

Oil Well Invitation Strikes Rave Reviews

By Kym Conis



Dotted across the plains of Oklahoma, oil wells (called oil derricks) skyrocket 30 feet in the air, their steel pipes reflecting the sun's shimmering rays. The mere stature of the oil derrick elicits an overwhelming sense of power and awe – the perfect choice for the focal point of a very unique invitation set created in honor of entrepreneur and philanthropist T. Boone Pickens.

Listed as one of the “100 Most Influential People of the Petroleum Century” (*Oil & Gas Journal*), Oklahoma native T. Boone Pickens has had an extremely influential career in the oil industry, impacting many aspects of corporate American life from economics to politics. So when his spouse, Madeleine Pickens, decided to throw him a *This Is Your Life*-style surprise party for his 78th birthday, every aspect of the event, from the elegant fare to the entertainment (Rod Stewart, Natalie Cole, and a team of cheerleaders) to the Master of Ceremonies Merv Griffin, had to be over-the-top and as ‘show-stopping’ as the guest of honor himself. And the invitation that would be sent to a very select guest list needed to set the tone for the gala event.

With a succinct talent for combining artistic flair with classic beauty, designer Karyn Dunn with Beyond Inviting accepted the challenge of creating an invitation that would draw excitement and anticipation over the upcoming party. With a collaborative team of artisans and craftsmen, Beyond Inviting, Ponté Graphics, Foil Graphics, and Jack Sullivan Marketing & Communications combined talents to produce a custom invitation package that was sure to catch even the most discerning of eyes.

To the Drawing Board

Designer Karyn Dunn, owner of San Diego-based invitationer Beyond Inviting, began her creative task with a series of meetings with her client. “Upon my first meeting, Madeleine (Pickens) gave me three different directions that I might head - oil, water, or quail hunting. All of the choices pertained to some aspect of Boone Pickens’ life,” stated Dunn. “I tried to decide which idea to tap into and decided that the oil concept would provide ample opportunities to create an invitation on several different levels.” Bob Lennen with Ponté Graphics, a Phoenix, Arizona-based stationery engraver and finisher, was brought into the picture as the project manager.

A concept was designed that consisted of a three-dimensional oil derrick - printed, foil stamped, and embossed with a surprise element. “I wanted to simulate oil coming out the top of the derrick in a way that was interesting and surprising to the recipient,” Dunn explained. A black silk ribbon that pulled from the top of the oil derrick, foil stamped with gold verbiage, accomplished the goal. As the ribbon was pulled, it unveiled the ‘who, what, and where’ of the surprise party – a captivating way to display pertinent information. ▶



Dunn and Lennen collaborated on the many facets of the invitation, from the oil drum that was first sent to guests with a save-the-date announcement housed within to all the various pieces of the elaborate invitation set, including the invitation, information/RSVP cards, and boxed encasement. Once the overall concept was in place, Graphic Designer Jack Sullivan with Sullivan Marketing & Communications, Phoenix, Ariz., was called upon to create the graphics. “Initially, I did a lot of research into the background of Boone Pickens and how he made his billions drilling for oil in Oklahoma. I researched the history of the oil industry and tried to design something that would portray a dated look – something with a rougher, yet sophisticated edge,” stated Sullivan.

Initial renderings of the oil derrick were more period with wooden slats. “Karyn and Bob wanted something more modern and sleek,” said Sullivan. So to set the high-end tone of the black-tie affair, a combination of silver matte metallic foil and metallic gold ink was utilized. Embossing was added to give the oil derrick further dimension – another unexpected surprise that guests would discover as they handled the invitation.

To accommodate the oil derrick and accompanying information cards, Dunn wanted something that would both protect the piece and compliment the invitation set. “From my experience, if you want something to get opened when dealing with high-powered people, you have to put it in a box,” said Sullivan. “That way, it actually makes it past the front desk screening process to the intended recipient. A box suggests it might be something personal.” A duotone image of men hard at work on an oil rig set the stage for the dated look Sullivan sought and the silver-stamped border around the image added just the right touch of sophistication – especially against the jet black background. The rest of the copy on the lid, including “We’re tapping into a very special event,” was stamped in silver and gold metallic foil, which popped against the rich black of the lid.

Fire Up the Presses

The design was complete but the task still laid at hand: how to produce the oil derrick and its encasement. Calling on a few industry craftsmen, Lennen contacted Guy Pepoy, president of Foil Graphics, Co., a Phoenix, Arizona-based print finisher, to collaborate on the construction of the box, inset tray, and oil derrick, and to

produce the foil stamping, embossing, and diecutting work.

“Through Foil Graphics and the expertise of Michael Uhl at AM Die Co., we were able to design and construct the three-dimensional pyramid-shaped oil derrick,” stated Lennen. “Foil Graphics was instrumental in producing several prototypes for both the oil derrick and the inset tray that would house it to make sure all the pieces fit perfectly together and would not be damaged in shipping - a key element to the success of the piece.”

A black coated 10pt. cover stock was utilized for all parts of the invitation except for the oil derrick. The white side of the stock first was printed with two hits of black on a

Heidelberg 28” press at MP Printing, Phoenix, Ariz. “Initially, we were going to print both sides of the stock, but we didn’t feel we could achieve the shine we were seeking without, of course, the use of UV coating, which would have caused a problem with fingerprinting on the dark black stock,” Lennen explained. The oil derrick panels were printed in two alternating colors - black and metallic gold - and then aqueous-coated on 12pt. Kromekote.

Next, the sheets were sent to Foil Graphics for the finishing touches. The box lids were foil stamped in two passes in silver and gold metallic foil from Crown Roll Leaf and copper flat stamp dies from Metal Magic. The oil derrick was stamped with silver matte metallic foil (Crown Roll Leaf) and then register embossed with a single-level copper embossing die from Metal Magic. Foil Graphics stamped all the passes simultaneously on several Kluge presses to help ensure registration and to meet the tight deadline mandated by the client. The pieces were all diecut on a Heidelberg SBG diecutter. The labels were printed in a black and white duotone on Fasson gloss label stock at Ponté Graphics and were affixed to the center of the foil stamped border on the box lid.

The tipped-in pockets were foil stamped in gold and hand-glued to the lid of the box. The information cards (RSVP, directions, and accommodations) were laser printed on Stardream antique gold stock, mounted to a black coated board stock, and sealed in a golden envelope at Beyond Inviting. Remaining pieces were shipped to Beyond Inviting for final hand-assembly.

To complete the invitation set, no detail was left unattended. Each box set was gently bound with a golden ribbon, wrapped in black tissue, fastened with a golden seal inscribed with the letters *BP* (BP Capital, Inc. - Chairman and CEO Boone Pickens), and cushioned in a bed of shredded paper - white and metallic gold. “Keeping with a high-end feel, I chose the metallic shred to keep it festive, yet elegant,” Dunn explained.

When asked what was the most difficult aspect of the job, the almost unanimous answer was designing the structure of the oil derrick and the inset tray so that they fit properly and in tight registration. “I wanted the piece to arrive well preserved and the presentation (box) needed to be as original and eye-catching as the invitation itself,” stated Dunn.



Additionally, the oil derrick needed to lift easily from the box and the ribbon pull effortlessly from the top. "The opening at the top of the oil derrick had to be just the right size to accommodate the ribbon," stated Pepoy. "If it was too small, it would not pull easily and if it was too big it might fall back into the hole." Figuring out the mechanics of the ribbon – what to use to simulate the oil, how to make it 'flow', and how to attach the ribbon within the oil derrick so that it could not be pulled out entirely also posed some challenges. But in the end, Beyond Inviting devised the perfect equation to come up with an ingenious solution.

Drilling for Success

From design through production, the oil well invitation set required meticulous communication and collaboration from every member of the team. "This was a complex job with many pieces that had to work perfectly together and fit just like a puzzle," explained Pepoy. Many meetings were held with the graphic designer, the printer, the finisher, and the project manager to ensure that every aspect of the project was covered – every minute detail. "This one would have absolutely, positively failed without adequate preplanning," Pepoy emphasized. "This (job) was a true collaborative effort."

Dunn flew in from California (the project's home base) to meet with Bob Lennen and Jack Sullivan to discuss the fine details, including the foil stamping and embossing. "I wanted the piece to be as elegant as the black-tie affair it represented. Tying in the foil stamping on the save-the-date cards (scrolled in the oil drums and tied with a silver ribbon), the oil derrick, and the



boxes created the luxurious feel we sought to convey," stated Dunn. "The added touch of embossing on the derrick elevated it to a new level of class."

The oil well invitation for T. Boone Pickens' birthday celebration received rave reviews not only from the client and guests (who consisted of celebrities, politicians, and personal friends) but also, from peers in the print finishing industry. On display last year in the Foil Stamping & Embossing Association's booth at the IADD/FSEA Odyssey in Milwaukee, Wis., onlookers were amazed at the creative design, over-the-top detail, and exquisite craftsmanship of the entire invitation set. "A dramatic presentation establishes the tone for the event. Our goal was to ensure that the first impression would be a lasting one," stated Dunn. And with this unique, custom-designed invitation, the collaborative team of Beyond Inviting, Ponté Graphics, Foil Graphics, and Jack Sullivan Marketing & Communications truly 'struck oil' – a creative success few can boast! ■

The Best way to make your products shine

Distributor Wanted

print media messe
drupa
 May 29-June 11, 2008
 Please visit us at
Hall 7(2) G30

Univacco provides an extensive range of quality hot and cold stamping foils to make your products shine and bring an impressive brand image. With 20-year experiences in vacuum metallizing and coating technology, we are honored to assist you to do printing job well down no matter in labels, book covers, greeting cards, cosmetic and perfume boxes, chocolate packaging, beverages packaging, textile, ribbon, T-shirt or more.



Univacco Technology Inc.
 TEL:886-6-5703853 sales@univacco.com.tw
 FAX:886-6-5702490 www.univacco.com.tw