Vintage Orange Wrappers
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The orange wrapper as a catalogue
(archive preservation by Mara Karagianni, John Colenbrander. Greece 2018)

The first wrapping papers for citrus fruits have been around for nearly one hundred and fifty years. When one began transporting oranges from southern Italy, Greece, Morocco, Cyprus and Spain to Northern Europe in the 19th century, more than half of the fruits spoiled because they were attacked by rot or mold. Only when one fell for the glorious idea of wrapping the oranges in tissue paper, the loss was drastically reduced. From the end of the 19th century, the papers were then printed in and henceforth also used for advertising purposes.

These incredible colorful pieces of graphic art went beyond the pure simple appellation of the producers. Instead they evolved into miniature works of art conveying a message of a healthy and sunny life appealing to the tastes and desires of the Northern Europeans who longed for the “exotic” and who by acquiring and consuming the fruit were essentially eating a piece of dearly missed sunshine and in the process gaining health through the bodily processing of vitamin C, fibers, potassium and sugars.

Developed as a clever marketing tool these wrapping papers were a free gift of Pop-art before the invention and recognition of this art form and as such went far beyond the mundane function of protecting the fruit from mold and rot. People started to keep and collect these wrappers after consumption, would frame them and hang them on the wall, put them in maps like a stamp collection or even use them as wallpaper creating a riot of colours and patterns and by doing so they created a catalogue of oranges, their producers and the origin of country and region. These catalogues represented a combined sophisticated history of agriculture, geography, graphic design, marketing and art. Predominate colours which were used are, besides orange, red, yellow, blue, gold, black and sometimes even dark purple.

Themes vary from simple yet powerful abstractions to more elaborate graphic compositions, anthropomorphic fruit, attractive ladies and gentlemen, geographic maps, futuristic designs and even cosmological schemes depicting the planets, the sun and comets. The were produced and printed in their country of origin and designed by anonymous artists and graphic designers who left behind a legacy which still appeals to the senses and haven’t lost their original power to seduce. They are still able to make you feel happy and make you smile when you look at them. The original product, the oranges, which these papers encased were consumed a long time ago but these papers, so fragile and ephemeral by nature are thanks to this collection still available for you to enjoy and to contemplate.
country: France
producer: unknown
period: 1970's
style: abstract-figurative
this simple two coloured design would encase the fruit in a blue tint which would contrast with the colour of the fruit itself
country: Spain
producer: Copal cooperativa agricola s.c.j.
period: 1970’s
style: abstract
printed in a rare purple colour
the red spania guarantee stamp is common for all fruits from Spain
country: Spain
producer: coop. agricola de gandia
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in two colours and gold
the red spania guarantee stamp is common for all fruits from Spain
country: Morocco
producer: MIAP
period: 1950's
style: abstract
printed in three colours
this design became the standard logo for all the fruit produced in Morocco
and became a guarantee stamp for different producers from that country
country: Spain
producer: Vicente Giner SA
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in three colours and
this particular wrapper was aimed at the Dutch consumers and the text “vol gezondheid” translates as, full of health
country: Spain
producer: Aranda S.L.
period: 1960’s
style: abstract, stellar, figurative
printed in four colours and gold
this remarkable design represents a star constellation and a sun-like orange with the caption “Filosofo”
country: Spain
producer: coop. Agricola Bitem
period: 1950’s
style: abstract, stylized, figurative
printed in two colours and gold
the geometric design envelops a stylized orange with the name of the producer
country: France
producer: Odet
period: 1960’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in three colours and gold
a circular geometry, like the rays of the sun, encloses a collection of fruits
country: Spain
producer: J. Estruch Minana
period: 1960’s
style: abstract
printed in two colours and gold
this cool-blue star surrounds an orange and the logo “destello Azul” (the blue star)
country: Spain
producer: J. Estruch Minana
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in two colours and gold
this cool-blue star surrounds an orange and the logo "destello Azul" (the blue star)
country: Spain
producer: Cualde
period: 1950’s
style: abstract
printed in two colours
minimal design of a black disc hovering in a concentric way inside an orange border
country: Spain
producer: M. Ferrada
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in three colours and gold
a frugal design, which focuses on the Gothic logo
country: Spain
producer: cooperativa Agricola Acaymo
period: 1960’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in three colours
not only oranges but also tomatoes where wrapped individually
the image shows a sun-infused tomato
country: Spain
producer: Ricardo Crespo
period: 1970’s
style: abstract
printed in three colours and gold
type font and colours are typical for the 70’s period
creating a strong typographic image
country: Italy
producer: Guerrino Grilli
period: 1950’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in three colours and gold
a purple and gold border around the name
in the centre a horse and horse-shoe represent luck
country: Morocco
producer: CMCE
period: 1960’s
style: abstract
printed in three colours and gold
a truly extraordinary design with futuristic elements
country: Italy
producer: cooperativa Realcatena Agrumi Acireale
period: 1950’s
style: figurative
printed in five colours
a classic design with the emphasis on their two products
country: Spain
producer: Beniajan
period: 1960’s
style: anthropomorphic
printed in three colours
this comic like pattern suggest a link between fruit and intelligence
country: Italy
producer: Tarocco
period: 1960’s
style: figurative, architectural
printed in five colours
four architectural highlights of the region of production as well as the name of the cities are grouped around a central orange
country: Spain
producer: unknown
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in three colours
this design of diagonal red stripes and a central blue circle intersected
by the brand name, napoleon, was aimed at the dutch market as the
depiction “bergfruit” means mountain fruit in Dutch
country: Italy
producer: Co. Ag. di borzi’ Carmelo
period: 1950’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in three colours
this charming design combines magic with fruit
with the slogan “the wizard of vitamines”, marketing their
fruit as something magical to the body
country: Greece
producer: Neagrex
period: 1960’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in four colours and gold
traditional ancient Greek motives are used to give a sense of a long tradition and craftsmanship
country: Spain
producer: frusanca S.L.
period: 1960’s
style: orientalism
printed in five colours and gold
a remarkable design with Japanese elements
like a pagoda and a Geisha to give a sense of the mystic
far East although the fruit is produced in Spain
country: Italy
producer: F. Lli. Tramontana Agrumi S.N.C.
period: 1950’s
style: exotica
printed in five colours and gold
the crowned lady suggest she is the Queen of fruit,
named “deliziosa” whose scepter is a bundle of oranges
country: Spain
producer: Faberi Valencia S.A.
period: 1950's
style: figurative
printed in three colours
aimed at the French market the Christmas theme of this design refers to the tradition of eating this fruit during the holy days
country: Italy
producer: Giovanni Lazzaro & C.
period: 1950's
style: figurative, exotica
printed in four colours
this beach theme allures to the summer feeling
and sunshine gracing the fruit
country: Italy
producer: Esportazione Agrumi
period: 1950’s
style: figurative
printed in four colours and gold
flower patterns adorns this happy fruit bearing lady
a common theme for many exporters
country: Spain
producer: Fabbri S.A.
period: 1960’s
style: tribal
printed in five colours
this very rare design depicts a North American Indian
inside an extremely expressive pattern
country: Cyprus
producer: S.P. Esperides Ltd.
period: 1960’s
style: mythical, geographic
printed in five colours
alluring to the myth of the birth of Aphrodite who, when she arrived up the dry land of Cyprus, transformed it into fertile land
country: Spain
producer: unknown
period: 1950’s
style: figurative
printed in four colours
this cute scene depicts an intimate love scene
between two children, the rabbits might be a hint to the easter period
country: Spain
producer: Jozagon
period: 1960's
style: abstract
printed in three colours
a simple but elegant floral abstract design
country: Spain
producer: Expobur S.A.
period: 1950’s
style: oriental
printed in five colours
another example of orientalism inside a circular pattern
we see mount Fuji and a traditional japanese gate or portal
country: Italy
producer: W. Cadsy S.p.A.
period: 1950’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in four colours
a racoon holds a fruit inside a geometric distorted perspective
country: Italy
producer: Carmelo Terranova
period: 1960’s
style: figurative
printed in four colours
a happy farmer’s boy brings in a new batch of oranges
what is remarkable is that he’s smoking a cigarette
country: Italy
producer: Tarocco
period: 1950’s
style: abstract, figurative
printed in four colours
a bundle of dazzling solar rays radiates from
the sun and oranges
country: Spain
producer: A Lluzar
period: 1960’s
style: abstract
printed in four colours and gold
a truly epic design of the planets, comets and Cosmos
with a crowned orange as part of our universe
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