



A New Sales Pitch: MANUFACTURER CHANGE OF FOCUS

Pearls Olives Design Process

Since 1940, the family-owned-and-operated Musco Olive Products in northern California packaged olives for the food-service industry, and in the past decade hit the retail market with its Black Pearls line of black olives. But since purchasing its largest competitor in 1999, the company has branched out with green and specialty olives—and has become the first company to offer a complete line of retail olives at all price points.

REASON FOR REDESIGN
Because it no longer focused exclusively on black olives, Musco needed a brand identity that more accurately summed up its quality and breadth. Market research showed that the Pearls name stood out in consumers' minds, while the manufacturer identity barely made the charts. The company decided to rebrand itself and its olives and wanted a system of packaging that would distinguish the subbrands (Green, Black, Mediterranean) at first glance on the store shelf.

Additionally, Musco and its creative firm, Tesser Inc., agreed that olives as a food were due for a rebrand. "Traditionally, olive branding approaches had ranged from 'utilitarian foodstuff' and 'mamma-mia Italian ingredient' for black olives to 'fancy-schmancy appetizer' for specialty olives," says Tré Musco, CEO and creative director of Tesser (who, as a member of the Musco family himself, understood the client's needs all too well). "American consumers, however, have long used olives as a convivial snack item for get-togethers. The creative team felt strongly it was time to give olives credit for being the healthy, versatile, and family-friendly snack item that they are."

REDESIGN OBJECTIVES

- Retain key brand elements such as the Pearls name, color yellow, and "bursting" olives
- Update the parent company brand and integrate new product offerings
- Complement a widespread marketing campaign

THE RESULTS
The new Pearls line is proving to be a major retail success, with penetration into 70% of the U.S. market, and volume sales that rank it first in its category. The manufacturer reports that brand recognition is at an all-time high. Additionally, consumers have been writing to Musco to report their delight with the label design and its effect on their purchasing decisions.



52 Packaging Makeovers



1 The new treatment works particularly well to create a billboard effect on store shelves. "The olives overlap and join one another like pieces of a puzzle from 'can to can,'" says Tré Musco. "The result is an impressive swath of Musco gold with bursting olives and black stripes across entire sections of shelving." Promotional support for the brand has included in-store POP displays, floor graphics, television advertising, and the website olives.com.

2 With Tesser's help, the company was renamed Musco Family Olive Co. New identity explorations included rustic scenes of olive harvests and romantic Italian landscapes.

3.4 Ultimately, the team decided that the olive category itself was due for a rebrand, and opted for a nontraditional approach. For years, Tesser had used a child's hand with olive-capped fingers in Musco's promotional materials. Initially, translating this image into a corporate mark seemed like it would be difficult. Early sketches looked cartoonish and odd.

5 Finally, Tesser hit upon the idea of rendering the hand in the style of 1930s and 1940s Streamline-era illustration. "Once we figured out the Streamline style, it all fell into place," says Tré Musco, CEO and creative director. "We hired Laura Smith to create the illustration, and I think she did a great job of making the hand fun and approachable, yet serious enough to represent a sixty-year-old company." The creative team created a frame and type treatment for the mark, and the Musco Seal was born. The seal is used by itself on retail packaging, and is combined with the Musco logotype on corporate materials.

6 In addition to the Musco Seal, the final label designs feature a black belly band, with the new Pearls logotype and variety descriptor. Olive sizes are called out in colored bars below the band. Green and Kalamata varieties come in jars, so the labels feature only the golden burst (without olives). Sliced and chopped olives have their own "bursting olive" illustrations, showing customers exactly what they're purchasing.

7 The new Pearls line uses descriptors to distinguish the products from one another, while the design combines a richer, proprietary gold color and hyperrealistic bursting olives with the rebranded Musco hand seal to give the product a sense of energy and fun.