heritage in **FF PARANGO** and romantic lyricism in **FF ANGKOON**. **FF Absara** is distinctly different – less polished, more direct. While its proportions and rhythm remain rooted in 16th-century French typography, Absara borrows the straightforwardness and simplicity of its details from contemporary Dutch type design.

<<
Genesis of the FF Absara. Around 2000/01, Dupré sketched a renaissance antiqua, the Amenofis, with heavy serifs and only two weights: thin and light. Two years later, this became a starting point for the Absara.

Although Dupré's typefaces cover a wide range of forms and styles, the underlying motivation has largely remained the same. *I am constantly searching for letterforms that are unusual, yet functional*, he says. *In general, I suppose you could say that I try to design rather sensual typefaces in which the influence of handwriting is still palpable, although I certainly wouldn't want to call them calligraphic. I try to avoid static shapes that are too stiff or too strictly based on a vertical axis, like many of today's grotesques.*

In Dupré's body of published typefaces, **FF Absara** marks a kind of transition. Whereas the earlier faces are, to some extent, 'style exercises', leaning rather heavily on the conventions of their respective genres, with Absara he truly seems to have found his own voice.

Absara was designed while Xavier Dupré was living in Cambodia. Its name means sacred (female) dancer in Khmer, Cambodia's national language.

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Early and final version of the Absara Bold Italic

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aa

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Both Absara and Absara Sans have five weights, ranging from Thin to Bold. The Light and Regular weights can be used for body text, using the Medium and Bold weights respectively for emphasis. The low-contrast Thin version was designed for display purposes.



The designer's initial impulse for FF Absara was a desire to get away from the vulnerability of his preceding text face, FF Angkoon. Dupré wanted to recreate the powerful text image of a page printed in letterpress, which conveys the impact of metal letters on the paper. Having already examined that principle in FF Parango, Dupré now aimed at realizing a similar effect with more efficient means, taking his cues from the work of Fred Smeijers (FF QUADRAAT) and Martin Majoor (FF SCALA). Instead of the curved verticals, cupped serifs and smooth corners that characterize his earlier text faces, FF Absara has straight stems, sharp corners and a certain crudeness. At the same time, there is a striking originality to some of its shapes, for which Dupré cites another inspiration source: the work of type designer Ladislav Mandel – such as his 1983 text face **MESSIDOR**.

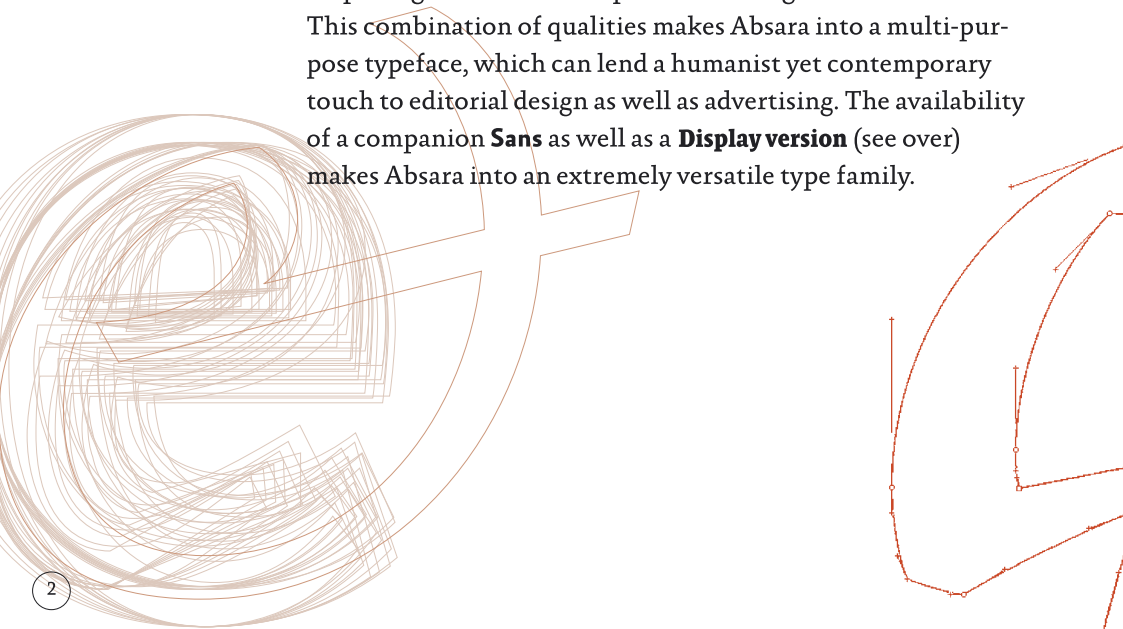
Messidor by Ladislav Mandel

hamburgefionts
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Versatility

As a typeface for setting body text, FF Absara has remarkable clarity. In small sizes the overall impression is energetic and agreeable. When used as a display typeface, it explodes with surprising details and abrupt ductus changes.

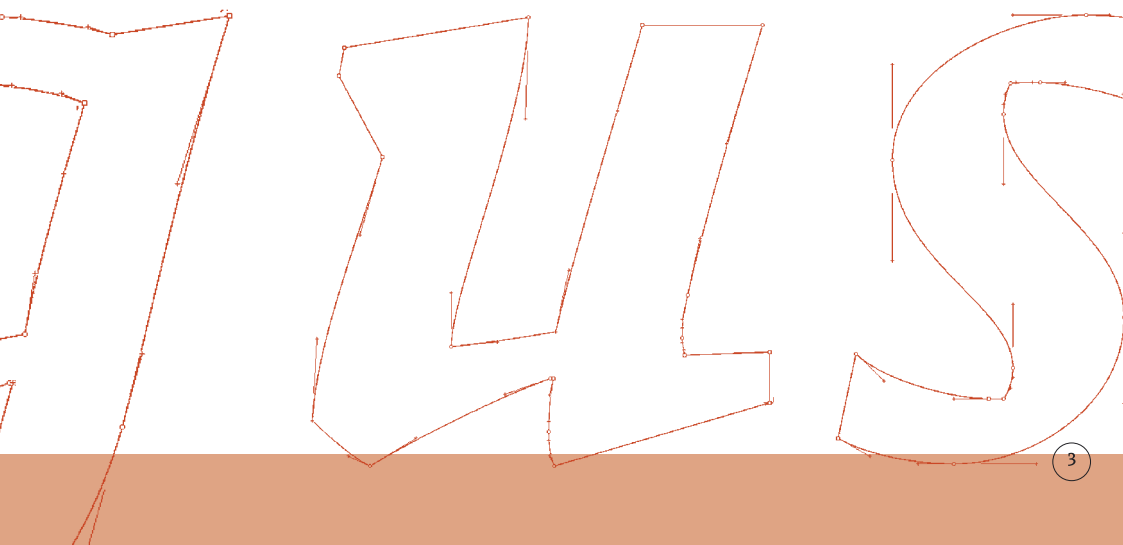
This combination of qualities makes Absara into a multi-purpose typeface, which can lend a humanist yet contemporary touch to editorial design as well as advertising. The availability of a companion **Sans** as well as a **Display version** (see over) makes Absara into an extremely versatile type family.





Italics

Although utterly contemporary, Absara incorporates numerous references to humanist handwriting. Absara Italic especially is reminiscent of the italics cut by GRIFFO for Aldus Manutius in 15th-century Venice. Like Griffo's seminal design, it recalls the unadorned, plain handwriting which could be made by a monk in the Quattrocento, writing page after page with no other ambition but to make a clear, well-crafted copy. The italic's angles give it a nervous rhythm which provides a strong contrast with the upright, so that words set in italics are clearly highlighted. For a type designer, says Dupré, it is a pleasure to design such a distinctive italic: *It's like making two different alphabets, almost a feminine and a masculine version of the same idea.*



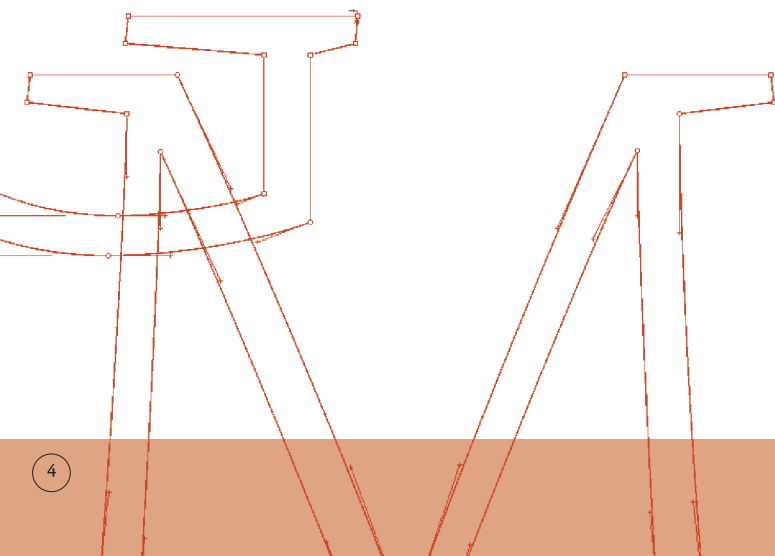
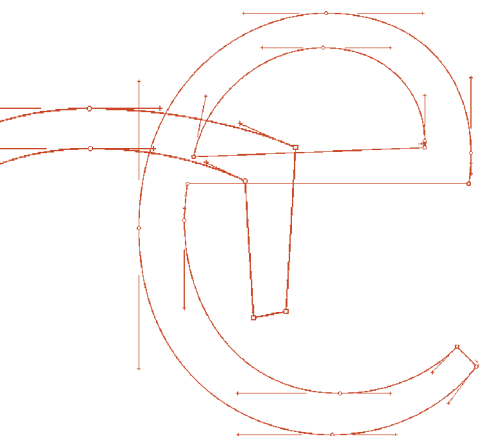
FF Absara Sans

FF ABSARA SANS is the ideal companion to the serified Absara. Based on the same skeleton, it distinguishes itself by its low contrast and simple structure. Yet it still has enough of a humanist feel to lend warmth to a text. The Italics have the same dynamic rhythm as in the serified original. Many forms were subtly simplified; some, like the lower-case 'y', were redrawn from scratch.

FF Absara Sans works well as a secondary typeface for complex designs set in Absara – using it for introductions, captions, subheads or footnotes. However, thanks to its humanist construction, Absara Sans is also a text typeface in its own right, especially suited for listings, annual reports or catalogues of contemporary art and architecture.

FF Absara Headline

With this recent addition, the Absara family gains an even stronger position as a tool for magazine design and advertising. ABSARA HEADLINE, available in a serified and a sans-serif version, has increased x-height and slightly narrower characters. Both have an added Black weight for extra impact. The serified Black version with its sturdy serifs becomes almost a slab-serif, adding yet another flavour to the multifaceted family. *It's perhaps not terribly original nowadays to add a Headline version, says its designer, but it is fun to see one's typeface change character in different guises. So the temptation is hard to resist.*



K

Type Specimen

FF Absara

K

FF Absara

Thin

Thin Italic

Light

Light Italic

Regular

Italic

Medium

Medium Italic

Bold

Bold Italic

FF Absara Sans

Thin

Thin Italic

Light

Light Italic

Regular

Italic

Medium

Medium Italic

Bold

Bold Italic

FF Absara Headline

Regular

Medium

Bold

Black

K

FF Absara Sans Headline

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ff

Absara Sans



FF Absara Sans Thin

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FF Absara Sans Light

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FF Absara Sans Regular

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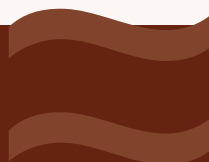
FF Absara Sans Medium

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Absara Sans Italic



Absara

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FF Absara Thin

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Absara Sans Italic



FF Absara Sans Thin Italic

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FF Absara Sans Light Italic

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FF Absara Sans Medium Italic

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FF Absara Sans Bold Italic

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FF Absara Thin Italic

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FF Absara Light Italic

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FF Absara Medium Italic

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8/10 PT

Printed matter is a very general term, taking in things as different in kind as a birth certificate, the NEW YORKER, an airline ticket, the Yellow Pages, WAR AND PEACE, and everything one can think of. It might be thought that, as in other fields of industrial design, a type designer would have a *particular sort of work* in mind when he or she begins a new typeface. Types

10/12 PT

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18/22 PT

Printed matter is a general term, taking in things as different in kind as a *birth certificate*, the NEW YORKER, an airline

8/10 PT

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18/22 PT

Printed matter is a general term, taking in things as different in kind as a *birth certificate*, the NEW YORKER, an airline

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FF ABSARA LIGHT & MEDIUM

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FF ABSARA REGULAR & BOLD

18/22 PT

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Absara Sans Headline

FF Absara Sans Headline Thin

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890 €£\$
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ßœæäéøñ «„fifl“!“?“.»,»@& { }

FF Absara Sans Headline Light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890 €£\$
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FF Absara Sans Headline Regular

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FF Absara Sans Headline Medium

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FF Absara Sans Headline Bold

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FF Absara Sans Headline Black

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Absara Headline

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18/22 PT

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10/12 PT

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Printed matter is a very general term, taking in things as different in kind as a birth certificate, the «New Yorker», an airline ticket, the Yellow Pages, «War and Peace», and everything else one can think of. It might be thought that, as in other fields of industrial design, a type designer would have a par

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Printed matter is a term, taking in things as different in kind as a birth certificate, the «New Yorker», an airline ticket, the Yellow Pages and everything else one can think of. It might be th

72/82 PT

**Was will der
Mann da auf
der Veranda**



ABSARA ITALIC 8

9 ABSARA ITALIC



k ABSARA SANS BOLD ITALIC



FF ABSARA CHARACTERISTICS

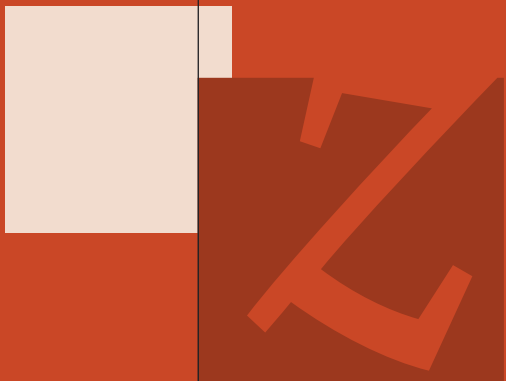


k ABSARA HEAD REGULAR

2 ABSARA ITALIC



z ABSARA ITALIC





ABSARA ITALIC *a*



r ABSARA MEDIUM



æ ABSARA HEAD MEDIUM



ABSARA MEDIUM *p*

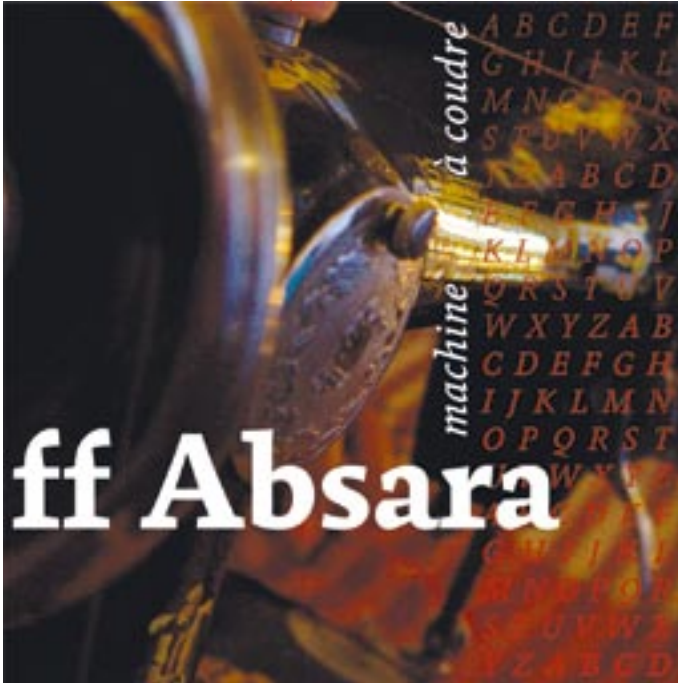


ABSARA SANS ITALIC *p*



ABSARA SANS HEAD BLACK *s*

Promotional picture, design Xavier Dupré



Poster for a music band, design F. Moissette





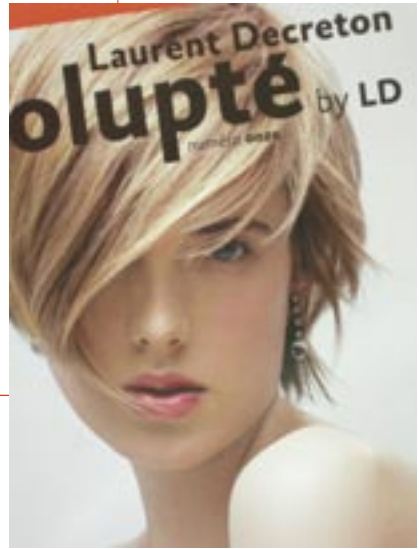
Book cover, design Xavier Dupré

FF 2005 Calendar, design F. Moissette





Magazine and folder for Laurent Decretton, 'Haute coiffure française', design F. Moissette



Book cover, design C. Liger



JANIS BRESNAHAN



FOR EDUCATION

Logo for a street race, design C. Rugen



T-shirt, design C. Rugen

CD cover, design C. Rugen





The designer of FF Absara, Xavier Dupré, is one of France's most prolific young type designers. His typefaces, most of which were released as FontFonts, show remarkable skill and variety. His display scripts are joyous and colourful, yet very readable; his text faces are well made and remarkably inventive. This combination of diverse qualities is the result of an equally varied background. Dupré studied calligraphy and typography at the Scriptorium of Toulouse, one of the few schools in Europe specializing in type design. He then became art director at Black & Gold, one of Paris' main studios specializing in packaging design. There, he worked for brands such as Président, Kraft and Nestlé. Simultaneously, he participated in an historical project based on research by Ladislav Mandel, grand old man of French typography who died in 2006, aged 85. In 1999, Dupré collaborated intensively with Mandel when digitizing Solinus, a typeface based on late 15th-century handwritten book pages. Dupré regards the work and personality of the Hungarian-born Mandel as one of his main influences. In 2001 he quit his job as a packaging designer and art director because he felt ready for a change. He then took off for Cambodia, where he lived for almost three years. His relative isolation there allowed him to concentrate fully on type design. Not only did he create some of his best text typefaces in Cambodia, he was also invited by local NGOs to design typefaces for the Cambodian language, Khmer. It is very well possible that typefaces such as FF Angkoon and FF Absara owe part of their unusual shapes and atmosphere to the unique visual culture and architecture of Cambodia.

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Other FontFonts by Xavier Dupré

FF Parango (2001) FF Parango was based on a typeface that Dupré designed during his studies at the Scriptorium de Toulouse. It is vaguely based on the proportions of the greatest of French old-styles – the typefaces cut by Claude Garamond – and is Dupré’s own interpretation of the French typographic style ‘with its alternating narrow and wide letters’. With its soft angles and low contrast between thick and thin strokes it evokes the feel of ancient printed pages; yet its crisp look makes it distinctly contemporary.

FF Reminga (2001) FF Reminga is a contemporary text face, rather sober and designed to be especially legible in text sizes around 12 pt. The Titling versions are narrower and even more elegant and more strongly calligraphic.

FF Jambono | FF Tartine (2002) Dupré designed Tartine and Jambono in 2000–2001 when working as a type designer at a Paris packaging design agency. There was no special commission for the alphabets; he simply wanted a couple of complete fonts up his sleeve whenever a client would make an express order for a logo or packaging. The playful FF Jambono is the more versatile of the two: It was designed as a display typeface, but thanks to the wide array of weights it can also be used for medium-sized short texts.

FF Angkoon (2003) FF Angkoon is part of the French tradition of personal, idiosyncratic type design that is exemplified by faces like Vendôme by Excoffon/Ganeau or Eras by Albert Boton. Yet there is also a non-Western influence at work. Dupré designed FF Angkoon while living and working in Cambodia. Although it was not his intention to capture elements of Khmer writing or architecture in his typeface, FF Angkoon does have an uncommon sophistication that recalls that of the Angkor temples.

FF Megano (2005) With FF Megano, Dupré set out to make a ‘fun sans’. The roundness of the diagonals is evocative of feminine curves, making the typeface a favourite for cosmetics packaging. As with most of Dupré’s typefaces, FF Megano is ‘a mixture of sweet and aggressive shapes’. Dupré says he ‘tried to combine the things I like in typography – humanistic oblique axis, high readability, and a touch of fun.’

FF Sanuk (2005) A lively sans-serif that combines readable shapes with a calligraphic spirit. FF Sanuk’s roman letter forms are clean and crisply drawn, but their stylish detailing showcases Dupré’s artistic sensibilities. Nearly upright italics convey a contemporary air while maintaining a high degree of legibility. The family boasts eight weights, from the delicate Hairline to a chunky Fat face, and is an inspired choice for both text and display typography.



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