

## In the Bull City, a Horse & Buggy Press

### Description

Dave Wofford is a Durham, N.C.-based graphic designer who also happens to own a pair of 1960s-era, hand-cranked, cylinder-based, Vandercook letterpresses.

We're not talking Kinko's here.

His work at Horse & Buggy Press is a fusion of state-of-the-art computer-aided design and typography with the tactile impressions of brightly-colored ink on paper.

He got into printing after studying the letterpress at Penland School of Crafts in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

"On some projects, like books and art catalogs, I do the design," he said. "On others, I do the design and the printing. But I don't print work that others design."

He sometimes prints on handmade paper, sometimes on chip board, but also on a hybrid that's 90 percent bamboo and 10 percent cotton. He'll use five colors of ink that he mixes himself, and then runs one at a time through either of his 15- or 20-inch presses. He designs and prints CD covers, posters, business cards, letterhead, books, brochures, catalogs and broadsides.

He likes the collaborative nature of his design work. "I want people to come to me with their problems, so we can brainstorm and figure out their goals and context," he said. "With the printing, I have an extra tool in my toolbar, for a tactile artifact."

When he designs, he's thinking not just about what the client wants and needs, but about the perceptions of the end user too. He wants it to be visually engaging, but appropriate to the content and the context too. He believes a menu, for example, should be easy to read and rewarding to the end user.

And the books he's produced are understated odes to their subject matter, whether birdhouses of the deep South or Jefferson's work at Poplar Forest near Lynchburg, Va. "I like a good narrative, something that's content-based," he said. "It's not like I'm making jeans or something."

Well, no. But what he is doing is preserving the art of the letterpress, with eye-popping and pleasing results

For more on Horse & Buggy Press, go to <http://www.horseandbuggypress.com/>

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