

## Will the “Real” Garamond Please Stand Up

**Garamond fonts** are nearly as plentiful as mosquitoes in August. There’s a version from International Typeface Corporation (ITC), a version developed for Adobe Systems, one produced by the Monotype foundry, another drawn for Simoncini and still another for Berthold. Linotype has two versions (three, if you count the Stempel™ Garamond design). And this doesn’t even take into account Garamond faces that use different names, such as the Sabon™ and Granjon® designs.

Since Claude Garamond made his first font more than 450 years ago in France, there have been so many versions of this typestyle that it’s a challenge to know them all without a full-scale database. In foundry type, machine-set type, phototype, and now in digital form, literally hundreds of Garamond designs have graced pages over the centuries.

### Big Family: Similar Traits

Although there are many different Garamond typefaces, they are all descendants of the original 16th century design, and, like members of most families, they have similar traits. For example, character stroke-weight stress in every Garamond design is canted, with the heaviest parts at approximately the two and eight o’clock positions. Head serifs (those at the top of character strokes) look like little banners, and baseline serifs tend to be long, slightly cupped and (in most Garamond designs) have soft rounded ends. ▶

Another feature shared by virtually every Garamond face is the bidirectional serifs on the top of the capital T. (These serifs are a dead giveaway for spotting the design.) ▶

### Garamond Family Tree

In spite of these similarities, the Garamond family tree developed two distinct branches: one American and the other European. When Garamond died in 1561, his punches and matrices were sold to Christopher Plantin in Antwerp who, in turn, enabled the Garamond fonts to be used by many printers. These became the European branch of the family.



GARAMOND #3 ITALIC



DISTINCTIVE GARAMOND TRAITS

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MONOTYPE GARAMOND

Typefaces on the American branch are ancestors of another – but similar – design. During the 17th century, another French printer, Jean Jannon, designed a typeface that bore a strong resemblance to Garamond’s original designs. The punches and matrices for Jannon’s designs were stored for centuries at the French national printing office. In 1825, these punches reemerged and were mistakenly attributed to Claude Garamond. The first modern revival based on these designs – thought to be Garamond – was produced by Morris Fuller Benton in 1919 for American Type Founders. Digital descendants of this hand-set metal font are faces such as the Linotype Garamond #3™ and ITC Garamond™ designs. ▶ These designs have slightly softer shapes and generally have larger x-heights than their European relatives.

The Berthold, Stempel and Simoncini Garamond™ faces typify those from the European branch of the family tree and are truer to the original Claude Garamond types. Contrast in character stroke width tends to be more pronounced, x-heights are diminutive, and generally the letters appear more angular – as if they were drawn with a chisel-point pen or brush.

A comparison of the lowercase ‘a’ in the ITC Garamond and Stempel Garamond™ versions provides a concise view of the detailed differences between the American and European designs. ▶

### Dual-Ancestry Garamond

The Adobe Garamond design is one of the newest members of the Garamond family. Drawn in 1989 by Robert Slimbach, it is a careful, modern interpretation influenced by specimens of Garamond’s original type. The lowercase ‘a’ perfectly exemplifies this melding of design traits. It is a soft design with no sharp edges – and yet it has an echo of the calligrapher’s brush in its slightly squared ball terminal.

Garamond #3  
ITC Garamond  
Adobe Garamond  
Monotype Garamond  
Berthold Garamond  
Stempel Garamond  
Simoncini Garamond  
Garamond Classico

A SAMPLING OF THE NUMEROUS  
GARAMOND DESIGNS



ITC GARAMOND, STEMPEL GARAMOND,  
ADOBE GARAMOND

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ADOBE GARAMOND

### Oldest New Garamond

Garamond #3 is one of the oldest interpretations of the Garamond typestyle that is still available. Drawn in 1922 for the Linotype Company and patterned after the Jannon designs, this Garamond version has served graphic communicators in many forms: as machine-set metal type, then phototype, and now in digital form. This design is marked by relatively open counters, gradual stroke weight changes and soft curves. In spite of the fact that it has been reinterpreted so many times, this Garamond version has warmth and spontaneity.

### A Different Kind of Garamond

The ITC Garamond version is almost in a class of its own. It's a Garamond design, but it's a Garamond like a Hummer is an automobile. With its very large x-height, wide proportions and distinctive character shapes, this version is distinctly dissimilar from its more traditional relatives. ▶ Few realize the design was never intended to be a classic interpretation of the 16th century fonts. It was first released only in book and ultra weights as display complements to existing, more traditional text designs from other foundries. Public demand compelled ITC to release other, text-friendly weights. Taken on its own merits, ITC Garamond is a yeoman design. It's legible, has lots of personality, and it offers a large family of weights and proportions.

### A Graceful Garamond

The Monotype Garamond design – another relative of Benton's 1919 revival – is one of the most elegant interpretations of the Garamond style. Its marked contrast in stroke weights, open counters and delicate serifs make this the Gwyneth Paltrow of the Garamond family. It can be set at virtually any size and is exceptionally legible. In addition, the contrast between the roman and bold weights is ideal. ▶

### A Lively European

The Stempel Garamond variety is the most faithful interpretation of the original 16th century design. Its angular details, vivid contrast in stroke thickness, small x-height and traditional wide capitals create a crisp and lively texture on the page.

## Garamond #3

abcdefghijklmnop  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN  
12345678I2345678

Garamond  
Garamond

ITC GARAMOND VS.  
STEMPEL GARAMOND:  
NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE

*It's a Garamond  
design, but it's a  
Garamond like a  
Hummer is an  
automobile.*

ITC GARAMOND



MONOTYPE GARAMOND

*The Stempel Garamond variety is the most faithful interpretation of the original 16th century design. Its angular details, vivid contrast in stroke thickness, small x-height and traditional wide capitals create a crisp and lively texture on the page.*

**STEMPEL GARAMOND**

### **Garamonds with Different Names**

Although named after another French designer, Robert Granjon, the Granjon typeface is an interpretation of the original Garamond typeface. It was designed for Linotype in the late 1920s and was based on type in a 16th century book that was made from Garamond's original punches. Because several other Garamond typefaces were on the market in the 1920s, Linotype decided to name this type Granjon.

Jan Tschichold designed the Sabon™ typeface in 1964. It was produced jointly by three foundries: D. Stempel AG, Linotype and Monotype. This was in response to a request from German master printers to make a typeface family of the same design for the three metal type technologies of the time: foundry type for hand composition, linecasting, and single-type machine composition. Jakob Sabon, for whom the type is named, was a student of Claude Garamond. In 2002, Linotype released the Sabon Next design as a revival of the 1964 design.

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Garamond typefaces, in both their American and European flavors, are generally considered ideal book faces. The design is also an excellent choice for most other forms of continuous text. Magazines, newsletters, annual reports, lengthy advertising copy – for example – are all naturals for the Garamond design. Elegance, warmth, readability and legibility are guaranteed. And, a typeface ideally suited to lengthy copy can be used with equal success in short blocks. If it can be set in type, it can probably be set in a Garamond font. ■



**CLAUDE GARAMOND**

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