

# Fiducia

A four weight typeface  
Inspired by the industrial times



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Designed by Michael Parson

# INTRODUCTION

## Intro

In the autumn of 2019, I was very honored to be invited to organise an exposition of my typographic work in Geneva. The invitation was extended by a local association, API (Association du Patrimoine Industriel), that aims to preserve and promote the past industrial history of the world. My first contacts with them had come through a visit, many years ago, to their amazing printing archives, filled with lead letters, letterpress areas and Linotype or Monotype print machines. So it was a great pleasure to be invited to expose my work with them.

The initial invitation was for me to simply showcase my existing typefaces, but I felt like this event could also be used to highlight the link between my craft, type design, and their world of industrial machines. The obvious answer would be to create a new, lead typeface, but that involved production costs and technical issues that I simply could not cover.

But around the same time, I had come across a fantastic book at a flea market that was presenting and celebrating the 100 years of Swiss bank notes since the official decree of 1891, whereby all the issuing of currency would be centralised with the State Bank. While flipping through the pages, my attention was caught by the notes designed by Ferdinand Hodler and Eugène Burnard in 1911. Despite being qualified as the second series, they were actually the first series that were widely distributed through the country. I obviously knew about the artistic achievements of Ferdinand Hodler, but I had not been aware of his work on these notes and was particularly intrigued by the use of typography they displayed. Whereas the more modern designs take a unified approach to the typefaces, these notes seemed to include a little collection of different typeface styles.

So why talk about bank notes when my initial question was to find a link between type design and industrial machines?

The link with currencies came from a realisation that, like the type industry, the world of money and currencies has seen some major shifts over the past 100 years. These bank notes I was looking at, signified the beginnings of a unified currency in Switzerland, the first time money was issued by a central government. The value of these notes was protected by the government and linked to a real value in gold deposits. But over time, that link to the gold standard has disappeared, and as we move into the digital age, even the very concept of physical money has changed and is gradually being replaced by fully virtual payments, either credit cards, banks transfers or even digital currencies like Bitcoin.

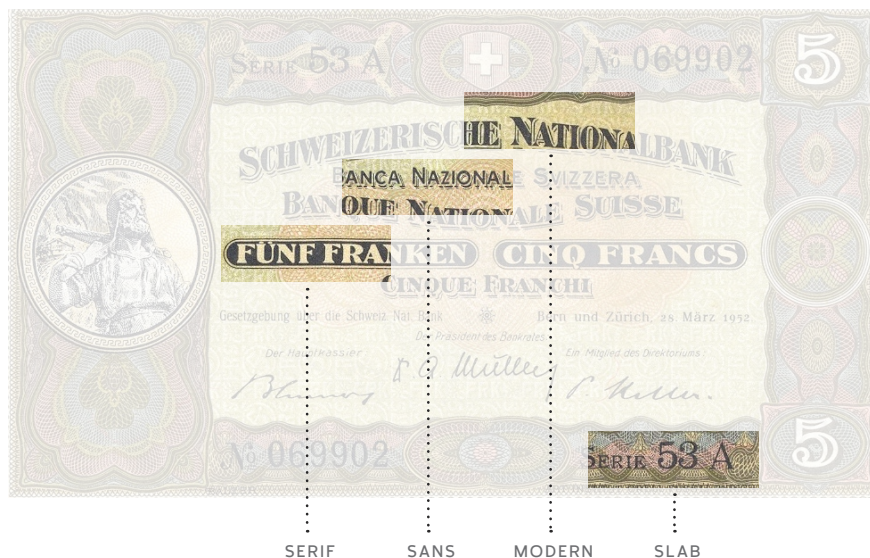
Therefore, just like typography once had a physical weight and form, money has also moved from a real, tangible value to a virtual one.

# Type design

With this main theme as my concept, I went back to those first bank notes and decided to use them as a starting point for the creation of a new typeface. Rather than focus on creating a single design, I used the bank note model and it's four styles as the inspiration for creating a typeface family that would include the four styles of letter forms rather than the traditional weights.

This inspiration was quite loose, since despite finding the original letterforms interesting, I also wanted to be able to craft the best letter forms. A simple example is the upper-case Q that was used in the notes and features a small, central tail that just seemed a bit too discreet and timid for the letters I wanted to design. I therefore took the few capital letters that were visible as a starting point, but then developed the fonts as I wished rather than aiming for a historic revival.

The main question was how linked I wanted the four fonts to be, should they share a common form or proportion? I quickly moved away from sharing a common skeleton as certain letters were more condensed than others and it seemed to impose a constraint that had no real justification. But I did decide to share common height proportions, the capital letters and x-height are all shared among the four weights. This would allow easy matching and mixing of the styles.



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MODERN

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SLAB

# Fiducia

## Serif

I initially started with the main letter forms that were featured prominently on the bills, that I called the Serif weight.

Intended as the main headline weight, its style is based on a dense, bold weight with a wide letter form that was the central text in the banknotes.

.....  
CAP HEIGHTS

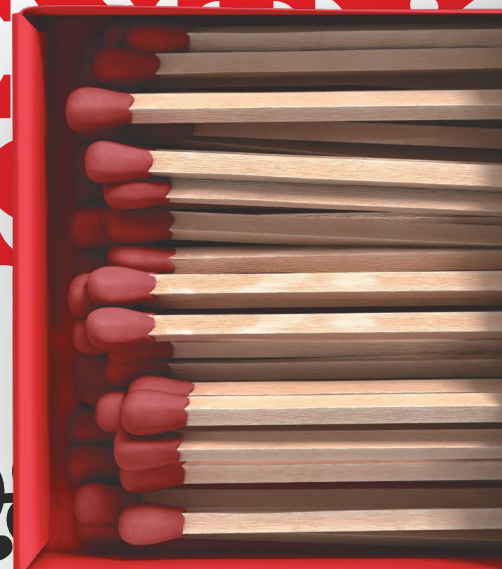


BASELINE

**MUCH SHAKEN**  
**social psychology**  
**STEAMBOAT**  
**(navigable waters)**  
**HILLS & FORESTS**  
**Columbus, Ohio**  
**14 REVOLUTIONISTS**  
**internecine**  
**KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**  
**New organized state**  
**POLITICAL METHODS**



NO 0923  
 FOUR  
 WEIGHTS  
 9'000%  
 SALE NOW!  
 OPEN  
 PE DIS  
 TYPE  
 NEW



Come on,  
 light  
 my  
 letters

SAFETY MATCHES  
MADE IN SWITZERLAND

Come on,  
 light  
 my  
 letters

SAFETY MATCHES  
MADE IN SWITZERLAND

[illegible]

**Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to Missouri, much less**

FIDUCIA SERIF - 9/12 PT

THAT WOULD BE THE STEAMBOAT  
THE PIONEER DOTS WOULD BE  
SPREADING SOON OVER KANSAS  
AND NEBRASKA FROM A NUMBER  
OF JUMPING-OFF PLACES ALONG  
THE GREAT RIVERS. THEN FROM

FIDUCIA SERIF - 21/23 PT

**The growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had, without railways it would certainly have dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the**

FIDUCIA SERIF - 12/15 PT

**BORN ON 5TH JULY 1768**  
**FOUR TYPOGRAPHIC STYLES**  
**ADAPTING TO EVERY**  
**MEDIUM & SETTING**  
**👉 OPENING TODAY**  
**IMPORTED PRODUCTS**  
**EXTENDED DESIGN IDEAS**



# Fiducia

## Modern

Having completed the main weight, I then started work on the secondary style, the Modern style. I called this weight modern due to the condensed form and central axis reminiscent of the so called modern typefaces. I could understand the logic behind this narrow form since it was used to write out 'Schweizerische Nationalbank' and the two other translations. Being rather long words, the designers would have needed a more compressed style as opposed to the Serif weight that is quite wide.

This modern style is equally quite dark in weight but features a pronounced contrast between thick and thin strokes. In keeping with the modern typefaces, the axis is central and constructed throughout the letters.

.....  
CAP HEIGHTS



BASELINE

**CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAIL**  
**tariffs & boundaries**  
**THE FORTH BRIDGE**  
**Photo: Baker & Hurtzig**  
**SKETCHY OUTLINE**  
**Men's acts waver**  
**BRITISH BUSINESS**  
**constitution crystallized**  
**VANISHING VAGUENESS**  
**Jeffrey Manufacturing Company**  
**SCIENCE IN THE COAL MINE**

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Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to Missouri, much less than halfway across the continent. The first state established beyond the river was the steamboat state of Missouri in 1821. But the rest of the distance to the Pacific was done in a few decades.

FIDUCIA MODERN - 9/12 PT

**THAT WOULD BE THE STEAMBOAT. THE PIONEERS  
DOTS WOULD BE SPREADING SOON OVER KANSAS  
AND NEBRASKA FROM A NUMBER OF JUMPING  
PLACES ALONG THE GREAT RIVERS. THEN FROM  
ABOUT 1850 ONWARD WOULD COME THE BLACK  
LINES OF THE RAILWAYS, AND AFTER THAT THE**

FIDUCIA MODERN - 21/23 PT

The growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had, without railways it would certainly have dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the man of Virginia was like the man of New England a century ago. And the process of assimilation goes on unimpeded. The United States is being woven by railway, by telegraph, more and more into one vast unity, speaking, thinking and acting harmoniously with

FIDUCIA MODERN - 12/15 PT

# Fiducia Sans

The third style I worked on was based on the accompanying Sans serif that was used in conjunction with the main serif forms. Due to it's small size, I found it hard to pick out some of the finer features but I did notice that the terminals were cut at a slight angle rather than being straight like what could be found in Helvetica. This feature actually seemed important as a defining aspect of the designs of grotesque typefaces before the arrival of Helvetica, so I decided to pursue that direction. Overall, the forms are quite geometric and open, with a low contrast and clear form.

.....  
CAP HEIGHTS

A

—————  
BASELINE

ROMAN REPUBLIC  
tariffs & boundaries  
THEIR REALIZATIONS  
The eye of a needle  
GREED & WASTE  
will find every gradation?  
OWNERSHIPS  
intensify & universalize  
(NEW PSYCHOLOGY)  
equalitarian formulæ  
EDUCATIONAL  
the Individualists group

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S  
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Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to Missouri, much less than halfway across the continent. The first state established beyond the river was the steamboat

FIDUCIA SANS - 9/12 PT

THAT WOULD BE THE STEAMBOAT. THE  
ONEER DOTS WOULD BE SPREADING  
OVER KANSAS AND NEBRASKA FROM  
NUMBER OF JUMPING-OFF PLACES ALONG  
THE GREAT RIVERS. THEN FROM ABOUT  
1850 ONWARD WOULD COME THE BLA

FIDUCIA SANS - 21/23 PT

The growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had, without railways it would certainly have dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the man of Virginia was like the man of New England a century ago. And the process of assimilation goes on unimpeded. The

FIDUCIA SANS - 12/15 PT

MODERNIST DESIGN IDEA  
HEAVY SERIF EGYPTIAN  
ZEBRA CROSSINGS  
INDUSTRIAL AGE  
GEOMETRIC INSPIRATION  
HYPED UP NEWS  
UNDERGROUND TRAINS

# Fiducia

## Slab

I then had a little internal debate about what style to choose for the final style. The note used some italic letters, a signature script and some numerals that seemed to be inspired by Slab serifs with a pronounced ball terminal. I felt that the most useful style would probably be a Slab, it could function as a companion to the Sans weight and would be more versatile than the script or italic ideas.

As opposed to the other serifs, this weight features heavy, bold serifs that give the overall letters a more dense and constructed form. Similar in width to the sans, this style equally has a low contrast and will work better than the modern weight in smaller point sizes.

CAP HEIGHTS

A

BASELINE

UNENCUMBERED  
 increasing realization  
 EARTH IS NEEDED  
 men's minds are limited  
 INSURRECTION  
 Russia, Marxism  
 HARSH & ELEMENTARY  
 ruling minority  
 ANTAGONISM  
 Launched in 1879  
 REALITY TRIUMPHS  
 world-wide prosperity



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R  
 S T U V W X Y Z ☛ a b c d e f g h i j  
 k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z ☛ Á Â  
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Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to Missouri, much less than halfway across the continent. The first state established beyond

FIDUCIA SLAB - 9/12 PT

THAT WOULD BE THE STEAMBOAT  
 PIONEER DOTS WOULD BE SPREAD  
 SOON OVER KANSAS AND NEBRAS  
 FROM A NUMBER OF JUMPING-ON  
 PLACES ALONG THE GREAT RIVER  
 THEN FROM ABOUT 1850 ONWARD

FIDUCIA SLAB - 21/23 PT

The growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had, without railways it would certainly have dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the man of Virginia was like the man of New England

FIDUCIA SLAB - 12/15 PT

**r i**



**BUT THIS WORLD** of the closing eighteenth century was still only in the interrogative stage in this matter. It had got nothing clear enough, much less settled enough, to act upon. One of its primary impulses was to protect property against the greed and waste of kings and the exploitation of noble adventurers. It was largely to protect private property from taxation that the French Revolution began. But the equalitarian formulæ of the Revolution carried it into a criticism of the very property it had risen to protect. How can men be free and equal when numbers of them have no ground to stand upon and nothing to eat, and the owners will neither feed nor lodge them unless they toil? Excessively—the poor complained. To which riddle the reply of one important political group was to set about “dividing up.” They wanted to intensify and universalize property. Aiming at the same end by another route, there were the

FIDUCIA MODERN

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FIDUCIA SANS

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FIDUCIA SERIF

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FIDUCIA SLAB

# Opentype features

Having completed the base letter forms, I then started to think about the additional Opentype features. Most of my typefaces use these features, but in keeping with my initial concept, I felt that it was essential to use OpenType substitution to truly showcase the digital aspect of my typography. Taking advantage of design aspects that were not available at the time of the printing of the original notes.

Initially, I worked on the common features that would appear on each weight, mainly the ligatures, alternates and numerals. With the ligatures and alternates, I stayed with a simple form, adding only the traditional forms and alternative ampersand designs. With the numbers, I went a bit further, incorporating four different variants. As with most of my fonts, the default form is the capital lining digits, these numbers are aligned to the capital letters and would be used in an uppercase setting. If one was setting running text with lowercase letters, then the second, hanging numerals would be best. These numbers are designed to mimic the rhythm of lowercase letters and feature ascending and descending strokes. With their smaller form, they will match the overall weight of lowercase text. A third, less well known form is the tabular lining numerals, in this case, the numbers are aligned to the capital letters but share a common width. The goal being to allow simple vertical alignment since each number will occupy the same horizontal space. The final numerals are the scientific numbers, these are smaller numbers that would be used while settings exponential values, either superior or inferior, for example in a chemical formula. I also use these numbers in the Fraction feature which allows the easy setting of any range of fractions.

**Tel 043 263 271**  
**169 169 169 169**

FIDUCIA SERIF

FIDUCIA SANS

FIDUCIA SERIF

FIDUCIA SERIF

**Tel 043 263 271**  
**169 169 169 169**

HANGING NUMBERS

**Tel 043 263 271**  
**169 169 169 169**

TABULAR NUMBERS

**Tel 043/26 03/271**  
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FRACTIONS

THE IDEA OF PROFIT ARISES OUT OF  
COMBATIVE INSTINCTS OF THE SPECIES.  
BEFORE MEN WERE MEN, THE VIOLENCE  
WAS A PROPRIETOR. P  
WHAT A BEAST  
DOG AND HIS BONE, THE  
LAIR, THE ROARING ST  
ARE PROPRIETORSHIP  
NONSENSICAL EXPRESS  
IN SOCIOLOGY THAN THE  
COMMUNISM." THE OL  
TRIBE OF EARLY PALA  
{373} UPON HIS PROPRIETORSHIP IN HIS  
AND DAUGHTERS IN HIS TOOLS IN HIS V

**Taboulé de Quinoa**

Poivrons Croquant, Sauce  
Champignons de Saison

18.50.-

**Légumes Croquants  
au Thé**

Nems de Légumes Arrosé au Thé

21.00.-

**Jardinière de  
Légumes Oubliés**

Legume, Jus de Champignons et Chips

19.00.-

**Carpaccio de Chou  
Fleur Amandine**

Amandes torréfiées, Duo de Sauces  
(Aïoli, Fromage Bleu)

18.50.-



# 01 TITLING

# 01 TITLING

FIDUCIA SERIF - TITLING FEATURE

# 02 FEATURE

# 02 FEATURE

FIDUCIA SLAB - TITLING FEATURE

# 03 MAKE FORMS

# 03 MAKE FORMS

FIDUCIA MODERN - SWASH FEATURE

# 04 Typography

# 04 TYPOGRAPHY

FIDUCIA SANS - SMALL CAPITAL FEATURE

I am obviously aware that any user can simply add effects to my letters to create decorative forms, but I still thought it was an interesting occasion to add in some decorative letters as I had already done with typefaces like Halja or Furius. I started with the main style, the serif weight, which, by being bold and wide, gave me quite a lot of space to imagine a decorative fill. I opted for a stroked letter and then added in some floral forms and lines to give an engraved effect to the letters. Since the inspiration was the numbers, I started with those but then decided to also add the capital letters for extra options will creating layouts. This feature can be activated simply by clicking the Titling feature in the Opentype panel.

The banknotes equally gave me the easy answer for the sans weight, creating small capitals. Despite not being a big fan of mixing capitals and small capitals like the examples, I thought it was a nice addition to the family and could also be used as an alternative weight to the traditional capital forms. This feature can be activated by using the Small capital feature.

For the Modern weight, I decided to branch away from the source material to explore a more basic Swash style, principally by adding extra flourishes to certain letters. The main forms are initial letters, so letters that would be found at the beginning of a line of text, but certain letters like the A or R are also featured as replacement letters with extended strokes on the diagonals.

The last weight was the Slab, I pondered a few ideas between small capitals or swash, but finally decided to follow the serif lead by creating some more decorative letters. Since the initial inspiration for the Slab was the numerals, I thought the decorative forms could also be applied in replacement or as an addition to the Serif weight.

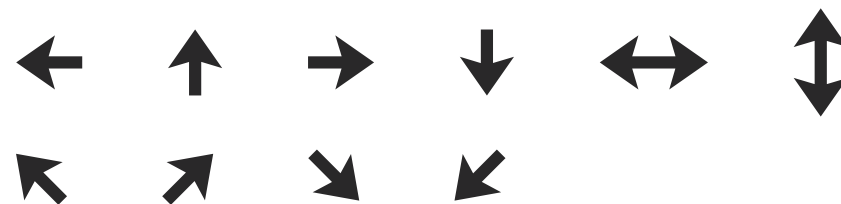
Thanks to these stylistic additions, Fiducia therefore offers four styles that can then be further expanded thanks to their decorative Opentype features, this ensures a wide range of choices and possible combinations for any design or setting.



A final little touch that I wanted to add was to include some symbols that could be used for type based layouts. Historically, a printer would be able to use a set of manicules and various fleurons that could be integrated as decorations in their layouts. The most common forms are the pointing finger and heart shaped symbol, but there were as many forms as there were printers. So pushed by the traditional inspiration for the fonts, I decided to design some simple forms that could be used to spice up a design. These include ten arrows for showing directions, eight manicules in either contour or solid glyphs and twenty eight floral symbols. These pictograms are included in each style and can easily be accessed through the glyphs panel.

All of Fiducia's weights use the extended Latin character set, so include a full set of punctuation and the various accents that will allow the setting of over 80 languages, from French or German to Turkish or Polish. Most Latin based fonts generally include five historical monetary symbols, that are the most commonly used in the western world. These are the Dollar, Pound, cent, Yen and since early 2000, the Euro symbol. But since this typeface was inspired by bank notes, and therefore the currencies of the world that number over hundred, it only seemed fitting to expand the monetary symbols to include currencies like the Turkish Lira, Korean Won or even digital Bitcoins that have become popular. The inclusion of the Bitcoin symbol was also a nice hint to this virtual, digital currency that we now all use as opposed to the more traditional currencies.

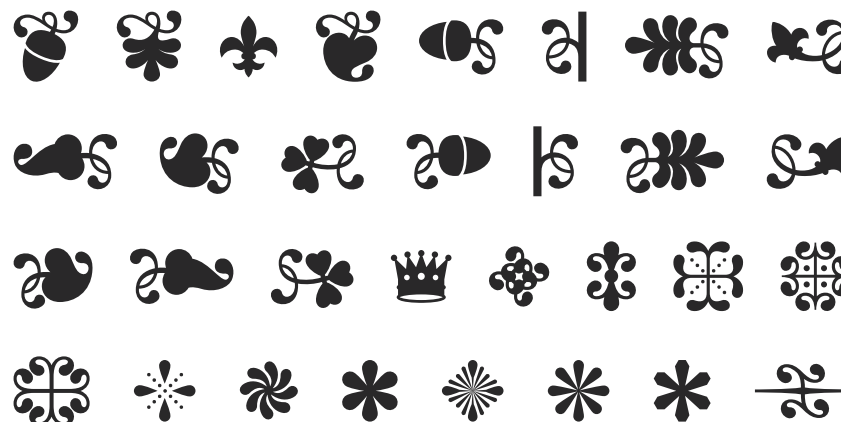
Developed over 10 months, Fiducia grew from a simple design concept into a full typeface family, offering four different styles in a single family. In the same way that this single banknote sparked a design concept, this family offers a complete tool set of type styles that can be applied to a wide array of settings. Whether you need to create a poster, a new game or a logo design, Fiducia aims to offer a versatile and interesting choice.



ARROWS



MANICULES



FLEURONS

**WANTED NOW**  
**by official decree**  
**WOODCUT POSTER**  
**dangerous times**  
**ATTENTION**  
**All new arrivals**  
**STATE PENITENTIARY**  
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**Fiducia Typeface**  
by Michael Parson  
4 weights  
Display / Text

[www.typogama.com](http://www.typogama.com)

Specimen Layout: Michael Parson  
Text & visuals: Michael Parson  
Font used: Fiducia Sans  
Longer text & notes set in  
Fiducia Sans

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