

DEATH'S DOOR

... SPIRITS ...

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REDESIGN: DEATH'S DOOR SPIRITS

When Death's Door Spirits needed an identity lift, the Madison, Wisconsin distillery turned to Chicago-based Grip Design. "Death's Door wanted to develop a series of design that feels like a family," says Grip principal Kevin McConkey. "So, we wanted to bring in a Paul Newman 2.0 ethos—a strategy that considered all the aspects of the company in order to positively impact its total performance."

Death's Door president Brian Ellison initially created the line of spirits as a way to revive the dying farms operations in northern Wisconsin. He vowed to make the highest grossing product possible from their crops—and thus the Death's Door distillery was born. The Grip team took this story into consideration and actually visited the rural farms as a part of their research. They talked to the company's key distributors and held intense brainstorming sessions with Ellison to determine the company's core objectives and values. According to Kelly Kaminsky, another Grip principal, "By the time we began to design, we really had an invested interest in the company."

Grip redesigned every aspect of Death's Door packaging, from its shipping boxes to its bottle shapes, giving the distillery's image an elegant, cohesive style. "We wanted to capture Death's Door as a company reminiscent of old apothecary shops and the pre-prohibition cocktail culture," says Kaminski. "We developed the typography, color palette, graphic design and product design to embody this spirit." A map of Death's Door Passage-way, the straight that separates Door County from Washington Island, Wisconsin, now anchors the distillery's imagery.

The rebranding of the Death's Door distillery reflects the company's local roots and down-to-earth nature, and Grip's research and deep knowledge of the company adds historical credence to its new public image. 🍷

Client: Death's Door Spirits

Firm: Grip Design—Chicago, IL

Level of Success: Since the redesign, sales have increased ten times over

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Death's Door Gin

Death's Door wanted its gin bottle to possess a unique shape—they understood that people like to feel a bottle's height when they lift it off the shelf. So Kaminski and McConkey went all the way to France in order to find a producer who could manufacture the bottle's perfect, heavy, trapezoidal form.



Death's Door Vodka

Being able to clearly see the spirits within the bottle was very important to Ellison, and Grip responded to this request by using a screen process to transfer the graphic design to the bottles instead of using stickers. The gold floral graphics and old-fashioned type treatment (reminiscent of an apothecary motif) have been individually silk screened onto each bottle.

Death's Door White Whisky

As prohibition era white whiskey is an extremely rare libation (its specialized aging process gives the spirit its clear color), Grip felt it required an equally unique bottle. To emphasize the whiskey's one-of-a-kind qualities, the designers pared down the Death's Door look and instead placed a simple black-and-white graphic sticker low on the bottle's form and left the back of the bottle blank, contrasting starkly against the gin and vodka bottles.

➤ Death's Door Vodka packaging before the redesign