

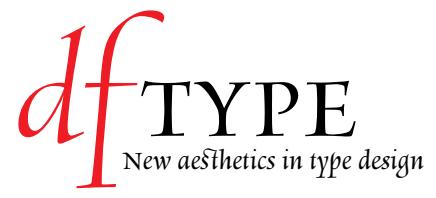
# RIALTO<sup>df</sup>

*... a bridge between ...*



Covered by the name *dftype* lies the hand of the calligrapher Giovanni de Faccio and the eye of the typographer Lui Karner, founder of die Fischbachpresse. Our interest in the origins and shapes of the Latin alphabet, the pleasure of creating, the challenge of our search for a contemporary accord between calligraphy and typography and our shared vision of type design, have generated the first type family from *dftype*: RIALTO. In Spring 1999 Waltraud Stefan joined us to take care of marketing and distribution of our typefaces. She is now developing personal contact with clients and all who are interested in calligraphy and typography. Time and again these contacts lead not only to workshops on typography & calligraphy, but also to some rewarding consultancies with agencies.

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Notwithstanding today's jungle of typefaces (approximately 60.000 Latin alphabets), we, GIOVANNI DE FACCIO, Calligrapher, and LUI KARNER, Typographer, threw ourselves into the adventure of creating a new typeface five years ago. We went through lots of elucidating discussions about the right shapes of the characters, the type family and type history before we could finish our work: RIALTO – an exceptional and functional typeface. Let us view some of the background:

The shapes of all Roman and Italic lowercase letters ultimately derive from the Roman capitals. When designing RIALTO, our aim was to create a single alphabet of capital letters common to Roman and Italic; to allow their harmonious combination, and at the same time to retain their individual character and contrast – *a bridge between Roman and Italic*.

Capital letters used with both alphabets need to have calligraphic elements to meet the requirements of Italics without incurring any compromise to their basically monumental nature. Not only the Roman capital letters (*Capitalis Monumentalis*) but also Dutch shapes like the types of CHRISTOFFEL VAN DIJCK were inspirations to us while designing RIALTO.

Distinct from all historical types, RIALTO capitals have calligraphic serifs, subtly derived from the broad pen. The flow of the stems into the serifs also reflects the movement of the pen, giving the Rialto capitals a delicate lightness and dynamism – *a bridge between calligraphy and typography*.

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Another logical consistency is that the capitals have to be a little smaller than usual to allow a harmonious combination with the Italic. Following the examples of many historical Romans, RIALTO capitals are sloped about one degree to the right; this is still an important requirement for optimum legibility.



Fig. 1: Some RIALTO capitals with calligraphic features.

The Roman lowercase needs first of all to be “masculine-hard”; but where possible (not many characters are suitable) it should also have calligraphic features.



Fig. 2: The few lowercase letters of RIALTO which benefit from calligraphic attributes.

RIALTO Roman lowercase is also sloped about one degree. Precision is achieved by sharp serifs of broad pen origin.



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Fig. 3: Roman lowercase letters of RIALTO with sharp angles where the stroke changes direction.

While working on Rialto, we were also very much aware of the necessity for distinctive shapes in the area of the x-height – another important, unfortunately often forgotten, tenet of legibility. Letter forms of elegance and quality derive from the great old face tradition with features such as small counters for a and e; such details are an aid to legibility.



Fig. 4:  
Upper part of x-height of letter combination ‘quanapegos’ and ‘orange’  
above: Futura, below: Rialto.

Following our ideas, the Italic needs to be “softly feminine”, retaining its italic status by its upright calligraphic shapes and not by its slope. It can only be sloped up to three degrees in order not to move too far away from the slope of the capitals.



Fig. 5: Roman features of Rialto Italic.

In certain instances – where suitable – it should display details specific to Roman. Wide open spaces between stems and arches of Rialto Italic considerably improve legibility, which is generally not so good with Italics. Apart from that, Rialto Italic is not too narrow and therefore offers improved legibility in mass.



Fig. 6: Wide open spaces between stems and arches of Rialto Italic.

Because upright capitals require upright figures, RIALTO uses only one cut of upright figures for Roman and Italic with individual widths and kerning, while the Caps cut provides figures with standardized widths for use in columns. The x-height of the figures is equal to that of the Small Caps, which makes them work well together. For the design of the figures, care was taken to make them appear as clear as possible without any unnecessary flourishes. In the main they follow Dutch examples such as *Romanée*.



Fig. 7: Rialto figures.

To improve typographic work, it is essential to use ligatures. RIALTO covers the spectrum of letter combinations for Roman and Italic on a large scale. The ligatures are not, as is usually the case, on a so-called separate expert font. They are included in the Roman and Italic fonts. Italic provides the early Italian ligatures *es*, *is*, *us*, as well as a double-storyed *g* and a *q*. The long *f* with its ligatures in Roman and Italic is also an integral part of RIALTO.

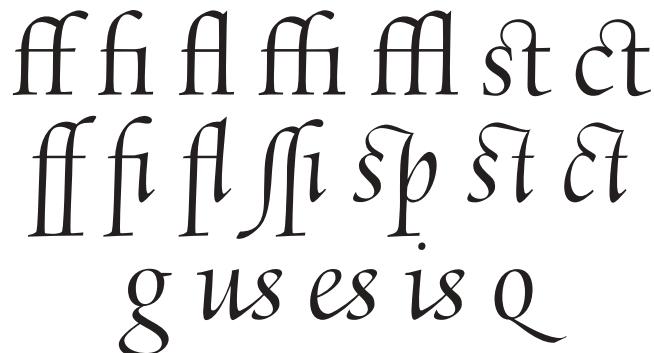


Fig. 8: Some of the Rialto ligatures and alternate letters.

Naturally RIALTO includes a set of Titling Capitals. Their weight is clearly reduced, the shapes are narrower compared with Rialto Roman and the calligraphic serifs are longer. Bold cuts for Roman, Italic and Small Caps complete RIALTO.

## THERE IS NO WAY TO HAPPINESS: HAPPINESS IS THE WAY

Fig. 9: Above: Rialto bold Caps, below: Rialto Titling.

Another unique feature of RIALTO is that the small caps are self-spacing. The wholesome tradition of spacing capitals to achieve harmony in word shapes sank into more or

less general disuse with the advent of film-setting in the 1960's. For the first time this basic precept of fine typography is now available automatically when using the three series of RIALTO small caps: Rialto, Rialto Piccolo and Rialto bold.

## MILANO MILANO

Above: RIALTO small caps; and below, ADOBE GARAMOND small caps.

Both examples are set in 36 point without use of spacing functions available on the computer.

Other essential precepts of fine typography are that bigger sizes require a reduction of weight and also need to be narrower; small sizes need a larger x-height, increased weight, rounder shapes and greater width. To meet these requirements RIALTO offers the Piccolo for small sizes up to 14 point. Rialto is specifically designed for sizes from 16 point upwards. Both fonts include Small Caps and Italic. For sizes smaller than 6 point the bold cuts are very useful.

xhp xhp Xhp

Fig. 10: Left: Rialto Bold, centre: Rialto Piccolo, with increased x-height and heavier than Rialto (right).

Voilà –  
there are no more  
excuses!

Rialto Titling ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
.,:;!?()\*/«»„“”——

Rialto ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890 @ €  
.,:;!?()[]\*†§/«»„“”——

Rialto Piccolo ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890 @ €  
.,:;!?()[]\*†§/«»„“”——

Rialto Bold ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
1234567890 @ €  
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Comments on RIALTO from some type experts:

**HERMANN ZAPP** It is a pleasure to see that, besides the flood of inferior typefaces which are offered everywhere today, somebody cares about designing a typeface for books in all details and above all with new ideas.

**KURT WEIDEMANN** Rialto is the most careful and profound work of a type family in the classical Roman style which I have seen for a long time. I will support this typeface with conviction.

**BRAM DE DOES** Congratulations on your Rialto! It is beautiful and well done. The concept is admirable. Of course I see influences, but there should always be influences! It is impossible, even undesirable, to design new typefaces without using the achievements of good existing ones.

**MAX CAFLISCH** Lui Karner and Giovanni de Faccio have given their Rialto an independent, fascinating shape by tying together the flowers, spread from their Italian predecessors, to a new bouquet. Unusual for a first performance, the design of this type family is exceptionally free of individuality.

**PHILIPP BERTHEAU** With Rialto, digital type composition could achieve a new quality and regain some of the typographic superiority of the lead letters.

**JAMES CLOUGH** There is no question that Rialto is a big contribution to fine typography. I have hope for its success in its spiritual home south of the Alps. Aldus, Bodoni and Mardersteig all share our high expectations.

## A new typeface needs publicity ...

14 ... that is why we introduced RIALTO as a mailing with a calendar in spring 1999 with the title *Every Day is a New Years Day*. The characteristics of RIALTO are explained on the twelve calendar pages. This work received an award for high design quality from the Designcentre Nordrhein-Westfalen within the *German Award for Communication Design* 1999. Beyond that – and for us more important – we found a lively interest for our work and we are quite proud of the fact that RIALTO was chosen for the big Renaissance exhibition at Palazzo Grassi in Venice in autumn 1999 – to name just one of several successful applications.

Personal contact with our clients and users of RIALTO is important to us; and that is the reason why we decided to do our own marketing.

### The ten cuts of RIALTO:

- Rialto<sup>df</sup> Piccolo for sizes up to 14 point in Roman, Italic and Small Caps.
- Rialto<sup>df</sup> for sizes from 16 point and above in Roman, Italic and Small Caps.
- Rialto<sup>df</sup> Bold in Roman, Italic and Small Caps.
- Rialto<sup>df</sup> Titling consists of caps only, for larger sizes.

These are obtainable direct from us, under the name *dfTYPE*. The price for the type family is ATS 8.000,—, € 581,38 excluding VAT.

## Historical examples?

The law of beauty consists of three things:  
*numerus*<sup>1</sup>, *finitio*<sup>2</sup> and *collocatio*<sup>3</sup>.

And something else is added through which everything  
is embraced and united and through which  
the whole manifestation of beauty  
shines wonderfully:  
*concinnitas*<sup>4</sup>.

LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI

1452

1 Rhythm

2 Realization, execution

3 Arrangement, partition

4 Skilful combination

During our work on Rialto we met a historical challenge which has never previously been resolved in an entirely satisfactory manner: the formal, elegant and functional combination of Roman and Italic with a common uppercase. Our search for a solution to this typographic problem was immensely stimulating. Certainly we did not underestimate the painstaking attempts to solve the problem in the past and we came to esteem the conceptional work done by our predecessors. Luckily for us today's more sophisticated technology made it a lot easier to realize the idea.

There are no existing rules for the height of capitals. We only need to know how they came into our alphabet. They are the shapes of the Roman *Capitalis Monumentalis*, the stone-carved letters of the Roman inscriptions. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century the humanists put the capitals next to the *Carolingian minuscule* to achieve a new corporate design, differing from the *Rotunda* and the *Textur*.

The capitals are basically too tall in all early Roman faces, especially in the so-called early Venetian faces. They were slightly reduced in the late Venetians but gained height again with the early French faces of ANTOINE AUGEREAU and GUILLAUME LE BÉ. CLAUDE GARAMOND lowered them again, and for about 200 years they remained at a reasonable height until PIERRE SIMON FOURNIER turned the wheel back again. He described his idea in his *Manual Typographique* as follows: "... I made some essential changes which seemed necessary, i.e. to align the ascenders of the lowercase with the capitals to achieve more uniformity; before they used to be a bit smaller."

This step of FOURNIER negatively influenced both the fairly well-proportioned Dutch faces of the time as well as the later neo-classical faces.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the height of the capitals is reduced again. When Monotype introduced an interpretation of one of Fournier's types they even offered a version with smaller capitals... a late amendment, as if Fournier – one of the *Saints of the Black Art* (at least we have to thank him for the point system) – had come down from Heaven to correct his mistake!

For texts set in German the size of the capitals is more important than for most other languages. Consequently the problem needs more thorough attention than for a face designed with English texts in mind. At Monotype they were aware of this and considerably produced a German version of *Times* – the most successful type design of our century – with capitals that are narrower but not smaller. ADRIAN FRUTIGER showed us during the fifties with his *Meridien* how good-looking lower capitals can be, even in a text set in German.

The size of the capitals, the x-height, the length of ascenders and descenders are all factors that depend on the designer's taste and the special requirements he has to cope with. Stylistic influences of a specific period obviously play their part too.

The  
golden rule is:  
there are no  
golden rules.

Inspired by the varying sizes of the capitals through the centuries, we designed Rialto caps according to our requirements: slightly lower than usual for the Roman, in order to allow them to harmonize with the Italic.

Endless words have been said about the interplay between Roman and Italic during the past decades. One of the most famous personalities, STANLEY MORISON, in his essay *Towards an ideal Italic* even expressed the opinion that an ideal Italic would be a sloped Roman. Anyone who looks at the Italic of *Trump Mediaeval* or that of *Perpetua* or *Joanna* by ERIC GILL will agree that a sloped Roman can be an Italic, provided it displays at least a few attributes of Italic. These elements of course are a certain slope and the shapes of such important letters as *a a*, *e e*, *g g*, and *ff*. A ‘Grandseigneur’ of type design, JAN VAN KRIMPEN, obviously took Morison’s message too seriously. His *Romulus* shows us the equivalent of electronically sloped Romans, an effect that every secretary is ill-advised to produce on her PC!

ROBERT GRANJON, the celebrated master of Italics, who lived during the time when sloped capitals were invented (the first known were printed in 1525), was influenced by GRIFFO when designing the capitals of his *Litera Currens Ciceroniana vulgo Scolasticalis*, known in England as *Pica Italic*. However, with his *Cursif Paragon* and his beautiful *Ascendonica Cursive* he changed his mind and sloped the capitals to the same degree as the Italic lowercase and also made them the same height as the Roman capitals. Claude Garamond did the same when he designed

the Italics for his already existing Roman faces. This obviously had to happen because of the need to mix Roman and Italic in the same line for the first time.

We went the other way: We reduced the height of our Italic capitals and consequently the height of our Roman capitals (the same as the Italics) is also lowered.

The Monotype Corporation had some difficulty in explaining the use of sloped capitals for the Italics accompanying *Centaur*, *Poliphilus* and *Bembo* simply because these did not exist in the chosen historical examples of ARRIGHI and TAGLIENTE. Even now the capitals of these three Italics do not appear to harmonize with the beautiful shapes of the lowercase letters.

The fine cut of the later *narrow Bembo italic* – following the drawings of ALFRED FAIRBANK and obviously made for use with upright capitals – still needs to cope with far too sloped, far too wide and too tall capitals.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought us some attempts to restore upright capitals to Italics, unfortunately without great success. In most cases the problems arising were not even perceived. Eric Gill’s *Joanna*, never had italic capitals in its foundry version. It was only when this face was adapted for Monotype casters that *Joanna Italic* appeared with italic capitals. After Gill’s death – still too immature to become reality – the dream came to an end. Jan Van Krimpen’s *Romanée* also belongs to this category. Apparently he never cared about this problem. He left the compositors alone in their decision to use either Roman capitals or Small Caps with his italic lowercase. However, the Roman capitals are too tall, while small caps are too small and too narrow.

The way we meet this historical challenge might seem rather extraordinary: the idea of reducing the height of Roman caps, as we did in our Rialto Roman, was necessary for a successful *Marriage* of type – where contrast and harmony make for an inspiring relationship – just like in a marriage of people.

At the same time, this could open new paths in type design.

*Let's keep the adventure alive!*



LUI KARNER, was born on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1948 in Melk, Lower Austria; after an unremarkable performance at school, in 1963 he became an apprentice typesetter with an old, traditional letterpress printing firm in Melk. After four years apprenticeship he “escaped into the wide world”, with one year at sea. From 1970 he worked as a compositor in Bremen, Germany, where he was introduced to photo typesetting (Diatype, Ads, mft). In 1976 he founded his own typesetting company in Texing, Lower Austria: 14 years of work mainly for industrial clients and advertising agencies. In 1990 he turned back to his roots and founded *die Fischbachpresse*, a traditional letterpress printing business; in 1993 he won the Austrian Award for the Best Book of the Year and in 1995 he won the German Design Award. In the same year he met Giovanni de Faccio and became familiar with type design on the Mac. Since 1995 he has taught typography at the College for Communication and Media Design in Pöchlarn, Austria. On completion of RIALTO in 1999, the time became ripe for new type creations and a return to fine letterpress printing.

GIOVANNI DE FACCIO was born on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1966 in San Donà di Piave, in the Venice region. In 1986 he got his school certificate of Electrical Engineering in Padua. 1987 - 89 he studied at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice and attended several graphic design and calligraphy workshops in Belgium, Italy and Austria. In 1991 together with some friends he founded the Associazione Calligrafica Italiana. 1990 - 93 he taught calligraphy in Vicenza. In 1994 he started work on digital type design, and has taught calligraphy since 1995 at the College for Communication and Media Design in Pöchlarn and Vienna. In collaboration with the Associazione Calligrafica Italiana he edited a handbook for Calligraphy in 1997. In 1998 with Francesco Ascoli he wrote *Scrivere meglio*, (a method for improving personal handwriting). After four years of intense collaboration with Lui Karner, the type family RIALTO was completed in 1999. Besides digital type design and teaching, he is busy with lead type, linocuts and inscriptions in stone. He also plays the double-bass.

**COLOPHON**

Above all we ask you to turn a blind eye  
to the printing quality of this brochure. We have used  
a laser printer and an inkjet printer—not real Postscript.

To make up for that, the bookbinding has been  
carefully done by hand.

All in all we trust it will give you a good  
impression of RIALTO.

Texing, July 2000

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