

News

# Women's Institute given initial makeover by Equilibrium

**By Tom Banks**

The Women's Institute is undergoing a brand overhaul led by consultancy Equilibrium that will see the organisation's iconic tree marque (pictured below) dropped in favour of a 'modernised and consistent' typographic identity.

Equilibrium was invited by

the client to talk about brand positioning in December 2008, and developed a strategy for the WI which included the roll-out of a new identity, following research with staff, members and non-members.

A creative director, Ian Houghton, was appointed by Equilibrium partner Shailendra

Kumar to work as a consultant on the project.

Kumar says, 'Within the organisation there was a small majority belief that it needed to modernise, so it opted for a change of identity.'

The new identity 'has been designed to attract a new generation of members', says Kumar, who adds, 'The idea is that it appeals to a new generation of women without alienating existing members.'

The rebranding of the organisation – which has kept its tree logo for more than 30 years – follows a recent surge of young women joining the WI, which has seen the establishment this year of the first two university WI branches – at Goldsmiths University and King's College in London.

'The only links to the past in the identity will be the colour green,' says Kumar.

The WI was founded in 1915 to revitalise rural communities and encourage women to become more involved in producing food during World



## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

- The Women's Institute was founded in 1915, aiming to revitalise rural communities and encourage women to grow food during World War I
- It now has 205 000 individual members and 6500 branches
- In 2005, a group of young women in London's Fulham set up a branch
- In 2006, an Islington-based branch started up, followed in 2008 by the setting up of The Shoreditch Sisters and other branches in Leeds and Manchester, and the launch of a network of university Women's Institutes



War I. Since then, its aims have broadened, and it now claims to be the largest women's organisation in the UK, with 6500 branches.

The new brand will attempt to unite the institute's 205 000 members, made up of stakeholders from its national board, federation groups and local WI groups.

'The intention is that the new identity can replace or work alongside thousands of individual logos, which are very confused and disparate at the moment,' says Houghton.

A strapline, 'Inspiring women', came out of the brand-positioning research.

According to Houghton, this 'was the driver behind the

whole identity'. The intonation takes on a different meaning if levelled at the organisation or its individual members, he points out.

'The new typographic marque – The WI [pictured above] – doesn't need symbolism. It's very clean and simple, and fits in with the brand architecture,' Houghton says.

He adds that, '[The new marque] can be followed by a place or a job title, so it can be used throughout the organisation.'

A roll-out of the new identity across all collateral will begin in the new year, when a website goes live.

# Mayfair club **Morton's** opens the doors on new interiors and website



**A series of Gruffalo merchandise, designed using brand guidelines created by Together, is set to be released in the run-up to Christmas Day, when a Gruffalo film will premiere on BBC One. The consultancy created the guidelines for licence holder Magic Light Pictures.**

Morton's, a private members' club in London's Mayfair, is poised to unveil new interiors designed by Virgile & Stone and a new website created by The Web Well.

Morton's appointed Virgile & Stone in summer 2008, on the strength of the consultancy's previous work for the club's owner Marlon Abela Restaurant Corporation. Virgile & Stone revamped the Morton's stablemate The Greenhouse last year.

Virgile & Stone's first task was to investigate the positioning of Morton's in relation to other west London private clubs. The consultancy claims that it found a gap in the market for a younger, more fashionable club.

'We wanted to move away from the stuffy traditional gentlemen's clubs and make it more contemporary and eclectic,' says Virgile & Stone co-managing director Carlos Virgile.

Artworks by Julian Opie and Howard Hodgkin will decorate the walls, while a digital installation by United Visual Artists will adorn the 'night bar' in the basement.

In the ground-floor bar, Virgile & Stone has used an aubergine colour palette and exposed some brickwork, which will be clad with glass and illuminated. The first-floor restaurant will feature a grey and green colour palette.

Morton's appointed The Web Well in October after approaching the group directly on the strength of its credentials. Morton's briefed the group to 'create a good platform to show the branding and interior of the club', says The Web Well design director Piers Milburn.

The site will include public areas featuring photography of the club's new interiors, as well as private areas with message boards for members to use, and an online reservation facility. The club hopes to add a

social networking element to the website at a later date.

Edge Design created branding for the club in October, after being appointed on the strength of its past relationship with Marlon Abela Restaurant Corporation in March. 'The brief

was to create a new, exciting brand to attract a younger clientele,' says Edge Design senior designer Tom West.

The new interior will be unveiled at the end of this month, and the website is due to launch in January.



**Buro Creative has designed two chain screens, made up from more than 400 000 individually coloured links, for restaurant chain Wahaca's Canary Wharf branch, which opens this week. Interior design is by Softroom.**