

# The Design of Rumba: Concept and Process

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## What is Rumba?

When hearing this word, the first idea that probably comes to mind is the one that associates it with a musical style because Rumba is a generic term for a type of West Indian music or dancing. In this document Rumba is also the name of the typeface family I designed as my graduation project for the Postgraduate Program in Type and Media at the Royal Academy of Art in the Netherlands (KABK). Before addressing the relationship between them, let's look first at Rumba as a style of music.

There are three types of Rumba:

**Cuban Rumba:** Designation that covers a series of Cuban musical and dancing styles. Initially it designated the profane celebrations of black Cubans which probably extended to neighbouring culture. Anchored in African music, the songs are based on a distinct percussive rhythm. Within Cuban Rumba they differentiate between three sorts: *yambú*, *guaguanco*, and *columbia*.

**Flamenco Rumba:** Musical style derived from son cubano, probably a transposition of *guaracha* in the singing cafés of Andalusia (Cadiz and Seville). Although the purist *flamencólogos* exclude it from the flamenco tree, many good performers of flamenco have interpreted them historically.

**Catalan Rumba:** Musical style derived by the Catalan gypsies from flamenco rumba, probably at the end of the 50s, with some influences from danceable Cuban music of the day and rock 'n' roll.

## **Design Brief**

### **Rumba as a typeface design project**

Since I began to sketch some ideas for my typeface design project I was asked to define its requirements and its limitations. So I had to answer questions like this: *What are the intended uses and applications for your typeface? Is there no other typeface that already covers them? What are the limitations of your project?* I have to say that to formulate a purpose and a list of requirements helps a lot in the design process, because it gives the designer a path to follow.

## My Purpose

### Design a formal and expressive family typeface

*What is an expressive typeface?* 'A typeface that is able to express people's thoughts and feelings'. With my project I wanted to explore this aspect of type design. Type is able to talk, to communicate, and most of the time it is just the printed text that best accomplishes this purpose. It can be warm, cold, funny, boring, informal, serious... All the connotations that a designer would like to transmit are possible to do with type. And what is meant by formal? Formal in construction with balance and elegance, strongly rooted in the principles of calligraphy.

## List of requirements

- The typeface should be usable in small, medium and large format printing (postcards, flyers, posters, packaging, etc./billboards, signalling flags, etc.) that requires a type with these characteristics.
- It should include a display version for short texts and headlines. It is easier to achieve more freedom and expressiveness in the letterforms in display because these types don't need to follow many established rules as closely as text types.
- Show diversity with the design of a family as a group of fonts that match each other, not in the usual range of weights but in variables of contrast, expressiveness and use.
- Produce as OpenType for cross-platform compatibility, but mainly because an OT font can contain a large number of contextual ligatures.
- Design a very good and functional type to be used in the languages spoken in Spain (Spanish, Catalan, Galician and Basque). Most typefaces are designed for English, and certain character combinations (like 'f' followed by a grave accented vowel, or 'i' followed by "í") result in an inaccurate design. How am I going to solve this? Taking care in the design of special characters, ligatures and their justification in order to avoid conflicts.



*Left: A poster advertising Vondelpark in Amsterdam. Its primary resource is the use of the typeface Cooper Black by Oswald Cooper.*

*Above left: Handwriting is always expressive because it is manual and individualistic. Regardless of technical proficiency, the writer always tries to put something personal into it. Here, 'party cakes' is written on a bakery in Barcelona.*

*Above right: Handwriting on a wall in Havana, Cuba. It says "When you work with love, you get results"*

The specifications and typographic particularities of Spain's languages are:

### Catalan

—Alphabet

a à b c ç d e é è f g h i í j (k) l [l·l] m n o ó ò p q r s t u ú ü v (w) x y z

\* *Characters in parentheses are used only in foreign words and names.*

Typographic particularities

—The Catalan alphabet is based on the Latin alphabet with the addition of the letters. à, ç, è, é, í, ï, ò, ó, ú, ü, and six digraphs gu, ll, nn, ny, rr, ss.

—k, w are used only for loan words, as well as y which is also used in the digraph ny.

—It has two special characters: ç (ce trencada or c cedilla) pronounced as an 's' in such words as *Barça*, *balança*, *escorçó*, and l·l (*ela geminada*). Pronounced as a simple l, as in *Instal·lació*.

—Preferred quoting

“Outside quotes and an ‘inside quote’ within a quote.”

—Accentuation

In Catalan, there are two kinds of graphic accents, acute and grave.

The capital letters are accented as well.

—Exclamation and question marks

Catalan uses the question and the exclamation in the same way as in English, just one at the end of the sentence: *Para! Vols dir?*

—The use of the diaeresis

The diaeresis is used as a mark " placed over the vowel 'i' to indicate that the vowel is pronounced in a separate syllable: estudiï, and over 'u' to indicate that you must pronounce this vowel in the syllable 'qüe': *qüestions*

—Apostrophe of 'de' or d'

The apostrophe of the preposition 'de' is used before a word that begins with a vocal o 'h'—*el dia d'avui*—and before the numerals '1 and 11'—*un joc d'11 peces*.

—Apostrophe of 'el' 'la' or l'

This is used in the same way as 'de' apostrophe. *l'11 de novembre*

—Apostrophe of 'te' or 't'

The apostrophe of the reflexive 'te' when used before a vowel. —*t'estimo*.

—Apostrophe of 'me' or 'm'

The apostrophe of the reflexive 'me' when used before a vowel. —*m'agrada*.

**La vista se'ns en va cap al bosc proper. Podríem gaudir d'una de les més sibirítiques truites.**

### Galician

—Alphabet

a á b c (ç) d e é f g h i (j) (k) l m n ñ o ó p q r s t u ú ü v (w) x (y) z

\* *Characters in parentheses are used only in foreign words and names.*

Typographic particularities

—The Galician alphabet is based on the Latin alphabet with the addition of the letters á, é, í, ó, ú, ü, ñ and nine digraphs ch, gu, ll, nh, qu, rr. The diagraphs qu and gu are only used followed by vowels e and i.

—ç, j, k, w and y appear only in loan words.

—It has a special character: ñ

- Preferred quoting  
“Outside quotes and an ‘inside quote’ within a quote.”
- Accentuation  
In Galician, there is only one kind of graphic accent, the acute.
- Exclamation and question marks  
The interrogative intonation or exclamation are used in the same way as in English; just one at the end of the sentence with the signs ?! respectively. To avoid ambiguities, it is permissible to use them in the beginning of the sentence with the signs ¿! (so both are possible).
- The use of diaeresis  
The diaeresis is used with the letter ‘u’ to indicate that you must pronounce this vocal in the syllable ‘güe’ and ‘güi’. It is also used with ‘i’ in the first and second persons plural and in the indicative of the verbs that end in -aer, -oer, -aír, -oír and -uir: *caïamos, traïamos, argüïamos*.
- Apostrophe  
This is not used in modern Galician, but it is permitted for reproducing the spoken language: *n’é verdade*. It is also used in the citation of titles when the initial article becomes integrated with the prepositions ‘de’ or ‘en’: *O Argumento d’A Esmorga, Iso está en n’Os Eoas*.

**Velaquí unha sensibilidade nada frecuente, porque as letras non son inocuas e a elección tipográfica sempre responde a unha intención.**

### Basque

- Alphabet Euskaltzaindia (Academy of the Basque Language)  
a b (c) (ç) d e f g h i j k l m n ñ o p (q) r s t u (v) (w) x (y)z  
\* *Characters in parentheses are used only in foreign words and names.*
- Typographic particularities
- The Standard Basque alphabet is based on the Latin alphabet; with the addition of the letter ñ, and seven digraphs: dd, ll, rr, ts, tt, tx, tz.
- c, ç, q, v, w, y are just used for loan words.
- It has a special character: ñ
- Preferred quoting  
“Outside quotes and an ‘inside quote’ within a quote.”  
The use of guillemets as the first quotation marks is also common.: <<first>> ‘second’ ‘third’ . (Not normalised by the Academy).
- Diacritics  
Accents are not used in Basque, only for writing foreign words.
- Exclamation and question marks  
The interrogative intonation or exclamation are used in the same way as in English or Catalan, just one at the end of the sentence with the signs ?! respectively.
- The use of diaeresis  
Some dialects also have a high front rounded vowel (referring to the sound), represented by ü when these dialects are written.
- Ordinal numbers  
There is no gender in ordinal indicators (neither in nouns).

**Mertxikaren lorearen ederra; barnean dizu hezurra gogorra.**

## Spanish

### —Alphabet

a á b c d e é f g h i í j (k) l m n ñ o ó p q r s t u ú ü v (w) x y z

\* *Characters in parentheses are used only in foreign words and names.*

### Typographic particularities

—The Spanish alphabet is based on the Latin alphabet with the addition of the letters: á, é, í, ó, ú, ü, and five digraphs: ch, gu, ll, qu, rr.

—k, w are just used for loan words.

—It has a special character: ñ

—Preferred quoting

“Outside quotes and an ‘inside quote’ within a quote.”

—Accentuation

In Spanish, there is only one kind of graphic accent, the acute. Its use in capital vowels is optional but recommended.

—Exclamation and question marks

In contrast to English, question and exclamation marks also go at the beginning of the phrase (these signs are aligned with the top of the lowercase, resting on the baseline and not hanging).

—The use of diaeresis

Is used with the letter ‘u’ to indicate that you must pronounce this vocal in the syllable ‘güe’: cigüeña or ‘güi’: güincha

—Ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers have gender: 1<sup>o</sup> or 1<sup>a</sup>

—Numbering conventions

1.234.000 and 0,618 (the same is applicable for Catalan & Galician)

**Encontró manteles de hilo, bordados a mano. En un armario descubrió los vinos: blancos, tintos, espumantes.**

### References

- Glanville, Price, *Encyclopedia of the Languages of Europe*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, 2001
- Andrew Dalby, *Dictionary of languages*. London: Bloomsbury, 1998
- Peter T. Daniels & William Bright (eds), *The World’s Writing Systems*. New York/Oxford: OUP, 1996
- Xosé Feijó Cid, *As normas ortográficas e morfolóxicas da lingua galega*. Edicións do Cumio, SA. Vigo, 2003
- Joxe Ramon Zubimendi. Writer, corresponding member and secretary in the *Sección Tutelar de Euskaltzaindia-Real Academia de la Lengua Vasca* and consultant of the Basque Government for the linguistic quality in Education.

## How to represent all this in a typeface?

### The name

This is not needed in the first stage of design but it can be good for reference and to give an identity to the project. Due to all the languages in which the type is intended to be used, it is a good idea to give it a name which is common to all of them. This is usually found in musical styles. Also 'musical' is a good attribute for a typeface. All this carried me to Rumba, a dance and musical style of Cuban origin but adopted in Spain as 'Rumba catalana' and 'Rumba flamenco'. Perfect!

### Aesthetic characteristics

#### Handwriting and calligraphy

Handwriting was my starting point; a text written with naturalness is the best way to look at the combination of letters. This was combined with calligraphic experimentation in different media (pen, brush, pencil) and can bring a sort of free style and personality to a display typeface.

La escritura manual es mi punto de partida, un texto escrito con natur-lidad es la mejor manera de apre-ciar la combinación entre letras.

#### A mix between lettering and printing type

Lettering, when used correctly, can create any desired impression by itself. It can express an idea, and even lend distinction to the printed page. It can suggest quality, charm, action, speed, beauty, dignity, character, etc. and can be made to fit shapes and spaces where typography can not be used.



Some examples of lettering as shop signing in Barcelona.



## Formal characteristics

**Variable contrast.** Since I wanted to create a typeface for short texts which wasn't limited in its use to mere headlines, I decided to create a range of typefaces, differentiated by the amount of contrast between their thicks and thins. A type with high contrast can be more expressive because it can be provided with more details (becoming more decorative, good for large sizes). In the other way less contrast allows the type to be used in smaller sizes, because the legibility improves.

Level of contrast	Use	Qualities
Extreme _____	Big Headlines (>72pt)	Expressiveness ↑
High _____	Titles & Subtitles (24-72pt)	
Medium _____	Text (18-24 pt)	Legibility

This aspect is reflected in the names of the different fonts in the family

- Rumba Extra > Extreme high contrast version (big sizes).
- Rumba Large > High contrast version (medium sizes)
- Rumba Small > Medium contrast version (small sizes)

**Generous x-height** that will allow the type to be used in smaller sizes than might be expected.

**Variable length of the stems (ascenders and descenders).** Shorter for Rumba Small, longer for Rumba Extra.

**Variable width.** More condensed in the Extra version.

**Variable spacing.** To alter the mood of the type.

**Serifs and stems endings.** Strong and balanced endings to improve the rhythm, one rounded and another sharp. The alternation of smooth and sharp will produce a balanced impression in the rhythm, as well as some playfulness.

**Ligatures.** Some of the ligatures will be designed to prevent conflictive pairs of characters, others to add some variations and playfulness to the text.

**Figures and the non-alphabetical glyphs.** Appropriate design to sustain the identity of the typeface.

## Personal References

### Barcelona, Galicia and type

Barcelona is my hometown and Galicia the region in the Northwest of Spain for resting in summertime; both are places full of letters. As a fan of types, it is just impossible not to look and admire them. Some of the manifestations are really wonderful, full of energy, and I simply love them. It's said that there is a Spanish style in typeface design, and has actually been said of my project, which is good because it's distinctive through its identity. In my opinion, it doesn't matter if you are in Spain, Finland or California. It is such a small world that all of us share the same references, but if my project has this style, it is because I'm unconsciously influenced by my environment.







## Typefaces designed by others

I researched designers and foundries who had made types accomplishing the requirements of my project.

I classified them in two groups:

- Expressive display typefaces
- Typefaces designed for any of the languages I specified.

### Roger Excoffon's types

In the 60s, the designer and painter Roger Excoffon designed typefaces with a lot of particularities. At first these were mainly display fonts and scripts: Chambord, Banco, Choc, and most famous of all, Mistral. These, combined with the Olive foundry's text font Vendome, designed by Francois Ganeau, became so ubiquitous in France that they almost seemed part of the furniture. Mistral also travelled widely and set the trend for free-flowing scripts which became very popular in the 1950s.

**OFERTA!**

Banco (1951-1957)

*L'Expressionisme*

Mistral (1953)

**Antique**

Antique Olive Compact (1963)

### Oz Cooper's types

**Cooper Black** (first released by the Barnhart Brothers & Spindler type foundry in 1922), Mr. Cooper's best known typeface, is a very heavy version of Cooper Oldstyle (also known simply as Cooper). Designed in 1919, it is an innovative typeface due to the fact that it was one of the first typefaces to be drawn with rounded serifs and short ascenders. Cooper Oldstyle was the first to be designed. It was part of a commission to design a whole family of types in Cooper's characteristic style. It was intended to work as an advertising type, but proved to function as a text face as well. The legacy of the Cooper 'family' still lives on in American commercial signs.

**Black&Italic**

Cooper Black & Cooper Black Italic (1921)

**House Industries** [www.houseindustries.com](http://www.houseindustries.com)

**House Industries** is an independent digital typeface, design and illustration studio. Its work is based mainly in lettering and the design of customized typography for logotypes. They publish the typefaces as collections in a very playful and nice way.

Paramour

JAPAN!  
TURNTABLE  
FLIGHT

**Font Bureau** [www.fontbureau.com](http://www.fontbureau.com)

**Font Bureau** was founded in 1989 by noted publications designer Roger Black and type designer David Berlow to serve the emerging needs of microcomputer-based magazine and newspaper publishers seeking unique typographic identities. Their primary occupations are: tuning existing fonts, adding styles and designing original faces. Some examples:

Á Señal  
Perdó, no volia molestar-li, oi que ho entén?  
L'Eixample  
UNA BONA PEL·LÍCULA  
N'é verdade  
És convenient que estudiï al col·legi  
el nido de la cigüeña

Á Señal  
el nido de la cigüeña  
L'Eixample  
És convenient que estudiï al col·legi  
N'é verdade  
UNA BONA PEL·LÍCULA  
Perdó, no volia molestar-li, oi que ho entén?

Stainless by Cyrus Highsmith (FontBureau, 2002)

Asphalt by Tobias Frere-Jones (FontBureau, 1995)

**PampaType** [www.pampatype.com](http://www.pampatype.com)

**PampaType** is the digital foundry founded by Alejandro Lo Celso. Its aim is to develop new, high quality typefaces with a Latin flair which could respond satisfactorily to any text and display situation.

À Señal  
el nido de la cigüeña  
*N'é verdate*  
UNA BONA PEL·LÍCULA  
*Perdó, no volia molestar-li, oi que ho entén?*  
*L'Eixample*

*In my research of types, I have found that there are very few that fulfill the demands of the target languages, and the ones that are suitable for them are mainly designs for text faces. This is then another reason to design a new typeface.*

### Analysis

In analyzing the data I have collected, I see that although they are great fonts, they fail some times when used in the languages I'm focussing on. It's difficult to find a perfect headline type!

The most common errors are:

—The collision between ‘i’ and ‘í’ in Catalan

**estudií**

Sauna Black (Underware)

**confii**

Gothic 13 (Adobe)

—The position of the apostrophe and quotation marks. It's convenient to place the apostrophe aligned with the ascenders in the top and the quotations a bit underneath to avoid the visual confusion when aligned.



—The collision between the lowercase f and the grave accents



—The position and size of the middle dot in l-l geminada. The dot in this character should be positioned to center vertically on the uppercase height and center horizontally when followed by another L or l.



## Conclusion

- 1 Rumba will be a typeface family for texts and headlines inspired in the environment of my city, and strongly based on the principles of calligraphy and handwriting.**
- 2 The concept of this family is based on the idea of fonts related to each other, not in the classical range of weights, but through a variance of contrast, expressiveness and use.**
- 3 It will be specially designed for use in the languages spoken in Spain (Spanish, Catalan, Galician and Basque); for that purpose special attention is given to the design of ligatures, diacritical marks, special characters and to the relationships between them.**



## **Approach**

**The methodology**



## First sketches

### Calligraphy

After experimenting with different sketching techniques, I chose calligraphy as the main one. I defined the proportions of the characters, and consequently of the resulting type.

ñoquetx, hísk  
hamburgueso  
a soup & ntígy  
dlezn̄cafeĩjw  
  
maub

### Defining the letterforms

Once the best drawings are selected, the next step was tracing the letter shapes on vellum over the original calligraphic drawings. The outlines were drawn with a thin marker pen, filled in with a thicker one, and then retouched with a brush, alternating white and black paint to smooth the shapes and improve the details. It is important to do this as accurately as possible; accurate shapes lead to better results in the next steps. Sketching words was really handy in this part of the process; common elements, space, shapes... everything has more sense if you are looking at words.



Eme

*Early sketches for Rumba Extra*

*<-Early sketches for a high contrast font. These sketches helped me to define the idea for the type I had in mind. Although it's a high-medium contrast version, all the fonts in the family will be related to the shapes defined in these drawings.*

### Scanning&Digitizing

Once the best drawings are selected, scanning is the next step. In my case, not all the letters are drawn and then scanned, because some of them share elements and terminals and it's faster and better to work in the editor (in my case FontLab). After scanning there are three possible digitizing methods. One is drawing over a background image with bezier curves, another one is tracing the shapes with TraceMaster (that's the one I chose, it's possible to do it with Streamline) and importing it into the glyph window, the third is using Ikarus.

### Drawing in the Font Editor

#### Defining solutions and relationships

Why these terminals and not different ones? In the first stage I used the font editor to experiment with different possibilities of endings and serifs until I identified solutions that fulfilled my purpose of balance and attractiveness. Letters share common parts. Horizontal and vertical strokes, curves and serifs combine to bring unity and build a cohesive set of characters.



*Different terminals for a low contrast version. Once the terminals are defined they are applied as a feature in the rest of characters, spacing begins to be developed as well.*



*In this illustration you can see that the bottom right strokes of the 'a' and 'n' may have the same serif. Another example of similarity in forms can be found in the endings of the vertical stems of 'h' and 'b' and in the top beginning of 'a' and 's'.*

### Development of a Family

#### From low to medium contrast

Once the first characteristics of the low contrast version were determined, I began to work on the medium contrast version. This proved to be practical because the decisions I made in the design of this version of my type (a more detailed one) helped me to find more solutions for the previous one as well.

Basically the steps followed were:

1. Deepen the joins in the branches
2. Emphasize the slope of the serifs
3. Increase the contrast

First version of *Rumba Large*. Notice the differences in the low contrast version mentioned before.

### From hybrid to roman and italic

This version of the type put more in evidence its hybrid construction between roman and italic. After some reflection I decided to define this as the construction feature of the family and develop two new branches:

**A ‘roman’ version.** Straightened serifs and upstrokes / Improved curves / Balanced strokes.

First version of the Roman style type

**A ‘italic’ version.** An upright italic with a lettering flavour / Higher contrast / More movement / Condensed width / Longer ascenders and descenders.

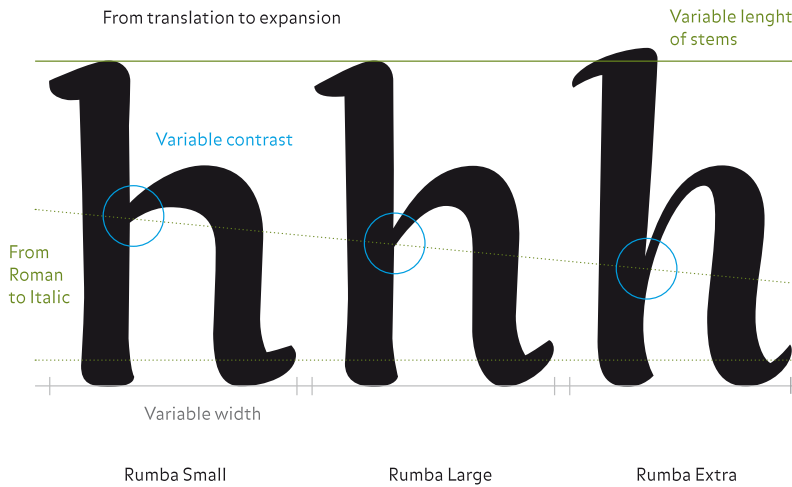
First version of the upright italic (*Rumba Extra*)

Once this process was consolidated more or less, I let it rest for a while and after some consultations I arrived at another thought. My project was in continuous evolution, which I think is good. The concept of my type family is not only based on the difference of contrast / expressiveness / size of use, but also on the transition from Roman to Italic.

The first high contrast version (*Rumba Large*) was clearly a hybrid between those two types of construction, and since I had developed it in two versions I left it aside. Nevertheless, it was a version that had admirers; they liked the freedom (even anarchy) of the design and the idea, and they encouraged me to take it up again. At the same time, the first low contrast version of the type (*Rumba Small*) now looked a little weird, obviously because the time dedicated to that version was significantly less than the time spent on the others.

So the conclusion and solution was:

- Replace *Rumba Small* by the Roman version, as it was pretty clear that this version worked best in small sizes.
- Place the hybrid version in the middle position as *Rumba Large*, where it was initially.
- Develop the upright italic into *Rumba Extra*.



## The Development and Evolution of the Design

The design process was supervised by the teachers in the academy, as well as some external type designers. It was the part of the project that took more time, week by week, step by step... but it was the most relevant as well. In the first phase, the alphabet is created with some basic characters. Accents, special characters and figures are added later. Every suggestion, every comment has a justification. Eventually, the process begins to make sense and the whole project moves forward.

### Rumba Small

This font is the one specially designed for smaller sizes, in a range from 16pt-24pt. The requirements for a text typeface are different from the ones for display types; legibility, rhythm and justification must be well done and balanced. It is in text type where these qualities must be as perfect as possible. Mainly for this reason, and because I wanted to use it as the basis for the intermediate version, the process of corrections and improvements took a long time. Rumba Small went through more phases of development than the others, as is illustrated here in the evolution of some of the characters.



In the development process from the first to the last version, the biggest change was between versions 9 and 11.

# Hamburgesfontsi

Rumba Small V9

# Hamburgesfontsi

Rumba Small V11

**One kind of contrast.** In comparison it becomes clear that version 9 shows a mix of different kinds of contrast. ‘a’ tends toward expansion and ‘m’ toward translation (this affects a lot of characters: h, n, e, o, f and s). The advice was to unify and emphasize the translation in this version and move towards expansion through the different versions of the fonts. Rumba Extra is clearly based on expansion. With this big change the emphasis became more horizontal, the rhythm better—not so stiff—and consequently more pleasant for the eye. Other additional changes were made: wider proportions and spacing, added weight to the tail of the ‘r’, g with two closed counters, straightened stems in diagonal letters.

## ABEGLMNVWXYZ

Rumba Small V9

## ABEGLMNVWXYZ

Rumba Small V11

**Serifs in the capitals.** Capitals letters don’t appear so often in written text. In the last version, serifs were added to some of them. With this solution they appeared more comfortable and pleasant. Other additional changes were added: straightened stems in the diagonal letters and width corrections in B, Y and Z.

Hem deixat enrere les darreres cases del poble, i la idea de la ciutat, de la gran urbs, fa temps que gairebé la tenim esborrada.

*Rumba Small Sample. Definitive version 16/18 pt.*

**Rumba Small** The basic alphabet 40/48 pt.

A B C Ç D E F G H I  
J K L M N Ñ O P Q R S  
T U V W X Y Z & ? !  
a b c ç d e f g h i j k  
l m n ñ o p q r s t u  
v w x y z \* . , ; } f i l f f

The figures

Lining

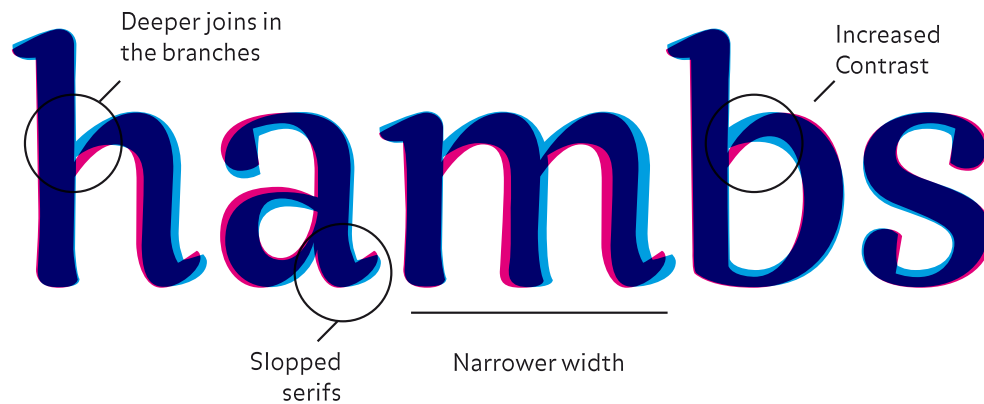
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Old Style

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

## Rumba Large

This font is the one specially designed for medium sizes, in a range from 24pt to 72pt. The idea came from drawings but the digital version is a transformation of Rumba Small. In addition some features from hand lettering were added.



çç ee gg jj kk ññ  
 00 vv ww xx yy  
 zz ÇÇ EÉ GG JJ KK  
 ÑÑ OO VV WW  
 XX YY ZZ

*Comparison between Rumba Small and Rumba Large (in black)*

**Rumba Large** The basic alphabet 40/48 pt.

ABCÇD&FGHI  
JKLMNÑOPQRS  
TUVWXYZ&¿?¡  
abcçdefghijk  
lmnñopqrstu  
vwxyz\*.,; }fifl

The figures

Lining

1234567890

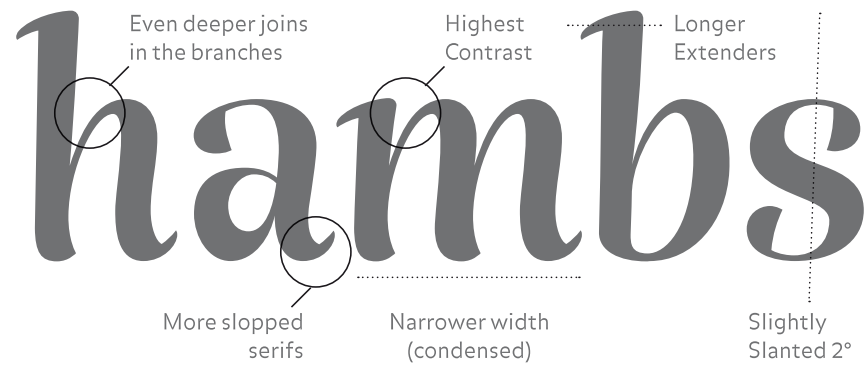
Old Style

1234567890

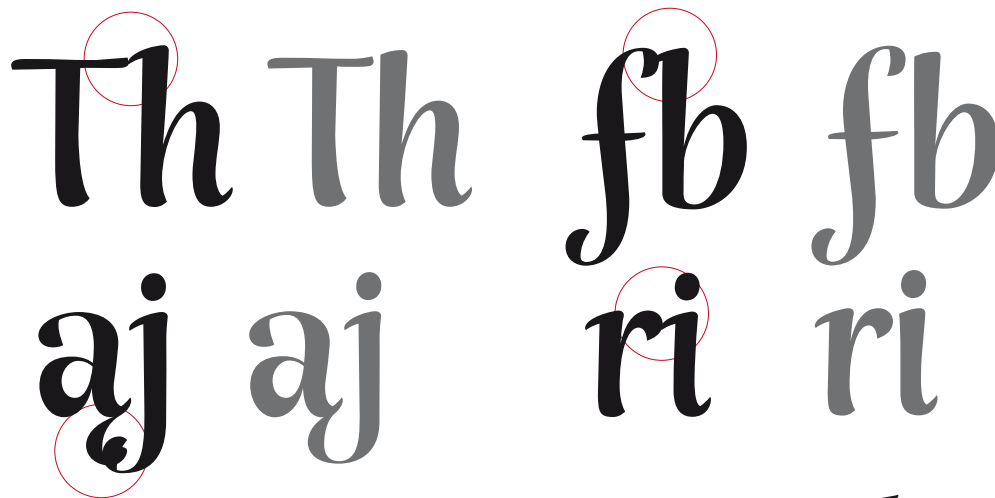


## Rumba Extra

This font is the one specially designed for large and extra large sizes, above 72 pt. This member of the family has the highest contrast. The construction is italic, lightly slanted, the emphasis is vertical and the kind of contrast is expansion. Pure lettering and energy, that's the goal of this version! It also contains special ligatures that would add some liveliness when applied in big headlines.



During the design process, and due to the design of the serifs and diacritics (see a-ogonek) I had to make a lot of adjustments which made it necessary to draw special pairs of characters.



*Image of specially drawn pairs of characters*

Whisky  
 MALT 100%  
 Distilled in North Ireland

*Rumba Small, Rumba Large and Rumba Extra used together*

Rumba Extra Some Characters 60 pt.

AaBbCcDd  
EefGgèHhIi  
JjKkLlNñ!  
OoPpQqRr  
SsWwxyz?  
358€ÅâËé  
áfiFläå¡!

## OpenType features

### The ligatures

One of the features of my type is that it is provided with different kinds of ligatures. Some of them add liveliness and a hand-lettering look when applied in large sizes, others improve the appearance of words by avoiding conflicts when certain letters appear together.

‘Aesthetic’ ligatures (shown in *Rumba Small*)

fina, flor, affable, affiliate, offlight

‘Lettering’ ligatures and stylistics sets (shown in *Rumba Extra*)

Café > Café

Little > Little

### Alternative characters

I decided to provide the font with some alternative characters to provide the designer with opportunities for altering the mood of the words:

–k and r are very common in Basque.

Mertxikaren ederra

Mertxikaren ederra

–g is a strong character in a typeface and often one of the signs of its identity.

Gong! Gong!

**Lining and Old Style Figures** (shown in Rumba Small)

Old Style figures 0123456789

Lining figures 0123456789

I was born in 1968 .The pool is 2,45 m. deep

**Alternative accented capital letters**

Accented capitals are required in Catalan and Galician, optional in Spanish and not needed in Basque. To avoid possible conflicts with the descenders of the line above I designed special accents for these letters.

Á > Ā    È > Ĕ    Í > Ĭ    Ò > Ò̇

Do you want to stop for lunch?

In Ècija or in Madrid?

Do Ĭou want to stop for lunch?

In Ècija or in Madrid?

**Special characters**

–**L·l and l·l**. Used in Catalan (ela geminada). This character is actually a compound character made from a base character and a mid dot, but often doesn't have the appropriate size. Now it has its own Unicode range— 013F for upper case and 0140 for lower case—so it can be defined by the designer. The dot in this character should be positioned to center vertically on the uppercase height and center horizontally when followed by another L or l.

Paral·lel > Paral·lel

*Middle dot**Special character*

## Rumba goes East

### The Central European approach

Once I graduated in Type and Media (Summer 2004), I decided to settle again in my hometown, Barcelona. In September of that year I attended the ATypI conference in Prague. My first meeting was at the Indigo Bar with some great Czech type designers. I remember very well the enthusiastic conversation with Frantisek Storm asking me about how to design a proper “ř” or “č” and consequently I asked him about a háček or caron and the ogonek. This is how the adventure of diacritics began and Rumba became a multilingual typeface.

**The modulation.** When I began to think of designing the diacritics I didn't know anything about it, but still I did some initial sketches for Rumba Small.

Final version of diacritics for Rumba Small: caron, circumflex and ogonek.

Rumba Large

Rumba Extra

Finally, with the help of Pavel Zelenka, I understood the shapes and construction. Here are some examples:

Rumba Small **Sample text in Czech** 20/26 pt.

**Zalyžařivšisi lyžař potkal  
nezalyžařivšisi lyžařku.**

Skier (male), who just finished skiing, met a skier (female), who just finished skiing.

**Přepeřený vepř.**

Pig with a lot of pepper.

**Přespříliš žlutoučký kuň úpěl ďábelské ódy.**

Overly yellow horse lamented devil's songs...

**Tak už to bývá, když se člověk pustí do  
křížku s jazykem.**

So that it has been, when somebody begins to contend with language.

**“Ukončete prosím výstup a nástup,  
dveře se zavírají.”**

Please finish getting off and on, the doors are closing.

This development also brought forth a lot of challenges in programming, so I have to thank Inka Menne for her unconditional help in making Rumba a useful digital font.

Rumba Small **Diacritical marks** 20 pt.

acute accent	Á á Ā Ē é Ĕ ĩ í Ĺ ĺ Ó Ō ó Ń ń Ú Û ú Ý Ŷ ý Æ æ W w Ż ż
breve	Ă ă Ę ę ĭ ħ Ğ ğ Ö ö Ŭ ŭ
cedilla	Ç ç Ş ş
circumflex	Â â Ê ê Î î Ô ô Û û Š š Ĥ ĥ
comma accent	Ç ç Ķ ķ Ļ ļ Ņ ņ Ŧ ŧ Ŗ ŗ Ş ş
dieresis	Ä ä Ě ě ĩ İ Ö ö Ü ü Ÿ ŷ Ẅ ẅ
dot accent	Ć ć Ğ ğ Ź ź ĺ
Double Acute	Ő ő Ű ű
grave accent	À à Ā ā Ē ē Ĕ ĩ Ĩ ĩ Ò ò Ù ù Ú ú W̄ w̄
Háček/carón	Č č Ď ě Ě ě Ľ ĺ Ň ň Ř ř Š š ť ŧ Ž ž
macron	Ā ā Ē ē Ī ī Ō ō Ū ū
ogonek	Ą ą Ę ę ĺ ĩ Ų ų
ring	Å å Ů ů
tilde	Ã ã ĩ ã Ñ ñ Õ õ Ũ ũ

## **Solution**

**The typeface**



Rumba is a typeface family that consists of:

**Rumba Small**

for texts in a range from 16 to 24 pt.

.....

**Rumba Large**

a intermediate step between  
text and headlines, in a range  
from 24 to 72 pt.

.....

**Rumba  
Extra, for  
display**

in any size from 72 pt.



vertical stems

E F H I J L T U  
f i j l t r

diagonal stems

A V W X Z  
k v w x y z

vertical and diagonal  
stems combined

K M N Y

vertical stems combined  
with branches

h m n u

curved stems

C O Q S  
c e o g s

curved and vertical  
stems combined

B D G P R  
a b d p q

Rumba Small **Sample text in Spanish** 14/18 pt.

### Un ensayo muy recomendable sobre la historia de la rumba.

En la frontera del flamenco, hay algunas formas musicales emparentadas con música del Caribe, que se han venido en llamar cantes de ida y vuelta: la guajira, la colombiana, la milonga...

Los musicólogos dicen que las diversas formas de la rumba cubana derivan de ritmos africanos, de los que siguen estando muy cerca. La más cultivada hoy en día es el guagancó: los discos de los Muñequitos de Matanzas traen buenas muestras de rumbas cubanas. Paralelamente, dicen que en Cuba se desarrolló el son a partir de la canción cubana, y que una de las formas festivas del son, la guaracha, transpuesta a España, fue la base de la rumba flamenca. Así, la rumba flamenca.

Rumba Small **Sample text in Catalan** 16/20 pt.

### LES HERBES AROMÀTIQUES

Hem deixat enrere les darreres cases del poble, i la idea de la ciutat, de la gran urbs, fa temps que gairebé la tenim esborrada. Davant nostre comença a obrir-se l'ampla serenor dels camps: al fons, la línia de pollanques marca el curs del rierol i les basses on la granota esgrana el seu raucar monòton. Al marge del camí, dues mates d'esparreguera ens han ofert els tres primers espàrrecs; els portem a la mà, molsuts, com a inici del manat que, ben segur.

Rumba Small **Sample text in Basque** 18/22 pt.

Kontuan izanik munduko askatasuna, justizia eta bakea giza familiako kide guztien berezko duintasunean eta eskubide berdin eta ukaezinetan oinarritzen direla; Kontuan izanik giza eskubideak ez ezagutzearen eta gutxiestearen ondorioz, giza kontzientziari irain egiten dioten basakeriak gertatu izan direla.

Rumba Small **Sample text in Galician** 20/26 pt.

## Ler entre letras

Pepe Barro, deseñador gráfico. Para comezar esta miña intervención cúmpreme facer unha cita de Castelao, é do seu diario de viaxe de estudos a Europa. Ao pasear por Berlín, o 20 de agosto de 1921 anota: “Eiqui ao mellor aparece enriba dunha letra vermella e inmensa un paxaro azul e neste pequeno detalle hai arte. Cada letra é un monumento”.



Rumba Large **Some examples of use**

Fundición Tipográfica  
Richard Gans, Madrid

\*\*\*\*\*

Wine &  
Spirits

L'Odissea

North Sea  
Jazz Festival  
9/10/11 July '04  
\* The Hague \*





Rumba Extra **Some examples in use**

Holidays  
in Spain!

\*Why not  
in Hawaii?

L'Évié

Kaçik

# Köfte

MAHI-MAHI

Vetkoek

Slovenian Partizanski golaž

# Gazpacho

Kontsomea foiearekin eta azarekin

# Whisky

SMÖRGÅSBORD!

# Chá com limão

8 Portions of Strawberry Cake

REVOLTO DE ALGAS CON OURIZOS

# ¡Un Pincho de Atún!

Una copita de fino

Dyrlægens natmad  
**Švargl**

Pålæg and smørrebrød

**Makovnjača**

Zupa ogórkowa, Bigos, Kielbasa, Rosól

Imam

Bayıldı

**Halušky**

Fergesë e Tiranës me Mish Viçi

**Pinnekjøtt**

“Platillo” de sípia amb bacallà

**Yuba** Klöße