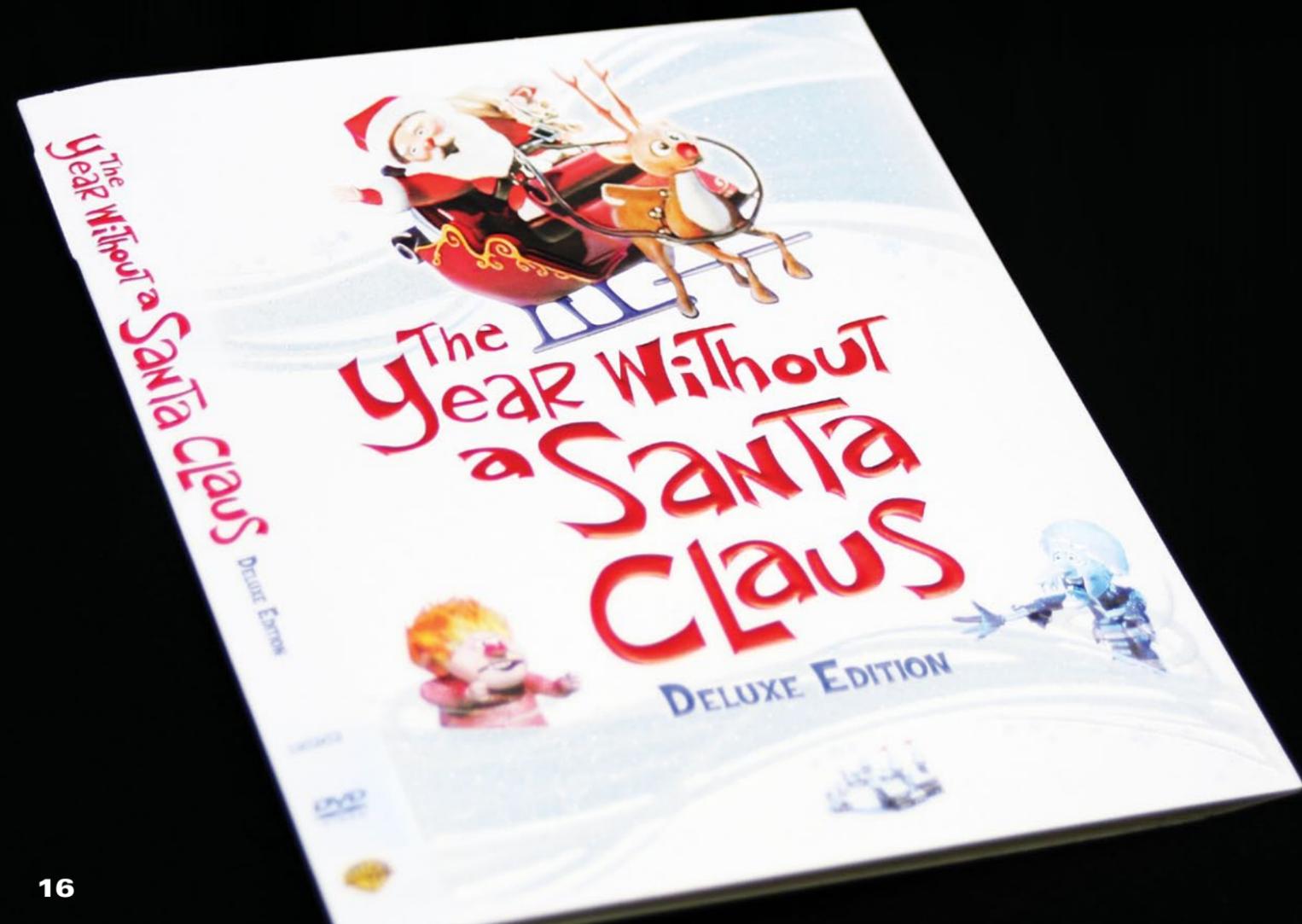


DVD Captures Holiday Magic

By Kym Conis



When Warner Brothers Home Entertainment Company decided to release a remastered version of the 1974 holiday classic *The Year Without a Santa Claus*, it set out to re-create the magic of Christmas, bringing the yuletide favorite back into the hearts of young and old alike. Originally released on video in the year 2000, the new Deluxe Edition succeeded in re-capturing an audience eight years later with sparkle, shine, and dimension – a mystical composition that would set the DVD apart from the massive sea of holiday releases.

Bert-Co took on the creative challenge of making the design come to life. As an ISO- and FSC-certified printer and trade finisher located in Los Angeles, Calif., the company focuses on folding cartons, specialty packaging (such as rigid and set-up boxes and temporary point-of-purchase displays), and a wide range of trade finishing products (such as presentation folders, greeting cards, advertising specialties, leather/vinyl/plastic products, and more).

Through the glistening specialty effects of glitter UV coating, two-dimensional holographic foil, vibrant metallic foil and rich, multi-level embossing, the 35-year-old television classic swirled like magic off retail shelves.

Selecting the Right Finishing Touch

Working with the in-house creative department at Warner Brothers Home Entertainment Company (Warner), Bert-Co was able to derive a strong sense of the customer's overall vision for the project from initial meetings. From there, the project entered the planning and pre-testing stage. Managers from digital pre-press, estimating, press room, diecutting, gluing, foil stamping, and embossing came together in several internal production meetings in order to map out the project from all angles – technical and creative.

According to Bert-Co Marketing Manager Sara Torres, this is common procedure for jobs requiring multiple finishing techniques. Pre-testing and sampling is done not only to show the customer the wide breadth of finishing options that are possible on a project but also to demonstrate the type of high quality and creativity that can be expected on each job.

For this project, testing was conducted on full-size press sheets. To create different looks with foils, embossing levels, and specialty processes, Bert-Co applied a variety of decorative treatments in varying combinations to each of the panels. Although it didn't make the final cut for this DVD sleeve, flocking (a crushed velvet-like feel) was tested on the trim of Santa's coat, hat, and beard to simulate a fuzzy texture soft to the touch.

Once preliminary testing was completed, the panels were cut out, glued, and presented to Warner in the form of actual mock-ups. This way, the customer was able to see what the DVD sleeve would look like with each decorative effect and,

therefore, choose which final product would best fit its overall vision – a great advantage in the decision-making process.

Two-dimensional holographic rainbow foil board was used as the base substrate for this particular Deluxe Edition for a few reasons. Many times, foil board is used when the design calls for foil coverage on several areas of the package, both front and back, in tight registration to print. Additionally, it can be used to further enhance the graphics on the package. In this case, areas on both the front and back of the DVD sleeve had little or no print. The holographic foil gave these areas an extra 'pop.'

As an example, Torres pointed out the Heat Miser on the back of the sleeve. The holographic foil can be seen through his bright orange hair and face flushed with rage – creating a special effect attractive to the eye. Also, the rainbow holographic foil aided in creating the rich, silky snow on the front panel. Two hits of opaque white over the top of the holographic foil provided an immensely rich effect – one that is not achievable on regular SBS.

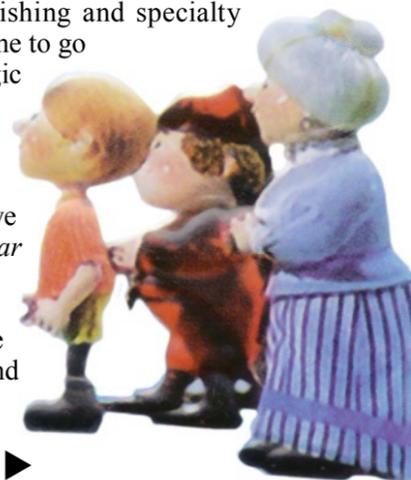
What's more, the satiny white snow shimmering in the light created the perfect backdrop to accentuate the title copy and Rudolph's glowing nose – both hot stamped in vibrant red metallic foil and register embossed.

When a design requires multiple areas to be foiled and then overprinted, the choice to utilize foil board v. foil stamping the images needs to be weighed in terms of cost, registration, and overall desired effect. "There are many factors involved in determining the best solutions for one process over another. It boils down to the main effect our client wishes to convey through its packaging and how much that company is willing to invest to achieve that effect," said Torres. Bert-Co offers many in-house finishing techniques and can oversee a project from beginning to end, thereby enabling it to guarantee quality, turnaround, and the best pricing possible.

Once Warner selected all finishing and specialty processes for the job, it was time to go into production and let the magic begin.

Illuminating the Spirit of Christmas

As the copy on the DVD sleeve so appropriately states, *The Year Without a Santa Claus* is "A Sparklingly Remastered Yuletide Favorite." Through the use of foil stamping, embossing, and glitter UV coating combined with 4-color process and two-dimensional holography, the





Deluxe Edition needed no strings of holiday lights to illuminate the old-time classic.

Printed on 18pt., 28"×40.5" rainbow holographic foil board, the sheets were printed in 4-color process with two hits of opaque white and aqueous coating (wax-free) on a Mitsubishi 6000. Next, the sheets were spot coated with specialty glitter UV and high-rise UV. The high-rise UV coating produces a raised surface effect and can be used in conjunction with the glitter UV.

With the purchase of its first Sakurai off-line coater in 2007, Bert-Co entered the world of specialty coatings – offering its customers a new range of coating effects, including glitter UV, high-rise UV, soft touch, reticulating, textured, and high gloss. Reticulating coating is the application of two coatings, one a dull varnish and the other a glossy UV, which react against each other to create a stippling effect. The textures can be controlled to produce different patterns such as linen, animal prints, and more. The glitter UV is available in several color options and the opacity can be dictated based on the client's desired look.

However, a few limitations do exist with some of these specialty UV coatings in that the coating must be kept off the actual edge or fold in order to avoid a peeling effect

– something that Bert-Co has learned to control through proper pre-planning and press makeready.

Next, the title (on the front panel and sides) and Rudolph's nose were foil stamped 9-up in red metallic foil from ITW Foils on an SBL foil stamping/embossing press. In a second pass, the sheets were register, multi-level embossed to the foil and to the litho, in tight registration. Metal Magic produced the sculptured brass embossing dies and flat stamp dies. Finally, the sheets were diecut to finished size, folded, and glued.

Depicting a Classic Charm

Stop-motion animation originally was invented at the turn of the 20th century, but the technology was refined in the 1960s and 1970s. Keeping within the charm of this type of animation, the foil stamping, embossing, and glitter UV added just the right amount of sparkle and dimension to create a memorable look for the time-honored classic. No matter what the age, the Deluxe Edition of *The Year Without a Santa Claus* got shoppers to stop and pick up the DVD – magically transporting them into the mystical world of Christmas.

The initial run was so successful that several more reruns ensued. (This author even bought one for her holiday collection!) The DVD sleeve also won a gold award in the 2008 FSEA Gold Leaf Awards Competition in the category of most difficult application on a folding carton – an honor bestowed on only the best work in the industry.

In the marketplace, response to the remastered video release was overwhelming. According to Torres, Warner was extremely pleased with the outcome of the project, as sales exceeded the studio's expectations.

Whether mesmerized by the shimmering swirls of glitter UV or drawn to the lush feel of the sleeve's embossed images, audiences of all ages reveled in the magic of *The Year Without a Santa Claus* – a holiday treasure they re-discovered on the shelf.

For Bert-Co and Warner Brothers Home Entertainment Company, the project represented a collaborative effort in creativity – one that produced an award-winning piece whose magical attraction found its way into the homes – and hearts – of thousands. ■

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