

# EPIISODE 026

---

## NEW HOLLAND BREWERY

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Mike Perry and Gregor Johnstone, Design Bridge

WITH

Adam Dickerson and Brett Vanderkamp, New Holland Brewery

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to The Follow-up, a weekly podcast that goes in depth into projects recently reviewed on Brand New featuring conversations with the designers, and sometimes their clients, uncovering the context, background and design decisions behind the work.

### **ARMIN VIT**

Hi, this is Armin Vit and welcome to episode 26 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on New Holland Brewing, a craft brewery and distillery located in Holland, MI, producing both beer and spirits. With two brewpubs in the state — one in Holland and the other in nearby Grand Rapids, MI — the company's beers are sold there and are distributed throughout 44 states and exported to Canada, Europe, and Asia. New Holland is often recognized as one of the leading innovators in the revolution of craft brewing and distilling.

The project, designed by the New York, NY, office of Design Bridge was posted on Brand New on March 29, 2021. You can pull it up on your browser at [bit.ly/bnpodcast026](http://bit.ly/bnpodcast026) that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast026, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Mike Perry, Creative Director of Design Bridge; Gregor Johnstone, Design Director of Design Bridge; Adam Dickerson, Brand Manager of New Holland Brewery; and Brett Vanderkamp, CEO and Founder of New Holland Brewery.

In this conversation we get to hear about how Design Bridge brought together references and sensibilities from Dutch culture and Midwestern culture to create a new and exciting visual language for New Holland. One that built on 25 years of legacy and that would help make it stand out on shelf. We also get a reminder of how important it is to immerse yourself in the brand you are designing for and while that may not be as easy to do in pandemic times it's the kind of effort that can lead to discovering the one big idea that drives the whole project. As was the case for the Design Bridge who stumbled, at a local bakery, unto a t-shirt with a Dutch word that unlocked the whole project.

Now, let's listen in as Bryony follows up with Mike, Gregor, Adam, and Brett.

**BRYONY** Food and beverage packages are challenged by their shelf presence. They need to stand out from the rest so that you, the consumer will take them home. New Holland Brewery can be found worldwide and they have loyal customers, but with a revamped design, I am sure they will acquire a whole new group of followers today. I'm really excited to hear about this process. Brett, Adam, Gregor, and Mike, welcome to The Follow-Up.

**MIKE** Yeah. Thank you.

**ADAM** Thanks so much for having us.

**GREGOR** Thanks. Excited to be here.

**BRETT** Wonderful to be here.

**BRYONY** I like to start at the very beginning, providing a context. Brett New Holland Brewery reinvented in a way, the city of Holland in Michigan. Can you give our listeners a quick summary on the beginnings of the brewery and its influence on its location?

**BRETT** The brewery started back in 1997. I was a undergraduate from a local college in town called Hope College. At that time, it was a pretty conservative town as it relates to our religious beliefs, our politics, and our drinking establishments. And a college friend and I kind of set out to change that mentality through better beer. We had kind of cut our teeth, so to speak on better beer over in England and Ireland, and then post my college graduation I moved out to Boulder, Colorado and got to experience some of the early kind of Renaissance beers of the craft brewing movement. And thought, this is a wonderful idea to bring back to the Midwest and specifically kind of our hometown of Holland, Michigan. And that's exactly what we did in 1997, we started a very small brewery on the outskirts of town, quite literally on the other side of the tracks as it was, we built a loyal following over time. Now kind of looking back on it, in short time, six years, as a matter of fact, we actually moved our tasting room of our brewery to the downtown area in a beautiful old hardware store where we've been in town ever since. So I like to think we had a very influential impact on the town and its relationship with good and better beverages.

**BRYONY** Just to give us an idea about how many local employees do you have at this point?

**BRETT** We currently employ just over 225 employees at this time... that will swell to close to 300 employees in the summer months when our peak tourist season happens.

**BRYONY** Yeah. So it seems like it's one of those places that everybody in town seems to know about. That's always exciting when you can incubate something like that, that becomes part of the local culture. Brett or Adam, there is usually a trigger to a rebrand such as this one. If you can tell us a little bit more about why you decided to embark on this journey, and especially at this particular time? And what were some of your initial goals and parameters for the rebrand?

**ADAM** Brett? Do you want to start that? Or do you want me to—

**BRETT** No, you go ahead Adam.

**ADAM** Yeah, I think it was a perfect storm of several different factors at the time. Brett, you had just recently undergone a new mission and vision pathway. I think you had some brainstorming on yourself, but brought in some outside folks to really uncover what the deeper meaning of New Holland was, and we were really trying to get at the root of who we were. At the same time where really craft beer, the beer segment we exist in, it had become more crowded than it ever had been. And I think we were pretty self-aware and honest with ourselves in that our position within that segment was pretty vague at best. You know, our branding, visual identity we had was near and dear to our hearts. But I think we were self-aware enough to know that the consumer didn't know who we were and it was a bit confusing. So the combination of those two things really triggered the fact that we really need to tell a new story that is still genuine and authentic to who we've always been, but a clearer story of who we are so that people can understand it quite a bit better.

**BRYONY** And did this process start before COVID or after?

**ADAM** Much before. I think it was late 2018 when really this started and early 2019, when we kicked it off.

**BRYONY** We're finding that a lot of projects, either stem from COVID, or get paused, or something has been shifted, but it seems like you were pretty much on track.

**ADAM** Yeah, absolutely. The rollout of the rebrand was about a six, seven month delay when it actually started to see public eyes.

**BRYONY** And then just for additional context, the brand that you had before, how long did you have that for? As the market got saturated?

**ADAM** We have quite a mix. So I think to Brett's point earlier, I mean, we're almost 25 years old at this time., and some of those brands that we had our Bret- originals from day one and have imagery that hearkens back all the way to probably prior to even opening the brewery. And then there were several other brands with different illustrators,

different art design techniques, that had been kind of all adapted over the years. So we had really had quite a blend of iconography and every different type of illustration style, all kind of blended together to really create a lot of unique individual brands. But it didn't tell the story of New Holland and who we were as a brewery very well.

**BRETT** Yeah. I would only add that our corporate logo shift, we had gone one other corporate logo shift that was a bit ambiguous. You had elements of our original logo in it. And that had occurred in 2005. So we had been operating with a... that logo since 2005.

**BRYONY** Okay. Now Mike and Gregor, how did you get involved?

**MIKE** Our relationship started with Pabst Brewing Company. We were working on a lot of PBR work for them around this time and also helped to launch their new craft brewery and craft brand, Captain Pabst. So with that, we very close with Rob Riley and Matt Brune who were kind of Pabst guys that introduced us to New Holland. They have a sales and distribution partnership. They basically came to us and they're like, these guys are making awesome beer, give them the treatment that you gave us. And luckily they were open to it—and we were, like, thrilled. We were stoked. I mean, all of us, even me in New York and Pennsylvania really have heard about New Holland over the years. It was one of those brands. It was a legend, but it kind of didn't get its justice this whole time. So we really wanted to bring that to it. Started to tell friends, yeah, I've heard about it. I definitely had that Dragon's Milk always comes up as well, but it was never just on the national scale that it really should be. What really excited us one, because it was small, but big, and large, and great beer, and then we also really wanted to bring it to glory or help help with that at least.

**BRYONY** Adam, was that something that you explored different firms and different groups of people who might be able to help you? Or was it a—

**ADAM** We explored quite a few, but Design Bridge came with more than a glowing recommendation from some pretty influential people that

we trusted a ton. We took a hard look and had some really nice conversations with a few folks at Design Bridge early on, and they just won us over pretty quickly. It felt really transparent, really honest. We didn't want anyone who was going to sugarcoat stuff—just a really nice, quickly developing relationship that felt perfect.

**BRYONY** So speaking to those initial conversations, when you all started working on this project together, what did that work entail? Where you looking at focus groups? More of an internal process? Did you involve the community at any point? Or the employees? How did that work for you?

**MIKE** The process really started how Design Bridge likes to do every project is full immersion. We got on a plane and went out to Holland. Was really at the kickoff of all of it. Myself, Laura Byrd, who runs the account. And Cristina Tazza our Head of Strategy, got on a plane, headed out there, not just for like an hour meeting like most people do, quick chat and that's it. We stayed, I think for four days and really dug in because we wanted to get the feel of the town. It's called New Holland, it's in Holland. We wanted to experience all of that and that's, you know, from our desktop research, it seemed like, but you're never going to know until you're truly there and you meet everyone. So we headed out there. Cristina's brilliant idea. Our Head of Strategy, brilliant idea to rent bikes. And she planned this whole bike route around Holland, Michigan, which you got a bunch of new Yorkers go into Michigan thinking that they can ride bikes around this town and it was, it's not like going downtown. We were hiking around this place. We biked like four miles just to get to the dunes, which was named after one of the beers are like, Oh, we got to get out here. It was this whole thing. And really thank God, 'cause I think that that was a massive unlock for this whole project because we were riding bikes, we all had our helmets on, we looked like 12 year olds going to the Seven 11 up the street, really just digging around a town. And we got so hot and so tired, 'cause it was the beginning of summer, we were sweating. We went to the Deboer Bakkerij, sweaty, trying to just get some water. And we were digging around, talking to the people there, we got a bunch of

pastries and we also found this t-shirt which on the back said Gezellig and had the definition of Gezellig. And that didn't leave our heads this entire time. We were like, there's something interesting about that. It really... I'll let Adam do the proper definition of it.

**ADAM** There is no one definition, which is the fun part because it doesn't translate to anything in the English language directly. But the best translation that we've really adapted is, it's a vibe of where good times can happen. It can be cozy, it can be gregarious, but it's always welcoming, and always really, really enjoyable, and always social. I think for Brett, you, I think it was just an eye opening. It's what we've always wanted to communicate. And it was just so well summed up in one Dutch word.

**BRETT** I just felt like that was really, Mike to your point, that that was really the unlock but the project, one of those aha moments for me. It was a term that I was familiar with on the peripheral. Your team really brought that to life then and really latched onto it. And it made perfect sense because in essence, that's what we were trying to do in Holland. We were trying to create a space in which Gezellig times could happen. So the infancy of our brewery and then bringing this concept to life now with the rebrand, I think was really a pivotal find.

**MIKE** Yeah, totally. So the trip, the immersion really pulled that out of it just by happenstance. And that's one of those things that we always talk about. This it's so important as the agency to really go and immerse yourselves because you're never going to find something like that. We would never found that Googling and sitting behind our computers, or in the studio. And even with that trip, just getting to really understand the community and even everyone that works at the brewery, and the pubs, we really dug into that. On that bike trip, of course, we went to the windmill gardens, and the tunnel parks, and Big Red, and really dug into the Historical Society, which is our favorite part about every immersion trip, just looking at the old town records and what happened back then. But all of that then later influenced everything

down to each variant, which we can get into a little bit later, but really played a pivotal role in the brand and the brand building behind it and putting meaning into all these marks that we made.

**BRYONY** So first question, did you buy the t-shirt?

**MIKE** We didn't buy the t-shirt. It was the biggest mistake we made. We were on the plane, still talking about it, like, why the hell didn't we buy that and go back. So now it's still hanging in the bakery, I'm sure.

**BRYONY** You got immersed. And then you went back to the office. What happens next?

**GREGOR** When they got back, they wouldn't really shut off about this Gezellig word. They just kept going on about it. They're like, we found the perfect thing—it just sums up the whole thing. I didn't make the plane ticket. So they came back, did their best to immerse me as well as they could. And they were just kept going on about, you know, there's an amazing place as brewery that changed the town, changed the place. And then they found this word, this Dutch word, that summed the whole thing up. And they're like, this is perfect. But what does that look like? That was our starting point within the studio, was... we got this amazing thing and we know that everything we do wants to communicate that, and enrich with meaning and everything that we're doing. But then it's, how do we then develop? How do we take that further? I mean, one of the things that we always try to do is have a kind of a big idea thought that should really contain everything that we're going to do from that point onwards, rather than going in with a few different ways. We really went in with this one thought of how we could instill everything that we had, everything that we learned when we were there, and to this one place and make sure that we evolve the brand the way we wanted to see, and then divide that into kind of two more distinct avenues from that point. So really only two routes going forward, but really two, that kind of actually you're doing the same thing, but visually confined different methods and ways of telling the



story. Working with [Mike] Perry and Cristina Tazza as well to come up with that big idea. I don't know if you want to touch on that first Perry.

**MIKE** The big idea we like to call them design ideas. Like most agencies, we work off of the positioning, the design idea, and the design principles, and we start to bring those to life. And that's really has a crucial hand in every single decision and mark we make. Focusing on that and really hammering that out with strategy, and the design team, and Adam and Brett and their full teams as well. What we came to was our overall positioning of course, was Gezellig, it fit perfectly. We couldn't get it out of our minds. And then we really dissected that and started to think, what is our design idea here? What do we want to do? And that was really New-Midwestern Dutch. And that became the overarching design idea for everything that we wanted to check this off against. We didn't want it to feel like a Dutch brand. We couldn't forget about our Dutch heritage.

Of course the town is named Holland after all in our logo is a windmill, but we really wanted that new interpretation because I think, you know, 25 years ago, the brand did that. They reinterpreted what the city could be, what beer could be, and revamped it all together. So we wanted to kind of have that in everything that we created visually moving forward for the brand. And also create that, so that it's part of their kit of parts to take forward and constantly build upon, like they've already been doing. That then gets us into some more of the new design ideas, which I'll let Gregor talk through.

**GREGOR** We have this big idea with the New-Midwestern Dutch. I know we have this feeling that we want to inject to everything of Gezellig. Really with that New-Midwestern Dutch, it's really reinterpreting things. So in order to do that, we really needed to immerse ourselves in Dutch culture, as best as possible. We set up calls with our Amsterdam studio and kind of got involved there. Fortunately, our Executive Creative Director was previously at our Amsterdam studio as well. So she was able to influence us from a Dutch point of view, which was very

helpful to make sure that everything was laddering up. I got kind of obsessed and Perry can attest to this... just like I was buying bicycle badges off of eBay and like Dutch tiles, weirdly someone in the studio actually has, um, Delft Dutch tiles that they just had lying around their apartment and brought them in for us to look at.

And we just became kind of obsessed with all of these amazing, unique things about Dutch culture. And, you know, our question for ourselves the whole time is how do we take this out of appropriation, or being a pastiche, or just, you know, sticking those things directly from there and just using them? How do we develop that to be something that is new and representative of the Midwestern culture and Holland culture and Holland, Michigan culture. So how do we take that and evolve that to make it current, and feel fresh, and modern and still, you know, ladder up to our overarching brand. Make sure that it still has that feeling of Gezellig across everything. The way we kind of approached it... there was some stuff that we'd seen around the actual, the badge of the city in Holland, that was this amazing iconic windmill, which I encourage you to Google after. It's a very, very interesting way of depicting a windmill. It's got kind of deconstructed blades, the house, and then the ground kind of in three parts, which very progressive for a logo of a town. It was something really interesting in this idea of this badge of honor for the town and the fact that New Holland had almost regenerated this whole time. And the fact that we can kind of wear a badge of the tone and, you know, wear it with pride was a really rich place that we could play with. With that also with my new collection of bicycle head badges, it felt like there was an interesting link there between this idea of badge and pride. And the fact that it relates back to such a notable thing in Dutch culture is the bicycle. So that was one kind of Avenue that we'd kind of seen going forward.

And then the other one was all around this idea of re-interpretation of Dutch classic, all our own. Can we do our New-Midwestern take on Delft pottery and the illustrations from there? So really there were these two quite distinct routes. Both of them laddered up to this idea

of being New-Midwestern Dutch. And both of them had, to varying degrees, this energy of Gezellig within them, that we made one lean more on the orange spectrum, and we made one lean more on the kind of blue spectrum, just to get a read there of what felt right for the brand. And then actually the way we evolved from there, we realized that actually the badge in the area that felt really iconic and like a proud badge of the city felt very right for the market itself. It felt like it was just this pro thing that, you know, New Holland can use for the next a hundred years to really just become iconic and really tell their story and be proudly in place representing everything that they stand for.

So we really wanted to lean into that as our kind of, this is our mark or pro-badge, but then we did feel that actually the new Delft route had a lot more energy and really laddered up to that Gezellig feeling. And I know we can touch on it with Adam as well, and some of the calls where... they kind of call us on it and they're like, well, actually this one feels a lot more like our brand. And I think that was a really big part of this, especially in that early phase, you know?

**BRYONY** I would like to hear about the first perceptions of these two ideas from Brett and Adam and see what the energy read was there.

**ADAM** Both ideas were nice, the new Delft I think at first was... it felt a little too old world, a little like Holland of the past, but in a way I think it felt almost too refined, and like delicate. And then the second route in was very contemporary and very clean with that bike badge led and like any terrible client, I think we asked Design Bridge, we'll just mash them together, 'cause we want Delft, we want heritage, but we want it to feel future-proof, and feel contemporary, and be able to speak to a modern consumer. But really be rooted in that Delft-ware, uh, principles. I'm sure there was some eyes rolling on the other side of that Zoom call, but they did an amazing job from there really honing in on that heritage, but really pulling it forward to a feel that felt just timeless and classic.

**BRETT** Yeah. I think for me, the arc of our logo over time... our first logo, which was fairly rudimentary wood cut design was very much what you would think of is that just an old world, typical windmill. We actually have one in town. There's one windmill. It took cues from kind of the old world Dutch, it had an old world Dutch feel to it. So initially, I was a little bit maybe less excited about the Delft design mock-ups and more excited about the bike badges. I'm not sure if you know what they are, but they're on the necks of the bike. And they're very contemporary as Adam said, and I really liked those, but I think I remember the comment of, yeah, we really liked those but less bike-y or something less, less like it would be on a bike. Yeah. We were probably difficult clients at that point. I was really excited. My initial instincts were very excited around that direction that we were heading there on the badge of the bikes.

**MIKE** It's so funny that you both are saying, you think are difficult clients because like that's what I think made this whole relationship so strong. And what made this project so fun. It's your brand. Even more important, which like isn't often the case is we're actually working with Brett who owned it, and started from the very beginning. This is more than just a baby project. You know, it is the baby. With that, the back and forth, you know, I don't like this, I don't like that., can you mash it all together, actually really helped to come to a great area on this project. I feel like, and I feel like, you know without the collaboration, we probably wouldn't have gotten to that point. And that's why I think it's so crucial because what ended up actually happening is we made the bike badges less bike-y, I think it was a great call. We're not a bike brand. We made the Delft less old world because of course we're New-Midwestern Dutch. We never wanted it to be a pastiche or anything of the past. And it really came together almost seamlessly. I hate to say Frankenstein, but we Frankenstein quite on purpose. The brand is very much bold and singular. It has that iconic nature to it. And then when you get to the packaging and the cans, you really get to tell that new Delft story through illustrations, and really bring them to life creating a system with all these elements so that it can continue to tell stories.

**BRYONY** I'm lucky enough that I have family in Amsterdam. I'm familiar with biking in Amsterdam and all of the badges and all of that. I can definitely see those references. You know, it seems like you were constantly balancing the old and the new, the Dutch and the Midwestern. Seesawing back and forth. And you did extraordinary job of finding that middle ground throughout all of the parts. At what point in all of this, did you decide to involve Dalton Maag for the custom typeface? Was that a hard sell internally? Was it not? And where in all of this, do those little references that you find in the typeface itself, that are really fun, come into play and who brought those in?

**MIKE** Stepping even back before Dalton Maag, and I'm going to let Gregor completely nerd out on all the type stuff, because I think he must have spent weeks on this. Very much on purpose 'cause we were having a lot of fun, but we first stepped back, we were looking at old Delft tiles, our Executive Creative Director, Claire Parker, who used to head up Amsterdam actually came in and just dumped piles of old ones on our desk. And we were like, ah, this is brilliant. And she also kept referencing the signage over top of the doorways, that say welcome. And so we really pulled tons of inspiration there, Gregor and I really cracked on with the type explore. He did all the technical work and then we engaged Rob Clark to really help us finalize and craft that logo. You know, he's a great typographer that we tap into every now and then to really fine tune everything. From there we then approached Dalton Maag to help us roll out that character set, and bring it all to life and get it working.

**GREGOR** You know, we knew that we wanted to move this bike badge thing away from being too bike-y, and it was getting a little industrial as well, just by nature, some of the typography that we were using. And as with finding the Gezellig t-shirt in the bakery, which is a lovely moment of serendipity, there was a similar thing with the tile where I think we were just looking for more Delft imagery, we weren't actually on a tight search at all at that point, or doing the explore. And I found

this tile that had this hand painted type on it that I can't remember what it said. It said something like welcome. And it had this amazing character that suddenly, we were just like, whatever it is that's working here, it just has this feeling to it. This Gezellig energy, the nature of the characters, they balanced very perfectly, quite an elegant feeling, sophistication, with playfulness, and character, and weirdness, that really evoke that feeling of Gezellig. We did a kind of backward search and realized that that hand painted tile had been loosely based on a really old typeface called Albert Old Style. After that we looked into the characters, we wanted to really develop this further. And that's when we enlisted Rob Clark's help, to really craft that into a logo and really bring the energy that we saw within that word on this painted tile, and bring that into the logo so that it really kept that kind of weirdness and quirks that drew us to it in the first place, but refined it into a place that could sit proudly on the logo.

**MIKE** From there, it was less about really creating a typeface for the sake of it. We're all designers and obviously super keen to make our mark in every area but, it was really created as, really as an equity and part of the kit of parts in the full system that we were delivering to New Holland. You know, we're aware that once we do the rebrand and design a few of the key assets that the job's not done, we're trying to create a full system that they can use and take forward. And we worked closely with their in-house design team, and know that the in-house designers really need to work with us for a long time. We wanted to create something that was fun and flexible for them as well. This face really helped so that they can use it on different touch points, POS, and items like that to really take it forward. And, you know, along with the typeface, we created an icon system in the same type of way, really creating a kit of parts so that they can build it out and continue the brand after we're long gone.

**BRYONY** Fascinating. I want to touch on the illustrations a little bit as well. First, Brett, how involved were you in the day-to-day? I think I know the answer, but I want to know, in detail...

**BRETT** Correct me if the perception was different, but I was quite involved, uh, with the team on this. And I was just going to comment as being kind of the CEO/Founder of a company, it was quite an experience to watch these guys nerd out on the font. As designers, you know, this is their craft, but I got to be a part of that. And I got to just... the cross section on an “A”. Oh, I don’t like the way that arc is right there, can we move that up? Or, you know, it’s too convex. We really did get into that detail and the guys and the team they were nice enough, you know, they were letting me be a part of that. And there was a lot of also—some of this like, hey guys, don’t worry about that, we’re going to get to that later, too, on the font. Like, we have the expert that’s going to come in and help us with that, so that we could keep the process moving on the bigger parts too. It was an engaging experience. I really enjoyed the process.

**BRYONY** That’s wonderful to hear. It is a very rare treat to have somebody that involved, being so high up within a company, be it a small company or a large company. It’s a big treat for the designers to have access to, not only your thinking, but also your decision making on the spot and being able to have those conversations back and forth. Kudos to you for doing that, for being that involved in the process, because it shows not only your personal investment in the company, but your input as well.

**BRETT** Thank you very much.

**MIKE** Absolutely. Completely agree with that. It is really, really unique.

**BRYONY** Let’s talk about the illustrations a little bit, and how you went about creating those, and how you foresee those being implemented in new SKUs as they come about in the future?

**GREGOR** With the illustrations, again, the biggest watch-it for us was avoiding pastiche. We didn’t want to just lift this old Delft style and just stick that on a can—it didn’t really feel right for our brand, but again, with some other stuff, the way that they can tell the story and the way that

they can evoke all of this emotion within a sort of, almost a border or a frame that can sit around, you know, in some instances, a tile or a plate, that was the part that we really loved about the Delft. That was the thing we wanted to bring forward. And you know, one of the challenges within the craft beer world is telling the individual stories of the products, the liquids, and also in this instance, the place surrounding the brand, you know, New Holland, Michigan. They felt like a wonderful way for us to tell those stories and really transfer that emotion. It really added this real happiness and uplifting quality to the brand.

But on the flip side of that, as we developed it, we started noticing that it was getting a little too whimsical, a little too pastiche, the more detailed we went. So it was a very intentional decision to bring that closer to that new side of the spectrum of ever talking about the New-Midwestern Dutch, and really have that feeling a little bit more simple and an iconic, and paired back. On a more technical side, that then allows future variants to be really easily created because we have a framework there, within the illustration, and you can change out the elements to tell the stories. I mean, we even did it down to like kind of nerdy formula of, like, these ones can represent this part of the liquid, and then these ones can represent the area, and these ones represent part of the story. So I think it encouraged every one of the C-account to really look at the details and see some of the little quirks that we managed to build in there.

**MIKE** And that was super crucial too, right? Because stepping back a little bit, there was 25 years of New Holland variant history. Each one of the stories were extremely unique and very much so, a variant led story. And that was part of the overall strategy working with the team is, actually flipping it a little bit. As being very much more New Holland as the icon brand led, and then as you start to enjoy you really dig into those stories more. So putting the stories a little bit further back in the hierarchy, really on purpose. Also a big shout out to Bailey Sullivan, who was the illustrator on this project. I've been wanting to work with



her for years. Her illustration style just fit this perfectly. It was that perfect blend of extreme modernity, while also very illustrative and looking back to the past. A lot of pieces, emulating old Delft tile, so she completely crushed it.

**BRYONY** There was a question on Brand New through the comments that kept coming up. And, you've sort of answered it, but I want to know if you actually explored this option and it was, you know, why not go just all out with those illustrations and really explode the brand?

**GREGOR** We did originally explore that. I think that was probably our first port of call where like, let's just go crazy on this Delft stuff. It just started to move away from that idea of New-Midwestern Dutch. You start to move away from the new and the Midwestern side of it when we go kind of too crazy on it. And we really, really wanted to avoid any pastiche. We didn't want to go too heavy on the illustration and really have that going to going crazy, especially on the packaging itself, but within the rest of the brand we did look to introduce it, but I didn't feel like it was a natural fit. It felt like it was a little bit forced. And honestly, we wanted to be a little bit more practical at times. When you have a poster that's selling beer, you kind of want to communicate the beer really quickly.

And that should really be the focal point. And I know that's something we worked at, you know, in collaboration with Adam and Brett is making sure it works for them, and for their market, and for how it's going to actually show up in the real world.

**BRETT** I would add to that—Perry, you can jump in on this—as you know, I think there's the, how it performs in the market and, you know, we're a national brand and it has to sit on shelves and stand out. And I just think there's a tendency in craft, if you go to any craft beer shelf and you look at it, there tends to be a lot of wild stuff that all becomes a sea of, I don't know, creative energy. And your own brand can't stand out on it. And I think that was really influential to me is saying, Hey, we need to have our badge up there so that it can clearly identify it on

shelf, that might be oversimplifying a bit, I'll let the guys take it from a design perspective.

**MIKE** And that kind of goes back to what I was saying where it's like, yeah, you know, our heritage was very much these individual stories that we were telling, but the market, as Brett said, moved on, it's too crazy. We're trying to then shout multiple different stories at you where really we needed to simplify it. We needed to be easily accessible at shelf. And then, you almost dig into the stories later—we needed to grab you. And I think by taking a more brand led approach, rather than a variant led approach, we had the badge big and large. You could see the windmill from across the supermarket or the beer store, and very much purposely making that as big as possible. And then adding the illustration and the story around it. Because we were just losing consumers and they weren't even hearing the stories.

**ADAM** Adam at this point, you've got a clear brand to work with. What does the future look like for you and your team as you keep adding new flavors, things like that?

I think it's summed up in one word is: patience. Now we have the identity, and the position, and the brand that feels just so right. And it feels perfect. It feels exactly what, not only what we were hoping to accomplish, but what we feel the market needs right now. Something that is really beautiful, and detailed, and tells stories, but in a clean, really approachable, welcoming way and invites people in. We have our portfolio. We're really honing in and focusing in on our home market where we think we can tell a story to a consumer who wants to listen and then really try to evoke some interest in that consumer here in Michigan, and grow within the borders of our state and then really allow that to echo out and build from there.

We're in a really good spot for the next several years, I feel, in terms of where we need to focus and where our brand is, and the story we can tell. We'll certainly never be resting on our laurels and stopping to... ceasing to innovate. I think that's one of Brett's strengths as a leader, is

pushing us to continue to innovate and do so with purpose, and with intentionality. The future's bright. But I think for a moment we need to just really continue to be singular in our message to the consumer and not stray too far from the Gezellig times we hope to accomplish and bring, bring to the world really.

**BRYONY** And what excites you most about the implementation of the brand?

**ADAM** I think it's when you walk into a store, and to Mike's point, we've accomplished what we set out to, which is a beacon on the shelf that really makes you smile. And I think we're just really proud of the work that's been done. And I think it tells the story exactly as we had hoped. And so you can feel proud about where you work, and the people you work with, and the products you put out, but it's also nice to have them really be quite beautiful and be something that makes you really happy to look at. And so I think that's overall something that really is what excites me most right now for this whole project and really the brewery as a whole.

**BRYONY** That's wonderful to hear. From the other perspective, Brett, have you received any feedback, be it from customers, retailers, employees, beyond Adam, or any hardcore data that you're receiving in terms of the rebrand and how that's changing everything from revenue to growth?

**BRETT** Overwhelmingly positive response on the rebrand. I'm loving seeing, as we're implementing the brand onto our physical spaces, the response from the consumers and our fans has been terrific. Interesting observation of some of even our most loyal, the hard core fans that they seem to resist everything. Even they have been swayed over in embracing it. And I think what has happened for me, the biggest challenge with this is how do you make an old-school windmill cool? And we've done it. If you had said, when I first heard the term New-Midwestern Dutch... what does that even mean? The brand has done it. This is New-Midwestern Dutch. The response on a general sense has been fantastic. Adam can speak to you some of the results that we're

seeing on the shelf and the increase in sales and velocity has been validating. I would even say beyond what my expectations could have been. So I'll let Adam jump in on the hard numbers and the data.

**ADAM** It's really evident what's been happening, especially right at the tail end, you know, we don't know what the future holds, but COVID is certainly been an interesting year for beer in a lot of ways. Though, it makes things a little bit unpredictable, but through all of that, our existing SKUs that were rebranded, the brands that this team really rejuvenated and refreshed, some of them their rate of sale on the shelf is double what it was a year ago at this time, anywhere from about 40% to 100% lift in the rate of sale on these brands that some of them have been around for 20 plus years. We've seen an incredible lift there, and really just an enthusiasm from not only the consumer, but our retailer partners, and our distributor partners, really appreciating a brand that is looking forward and has some of that self-awareness to know when it's time to really make a change and bring it forward. So we've seen not only an emotional response from our consumers, but they're supporting us in a way that's really validating to Brett's point.

**BRYONY** Wowza, those are some strong numbers. Congratulations.

**ADAM** Thank you. We've got a lot of work to do to keep that going, but we're ready for it.

**BRYONY** Just ride that wave and then keep enjoying it. Gregor, what has been the most challenging aspect of working on this project?

**GREGOR** For me personally, the most challenging part was actually reining in all of the amazing things that we could have done. When you look at the Dutch culture, and there are so many things that we were leaning into... and it was almost like, how do we pack all of these things into this brand? And it was amazing to get our grips on such an amazing brand. And like we touched on earlier working with the founder as well as always just a very blessed thing to be able to do. On top of that, a brand that really did stand for the thing that we wanted to

communicate, it was an amazing thing. But the challenge was then how do we distill that into something that works, and is still iconic, rather than trying to do everything all at once and bring all of these different things that we found all together. That was the challenge for me, was balancing those things and not getting too carried away and doing every single little thing that we wanted.

**BRYONY** Well did a wonderful job, and I think you've created a new style and that is the Dutch Midwestern style. Mike, what was the most satisfying aspect of this project for you?

**MIKE** I think we touched on it early. It was really the collaboration. It was being so tight knit with the New Holland team. Also, I got a shout out to the New Holland design team. In-house to Nick Zalewski and Kate Dowling, they were great. Also just everyone on the New Holland side, it was a treat working with everyone up to Brett, but really the collaboration that came through all of this. Without that we wouldn't be seeing the old heads, the old fans really digging this new style. We wouldn't see the increased number in shelves, especially locally. I don't think we'd get the creative workout. It wouldn't be as special as it really is. That's what really excites me is how special and New Holland, and you said it, Midwestern Dutch style it is. It's really great to hear you say that we almost created a new style, and that was the goal. Is we wanted to bring, you know, back to what I said at the beginning, we wanted to bring the glory back to New Holland, Holland, Michigan, I think with the collaboration we did.

**BRYONY** Yeah. And I think between the brand and how embedded New Holland is within the town, I can see this as becoming a style that 10 years from now is going to be kind of iconic to the area. At least that's what I imagine it to be.

**BRETT** When you think about what we've done here, and I really appreciate your perspective on this because sometimes, you know, you're so insular, you're so close and you don't get that perspective, but when you think about the community, I mean, we have you think all the way back to

just the wonderful designers that we've had here at Herman Miller, from Eames and Nelson, this can live on in that legacy. And those are huge names to drop, but the work is really that cool and that good. I'm super excited about it. And I really appreciate your perspective to say, could this New-Midwestern Dutch, I mean, it really is returning the glory to it because it really has been a thing in the past.

**BRYONY** Absolutely. Well, I think we're ending this on a very high note with that. So I'll skip the last two questions that I had. I want to thank you all for your time for being with me today and for sharing such insightful bits of information and especially the personal experience.

**ADAM** Thank you so very much.

**BRETT** Thank you.

**GREGOR** Thank you.

**MIKE** Thank you so much.

**ARMIN** As it turns out, "New Midwestern Dutch" is the style we didn't know we needed or wanted but this fruitful collaboration between client and design firm showed us it is. It was also great to hear how well Design Bridge embraced New Holland's feedback, who basically asked them to Frankenstein two design options into one — which is most designers' worst case scenario — and how they acknowledged that that combination is what made the project so special. Without a doubt this was all possible thanks to both parties having a Gezellig of a time working together.

Today, thanks for listening. Until next time, we'll be here, we hope you'll be there.