

Fraunces by Charles@Thorn.

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A Variable Font Family.
Available on **Google Fonts**.

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Introducing **Fraunces**, a new typeface family by **Charles&Thorn**.

In the early summer of 2018, Google Fonts approached us with the challenge of designing a display typeface. I spent some time perusing the catalog, and was struck by a pretty big hole in the typographic voices available, a hole normally occupied by Cooper Black, Windsor, Souvenir, Clearface, and other “wonky” typefaces made popular in the 1970’s.

ABCabc123 *Cooper Black*

ABCabc123 *ITC Souvenir*

ABCabc123 *Windsor URW*

We’ve played with this style often in our lettering work. Even our logo is a not-so-subtle nod to Windsor’s characteristic leaning n’s.

goofy! **Cooper
Type**

One of my favorite aspects of these typefaces is their ubiquitousness. They are used on menus, printed ephemera of all sorts, signs. The friendliness and warmth of these typefaces has made them enduring across not only industries, but time periods.

Most of these typefaces trace their origins back to the Arts & Crafts experimentations of the late 1800’s—early 1900’s. As I was doing research on this era of type, I noticed a term pop up often: “Old Style”. What quality makes them “Old Style” is a bit difficult to comprehend, since none of these typefaces share much in common besides a misunderstanding of what “old” typefaces looked like.

I think an ideal example of this misinterpretation comes from comparing two interpretations of supposedly the same source; the type of renaissance printer Nicolas Jenson. William Morris’ Golden Type (which may have single-handedly kicked off the craze) spoke much more to a desire to romanticize the effects of printing on letterforms, a nostalgia for a letterform that never truly existed. Bruce Rogers’ Centaur serves as a stark counterpoint to this, instead interpreting Jenson’s type through it’s calligraphic roots.

**¶ To some of us when we first read it, now
many years ago, it seemed to point out a new road
on which the world should travel. And in spite of**

William Morris’ Golden Type

**the others and bade them flay and burn with fire the
which lay there, slaughtered by my pitiless sword.
conjuring without cease the Gods, great Hades and**

Bruce Rogers’ Centaur

Elbert Hubbard, founder of the Roycroft Guild and a contemporary to Morris in the United States, exemplified this romanticism.

**In Aid of Bart’s
AT NEMO’S CLUB**

Additionally, the types of Robert DeLittle captured this spirit.

In Aid of Bart's

Overall, my goal with Fraunces was to capture the spirit of this movement, not just a single font. I hope that the range of expression you find within Fraunces captures that.

Key Features & Design Features

Fraunces consists of a Roman and Italic. Within each are 4 axes: Weight, Goofy, Wonk, and Optical Size.

Type designers in the past would provide fixed instances of an axis (such as Light, Regular, Bold, Black). Variable Fonts allow granular control of each of these axes, and allows the user to access all the calculations in between.

The main axes intended for the end user to use are the Weight, Goofy, and Wonk. The Goofy axis controls the "wetness" or "goofiness" of the typeface, while the Wonk axis controls substitutions of all the leaning characters in the Roman, and the exaggerated flag characters in the italic.

The Optical Size axis makes automatic size specific adjustments to the type. At larger sizes (Optical Max), the contrast between thick & thin increases (especially in the Goofy Min), the x-height reduces, the letter width compresses, and letter spacing decreases to a tighter fitting. In the smaller sizes (Optical Min), the x-height increases, contrast decreases, the letter width expands, and letter spacing increases. Additionally, at 18pt and below, the wonky characters are automatically substituted for the normalized characters.

□ specimen specific text

On pages XX, XX, and XX, you'll find more detailed explanations and diagrams of these axes.

Weight

While the Black side of the typeface draws inspiration from Cooper Black, and high contrast transitional typefaces, the Light is more difficult to draw a historical comparison. Oswald Cooper drew a lighter version of Cooper, that seems to carry very little in common with its Black companion besides its overall shape. Kyle Wayne Benson's Gooper showcases a sensible skeleton for this letterform, sharing more in common with monolinear typewriter faces. Fraunces follows this model, albeit with a more buttoned up approach.

Soft vs. Sharp

Although Fraunces is drawn entirely with rounded serifs, it achieves sharpness in the Goofy Min area of the design space with extremely high contrast.

Wonk

The leaning h/n/m is a major characteristic of Windsor, which isn't without historical precedent. Diagonal movement is often seen in the Uncial a/d. Windsor seems to take liberty with this idea and gratuitously applies it to the h/n/m.

Type designers introduced the horizontally squished lowercase f and j as a way to avoid the need for ligatures. This logic places an emphasis on economy. In the Italic, this logic is extended to the flagged characters of the d and l.

HONK
FOR

WONKY
FOUNTS

Back by Popular De

Fraunces Roman Thin Optical Max

Celebrating 123 Ye

Fraunces Roman Light Optical Max

Years of Service in

Fraunces Roman Regular Optical Max

Cutting Edge Tec

Fraunces Roman Semibold Optical Max

Giving 110 to Ou

Fraunces Roman Bold Optical Max

Huge Savings In

Fraunces Roman Black Optical Max

Largest Selection

Fraunces Roman Thin Optical Max

Loaded with Opt

Fraunces Roman Light Optical Max

Must See to Appre

Fraunces Roman Regular Optical Max

Once in a Lifetime o

Fraunces Roman Semibold Optical Max

Outside the Box Thin

Fraunces Roman Bold Optical Max

Pushing the Envelope

Fraunces Roman Black Optical Max

Quality Workm

Fraunces Roman Thin Optical Max

Free Shipping

Fraunces Roman Thin Optical Max

Setting the Star

Fraunces Roman Light Optical Max

Buy One, Get One

Fraunces Roman Light Optical Max

Under New Ma

Fraunces Roman Regular Optical Max

Built from the

Fraunces Roman Regular Optical Max

Information S

Fraunces Roman Semibold Optical Max

Do More with M

Fraunces Roman Semibold Optical Max

Buy 4 for \$4.9

Fraunces Roman Bold Optical Max

Efficient and Eff

Fraunces Roman Bold Optical Max

Risk-Free Tri

Fraunces Roman Black Optical Max

One-Stop Shopp

Fraunces Roman Black Optical Max

Bagels R' Us
99 Cent Store
Jim's Pizza
Coffee Break
Eli's Antiques
Spatula City
Crafts & Stuff
Squat N' Grunt

Frank's Diner
Luigi & Sons
Mister Cocoa
Copy & Print Co
Laundromat
Spencer's Meats
We Never Close
24 Hour Deli

The Wonk Axis

hnms&&

hnms&

Wonk Substitutions in Roman

bdhklvw&&

bdhklvw&

Wonk Substitutions in Italic

The Wonk Axis controls the substitution of “wonky” characters. These substitutions *automatically* switch at smaller sizes (**18 pt. and below**), but can be toggled manually at larger optical sizes.

Fanciest Fanciest

Fraunces Thin OpMid

Billings Billings

Fraunces Italic Light OpMid

Limons Limons

Fraunces Regular OpMin

Clovers Clovers

Fraunces Italic Semibold OpMax

minster minster

Fraunces Bold OpMid

knives knives

Fraunces Italic Black OpMin

The Weight Axis

nnnnnnnn

nnnnnnnn

nnnnnnnn

nnnnnnnn

The Weight Axis spans a range of weights from Thin (100), Light (200), Regular (400), Semibold (600), Bold (800), and Black (1000).

SALESMANSHIP

Fraunces Thin OpMid

Simon & Garfunkel

Fraunces Italic Light OpMid

LAUNDROMAT

Fraunces Regular OpMin

SIGN of the TIMES

Fraunces Italic Semibold OpMax

The Beach Boys

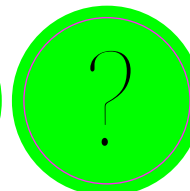
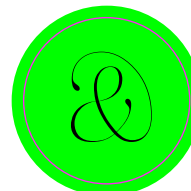
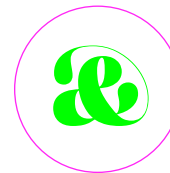
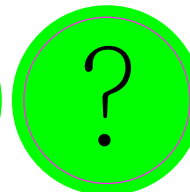
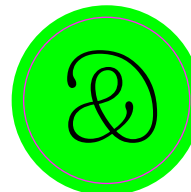
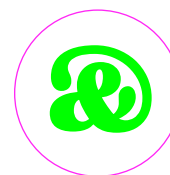
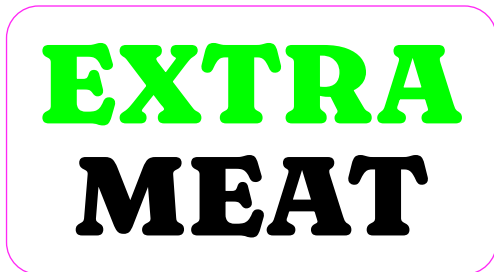
Fraunces Bold OpMid

Emphatically!

Fraunces Italic Black OpMin

We
Appreciate
Your
Business
and
Depreciate
We

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OPQRSTUVWXYZ
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reaming of fine-looking hams is a good omen; but if they are wormy or in ar
blemished, it spoils all the luck, and shows that you will be unfortunate. To dre
eating fine-tasting hams is a sign that you will do something noted that will

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If, in your dream, you imagine you are eating oysters, it denotes that you will
difficulties relative to money matters: but to rake them out of the water is a s
money-getting: to dream of opening nice fat oysters for other people to eat is

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

For a girl to dream of baking pancakes, is a sign that some gentleman is ir
with her; and if a married woman has such a dream, she may be sure that
man, other than her husband, admires her; to dream of eating pancakes, f

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of simply treeing a raccoon, is a good omen, for you will prol
either gain a sum of money, or have it left to you as a legacy: if you ima
that you shoot the animal, and he falls to the ground, this will spoil the

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream you lose your teeth, denotes the loss of friends, troubles, a
misfortunes; to the lover it shows the loss of your sweetheart's affec
to dream you cut a new tooth, denotes the birth of a child who will m

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

For a girl to dream of accidentally sticking a thorn into her finger i
sign she will have a ring presented to her, probably a wedding ring
married woman dreams this, some outsider will make love to her b

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To dream of ripe cherries foretells that you will hear good news, or that some one will do you a favor. After such a dream you can easily borrow money if you wish to. If the cherries are green or mixed, your news will be a mixture of good and bad. 14, 54.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If you dream of riding well and easily on the back of this noble animal, your fortune is sure to advance in the world: but if you imagine you are thrown from a horse, it is a sign of disgrace. To dream of swapping horses shows that some one will cheat you in a bargain.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of dropping or breaking a lighted lamp, denotes disappointment. If, in your dream, you see the bright light of a lamp at a distance from you in the darkness, and you approach it, it shows that you will either have good luck, or will be in a position to do so.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream of approaching beautiful smooth-looking mountains, dressed in verdure, denotes thrift and happiness, and that you will rise in the world: if the mountains look steep, rugged and rocky, it foreshadows difficulties and reverses.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

To dream you eat mushrooms is a sign you will live to a good old age, but to dream you see them grow, or gather them, is a sign you will get rich by splendid speculation, and then get poor as suddenly as you got wealthy.

FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

If you dream you have a new pair of pantaloons, it is a sign you will be prosperous; if they do not fit, and are too tight, it is a sign you will be pinched in money matters; if they are dark, it is a sign of long life, but if they are light, it is a sign of short life.

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FRAUNCES ROMAN THIN OPTICAL MAX

Playfuls

Pleasure
Wizard

The Goofy Axis

Goofy Refined

The Weight Axis spans a range of weights from Thin to Black, across a Ris dolorruptat erumquod quisimodis qui idestiae eicipsaperae none recuptate cus enistias nem incias reiurias cum ut delibea quatio. Faceaqu atiaspi tatiorerum, nihita vendendi nim et reriore, sinum sequamusda dit rem sit dolorepernam experciae. Piendel endanduscia voluptatur, occat et aut qui denimuscil eum rerchitas quis aut a doloria doluptatibus quis nihitat iorrorum eari te perferior maximin nimpos nita volorepel mi, ut pre poreptatur sectorro mi, quunt re sequos Eritempor am la nos que sundae optatus, int laut minimus milit incidit ionsequo quatis et facides tibus, conet dolorpo rporate dolorenda voleste mperchilite peris rem rection sector aute serundi adipid essequia vendioreptas ea velli quis ex esendebit fuga. Perist lit, secati bearum aut

The Optical Size Axis

Large

Medium

Small

The Wonk Axis controls the substitution of “wonky” characters. These substitutions *automatically* switch at smaller sizes (**18 pt. and below**), but can be toggled manually at larger optical sizes.



Extended Language Support

nnnnnnnnnn
nnnnnnnnnn
nnnnnnnnnn
nnnnnnnnnn
nnnnnnnnnn

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FREE
SALE

SALE
SALE

Colophon

Fraunces was made possible with the generous support of Google Fonts. Thank you to Dave Crossland, Damien Correll, etc.

Fraunces was designed by Spencer Charles and Flavia Zimbardi in 2019.

The type specimen you hold in your hands was designed by Charles@Thorn, with contributions from Douglas Hayes. Thank you to Risolve Printing in Philadelphia for their exceptional riso printing.

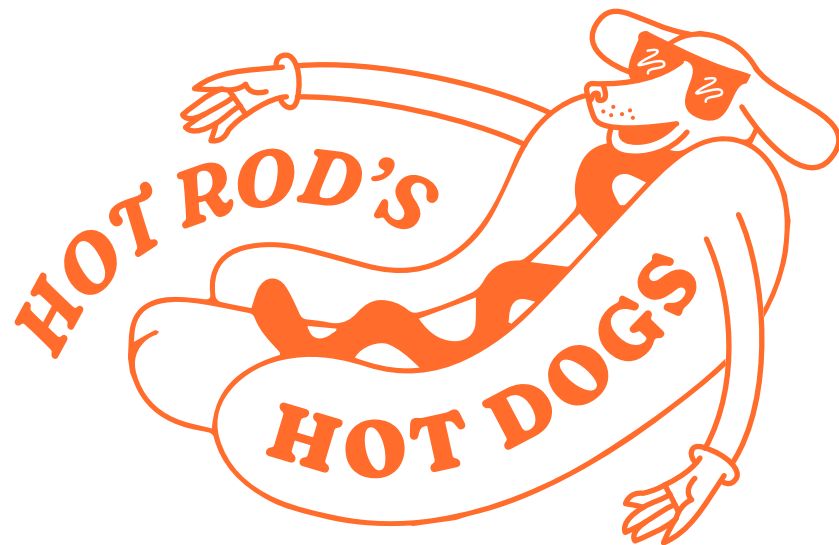
Thank you to the contributions from the following (in no particular order): Andy Clymer, Stephen Nixon, Douglas Hayes.

Fraunces is available for download as a Variable Font under the Open Font License on Github at:

www.github.com/undercasetype/Fraunces

Bibliography

DeLittle's Wood Type Specimens provided courtesy of David Wolske.
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