

HOW

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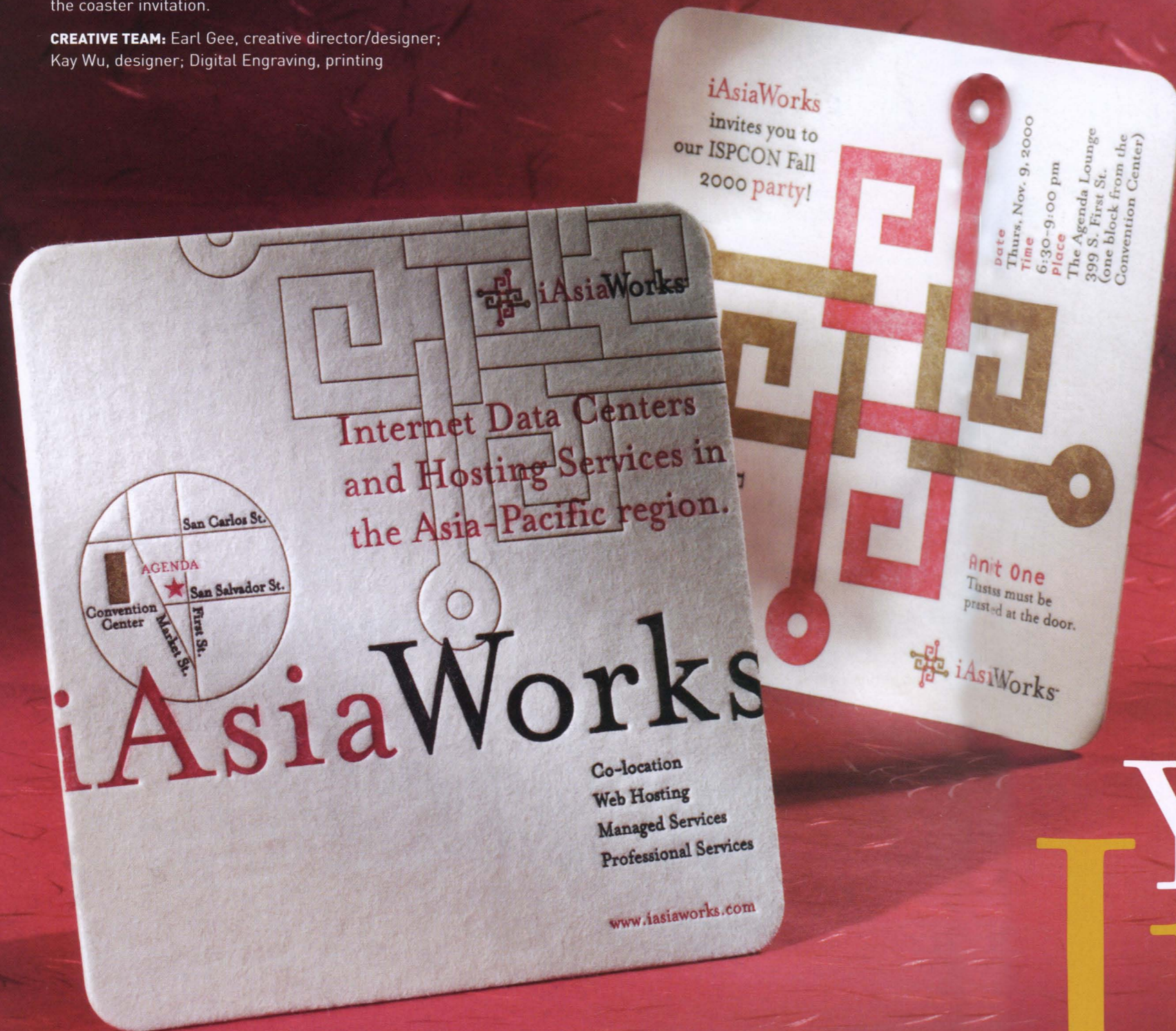
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CHEERS

Crown Vantage blotter paper with letterpress type made an invitation for the Web-hosting firm iAsiaWorks not just dimensionally intriguing, but also economical. The piece served as an entry ticket to a trade-show cocktail party and then doubled as a coaster. San Francisco firm Gee + Chung had already designed the identity for iAsiaWorks and parlayed the same aesthetic into the coaster invitation.

CREATIVE TEAM: Earl Gee, creative director/designer; Kay Wu, designer; Digital Engraving, printing



From party invitations to birth announcements, designers' prized projects are all dressed up and going places. Keep your eye on the red carpet—this pack is sporting a fashionable favorite: paper.

by Jenny Sullivan

What's tiny and shiny, pink and precious, and without question, a labor of love? Emily Elizabeth Olson, born May 28, 2001. So is the birth announcement proclaiming her entry into the world—a wee 2in.x3in. masterpiece that pulls out all the stops, including two-level embossing, foil-stamping, pearl varnish, a die-cut window, hand-glued vellum case with thermographic insignia (deep breath) and a metallic stitched binding.

No worries—her college fund is still intact. Grandpa Mark Kuzma co-owns the printing company—Flaire Print Communications in Minneapolis—that made the production extravaganza possible. And the design was a freebie. "Whenever we've done stuff for AIGA or ASMP, Flaire has always donated its printing services," says designer Derek Sussner. "When Mark's daughter got pregnant, he called in a favor."

Need we say more about why most designers savor the opportunity to take on the occasional invitation or announcement job, even if it's pro-bono? This is one design category in which craft is at a premium and paper fetishists can go hog-wild.

But a winning invitation is only as good as the paper it's printed on. The wrong choice in substrates can ruin an idea that appears brilliant on screen. We asked a short run of designers to share the stories behind their best invitations and announcements ... and how the right paper made all the difference.

You're Invited