

The following comparisons are based on current price lists, which are subject to change. Prices do not include shipping or sales tax. The number of characters will vary among foundries.

Example 1: Enough 10 point Garamond for several pages; target character count: Roman 45A 350a; Small Caps 15A; Italic 15A 70a

Foundry	Roman	SC	Italic	Cost
M & H	52A 364a	28A	28A 112	\$327.00
Swamp	48A 360a	16A	16A 72a	\$182.40
Quaker	48A 360a	24A	24A 72a	\$230.20
Berliner	45A 360a	15A	15A 90a	\$391.50

Example 2: Enough 12 point Bembo for several pages; target character count: Roman 40A 325a; Small Caps 14A; Italic 14A 65a

M & H	48A 336a	24A	25A 96a	\$361.00
Swamp	48A 360a	16A	16A 72a	\$264.00
Berliner	45A 330a	15A	15A 90a	\$427.25

Example 3: A single font of 18 point Garamond Bold

M & H	13A 26a	\$83.00
Swamp	16A 36a	\$80.00
Quaker	4A 6a	\$18.80
Barco	12A 20a	\$80.85

Example 4: A single font of 24 point Brush

M & H	6A 15a	\$116.00
Swamp	10A 18a	\$100.00
Quaker	4A 6a	\$ 24.50
Barco	8A 14a	\$138.80

CONCLUSIONS

Where should you buy type? Some faces are only offered by a single foundry. Price is a consideration, but only one factor. If speed is important, M & H or Quaker City deliver promptly. (Berliner and Swamp may not be casting your face immediately.) The hardness and quality of true foundry type is available from Dale Guild. Differences among Monotype casters were described in the Spring 1996 issue of *Serif*; Theo Rehak notes the English Supercaster is “a superb device” whose body type can be identified by a square nick...the style visible on Berliner’s type.

I had hoped to consult with type experts before presenting this information, but news of M & H’s troubles spurred me to get the word out quickly. I plan to publish a follow-up issue in March 2000 that will include responses from foundries and opinions by knowledgeable typographers. If you have any comments about this subject, please send them to me by January 31.

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Typecasting in 1999

It’s easy for today’s printers to long for the Good Old Days when real foundries turned out hundreds of type faces. A look at an ATF catalog from 90 years ago can make us lust after fonts that are only memories today. But you might be surprised at how many faces remain available as newly cast type. Today’s foundries mainly use either Lanston (American) or English Monotype Corporation matrices, plus a few special adaptations of ATF or Ludlow faces.

Between February and September I ordered catalogs (and some type) from as many different foundries as I could identify. I compiled a list of faces offered by six United States foundries and ended up with nearly 500 different faces—not counting companion italics. The list is available at <http://members.aol.com/aapa96/foundry.html> or by mail (send me a self-addressed envelope with 55 cents postage for the 16 page printout).

FOUNDRY DESCRIPTIONS

M & H Type (Mackenzie & Harris), 460 Bryant Street, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)777-0716; e-mail MHType@aol.com

There’s both good news and bad news at M & H. They offer a broad selection of type—over 200 faces plus rule, special characters, and more than 600 ornaments in a variety of sizes. They will even cast sorts (\$15 per pound, minimum order \$35).

The foundry traces its roots back to 1915. Owned since 1989 by the Arion Press’s Andrew Hoyem, their *Catalogue* is a beautifully bound 4½ by 10 inch book of over 100 pages. Unfortunately the cost is \$40 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling (plus sales tax for Californians). (If you have an older catalogue, they will sell you fonts and handy boxes out of it at current prices.) Sample prices for complete fonts: \$38 for 6 point; \$49 for 10 point; \$65 to \$81 for 14 point, \$99 for 18 point.

I have always received prompt, helpful service. An order phoned in during September arrived before the end of the week. Some sorts cast on 12 point instead of 10 were replaced within days of another call.

The bad news broke in the October 21 *San Francisco Chronicle*: the owner of the building that houses Arion Press and M & H has told tenants they must be out by June 30, 2000, for seismic upgrades. It is uncertain whether the type foundry can be relocated. If there is anything you want (particularly faces unique to M & H, such as Goudy Thirty, Goudy Bible, Imprint Bold, Neo-Didot, and Veronese) you should consider ordering it as quickly as possible.

Quaker City Type Foundry, 2019 Horseshoe Pike, Honey Brook, PA 19344; (610)942-3637

Bill Riess is the third generation owner of this foundry established in 1922. Quaker City is known for offering small fonts at reasonable prices (for example, 6A 8a in 14 point for \$18.80).

The catalog (cost: \$2, refundable on first order) lists 68 different typefaces, but they have additional matrices and will cast custom orders. They have a good selection of borders, ornaments, and special characters. I placed an order for a font, some borders, and several handy boxes and received prompt service.

Harold Berliner, 224 Main St., Nevada City, CA 95959; (530)273-2278; e-mail: berliner@jps.net

Harold Berliner has been printing fine books and posters for over 50 years. He has tried to find a way to make type for others without losing money. In the early 1980s he offered subscriptions to special castings, with leftovers later sold at slightly higher prices. A couple of years ago he selected 25 type faces from his collection and offered them as fonts. He also placed his catalog on the Web. Sales were not strong enough to be profitable, so in April 1999 he changed his policy to require a \$250 minimum order of any one font and size, although the mix could include Roman, Italic, and Small Caps. In October, he added 200 more faces, some unavailable elsewhere. His font prices average about \$14 per pound. His typemetal alloy is 10% tin, 16% antimony, and 74% lead.

The Berliner foundry does carry a selection of some individual fonts. Write for a spreadsheet listing the inventory and prices.

Swamp Press, 15 Warwick Rd., Northfield, MA 01360; (413)498-4343

Ed Rayher offers more than 260 different typefaces plus a large selection of ornaments. (Write for a list.) Six through 18 point type is offered in 16A 36a fonts, while 24, 30, and 36 point fonts are 10A 18a. Prices are reasonable: \$20 for 6 point; \$25 for 10 point; \$57 for 14 point, \$80 for 18 point. If you buy 2 or 3 fonts of the same size, there is a 10% discount; 20% on 4 or more fonts. The typemetal mixture is 6.58% tin, 15.9% antimony, .15% copper, and 78.37% lead.

I purchased a font of 14 point DeVenne from Swamp in August. After running a couple of jobs, I noticed a few characters toward the end of the alphabet were slightly out of alignment. I sent a proof to Ed, and he promptly replaced the problem characters (including a couple that I hadn't noticed).

F & S Type Founders (Barco Type), P.O. Box 1011, Bensenville, IL 60106; (630)766-1230

Barco's catalog (cost: \$2) lists 199 fonts, including 65 antique faces acquired with Los Angeles Type Founders. Barco emphasizes display faces. Their catalog lists only a few fonts smaller than 14 point, although some smaller sizes are available. Small caps are not listed.

Prices vary among groups of fonts: \$49.55 to \$63 for 6 point; \$53.50 to \$89.15 for 10 point; \$78.25 to \$99.80 for 14 point, \$80.85 to \$108.45 for 18 point.

Dale Guild Type Foundry, 4621 Rt. 9 N., Southard, Howell, NJ 07731; (732)363-3590

Theo Rehak, a typesetter with ATF, was able to purchase some of their casting equipment and matrices at the company's 1993 liquidation. He is one of the last sources of true hard foundry type. (The other foundries use Monotype equipment.) His type is sold by units of 36 pica sort lines of each character, minimum of 50 pounds. Prices depend upon the caster used: \$7.50 to \$10.50 per line for most, but much more for hand finished sorts. "Collector's fonts" are available when a new face is introduced, but after the fifty fonts are sold additional characters may be ordered only by sort lines.

NA Graphics [P.O. Box 467, Silverton, CO 81433; (970)387-0212] recently commissioned The Dale Guild to cast fonts of ATF Garamond, and may work together in the future to offer additional fonts.

Sterling Type Foundry, P.O. Box 50234, Indianapolis, IN 46250; (317)849-5665

AAPA member Dave Churchman's Sterling Type Foundry offers hundreds of cuts, borders, ornaments, logos, and dingbats. His 32 page catalog is available for \$2.

John Hern, 1900 Millview, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814; (800)228-7794; e-mail: hern@nidlink.com

John Hern casts mainly borders, decorators, and initial letters, but this fall he also cast fonts of 18 point DeVenne. Most borders come in a 12 by 18 pica box and cost \$20. A large self-addressed envelope with 99 cents postage will get you specimens of his borders and a list of type.

Michael and Winifred Bixler, Box 820, Skaneateles, NY 13152; (315)685-5181

The Bixlers offer Monotype machine composition, with fourteen faces available. Prices are \$12 to \$15 per pound, minimum order 20 pounds.

Typesetters of Chicago (Castcraft), 3649 W. Chase Ave., Skokie, IL 60076; (847)675-6530

Castcraft's 219 page catalog (price \$15) is filled with dozens of type specimens. The problem: it was published in 1983 and they quit casting new type some years ago. They only have a few faces available; for example, 10 point 18A 55a Century Expanded for \$76.

Acme Type Foundry, 1812 W. Greenleaf Ave., Chicago, IL 60626

Acme appears to be in business in name only—they sent a photocopy of the type specimens from the Barco catalog.

Golgonooza Letter Foundry, Box 111, Ashuelot, NH 03441

I received no response from this foundry.