

THE PROJECT

Fritz Gottschalk's 70th
Birthday Tribute Poster

THE TEAM

Ken Carbone, designer;
Leslie Smolan, copywriter
(www.carbonesmolan.com)



For Fritz
Fabulous friend
Fantastic designer
Funny laugh
Forever Swiss
Happy 70th Birthday
Fondly
Ken & Leslie



MY BEST WORK

KEN CARBONE

Leslie Smolan, my partner, and I received an invitation to create a poster celebrating the 70th birthday of the famous Swiss designer Fritz Gottschalk. We were thrilled to be asked, and I won the coin toss to do the design. Leslie said she would write the copy. This invitation meant a great deal to us because Fritz has been a mentor, former partner and enduring friend for more than 30 years. Another plus was that we would be part of an elite international group of designers asked to join the tribute, including Massimo Vignelli, Takenobu Igarashi, David Hillman and Bart Crosby. Given this company, I needed to be on the top of my game.

Fritz Gottschalk is quintessentially Swiss: His name is *Fritz*, he lives in Zurich and he even designed the Swiss passport. A jovial guy with an infectious laugh, he certainly stands out in a crowd. Early in my career Fritz hired me to work on the design program for the 1976 Montreal Olympics. That two-year experience gave me great insight into Fritz's design philosophy and taught me that he favors design in its purest state without "frou frou," as he would say.

So where to begin? I don't often design posters, so I welcomed the opportunity to work on something that didn't require weeks of strategy and months of implementation. However, this proved to be more difficult than I expected.

A few weeks before the deadline, I was in Santa Fe giving a lecture at the local AIGA chapter. That evening in my hotel room I began sketching again. I looked over at the envelope containing my airline ticket, which happened to be red and white. The Swiss flag came to mind. I used my Swiss Army knife (no joke) to cut out a small red rectangle and white cross. Then I saw it. I tore off the left side of the cross and recomposed it into an "F" for Fritz.

—KEN CARBONE

Ken Carbone is co-founder and chief creative director of the Carbone Smolan Agency in New York City. He's a faculty member of the School of Visual Arts MFA Design program and the author of "The Virtuoso: Face to Face with Forty Extraordinary Talents."