

*Feldspar by Ben Mitchell

A chunky, textured typeface designed for immersive reading, Feldspar sits between calligraphic and typographic styles. Large, open counters, dark extenders and medium contrast ensure good readability.

As well as working well at book sizes (11-12 point), Feldspar's squarish forms, strong unbracketed serifs and ink traps allow it to be used at news and other editorial sizes (9-10 point) without clogging. The angle of stress is rhythmically varied between glyphs, allowing each letter to take on its own personality, reducing visual stutter.

The extenders throughout the four current weights are heavy; the intention here was to improve readability by exaggerating the idiosyncratic parts of each glyph.

Feldspar's *italics* have a subtle slope (about 1:9), so I wanted to find other ways to distinguish it from the roman. In contrast to normal italics, the entry and exit strokes have not been made more fluid and pronounced, as this lends a softer, more cursive feel (which could have looked fussy and impractical given the uncompromising sturdiness of the roman). Those entry and exits strokes have become serifs and semiserifs instead. To hold the face back from looking too angular and mechanical however, I've introduced subtle curves in places that suggest forward motion. The result is an italic that contrasts with the roman in

unusual ways; the letters feel quickly-written due to their simple forms. In addition, the italics are somewhat condensed relative to the uprights, and are a shade lighter in colour.

The **bold weight** was designed to add emphasis to words or sentences set in regular, yet it can also be used in its own right for applications such as titling or short runs of text that require definition.

The *thin weight* is best used sparingly, for display and titling. With only faint hairline strokes, I had to consider different ways to maintain the structural strength and crisp voice. I therefore kept a slight contrast that prevents the strokes from fading away; similarly, the serifs have been elongated to lend more stability. There is planned to be an intermediate weight between the thin and the regular, also for titling.

SMALL CAPITALS are a further useful addition to the family; these will be drawn to accompany each of the weights.

* *Italic* TYPE

IN TYPOGRAPHY, italic type is a cursive typeface based on a stylized form of calligraphic handwriting. Owing to the influence from calligraphy, such typefaces often slant slightly *to the right*. Different glyph shapes from roman type are also usually used—another influence from calligraphy. It is distinct therefore from *oblique type*, in which the font is merely distorted into a slanted orientation. However, uppercase letters are often oblique type or swash capitals rather than true italics.

This style is called “italic” for historic reasons. Calligraphic typefaces started to be designed in Italy, for chancery purposes. Ludovico Arrighi and Aldus Manutius (both between the 15th and 16th centuries) were the main type designers involved in this process at the time.

Italic type was first used by Aldus Manutius and the Aldine Press in 1501, in an edition of Virgil dedicated to Italy. Based on the *Humanist cursive script* first developed in the 1420s by Niccolò de’ Niccoli, it served as a condensed type for simple, compact volumes. The punches for these types were cut by Francesco da Bologna (whose surname was Griffio). In 1501 Aldus wrote to his friend Scipio:

We have printed, and are now publishing, the Satires of Juvenal and Persius in a very small format, so that they may more conveniently be held in the hand and learned by heart (not to speak of being read) by everyone.

UNLIKE the italic type of today, the capital letters were upright roman capitals which were shorter than the ascending lower-case italic letters and used about 65 tied letters (ligatures) in the Aldine Dante and Virgil of 1501.

This Aldine italic became the model for most italic types. It was very popular in its own day and was widely (and inaccurately) imitated. The Venetian Senate gave Aldus exclusive right to its use, a patent confirmed by three successive Popes, but it was widely counterfeited. The Italians called the character Aldino, while others called it Italic.

Feldspar regular 10/14pt
with small caps and
inline italics.

*Waterfall

Feldspar

Editorial

Typographic

Housewarming

SHAFTESBURY AVENUE

greenschist, amphibolite, and granulite

gastronomic contentment

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

HAMBURG

