



Big, bold beautiful

Southwest Airlines' in-flight magazine shows how to design short, engaging stories. *Continued* ▶

Big, bold, beautiful

Southwest Airlines' in-flight magazine *Spirit* is a quick read for the busy traveler. Here are the techniques that make it work.

Cover



Inside pages



You're on a Southwest 737 eagerly approaching the Grand Canyon when a two-state cloud layer obscures your view. Bummer. You reach for the in-flight magazine. What's here? Unlike *Sports Illustrated* or Oprah's *O*, an in-flight magazine has neither a regular audience nor a common topic. Because of this, it must present its material in unique, attention-getting ways. Designed in collaboration with Pentagram, *Spirit's* short, easy-to-read articles illustrate how to design for quick impact, beautifully. Let's see what we can learn.

The basics

To create its easy-to-read look, *Spirit* uses three techniques—big headlines, big images and a vertical bar that’s repeated from page to page.

Big headlines



Big images



Vertical bar



To snag the busy traveler, stories in *Spirit* magazine are deliberately short, usually only a page or two. Most have only one image. Headlines are short and oversize. Each expresses one idea, ideal for quick comprehension (a good idea anytime, by the way). Images are big and—this is important—simple, which makes them easy to understand. Photos are favored over illustrations, which tend to be complex and less direct. A third device is a vertical bar (above, right) that appears in various colors throughout the magazine.

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Every cover is a close-up portrait—a powerful, universal theme. (The human face is the strongest of all images.) The format is bold, nearly square, uncluttered.

Blue sky establishes the magazine's venue and is a permanent element on every cover. Note that the clouds change.

Black horizontal bar does double duty. It's a base that blends nicely with the title, and it's a buffer that divides the blue sky above from the portrait image below.

Powerful focal point



Credits: Spirit



One big close-up What do people have in common? It's their people-ness! Without a common denominator like sports or quilting to anchor the magazine, people stories are a great way to bring readers together. Even better, people pictures connect instantly. (Left) While typical covers are peppered with headlines, here, a few lines of type set quietly in the bottom-right corner allow the reader to focus entirely on the face. Note that the **vertical bar** color is eyedropped from the image and connects portrait to nameplate.

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Two typefaces handle the work of body copy, captions and other small text. Key to a workhorse typeface is to choose medium, not extreme, weights and proportions.



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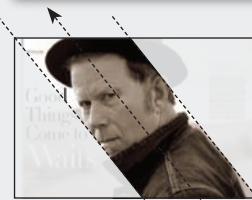
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Oversize photos—typically one per spread—immerse the reader in a visual “surroundscape.” Key is simplicity: one focal point, no distracting backgrounds.



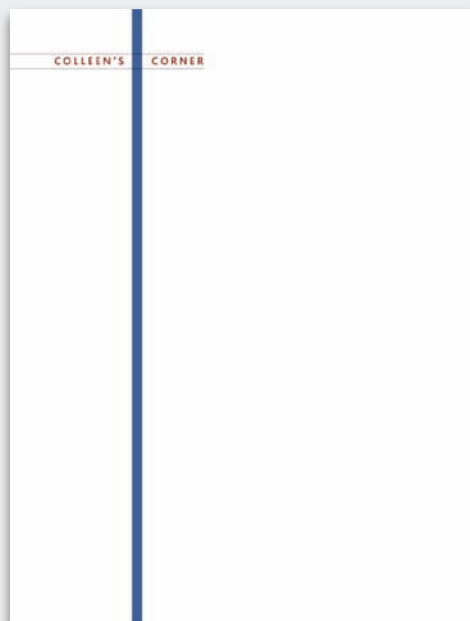
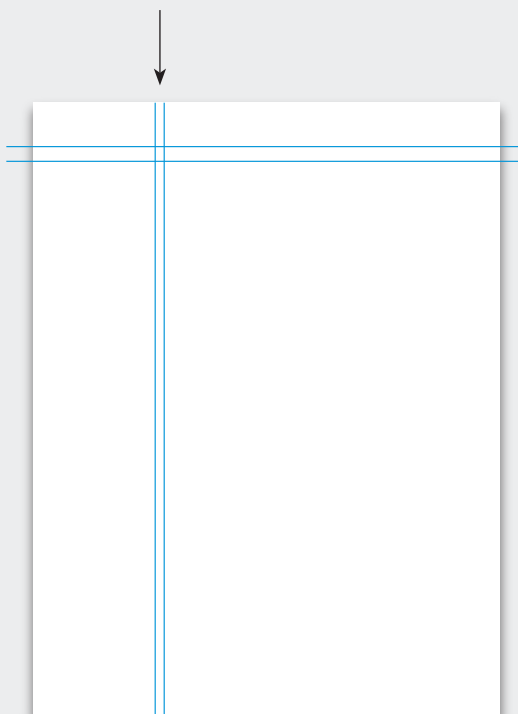
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Center stage This layout illustrates the power of the center. Angled portrait divides the spread in halves, headline on the left (its contours follow his face), text on the right. The background is featureless, and even that has been blurred, leaving the reader nothing to see except, well, the thing he came to see.

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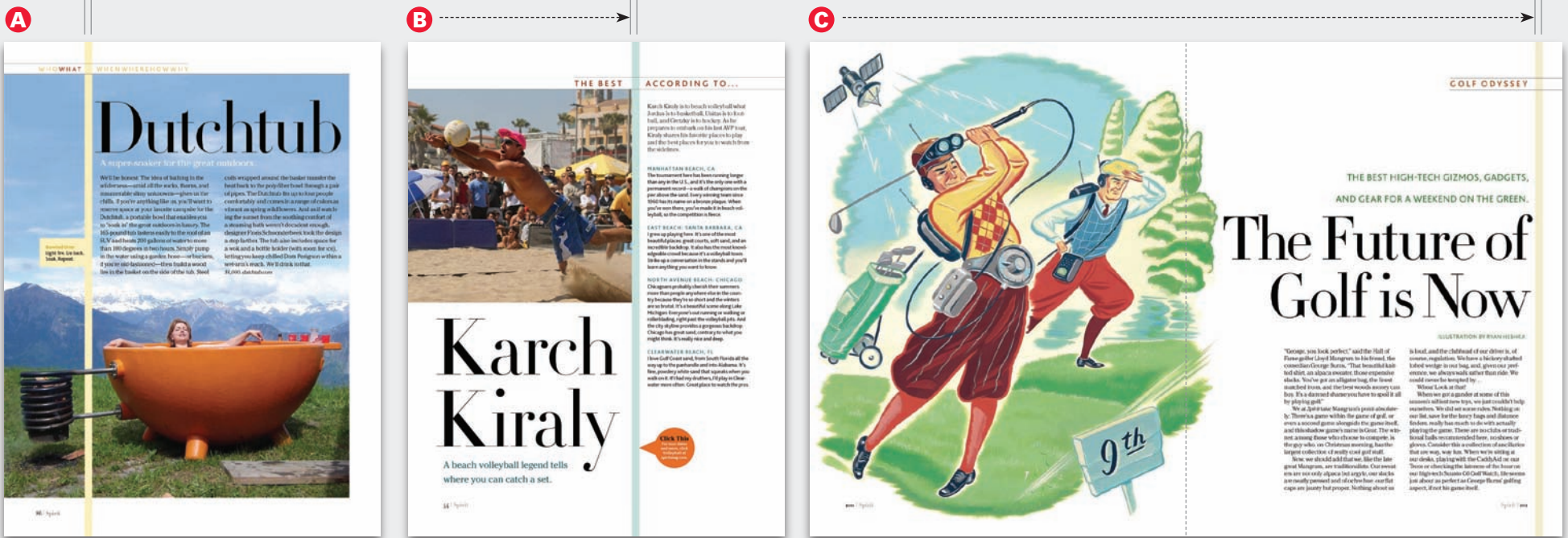
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Big objects

“The Numbers” section consists of single-object cutout photos and numerals so big that they become objects, an eye-arresting variation of the “big images” idea.

Before



41%

After



Create a verbal object Supersize numerals make it obvious that characters are graphics, too!—a beautiful typeface (HTF Didot italic) makes this appealing. The technique is contrived—it would be out of place in, say, *U.S. News & World Report*—but it’s perfectly bite size for *Spirit’s* diverse, on-the-fly audience.



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Textural contrasts—curving black sole, rectangular gray text, white expanse behind.

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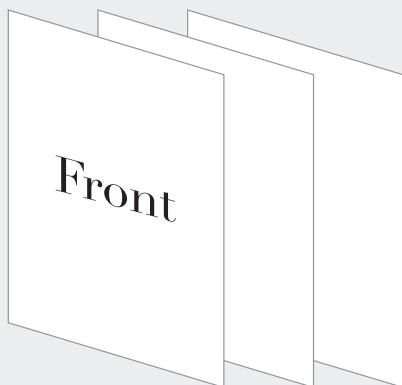
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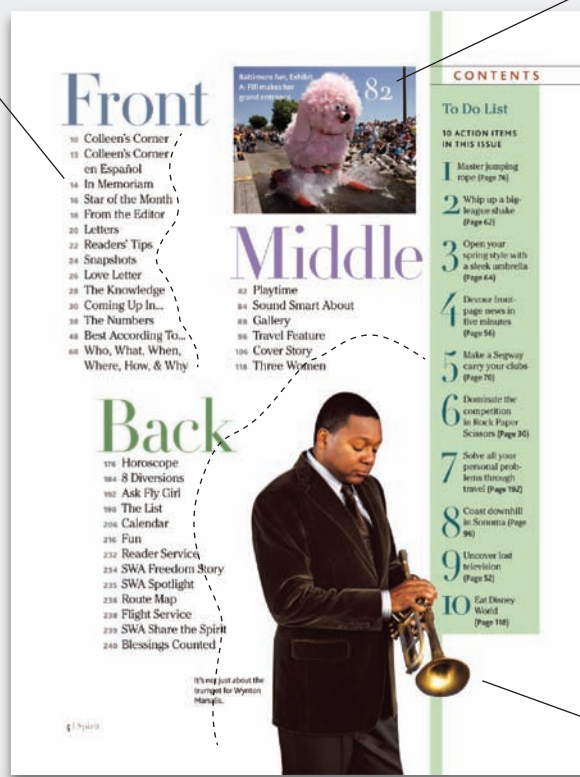
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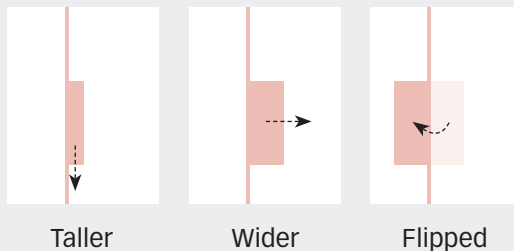
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Flag-style caption waves for attention; note its contrasting background. Flags must attach to the “pole” but can be placed atop almost any image. The savvy editor knows the make-it-or-break-it value of these bits of text, which are always read before just about anything else. The tiny caption above even has its own headline! Below, the flag can be any height or width. It can also flip sides.



Vertical bar separates text from photo, but note the headline runs right across.

Fun with bubbles Below, looking like a voice balloon but acting like a flag, a “Click This” caption has an entirely different shape and color. Centered type conforms to its shape.



Article resources



Typefaces

- 1 [Bliss 2](#)
- 2 [HTF Didot](#)
- 3 [ITC Cheltenham Std.](#)

Credits

Spirit magazine (www.spiritmag.com) is published for Southwest Airlines by Pace Communications (www.pacecommunications.com). Editorial director Jay Heinrichs worked with DJ Stout of Pentagram (www.pentagram.com) on the magazine's original design. Each issue is designed by Spirit design director Kevin de Miranda, senior associate art director Brody Price and assistant art director Emily Buxkemper, all of whom also track down art and assign photography and illustration. Lauren Chesnutt is photo editor. The pages shown in this article include the work of freelance photo editor Kathy Marcus and designer Christine Xoinis.



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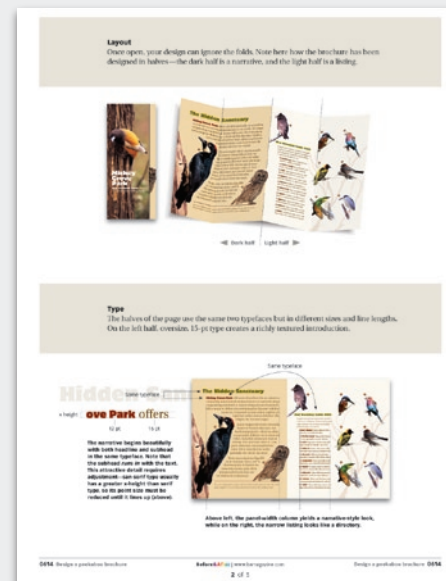


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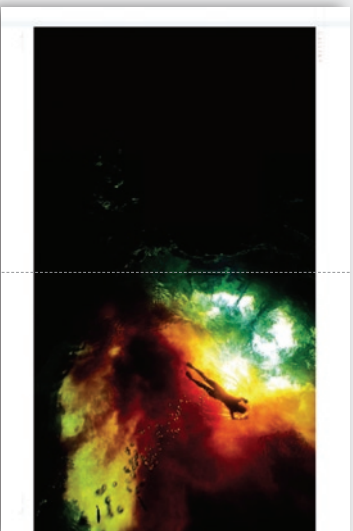
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A **WHOWHAT** WHEN WHERE HOW WHY

Dutch tub

A super-soaker for the great outdoors.

C We'll be honest: The idea of bathing in the wilderness—amid all the rocks, thorns, and innumerable slimy unknowns—gives us the chills. If you're anything like us, you'll want to reserve space at your favorite campsite for the Dutchtub, a portable bowl that enables you to soak in the great outdoors in luxury. The 165-pound tub fastens easily to the roof of an SUV and heats 200 gallons of water to more than 100 degrees in two hours. Simply pump in the water using a garden hose—or buckets, if you're old-fashioned—then build a wood fire in the basket on the side of the tub. Steel

coils wrapped around the basket transfer the heat back to the bowl; the bowl, through a pair of pipes, The Dutchtub fits up to four people comfortably and comes in a range of colors as vibrant as spring wildflowers. And as if watching the sunset from the soothing comfort of a steaming bath weren't decadent enough, designer Forts Schoonderbeck took the design a step farther. The tub also includes space for a wok and a bottle holder (with room for ice), letting you keep chilled Don Perignon within a veteran's reach. We'll drink to that. \$6,000. dutchtub.com

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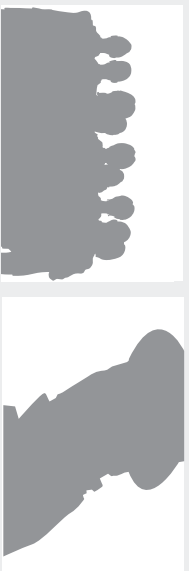
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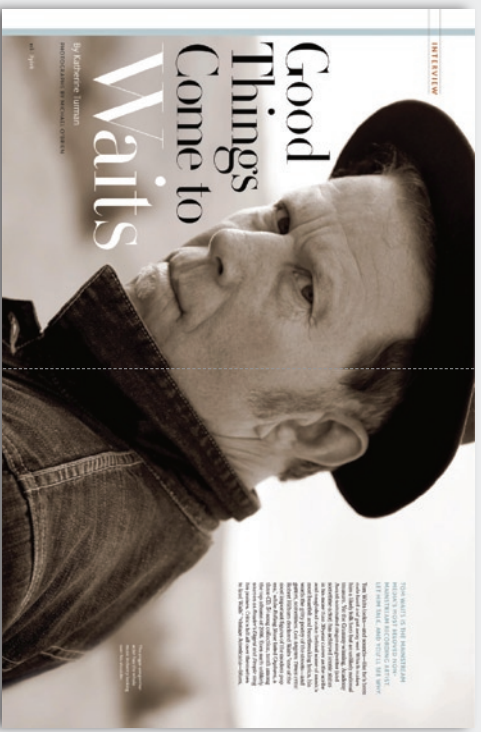
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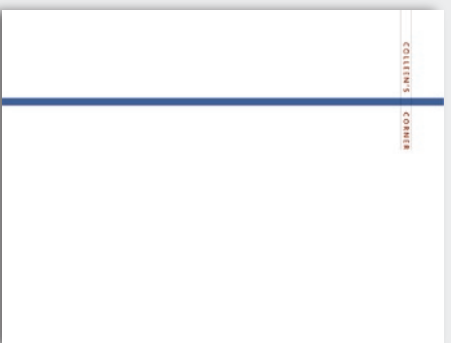
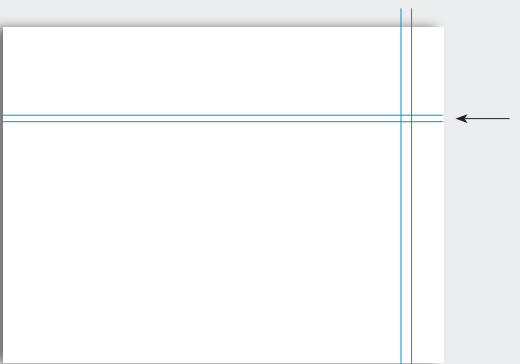
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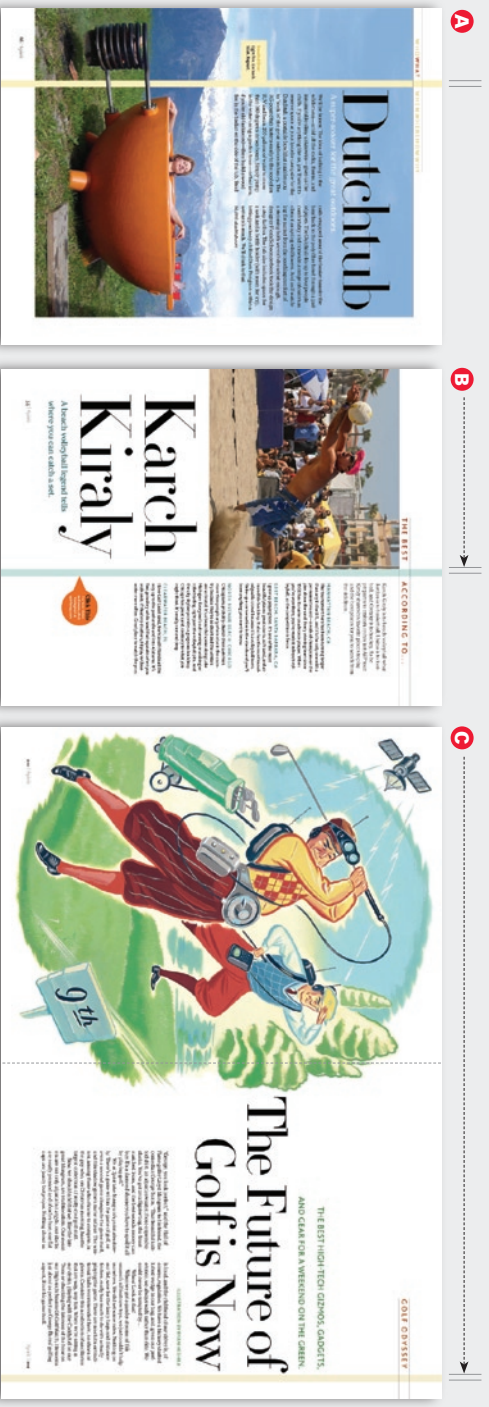


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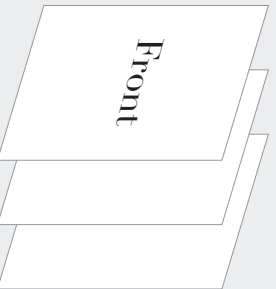


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Front	82
Middle	96
Back	106

CONTENTS

To Do List

1. **Master Jumping rope** (Page 76)
2. **Whip up a big-league shake** (Page 62)
3. **Open your spring style with a sleek umbrella** (Page 64)
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10. **Master Jumping rope** (Page 76)

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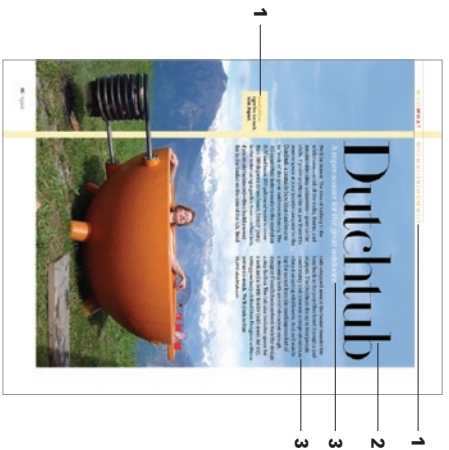
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Article resources



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- 3 [ITC Cheltenham Std.](#)

Credits

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