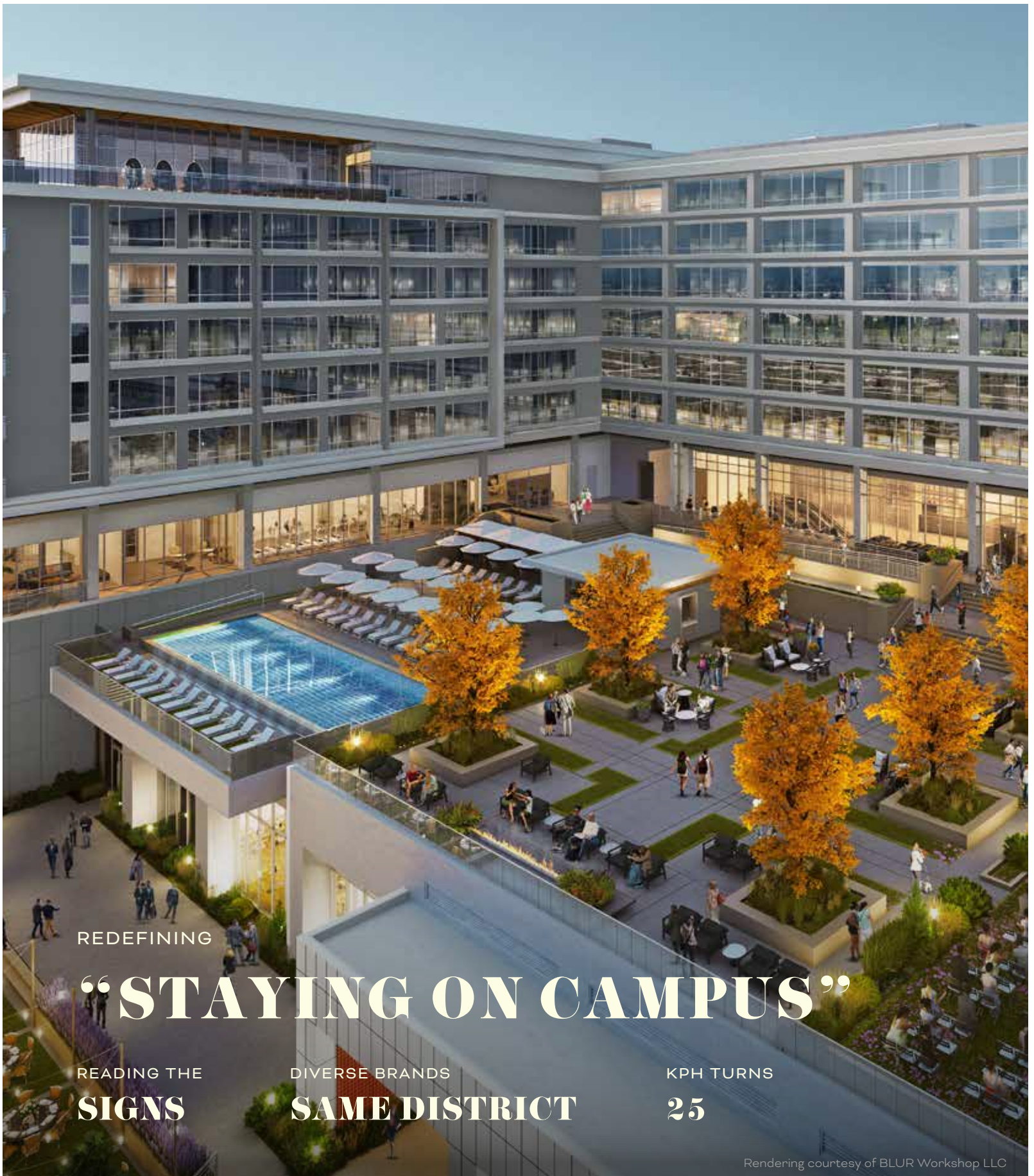


The B-side

NEWS & MUSINGS FROM B&CO.

VOL. 6 / Q2 / 2024



REDEFINING

“STAYING ON CAMPUS”

READING THE
SIGNS

DIVERSE BRANDS
SAME DISTRICT

KPH TURNS
25

Rendering courtesy of BLUR Workshop LLC



Same Market, Very Different Hotels

Back in 2021, we were hired to rebrand a hotel in Houston's burgeoning Galleria District. But before that hotel reopened under a new name and concept, we kicked off yet another hotel rebranding project in that same flourishing Texas district.

Creating distinct hotel brand stories is what we do - but developing two in one market at the same time posed a unique opportunity.

Houston is the fourth most populous city in the country (or third, if you ask most Houstonians).

In The Galleria District of Houston, we were asked to position and brand two completely separate properties a mile apart, opening within a year of each other. While there may be worries of cannibalizing a target audience or a conflict of interest in favor of one brand over another, we found many more positives than negatives.

An immediate benefit of branding two hotels, along with their on-property bars and restaurants, was establishing an immersive knowledge of the market. As outsiders, we explored everything from the market's traffic drivers to the cultural makeup of the city. What resulted was unique market positioning and stories for each property.



The Chifley is a Tapestry Collection hotel by Hilton. A reflection of the greater Houston area, the brand concept is a metaphor for the city's entwined cultures, art and industry. The name was inspired by the schiffli weaving process that utilizes hundreds of needles to carefully stitch patterns into lace. A perfect metaphor for Houston, with its myriad flavors and influences. The visual identity takes on a diverse and industrial Texas Maverick attitude, with colors like "Steel Blue" and a pattern referencing space travel for a hotel in Space City, USA.



Hotel Vesper, however, comes along as the Yin to The Chifley's Yang. A Marriott Tribute Portfolio property, Hotel Vesper leans into its location in the heart of The Galleria, where haute couture luxury brands call to fashionistas from all over the world. Hotel Vesper is decidedly feminine and is presented as the personification of her guests who embody class and confidence. Where The Chifley's Denim Blue makes a statement, Hotel Vesper's color palette of soft Pink, deep Purple and shimmering Gold makes its own impression.

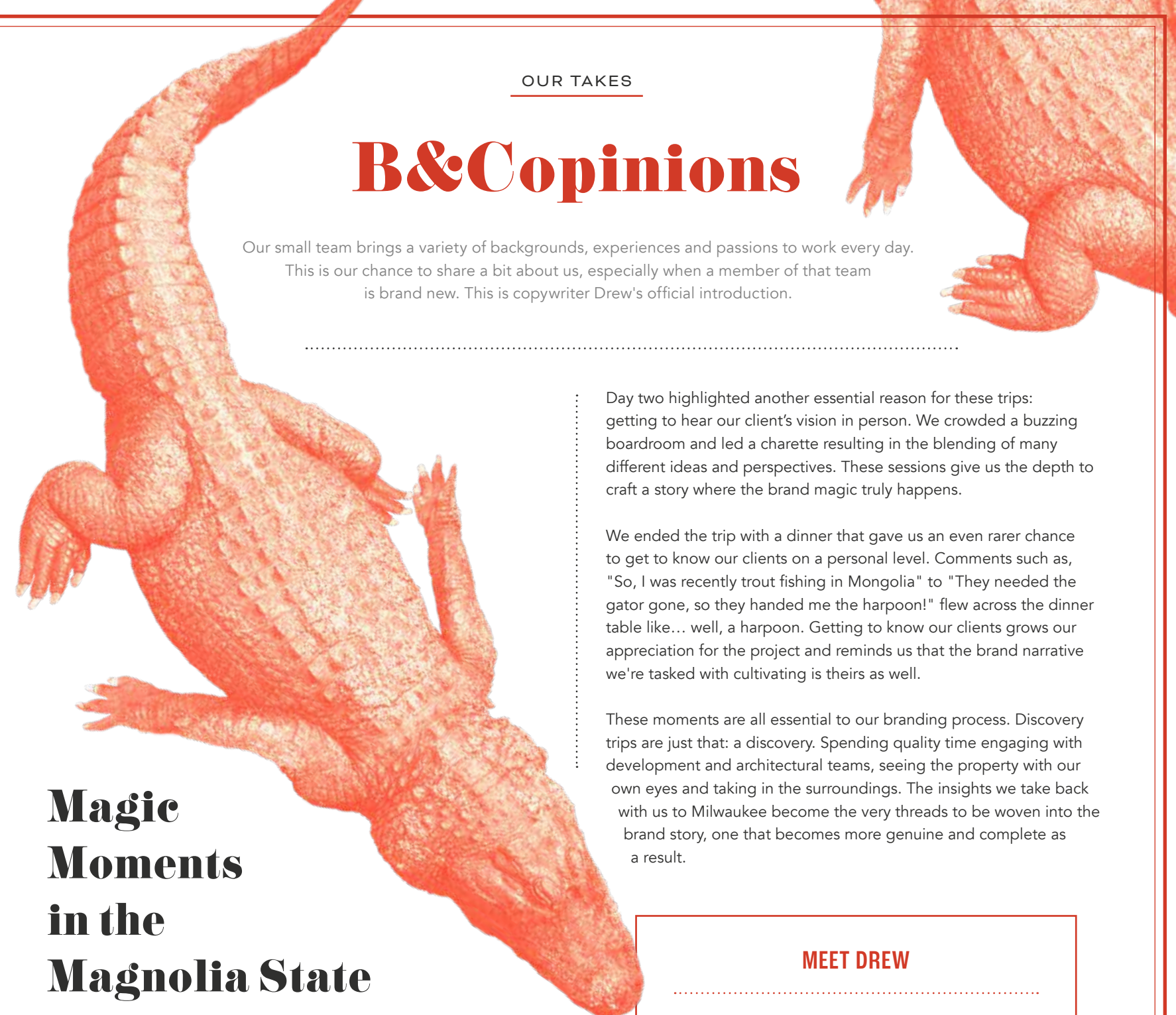


The juxtapositions of these brands are stark. One represents the greater footprint of Houston while the other focuses on tailoring and style. One calls all mavericks while the other looks inward at her own beauty and confidence. Both survive and thrive in a market with diverse people, perspectives and priorities.

Special thanks to Driftwood Hospitality Management for their confidence in our handling both of these stellar Houston hotels.

B&C opinions

Our small team brings a variety of backgrounds, experiences and passions to work every day. This is our chance to share a bit about us, especially when a member of that team is brand new. This is copywriter Drew's official introduction.



Day two highlighted another essential reason for these trips: getting to hear our client's vision in person. We crowded a buzzing boardroom and led a charette resulting in the blending of many different ideas and perspectives. These sessions give us the depth to craft a story where the brand magic truly happens.

We ended the trip with a dinner that gave us an even rarer chance to get to know our clients on a personal level. Comments such as, "So, I was recently trout fishing in Mongolia" to "They needed the gator gone, so they handed me the harpoon!" flew across the dinner table like... well, a harpoon. Getting to know our clients grows our appreciation for the project and reminds us that the brand narrative we're tasked with cultivating is theirs as well.

These moments are all essential to our branding process. Discovery trips are just that: a discovery. Spending quality time engaging with development and architectural teams, seeing the property with our own eyes and taking in the surroundings. The insights we take back with us to Milwaukee become the very threads to be woven into the brand story, one that becomes more genuine and complete as a result.

Magic Moments in the Magnolia State

BY DREW MCCARTHY

My first Discovery trip as B&Co.'s newest copywriter had me touch down in Jackson, Mississippi. Over the next three days I would travel from Jackson; venture deep into the Homochitto National Forest; spend hours cruising the pristine Natchez Trace Parkway; and of course, stroll the shores of our project site. It was a whirlwind three days but an adventure I won't soon forget.

We arrived at the lake on day one to meet with many of the teams involved. These "walk and talks" spur some of the most valuable gems, giving us insight into our stakeholders amidst natural conversation. We soak it all in and take it with us, everything from, "When he arrives, don't mention the floating saddle" to "Have you ever been frog-gigging?" (we haven't). Our own observations also floated to the surface with our Senior Graphic Designer Josh remarking, "Every time I hear the wind in the trees, I expect a car!" The true remoteness of the property washed over us like a calming breeze, and the lake views stayed framed in our heads as we turned our car back to Jackson.

MEET DREW

ICEBREAKER FUN FACT(S)
I was born a twin... in Russia!

FAVORITE PLACE YOU'VE LIVED
Minneapolis, MN

FAVORITE VACATION SPOT
Colorado (any time of year)

MOST LIKELY TO
Join Milwaukee's underground indie folk scene

NEVER TRAVELS WITHOUT
Audio-Technica headphones



Redefining “Staying On Campus”

More and more independent hotels are showing up on college campuses across America, much to the delight of parents, visiting faculty and a host of business travelers. With that comes a boon of opportunities to create captivating stories that lean into each university setting.

Beyond the obvious advantage of opening a hotel with extremely predictable demand generators, an independent hotel can be an extension of the university's greater brand.

We've had the opportunity to brand a handful of independent hotels on and around college campuses over the years. Each has presented completely different goals, challenges and, the fun part, narratives. Here are just a few that represent how a symbiotic relationship between university and hotel brands is a winning combination.



Hotel Ursa

ORONO, ME

On the U-Maine campus in Orono, Hotel Ursa balances a brand that embraces the surrounding area's unspoiled nature while leaning into Black Bear culture. U-Maine had exciting plans to work with the hotel and expressed intentions for co-branding opportunities. We created the Hotel Ursa color palette to complement the established U-Maine colors, while also remaining inspired by the wilderness of Central Maine. The resulting story, visual identity and guest experiences are what academics and trailblazers alike can get behind.



Hotel Polaris

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

The U.S. Air Force Academy used to be the highest-trafficked manmade destination in Colorado. After 20 years of closed gates to the public following 9/11, a new hotel was envisioned as the conduit to making the Academy accessible to the public once again. As part of a larger development at the Academy's North Gate, Hotel Polaris includes a conference center, lobby bar and restaurant, rooftop bar and an eatery complete with aircraft simulators. While Hotel Polaris is always in service of the Academy, the hotel does not co-opt its messaging or branding, but rather uses its flight path as inspiration, taking off from a brand new runway. Set to open fall of 2024.



The Heartwood

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY

In the middle of Vassar College's campus is a new boutique hotel that will attract both alumni and road-trippers along the Hudson Valley in upstate New York. What few people realize is that Vassar's campus should be a destination for anyone, as it's a certified arboretum with more than 230 species of trees. Hence, The Heartwood was born - a name stemming from the term for the strongest innermost rings of a tree. The Heartwood is central to Vassar's campus and to the exchange of ideas - a strong foundation for the next iteration of Vassar College's campus experience.



The Benson Hotel & Faculty Club

AURORA, CO

The University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora is one of the premier medical facilities in the country, making its mark through education, research and innovation. Gaining in population and notoriety, the university decided it needed an independent hotel to welcome medical patients, professionals in residence and transient visitors alike.



B&Co. branded The Benson Hotel & Faculty Club as a gathering place centered around wellness and the pioneering spirit of the West. The hotel encourages guests to rest, recover and rejuvenate and invites business travelers, global thinkers and modern pioneers to embrace innovation.



The Sophy-Hyde Park

CHICAGO, IL

The University of Chicago is one of the most prestigious universities in the world, so naturally, the best and brightest around the globe travel to Hyde Park. Hyde Park is known for creativity and diversity, while the University has made its academic mark in art, music, science and mathematics. We created a hotel story with a strong sense of place that is reflective of this. The name 'Sophy' - rooted in the Ancient Greek word 'Sophia' for wisdom and knowledge - is sophisticated yet approachable and softens the complex symbolism in the branding. It's also reflective of the personal approach Sophy delivers through its style of service and neighborhood hospitality.

Want to bring your brand to life?

Look for the signs.

Signs are everywhere, but the best deliver branding moments. We love working with our clients on signage that amplifies their brand. Here are just a few of our favorite iterations of environmental branding, each conveying a unique message and taking a different shape than the next.

The Camp at Carmel Valley



The Camp at Carmel Valley is a former girls' camp turned adult outdoor playground. With a pool, archery range, tennis court, equine center, individual cabins, yoga studio and more to explore on its expansive grounds, guests welcomed the installation of comprehensive signage in keeping with the nostalgic brand we created for The Camp.

The exterior wayfinding at The Camp was arguably the most intensive signage project we've ever managed. But, working with Signs by Van in California to invest in weather-proof materials and branded elements, these property-wide signs continue to point guests towards inspiration everyday.



Lolly Cakes

Sometimes the most eye-catching signs aren't the biggest. That's a fitting distinction for Lolly Cakes, a popular cupcake brand in Colorado Springs. We designed a circular sign, hand-painted by Milwaukee-based Gietl Signs, to be suspended from the ceiling of the owner's equally popular restaurant. That way, neighbors frequenting their favorite cafe will be able to spot a sweet new cupcake brand in the refrigerated display case.



Dubbel Dutch

When you renovate a historic mansion from 1898 into a downtown boutique hotel, the existing architecture should do most of the talking. A double house with an asymmetric layout, Dubbel Dutch in Milwaukee boasts 17 unique guestrooms—and paths to get to them.



Michael Cerda from Cerda Design Co. hand painted the interior wayfinding signage, room names and numbers on each door to be informative, artistic and minimally encroaching to the original design of the building.



Big River Market

When Big River Market opened, the South Main District in Memphis got a hip new urban bodega. Always craving to be more than your run-of-the-mill convenience store, Big River Market had big plans for its sign. An open-face channel neon sign more than ten feet long announced to the neighborhood that they were no longer in a food desert. And that their block just got a lot cooler in the process.



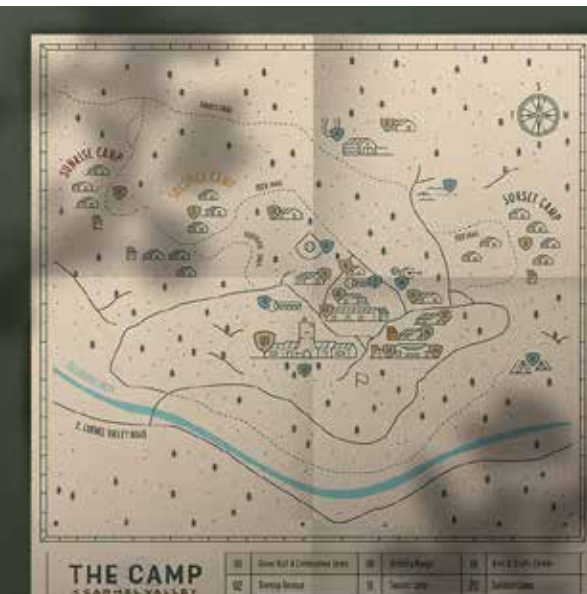
Black Sheep

Signage can be any information communicated on a public surface. You may have seen our darling neighbor Black Sheep's external mural that climbs between our office windows. But inside the local happy hour hot spot is a hand-painted illustration that is equally as cheeky as it is informational. Above the self-serve wine dispensers of Milwaukee's favorite wine bar is a whimsical mural that does everything from educate consumers on the perfect pour to pull back the curtains on where those grapes really come from.



The Last Hotel

The most valuable property frontage in a city is the street corner. That's even more impressive when it's the most iconic street in the city's exciting garment district. The Last Hotel, on the corner of Washington Avenue and 15th Street in downtown St. Louis, is a marvel of exterior architecture. Formerly a shoe factory in the former shoe-making capital of the world, The Last Hotel makes a statement with its name. So the vertical blade sign we designed, strategically mounted to be seen down both street corridors, had to signal the new chapter of this historic building.



Branding A Milestone Year

And how we helped KPH build on their success during their anniversary



This year marks our client KPH Construction's 25th year in business. Reaching a milestone is an excellent opportunity to celebrate a brand, from B2B to B2C. It often encourages a brand refresh, sometimes it illustrates the way a brand can grow and expand. In the case of KPH, it's all about celebrating and highlighting people and partnerships.

Our team sat down with KPH's leadership and helped them create a plan for a celebration that could be executed and expressed throughout the year. We started by designing a suite of "25 Year Anniversary" visuals that could be utilized throughout the year-long campaign. New apparel, vehicle decals, social media graphics, a new webpage and printed business collateral all don the new celebratory icons. The designs vary from the focus on 25 years in business to supporting marks that highlight the company's slogan and point of pride: the valuable partnerships that fueled their quarter of a century achievement.

A short 25th Anniversary video was produced, featuring the company founder, who shares his message of thanks to both clients and employees. This personal message and investment in more than just a simple "letter from the founder" helps elevate the 25th Anniversary campaign and better convey the brand's ethos of building partnerships.

From print and digital ads with business and industry publications to a 3-sided mural on the company's headquarters designed by Cerda Design Co., B&Co. focused on themes of pride and culture to support the KPH brand internally and with the community.

KPH is one of many clients B&Co. has had the pleasure of helping when it's time to celebrate milestones. A cohesive campaign, thoughtful visuals, compelling message and genuine passion not only enhance anniversary messaging, but establish a business more than any year marker can.

