

≡ Visit Mendocino Brand Exploration

Reimagining the brand message + visual concept



01/1

discovering a fresh new
brand outlook



CREATION DATE :
APRIL 2022

ISSUE 01
FIRST FINDINGS AND DIRECTION

BRANDING EXPLORATION FOR
REIMAGINING OF MENDOCINO

CREATED FOR :
VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY

MADE WITH LOVE BY:
AGENCYXI
MENDOCINO, SAN MARINO, MADRID



Brand Exploration

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Intro:duction Now and How

AN EXCITING TIME TO REINVIGORATE THE BRAND

Mendocino County is at an exciting juncture in its evolution as a destination brand. While the past two years have been full of unprecedented challenges, the destination has met those challenges with an equally unprecedented sense of teamwork and collaboration, and it has unlocked a new potential for the area.

Demographics that we for years have been trying to reach – largely unsuccessfully – were made aware of Mendocino as a destination in the midst of the pandemic. With international travel closed down, and ‘distance’ being a highly-sought-after commodity, our drivability and unique marriage of remoteness and infrastructure made Mendocino newly attractive to a much larger group of people.

Now is the time to ride that momentum with a refreshing and exciting brand statement – one that sets Mendocino County apart as a unique destination in the minds of this greatly increased new audience.

We began by surveying people in our main drive markets – Sacramento and the Bay Area – to see what keywords sprang to mind when people thought of Mendocino County. Although many people were unfamiliar with the destination, those who did know it had strong associations.

There’s an opportunity to build on those associations, and create something that feels uniquely us.

As a destination we are very distinct from some of our direct competitors – Sonoma County, Napa County, Santa Cruz, Tahoe. And we have some key differentiators from probably our most closely-aligned competitor – Humboldt County – mostly in terms of our material assets: higher end properties, wineries, better infrastructure in many cases.

We come at this very strongly believing that a brand identity doesn’t need to stray too far from its base identity to be resonant. A twist and a turn on an idea that was already there under the surface can be stronger than going against the pre-existing conception of the region.

With this brand refresh the goal is to align the reality of the destination with the visual brand, to create a memorable and invigorating tagline, to evoke a sense of wonder in potential visitors and to remind repeat visitors why they fell in love with the destination in the first place.

We are excited with where our research led us, and with the possibilities this brand direction will open moving forward.



**What is
Mendocino?
Why is it
unique among
the many
regions of
California?
Why do people
return time
and time again
once they
discover it for
the first time?**



01/2

**what real people think
when they think mendocino**

The Dream Of Mendocino

So much is so deeply engrained in people's vision of Mendocino County. Many of these ideas are concrete, tangible things – redwood trees, the Pacific Ocean, wine – while others are a sense of place, a sensation, an experience.

We surveyed people in both the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento region, to see what words and ideas they associated with Mendocino County (if they were familiar with it at all).

Many of the most common phrases associated with us were expected, and tangible touchstones: redwoods, the ocean, wine, cannabis. Others were more general: nature, outdoors, artists. Still others were more specific: lighthouses, the Skunk Train, Glass Beach.

A set that is telling, and one of our differentiators, were those that indicated a sense of remoteness, of otherworldliness: rural, eccentric, untouched, pristine, bohemian, peaceful.

And the set we think is most exciting is a sub-set of that, which really gets to the heart of what our individual interviews revealed to be the unique Mendocino offering: magical, fantastic, wonderful, awe-inspiring, primeval.

It is in this vision set that we see what really sets Mendocino County apart from Sonoma or Santa Cruz. It isn't the beauty – both locations are beautiful – or the nature – both are filled with natural beauty.

It's an ephemeral sense of wonder, of magic, that is tucked into every nook and cranny of this place. It's a feeling that you've not only traveled somewhere beautiful, but you've come somewhere truly unique.



One of the most amazing things about Mendocino County is that it's undeveloped – hike Armstrong Woods in Sonoma County, and the trees are absolutely stunning. But there is something offputting (to someone used to Mendocino) about the fences everywhere, the well-manicured trails, the wood chips, the paved roads crisscrossing the lower grove. Hike Montgomery Woods, in contrast, and you are somewhere that feels almost identical to the way it would have felt a thousand years ago – and that is a special kind of magic.

We don't want to talk about lack of infrastructure, of course – and unlike some of our rural neighbors we have plenty of infrastructure. But what we have here is the space for genuine wonder. An immersion that feels like stepping back in – or out of – time.

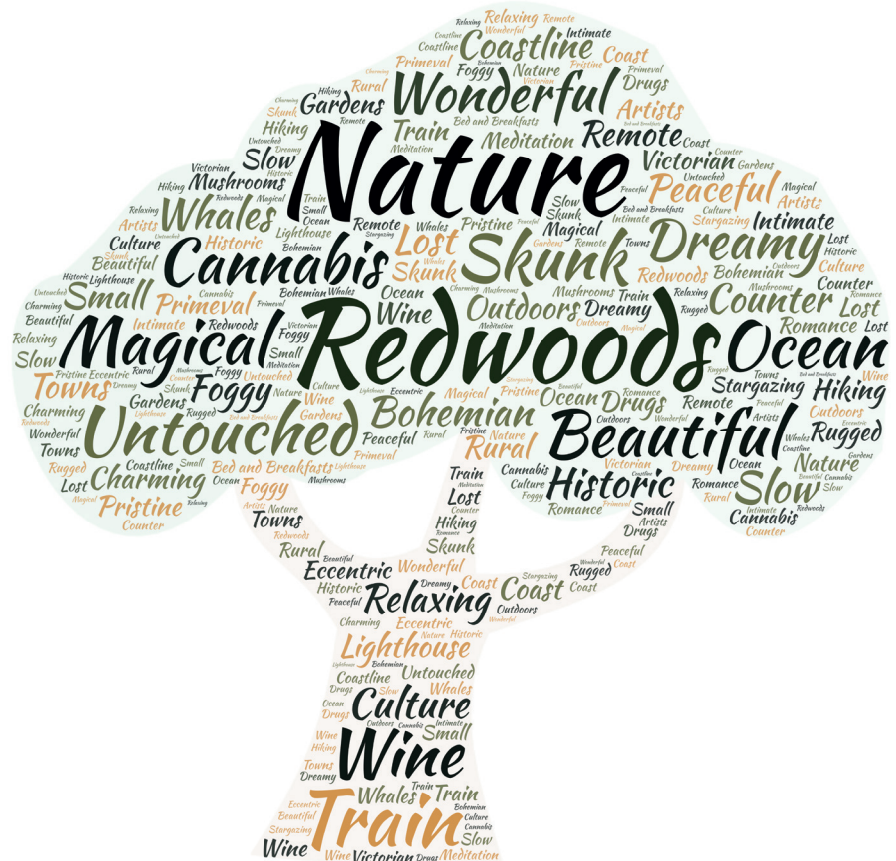
A place where if you were to round a bend in a fern-lined redwood canyon and stumble upon a herd of brontosaurus grazing on the low branches, it wouldn't feel out of place. Where if you were to stumble into an ancient redwood grove at dusk and find a conclave of pixies dancing in the waning light, it would feel like a natural fit. Where if you were to spot a seal in the shallows on a foggy morning, and saw it transform, selkie-like, into a child, it would feel like just part of the day.

Magic is our brand. It's a simple, memorable brand promise with no end of possibilities. It says, clearly, this is a place where anything is possible. And a place where you can reconnect with the childlike wonder you may have left behind. There are so many types of magic in the world – whether it's the magic of fermentation, the magic of mushrooms springing forth from the loam after a good rain, or the magic of waking up with the love of your life in a room overlooking the crashing waves of the Pacific. We are where you come to rediscover magic, to replenish your reserves of awe before you return to the 'real world'.

Humboldt played with the idea of magic in their previous iteration (now they are "California's Redwood Coast"), but they never explored it beyond the superficial, and we don't believe there is any potential brand confusion.

It's something no one else can really compete with. They may have natural beauty. They may have wine. They may have charming Victorian villages. They may even have redwood trees. But no other region has carved out that special blend of untouched natural beauty, a down-to-earth community of locals and businesses, and the visitor infrastructure to pamper people to their fairytale dreams.

Keyword Cloud



A Tagline to Inspire

A GOOD TAGLINE IS UNIQUE TO ITS PRODUCT.

IT CHALLENGES. IT INSPIRES. IT EVOKES A SENSE OF PLACE.

One of the big challenges in developing a destination tagline is coming up with something that feels like it belongs to the place itself. A good brand promise for Mendocino would not be a good brand promise for San Diego, or Lake Tahoe, or even Sonoma County.

Some of the best destination slogans are a bit challenging – they make you sit up and pay attention. They might even be a little bit confrontational. They might have a layer of meaning that's obfuscated and forces you to dig deeper.

We looked at a few hundred DMO and CVB slogans worldwide, and compared those that were part of major tourism campaigns (and winning awards) to, well, the rest of them.

To the right are some of our favorites – and some media darlings – to showcase the tone we're aiming for (while of course coming up with something that is uniquely Mendocino).

100% Pure New Zealand

A great new campaign, making a strong statement about New Zealand – and encapsulating the message that everything here is clean, pure, natural.

Thirteen Months of Sunshine

A stunningly strong new campaign from Ethiopia tourism. This raises an immediate question – why 13 months – while still conveying the brand promise. Ethiopia is where you go for guaranteed good weather – and yes, they also happen to have their own calendar system with 13 months.

Little Big Country

Slovakia's new ad campaign is all about the fact that Slovakia has the feel of a small, intimate place – but they offer something for everyone, and with a scale of size that's truly astonishing.

A Touch of the Exotic

A Scottish ad campaign, trying to walk the fine line between showing that here is a place that feels like a truly exotic location – but where there's plenty familiar as well. Not dissimilar to us trying to walk the line between 'remote' and 'too far away' or 'unspoiled' and 'undeveloped'.



Mendocino Magic

We tested a number of taglines utilizing the idea of magic and wonder. And in the end the one that had the most resonance was one that is a simple statement of fact:

Mendocino: Magic is Real

It's a little bit confrontational, it makes you stand up and take notice. And it opens doors to branding and riffing that we can plumb for years to come.

Magic is real. Bowling ball beach is a real place. Those redwoods actually are 2,000 years old. That delicious mushroom sprang up out of the moss 24 hours after the rains came. Subtle alchemy transformed those grapes into a liquid that could have come from the gods.

Every sunset, every filtering of light through the trees, every roaring river in winter, every clear Milky Way, these are our magic and our brand. In the real world you might watch fantasy shows to see these scenes, but in Mendocino that magic is living, breathing, and you can step into it every day you're here.

Rethinking Typography

Softening the line, embracing the organic

We recommend stepping away from the hard-lined edge and the straight-and-angular serifs of our past iteration. We understand the impulse to reflect boldness in typography, but for this moment we feel strongly that an organic, natural feel with soft curves and luscious line width will better reflect a feeling of wonder.

Bold

Regular

Figures

Characters



Organic Header Font

Chicago Makers

Primary Font :
Chicago Makers

Foundry :
Din Studios

-

-

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
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Classic Elegance

Classic Text Garamond

Secondary Font :
Adobe Garamond

Designer :
Robert Slimbach

Bold

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Regular

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Figures

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Characters

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i “ ¶ ¢ [] | { } ≠ ¿ ‘
« Σ € ° † Ω “ / ø π • ± ‘



Typo and Text Hierarchy

Typographic hierarchy is another form of visual hierarchy, a sub-hierarchy per se in an overall design project. Typographic hierarchy presents lettering so that the most important words are displayed with the most impact so users can scan text for key information. Typographic hierarchy creates contrast between elements. There are a variety of ways you can create a sense of hierarchy. Here are some of the most common techniques for Metrics' layouts.

Caption
Text

Mendocino Caption

-
Adobe Garamond Italic - Title Case
6 pt Type / 9 pt Leading

Copy Text

Mendocino copy in text

-
Adobe Garamond Regular
8 pt Type / 11 pt Leading

Headlines
Copytext

MENDOCINO HEADLINES IN COPY

-
Adobe Garamond Bold - Capital Letters
10pt Type / 10pt Leading

Sublines
Sections

Mendocino Sections

-
Chicago Makers Medium
12pt Type / 12pt Leading

Big
Headlines
and Title

Mendocino Titles

-
Chicago Makers Bold - Title Case
21pt Type / 30 pt Leading

Titles and
Large-
format
Display

Mendocino

-
Chicago Makers Bold - Title Case
30pt Type / 30 pt Leading

A Color Story of Growth, and Life, and the Seasons

A JEWEL TONE COLOR SYSTEM BUILT ON NATURE

Color is critical in creating the mood we want to convey, both online and in print. We want to return to a green as our core color – while we understand the impulse that led to moving to a bolder orange color, we think in this case avoiding the ‘obvious’ is a mistake. Mendocino County is a place of organic beauty, and green is the color of organic growth – whether it’s the redwoods, the rolling hills, or cannabis.

We do, however, think we can differentiate and elevate beyond the bright green that was used in the past. A shade of green that won’t fight with the greens in photographs, and can also feel a bit more design-focused, will help us build brand. We like a more 1920s emerald jewel tone – a green with much

more blue present, which avoids the greens found in most of our photos, and also can be coordinated with a number of accents. We’d like to stick with a 1920s color palate here, staying within current trends of design while still manifesting the brand.

That means an earthier orange tone, calling back to the fall colors of our county. A dusty rose, the perfect accent to our jewel-tone emerald, and representative of the rhododendrons and roses of the county. A light blue, the magical color of the ocean at the bays on those perfect days. Along with a truer cornflower blue for the sky. And a true sand for our beaches, dunes, and cliffsides. This toolbox gives us a wide latitude for design.

PRIMARY COLOR

EMERALD

PRIMARY COLOR

GREY

COLOR CODES

CMYK : C084 M054 Y068 K058
 Pantone : 567C
 HKS : 38K
 RGB : R022 G056 B050
 Web : #163832

COLOR CODES

CMYK : C071 M060 Y056 K042
 Pantone : 446C
 HKS : 97K
 RGB : R062 G069 B072
 Web : #3e4548



Secondary Color system

Explanation:

The Secondary colors are complementary to our official colors, with a range that's built to complement whatever photographic elements we might be leaning on. Dusty rose will be our most utilized in text headers, but all four will have their purpose. The emerald is a flexible enough color to take on tertiary accents as needed, so if none of these secondary colors are suitable for a specific photo, a lighter accent shade can be grabbed from the source photo.



Color Codes

CMYK : C022 M064 Y100 K008
 Pantone : 7414C
 HKS : 81K
 RGB : R188 G108 B037
 Web : #bc6c25



Color Codes

CMYK : C014 M037 Y024 K000
 Pantone : 693C
 HKS : 91K
 RGB : R216 G167 B169
 Web : #d8a7a9



Color Codes

CMYK : C049 M004 Y028 K000
 Pantone : 564C
 HKS : 91K
 RGB : R131 G197 B190
 Web : #83c5be



Color Codes

CMYK : C039 M030 Y000 K000
 Pantone : 7681C
 HKS : 95K
 RGB : R155 G166 B213
 Web : #9ba6d5



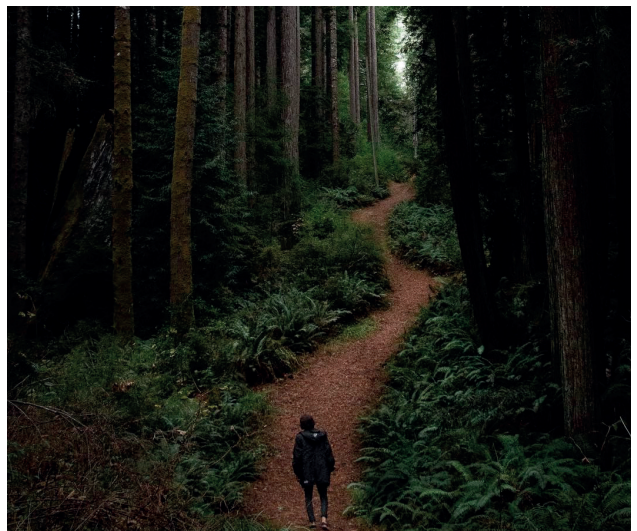
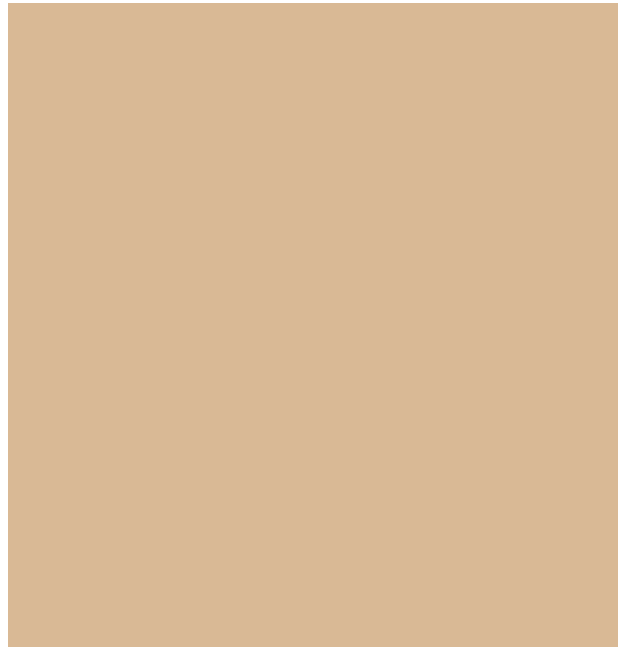
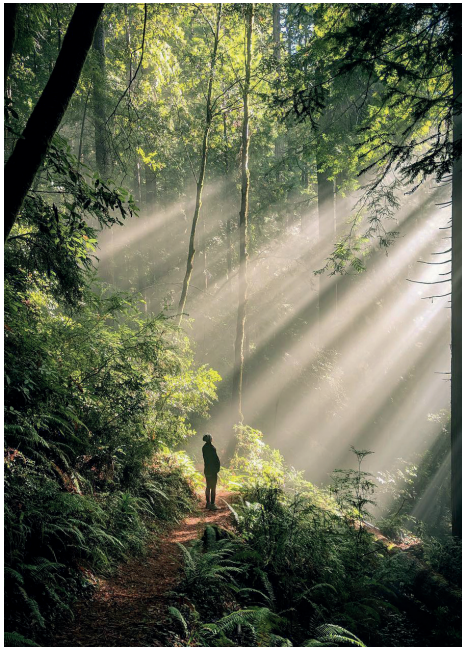
Color Codes

CMYK : C013 M025 Y042 K002
 Pantone : 726C
 HKS : 98K
 RGB : R224 G193 B155
 Web : #dfc09a

Color Usage

Use them to accent and support the primary color palette.

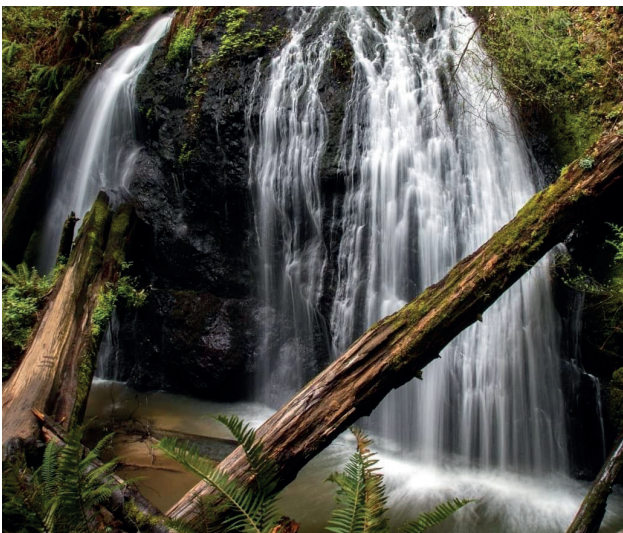
The Visual Voice of Magic





Our photo and video assets will evolve to lean ever more into the idea of magic – one-of-a-kind light situations, wide and epic views, moody fairytale wonderlands.

**Every step an inspiration.
Every moment magical.**



Bringing it Together

3 Takes on a Simple Layout

TYPOGRAPHY MEETS COLOR STORY MEETS VISUAL LANGUAGE

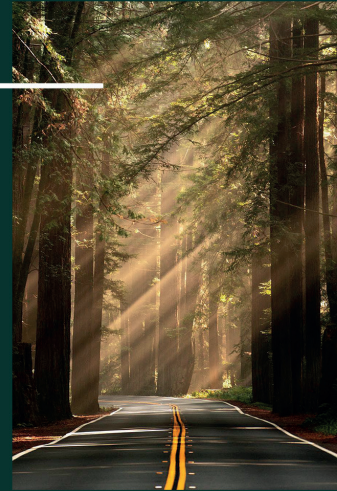
-

Specific ad campaigns can play more heavily into the idea of magic – we have some creative ideas in mind that we think will be eye-catching and have broad appeal – but at its most simple our visual constructs can bring forward the organic feel of the destination, evoke a sense of wonder and magic, and harken back to a simpler time. Our accent colors can bring out different playful elements, and this can easily translate over to our new web presence, as well as social.



Silent Giants

Silent giants rising up over the eons, sheltering this corner of the earth, serving as quiet sentinels welcoming you on your journey as you leave behind the world of the everyday and enter the unique magic of Mendocino.



Hidden Doorways

Cracks in the world are how the light gets in, and Mendocino is full of these hidden doorways that lead to a magic you never knew existed.



Infinity Beckons

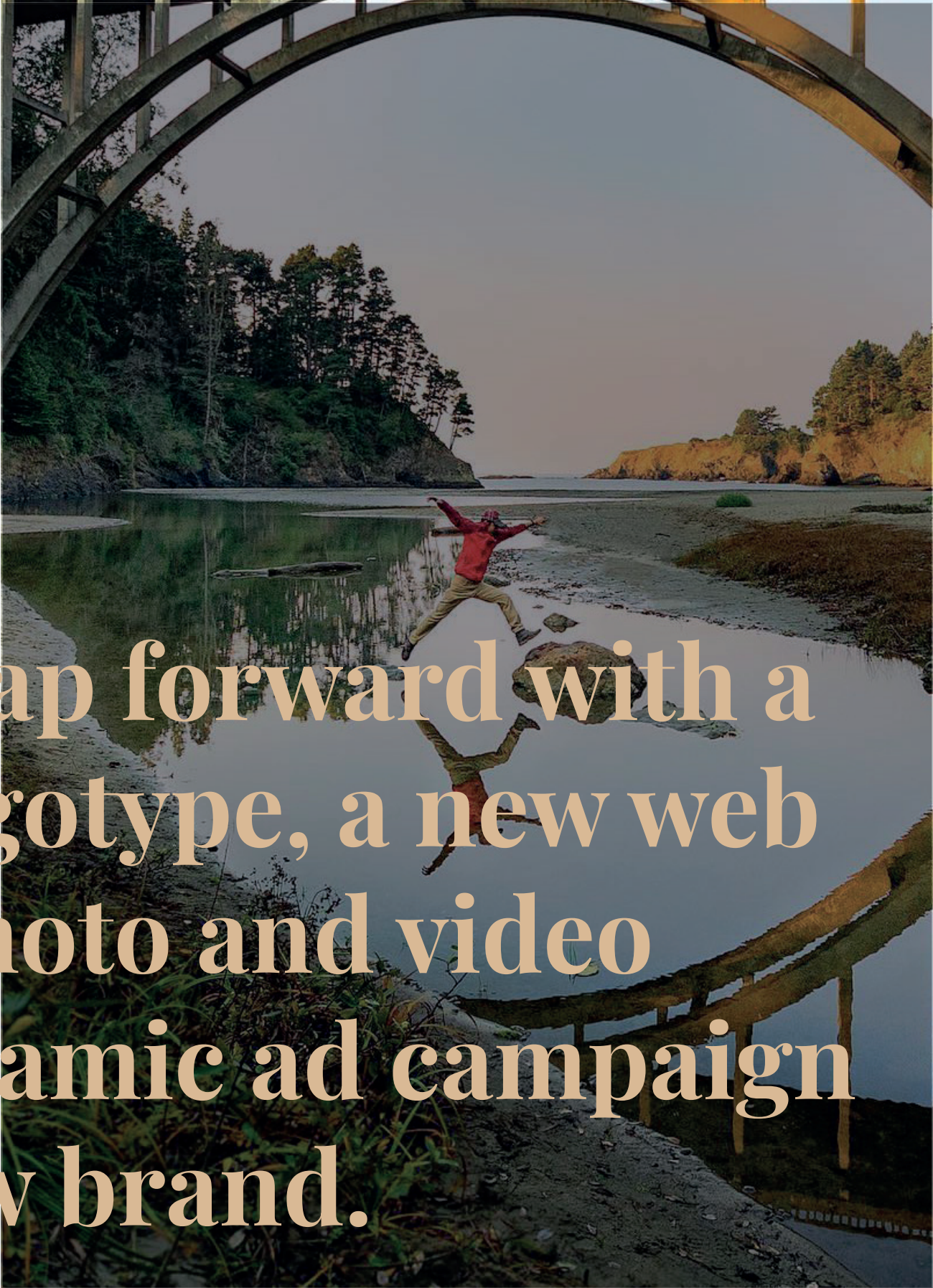
In the quiet stillness of the night, a million million stars come out to welcome you to a magical new world, where anything is possible, and every moment offers the opportunity to discover something new.





Mendocino: Magic is Real

We're ready to launch
hand-lettered logo
presence, new packaging
assets, and a dynamic
to launch the new



leap forward with a
logotype, a new web
photo and video
namic ad campaign
ew brand.