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EXPORTING A BRAND:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FRENCH MODEL BRAND
ELLE DECORATION WITH THE AMERICAN EDITION *ELLE DECOR*

By Kate Hayes

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2016

Approved by

Advisor: Dr. Samir Husni

Reader: Assistant Professor Darren Sanefski

Reader: Assistant Dean Charles D. Mitchell

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“Like fashion, decoration is an expression of femininity and lifestyle
which combines dreams with accessibility.”

– Jean Demachy

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ABSTRACT

Exporting A Brand: A Comparative Analysis of the French Model Brand, *ELLE Decoration*, with the American Edition, *ELLE DECOR*
(under the direction of Samir Husni)

This thesis explores the history and editorial design of the French and American publications within the ELLE Déco brand network. The ELLE Déco network of interior design magazines is the only truly global brand of the shelter category with 25 editions published in 28 countries. By studying corresponding issues of the original French edition, *ELLE Decoration*, and American, *ELLE DECOR*, I have determined the different personalities of each publication, as well as what elements are used in the cover and editorial design of each. In doing so, I uncovered what consistencies of both content and design have led to success for each publication to both survive and thrive in each of their markets. In studying and uncovering the patterns within the design and layout, I found how each magazine produces successful content that is both cohesive enough to fit under the same brand name, but tailored for the different audiences served.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the thesis, much magazine terminology is used. Here is a guide for readers unfamiliar as to what any words mean:

The magazine's **cover** is the front outside page. The **logotype** or **logo** is the graphic treatment of text, or a combination of text and graphics, that identifies the magazine brand. The **layout** is the compilation of text and graphics on a page. **Art direction** is a term used to describe the process of conceiving and directing the creation of art, such as photos or illustration, for a magazine story or other editorial component. A **font** is a complete typeface design in any or all point sizes. **Serifs** are the small strokes at the end of the main strokes of letterforms. A typeface that is **sans serif** has none, a typeface that is serif quite obviously does. **Weight** refers to the thickness of a line or typeface. A **color palette** is a selection of complementary colors chosen for a design. The **copy** is the text portion of the printed material. A **facing page** is a page that forms a spread; therefore, a **spread** is two facing pages of a publication. **Flush right** describes lines of type that are aligned along the right margin of a page, leaving the left edge ragged. The **masthead** is the section of a newspaper or magazine that lists the publication's staff, ownership, and subscription details.

A HISTORY OF THE BRAND

chapter one

ELLE Decoration has established itself as the international fashion magazine for the home in being the only truly global brand of the home and interiors magazine sector. The publication's mission statement says that it "is where style and design meet. It is the interiors destination for the fashion-forward, the guide to luxe living for those for whom design is not an option—it's essential".¹ Readers are encouraged to express themselves through their surroundings as the pages of the magazine deliver both inspirational and practical ideas. The publication combines aspiration with the achievable by bringing advice from industry veterans, featuring provocative new designers, and reflecting the evolutions of the design world.

Now publishing 25 editions in 28 countries, ELLE Déco is the world's largest interior design magazine network. The network considers the French publication, *ELLE Decoration*, its reference point and source for inspiration toward all other international editions that captivate its 9.2 million readers.² *ELLE Decoration* is the leading upscale decoration title in both readership and circulation in France and is read by the wealthiest women in France.³ The still flourishing, pioneer edition of this predominant network is considered the benchmark for all upscale interior design magazines in France. However, *ELLE Decoration* and other derivate brands are products of the original magazine, *ELLE*, the leading reference for the entire brand.

¹ELLE DECOR. *ELLE DECOR Media Kit*. New York, NY: Hearst Corporation, 2016. Digital.

²ELLE DECOR, *ELLE Decoration Network*

³Burda Community Network. *ELLE Decoration France – The Benchmark for Upscale Interior Design Magazines in France*. Germany: Marken, 2012. Web.

The ELLE brand was born in 1945 with *ELLE* magazine, a weekly women's fashion magazine that emphasized freedom, feminist demands, and the consumer society. The visionary and founder of the publication was Hélène Gordon-Lazareff, a woman of Russian origin who fled to France during the Bolshevik Revolution.⁴ In 1938, Hélène married her boss, Pierre Lazareff, the owner of *France-Soir*, a leading French daily newspaper she had written for.⁵ The two fled from Paris to New York upon the outbreak of the Second World War, and Hélène quickly thrived within New York journalist circles. Her perfect English allowed her to write for fashion sections of *Harper's Bazaar* and later become the editor of the women's page of *New York Times Magazine*. Soon after the liberation of Paris in 1944, the couple returned, and Hélène was able to use her experience acquired from the American magazine industry to publish the first issue of *ELLE* within a year.⁶

Hélène's post-World War II magazine held its own qualities that were independent from the long-established *Vogue* and the pre-war *Marie Claire*. *ELLE* was an adaptation of newspapers and held more in-depth news content than other similar publications of the time. Before she left New York, Hélène arranged American photographers to shoot for *ELLE*'s first fifteen covers, knowing that color film wasn't available in Europe. This distinguishing factor became the trademark of the magazine: color photography and models in bright outfits with

⁴ Grandpierre, Karine. "How ELLE Magazine Conquered the World." *Institut National De L'Audiovisuel*. INA Global, 7 Feb. 2013. Web.

⁵ Delassein, Sophie. "Pierre et Hélène Lazareff, couple hors normes!" *France Soir*. 3 December. 2010. Web.

⁶ Weiner, Susan. *Enfants Terribles: Youth and Femininity in the Mass Media in France, 1945-1968*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 21-24. Print.

vivid accessories.⁷ The issue stood out from other French magazines and had a more luxurious feel: it was the first to use color photography and had lightened text and images, establishing a relationship between articles and images.⁸ Hélène’s international persona and year spent away from the war allowed her to deliver content that inspired women in its aftermath with the key editorial approach “to open women’s appetites”.⁹ Even though French women were still wearing wooden soles and using *tickets de rationnement*, later editor of *ELLE*, Françoise Giroud believes that very early on the magazine echoed what became the “*société de consommation*” (or the consumer society).¹⁰



Figure 1
Launch cover of *ELLE* in 1945

⁷ Heller, Steven and Ballance, Georgette. *Graphic Design History*. New York, NY: Allworth Press, 2001. 189-193. Print.

⁸ Grandpierre, Karine.

⁹ Weiner, Susan.

¹⁰ Giroud, Françoise. *Profession Journaliste*. Paris, France: Hachette Littératures, 2001. 49-59. Print.

Peter Knapp, a Swiss artist and photographer, designed the first issue of *ELLE*. The design set the “deliberately modern graphic signature” that the magazine still carries today. Clean, sans-serif typography, cheerful color photography, and bright white paper were distinguishing factors that separated *ELLE* from the rest of the women’s magazines of the time. Gordon-Lazareff was said to have “hated everything trivial, cute and fussy—everything *kiki, coco, cucu* as she used to say in slang”. The rules of design she followed have held true; namely: never show a photograph without a caption; never start a story at the bottom of a page; never interfere with the readability of the text; and always use boldface for headlines and subheads.¹¹

Lazareff’s concept was certainly successful in promoting women to be key players in society’s evolution. According to sociologist Edgar Morin, *ELLE* played a role in the immediate post-war era in being a “découvreur de confort”: a discoverer of comfort.¹² The weekly publication motivated women’s investment in major issues. Additionally, this was the first fashion magazine to develop the linkage between high fashion and the street. The magazine began to achieve international fame in the 1950s due to the influence of its founder and the ways in which the publication itself began to influence fashion. It is said that “in the history of magazines, few founding editors have had such a lasting influence on their publication”.¹³

¹¹ Heller, Steven and Ballance, Georgette.

¹² Weiner, Susan.

¹³ Heller, Steven and Ballance, Georgette.

Today, *ELLE* is a weekly magazine in France. It is the most prestigious and influential of the women's magazines, covering women's issues and fashion. It is the leader among women's fashion magazines with 740,000 circulation.¹⁴

The expansion of women's magazines overseas was initiated in America, the first being *Vogue* publishing a UK edition in 1916 followed by a French in 1921. Competitors *Harper's Bazaar* and *Cosmopolitan* later followed this trend and published English editions in 1929 and 1972, respectively. However, *ELLE* remained a strictly French magazine until 1985. A major media-conglomerate, the Lagardère group, bought the then struggling publication in 1981 and began to look at international expansion. Four years later, the Lagardère group took the brand overseas to publish *ELLE USA* and *ELLE UK* localized English-language editions. Eventually, the magazine brought out forty-six editions distributed across the world.¹⁵ Residing editor-in-chief, Robbie Myers, of the American edition says, "There's probably not a language on earth we don't speak."¹⁶

During the 1980s, French press companies were forced to globalize brands and advertisers due to technical changes and the rising phenomena. The increasing deregulation of the global system caused an increase in international trade and foreshadowed the globalization of trade. Additionally, local markets were becoming increasingly saturated and drove the search

¹⁴ Tebbel, John. "Print Media – Newspapers, Magazines." *Discover France*. 2003. Web.

¹⁵ Grandpierre, Karine.

¹⁶ ELLE DECOR.

for opportunities internationally. Eventually, the French were no longer the sole fashion creators with rising competition in the United States, Italy, and England.¹⁷

To expand upon its share of women's magazine readers, the Lagardère group launched sub-brands in other sectors related to fashion, namely *ELLE Decoration* France in 1987. The derivative brand immediately succeeded within the French market and became the national referent in interior design magazines that it still is today. Lagardère published *ELLE DECOR*, the US edition, two years later in 1989 as a joint venture with Hachette Filipacchi. In 2011, Hearst Corporation bought Lagardère SCA's international magazine portfolio for \$900 million. The deal made Hearst the largest magazine publisher in the world by number of editions and the second-largest US publisher by circulation, following Time Inc.¹⁸

Under the license deal, Hearst holds publishing rights to 15 editions of *ELLE* and 10 editions of *ELLE Déco*. Lagardère still holds the trademark to *ELLE* globally and, therefore, profits from commercial use of the brand, as well as maintains control of the layout and advertising distribution. Lagardère's decision to make the license sell to 14 different countries came as a result of the company's international magazine business lacking the scale to bring in profits over the long run.¹⁹

¹⁷ ELLE DECOR.

¹⁸ Adams, Russell and Colchester, Max. "Hearst Buys Lagardère Magazines." *The Wall Street Journal*. 1 Feb. 2011. Web.

¹⁹ Adams, Russell and Colchester, Max.

Judging by the continued strength of the ELLE Deco network, the former owner will continue to profit from the sales made on its global scale. All 25 editions are local magazines produced by dedicated editorial teams who showcase the work of designers all over the world. Though editions are tailored and adjusted to public tastes, the magazine operates through the exchanging of images and ideas to develop content composed of the grandest interiors on the globe.²⁰ The power and history of the ELLE network establishes it as the only global interiors magazine with a fashion heritage and a truly international perspective.²¹

The benchmark magazine of the Deco network was launched in 1987 by Jean Demachy. Just as Gordon-Lazareff's *ELLE* had become the reference in the fashion sector, such was Demachy's goal in establishing *Elle Decoration* within the interior area. The hope was to create "a magazine for those who value decoration and a defined way of living" by keeping in touch with the latest trends and predicting those in the near future. Demachy described the relationship between fashion and decoration in stating that, "Like fashion, decoration is an expression of femininity and lifestyle, which combine dreams with accessibility".²²

Demachy felt that the truly privileged lived in homes that were created with good taste, akin to museums of personal style. Over time, he made *Elle Decoration* the design bible of French society by creating pages not about excess, but about access to every object of desire imaginable. Building on the values of femininity, luxury and inspiration, the *ELLE Decoration*

²⁰ Burda Community Network. *ELLE Decoration France – The Benchmark for Upscale Interior Design Magazines in France*. Germany: Marken, 2012. Web.

²¹ ELLE DECOR.

²² ELLE Decoration Network. *ELLE Decoration South Africa*. YouTube, 12 Feb. 2015.

brand soon influenced the way people saw space and daily living and has redefined the definition of the good life. Today, the title is the best-selling luxury shelter magazine in the world.²³

The reigning Editor-in-Chief of *ELLE Decoration* France is Sylvie de Chirée. After years of work in fashion magazines, Chirée was appointed to head the publication in 2007.²⁴ She says, “For me and us in France, the *ELLE Decoration* brand means international, feminine, fashion, modernity, design, style, but also luxury and accessibility”.²⁵

In America, the helm of *ELLE DECOR* USA was handed off to Michael Boodro in 2010. Boodro’s experience as editor-in-chief of *Martha Stewart Living* and his past contributions to *ELLE DECOR*, *Vogue*, *Culture + Travel*, and *The New York Times Magazine* made him the man for the job.²⁶ At the time of Boodro’s coronation, the chief brand officer of *ELLE DECOR* believed that Boodro would “elevate” what the magazine was currently producing and surviving with, amidst the home decoration category’s recent implosion: “It’s basically like we have this wonderful entrée—all we need to do is add a little salt and pepper and some spices”.²⁷

²³ Phil Star Global. “Elle Decoration Now in the Philippines.” *The Phillipine Star*. 22 Sep. 2012.

²⁴ ELLE Decoration Network.

²⁵ ELLE Decoration Network.

²⁶ Murg, Stephanie. “Michael Boodro Named Editor-in-Chief at Elle Decor.” *Fishbowl NY*: AdAge, 25 Aug. 2010. Web.

²⁷ Axelrod, Nick. “Elle Decor: If It Ain’t Broke...” *Women’s Wear Daily*. 24 Aug. 2010. Web.

The spices seem to have been a successful ingredient. With a frequency of 10 issues per year, *ELLE DECOR* has a total paid and verified circulation of 553,856, which is 3,856 above the rate base. An inclination of the publication's content quality is evident in one in five subscribers being Design Professionals, as discovered in a study made by the company in September of 2015. Furthermore, 80% of Design Professionals are highly satisfied with the content and homes featured in the magazine, and four out of five engage with the *ELLE DECOR* website and social media.²⁸

ELLE DECOR's current competitors within the luxury shelter category are *Architectural Digest* and *LUXE*. Lesser competitors are *House Beautiful* and *Veranda*, which are under Hearst's Design Group category, delivering different content but all within the shelter category. According to the magazine's 2016 IPSOS Reader Profile report, out of a total audience of 595,000, 72% of *ELLE DECOR* readership is comprised of women, with 79% ages 35 and above. Median age of readership is 50. This is an educated, home-owning audience with 96% having attended college and 92% owning their own home. The median value of these homes is \$451,138 with 23% valued over \$750,000 and 13% over \$1,000,000.²⁹

Through my research, I investigated how the graphic designers behind this renowned network successfully construct and arrange the content in an impactful way to keep subscription and newsstand sales at the top of the category. My research gravitated around four editions of both French and American publications to study the similarities and differences

²⁸ ELLE DECOR.

²⁹ ELLE DECOR.

between the benchmark edition and the American adaptation. These issues were not necessarily a random sampling, but what was available to accomplish the task and focus on the fundamental design aspects of each publication over the course of the last two years. I deciphered what trends overlapped, what graphics were consistent, and, therefore, uncovered how linked or unlinked the personalities of the two editions are in each country.

COVER DESIGN OF THE PUBLICATIONS
chapter two

The current logos of both *ELLE DECOR* and *ELLE Decoration* feature the same logotype of the original *ELLE* women's fashion magazine. This iconic brand name is written in all caps in a condensed, serif font. In the US version, it reads vertically to the left side of the word 'decor' but is spaced out above the word 'decoration' in the French version, putting a different emphasis on the words of the founding brand and the category entailed in each. Both 'decor' and 'decoration' are shown in simple sans serif fonts, but the category heading of the US version is much larger and wider than that of the French. The contrast of this construction is likely due to the greater knowledge of the shelter magazine's heritage in France and the understanding of its relationship to the founding fashion publication, *ELLE*.



Figure 2



Figure 3

This rather similar arrangement of typefaces works because serif and sans serif pairings often do when executed correctly. The amount of tracking and the varying size of the words create readability. Additionally, the unchanged composition of the *ELLE* logotype evokes the mind to associate it with being classic, elegant, formal, and established, as the brand itself is.³⁰ Having lasted 71 years, the original logo concept has obviously succeeded.³¹ Contrastingly, sans serif fonts give the aura of modernity, directness, friendliness, and cleanliness.³² This helps to deliver the mission and criteria of the magazine, as being an inspirational threshold to readers looking for new, fresh ideas.

The cover photos of both magazines are always wide shots of an interior room in which walls, floors, and ceilings are in view. Some form of seating— a chair, a sofa, a barstool—is always in view. While fabrics, colors, or objects may be detailed or loud, the styling is simple to let the projects speak for themselves. Doors, windows, and curtains are photographed open to allow for natural lighting and create welcoming and open personas. According to acclaimed interior photographer Matthew Millman, a crisp space allows the viewer to imagine themselves inside of the room and how they would feel if they were there. The images should try to communicate as much of a story as possible, while still allowing the reader to build their own story about the space.³³

³⁰ Cousins, Carrie. “Serif vs. Sans Serif Fonts: Is One Really Better Than the Other?” *Design Shack*. 28 Oct. 2013. Web.

³¹ Grandpierre, Karine.

³² Cousins, Carrie.

³³ Brunner, Vanessa. “4 Professional Photographers Share Tips for Making Home Interiors Shine.” *Houzz*, 1 June. 2012. Web.

The text of each edition's headlines usually spans across the bottom of the cover page. In the US version, there is almost always a headline in the top left corner of the image, directly under the logo. Husni, Mr. MagTM, refers to this particular spot on the cover as the 'prime real estate' of headline placement.³⁴ It is typically the spot where the most important or attention getting content is placed in the cover design of most magazines. This is because when magazines are sold from newsstands, this headline is most likely to be seen, even if other publications are stacked to the left of it or below it. The French edition practices more variability in its headline type placement and doesn't as often utilize this prime real estate in headline placement. This is an interesting fact because magazine sales in France are more largely based on newsstand sales, rather than subscriptions. It is likely that the covers of the French version have to have a more interesting composition to compete with the other publications they are sold on the stands with.

The typefaces used on the US edition's cover are limited to two: a sans serif and serif. The serif text is essentially always in italics on these covers, or there is some form of it somewhere on the page. The typeface is closely related to those of 'Bodoni' and 'Didot'. When the sans serif text is used, it is always in all caps, but can vary in italics or regular fonts. This typeface is very similar to 'Helvetica' or 'Arial'. The colors of the text are pulled from the images of the interior design and paired either with black or white. Like most American publications, the interior editorial copy of *ELLE DECOR* is in the same serif as the cover. The department heads follow this trend, while page titles and subheads are mostly in the sans serif style.

³⁴ Husni, Samir. Lecture.

The French cover headlines are never italicized but, rather, are in an all caps, sans serif font the majority of the time, with varying weight of thin to heavy. This typeface is closely related to 'Futura'. Otherwise, there may be some headlines in a lower or sentence case heavy weight "storybook-like" serif font. The color of the text is pulled from the image and most often paired with white, sometimes black. The interior editorial copy of *ELLE Decoration* is completely in sans serif, which is the norm for European publications and the majority of the continent's typography.³⁵



Figure 4
ELLE DECOR cover: April 2014



Figure 5
ELLE Decoration cover: April 2014

³⁵ Sanefski, Darren. Lecture.



Figure 6
 ELLE DECOR cover: May 2014



Figure 7
 ELLE Decoration cover: May 2014



Figure 8
 ELLE DECOR cover: June 2015



Figure 9
 ELLE Decoration cover: June 2015



Figure 10
ELLE DECOR cover: July/August 2015



Figure 11
ELLE Decoration cover: July/August 2015

Despite the content of the images being generally similar, these two different editions of the ELLE Dèco network are each able to communicate different auras. The use of type in the French magazines gives the covers a more modern, sleek feel than the US magazines. The US covers exude a slightly more sophisticated and traditional aura through the use of typefaces.

LAYOUT OF THE PUBLICATIONS

chapter three

The content of both the American and English publications are divided into similar sections. The American magazine is categorized only by departments and features, and each feature sections are titled as 'Style'. In the French magazine, departments are categorized as 'News'; Features are 'Style'; and the back of the book content is 'Idées' (ideas). The 'Style' sections are separated from the rest of the content with a full opening page that includes the publication logo, month and year of the edition. This introduces the reader to the content in which the hearts of each publication lie and showcase interior design inspiration from around the globe.

While these similarities exist, there are some significant differences in the two versions. For one, the French magazine does not issue a letter from the editor, something that is always accounted for in American magazines, including *ELLE DECOR*. The 'Idées' section of the French magazine offers DIYs and how-to's, whereas the American has no 'crafty' instructional content. It does, however, have a cooking department titled 'Daniel's Dish' which is produced by world-renowned chef Daniel Boulud. The department showcases direction for sophisticated entertaining with recipes for Boulud's seasonal dishes and suggestions of complimentary wine pairings. Contrastingly, the French editions do not highlight food, but do showcase many restaurants.

Departments

Each issue of *ELLE DECOR* brings the following department titles: 'Editor's Page', 'Scene + Heard', 'Style Sheet', 'What's Hot', 'What's Next', 'Trend Alert', 'Great Ideas', 'Shortlist', 'Art Show', 'Unconventional Wisdom', 'In the Showrooms', 'Truth in Decorating', 'Appraisal', 'Daniel's Dish', and 'Etcetera'. *ELLE Decoration* brings a variety of department titles, the most recurring one's being: 'Héros du Design', 'Plein Cadre', 'Rèperage', 'Mode d'Emploi', 'Shopping Lists', and 'Rendez-vous Chez'. All of these will be discussed.

The art direction behind the two different publication's Table of Contents design is very different. *ELLE Decoration*'s contents are always displayed on two pages. The 'News' departments are on the first, the 'Style' and 'Idees' content are on the second. Each page states the number of the issue and the month and year. The content is all displayed in one flush right column with snippets of images from the issue arranged to the left. Each page is on the right side of the spread with an ad on the right. Images of the print cover of the issue and the iPad edition are repeated on the 'News' content page.



Figure 12
ELLE Decoration April 2014
 Page 9 - Contents



Figure 13
ELLE Decoration April 2014
 Page 11 - Contents

ELLE DECOR's contents span across four pages, or across three if the issue is smaller, like July-August. All of the pages are on the left side of the spread. The copy is arranged into two columns and contains more description of each story than is given in *Decoration*. Less images are displayed on each page than those of *Decoration*. On the first page, the image that is on the cover is repeated in a smaller size, with the volume number and month and year displayed under the logo. To its right, a photograph of a room sits in the top right corner and covers over ¼ of the page. The bottom left corner holds a cutout photograph of an object and sits on white space.

The next page of contents contains an image that spans over half of the page. A smaller image of some other object again sits on white space in either the top right or bottom left corner. On this page, the departments are listed in continuation from the first page, and

continue on to those in the back of the book. Unlike *ELLE Decoration*, the departments are listed all together before the features, so the contents are not listed in numerical order of appearance.

The last two pages of the contents are separated from the first by an advertisement of facing pages. The third page showcases a photo in the top right corner that covers a little over one fourth of the page. White space separates it from the page's edge and two columns of content are lined up underneath it. To the left is a sidebar titled 'What's New at ELLE DECOR Online' with selected articles from the publication's corresponding webpage. The last page is arranged similarly with two photographs pulled from the features section, one large and one small, arranged to the right. On the left is a sidebar describing the Digimar Discover app. This app allows readers to use their mobile devices to scan the pages of the issue with a mobile camera to gain access to additional content.



Figure 14
ELLE DECOR April 2014
 Page 18 – Contents



Figure 15
ELLE DECOR April 2014
 Page 20 - Contents



Figure 16
 ELLE DECOR April 2014
 Page 24 – Contents



Figure 17
 ELLE DECOR April 2014
 Page 26 - Contents

In *ELLE Decoration*, the front of the book begins with ELLE Déco News. This opening section consists of new material and trends in the world of design: whether it be furniture, lighting, wallpaper, paint, dishware, appliances, or any of the like. The caption under the News title reads ‘*design, déco, boutiques, expos...tous nos coups de cœur*’ which means “design, decoration, shopping, exhibitions ... all our heart strokes”. The images are generally arranged in different sizes in an overlapping nature atop a white background. This design is consistent throughout the issues and ranges from a span of 12 – 15 pages. This is where the publication can showcase the evolutions in the design world. Similarly, *ELLE DECOR*’s ‘What’s Hot’ and ‘Trend Alert’ sections do the same, but divide content into two separate departments.

‘Mode d’Emploi’ is *manual* in French. This department showcases seasonal styling tips to update the home. Examples from the magazines studied include: ‘*Put your home on vacation*’, ‘*How to play the eccentricity*’, and ‘*Cultivate the country spirit*’. Unlike the name, the department

does not read like a manual with play-by-play instructions, but rather shows photos of spaces, gives a few tips on why the look works, and offers the sources used in the space.

The ‘Shopping List’ department of *ELLE Decoration* showcases various, trending pieces centered around a central theme and cites the sources to purchase them. The pieces range from being funky and eccentric to more traditional, but all are beautifully and articulately designed. Examples of the content in this department are outdoor furniture, runners, or different pieces of a certain color or theme. The design of the Shopping List section is not the same in each issue. The composition is generally a white background with the objects featured and arranged around the white space. However, the design carries throughout the multiple pages that the department runs. Examples of two ‘Shopping List’ layouts from different issues are shown below.



Figure 18
ELLE Decoration Avril 2014
Page 94 – Shopping List



Figure 19
ELLE Decoration Avril 2014
Page 90 – Shopping List

The department 'Plein Cadre' features profiles on today's top interior designers and their revolutionary designs. Similarly, 'Héros du Design' showcases the work of designers who have achieved high status and recognition through their work and have highly influenced the design world. These two departments shine a light on up and coming designers and those who have already made an impression on design today.

The 'Rèperage' department of *ELLE Decoration* France is perhaps the heart of the front of the book content. The title translates to mean '*spotting*' and is descriptive of the content showcased: beautifully designed spots to visit around the globe. Ranging from restaurants, to hotels, to clubs, the places showcased in the magazines under study were in New York, London, the Maldives, and Miami. A short paragraph or two are written about each spot, the rest of the content being full-page photographs.

The department titled 'Rendez-vous Chez' translates to mean '*a meeting at the home of*'. This section shows the personal homes and workplaces of top designers, artists, or architects. It offers a glimpse into their everyday lives and what inspires their work.

Like the French version, issues of *ELLE DECOR* rearrange the order and usage of departments from month to month, but there are a few that are present in the majority of issues. Similar to the 'News' portion of *ELLE Decoration*, the front of the book of *ELLE DECOR* serves as an inside scoop for finding all the news within the world of design. The departments open with a section titled 'What's Hot' and subheading: 'dispatches from the world of design'. The season's best furniture, lighting, and accessories that are new to designer's

collections are showcased and described over the course of three pages of editorial, less than that of the French version. The proceeding department is called ‘What’s Next’, an inside scoop on gallery exhibitions; book releases; hotel, restaurant, or store openings around the globe that have made an impression in the world of design.

Next comes the one-page department called ‘Trend Alert’. This department is most unique from the ‘News’ section of *ELLE Decoration* in that it showcases fashions’ influence on design through furnishings. On this page watches, wallpaper, dresses, or armoires can be found, all showcasing a particular trending pattern or color. This design of this layout is similar to those of *ELLE Decoration* News and Shopping Lists.



Figure 20
ELLE DECOR – April 2015
 Page 64 – Trend Alert



Figure 21
ELLE DECOR – May 2014
 Page 78 – Trend Alert

‘Talent’ is the next department, showcasing the stylish and creative people of today’s world of design. Usually featuring two designers, but sometimes three, the talent reported ranges from Alabama to Finland. A short article offers readers insight to the artist’s process and product line, and a clean layout with multiple pictures help to allow the designs to speak for themselves from the page.

Another unique quality of the *ELLE DECOR* departments is the 'Unconventional' Wisdom section. The one-page attribute brings personal advice from veterans of the industry. The wisdom shared is often surprising coming from legendary leaders and their ideas are highly inspirational. 'Appraisal' is a somewhat similar, more in-depth instructional department. 'Appraisal' brings a report on the iconic pieces from the talents who shaped design throughout the 20th century. Top dealers offer advice on what you should know about their work, as well as where and how you can purchase it.

Perhaps *ELLE DECOR*'s strongest department is 'Truth In Decorating'. Similar to *Decoration*'s 'Shopping List', this section is the magazine's three-page comprehensive shopping guide to the "top 10" home furnishings of a certain sector. Two examples from the issues studied are "The Top 10 Rattan Pieces" and "The Top 10 Slipper Chairs". Also offered in 'Truth In Decorating' is authoritative commentary from leading designers. Two designers give ideas on where and how to style the different pieces that are highlighted.

The last page of the magazine is titled 'Etcetera'. In a simple grid format, this department offers twelve of the best choices for current trending objects. The images of the products are arranged on a white background and are positioned at the same angle. Materials covered range from wall sconces to wastebaskets, coming at all different prices.

Features

ELLE DECOR only uses section dividers for the Style features section, whereas *ELLE Decoration* uses three to divide its 'News', 'Style', and 'Idées' content. The same font, a clean serif style, is used in each but in different sizes. The text appears in the same spot on the page each time. Marginal white space is utilized in each: top and bottom of the page in the US version and left, right and top in the French. As in most magazines, a small masthead

reappears here. The *ELLE Decoration* divider offers a small introductory paragraph of copy, *ELLE DECOR* is simply photography and logo based. Shown below are the ‘Style’ dividers from each edition studied.

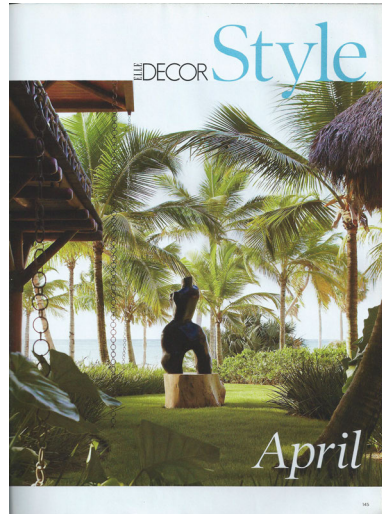


Figure 22
ELLE DECOR – April 2014
Style



Figure 23
ELLE Decoration – April 2014
Style



Figure 24
ELLE DECOR – May 2014
Style



Figure 25
ELLE Decoration – Mai 2014
Style



Figure 26
ELLE DECOR – June 2015
 Style



Figure 27
ELLE Decoration – June 2015
 Style



Figure 28
ELLE DECOR – July/August 2015
 Style



Figure 29
ELLE Decoration – July/August 2015
 Style

The features of each magazine are where many of their differences lie. Following the ‘Style’ section divider pages, *ELLE DECOR* showcases between four to six homes each issue. The layout designs of these feature spreads follow a rather strict pattern. At least one feature in each issue opens with full-page photographs of either the interior or exterior of the home,

covering the span of the whole spread. Text with the title of the section, a description of the article, and the byline appear on this first page on top of the imagery.

Another layout used in each issue is the image with a margin of white space surrounding it. Here the title, description, and byline are positioned in the bottom corner of the page. A variation of this same layout style is the image bleeding off on all edges but the right, where the text is placed in the bottom corner. A few features will open with a spread of two photographs, in which the article begins on the page with the smaller images. Following the opening pages, the rest of the spreads within each feature are arranged in similar layout designs. Usually, about ¼ of on page holds copy, while the rest holds an arrangement of images. Here, photographs are never overlapping or at an angle. There is a slight bit of white space that separates each, but the images align with one another and the text. This creates a clean composition in which the interior design speaks for itself and can easily be communicated to the reader from the page.

ELLE Decoration practices more liberty in the layout design of the ‘Style’ sections from issue to issue. Each issue has a totally different layout style, but it is repeated and used in each of the features. *ELLE Decoration* also often has a ‘Shopping’ spread that follows a particular feature, showcasing where to find similar pieces that reflect the style embodied in each home.

The typefaces used in the headlines ‘Style’ section of *ELLE Decoration* are used in each of the edition’s features, but vary from issue to issue. This presents somewhat of a surprise factor, in that no issue is the same. It also creates unity and makes the ‘Style’ section read more

as a coffee table book than a magazine. While *ELLE DECOR* includes an article with each of its features, the French publication only includes one to two paragraphs of copy with each and is largely photography based. The copy offers a brief biography behind the homeowner or designer and the process of the design. While there are captions describing how the composition of the room is successful, the features are more imagery based than those of the US version. *ELLE DECOR* does not include pages and pages of article copy, but definitely has more in comparison to *Decoration*.

PERSONALITIES OF THE PUBLICATIONS

chapter four

The two publications examined, *ELLE DECOR* and *ELLE Decoration*, share the common mission of the ELLE Déco brand to inspire and influence through styling of the home by delivering unique, international content. They each showcase the work of artists and innovators from across the globe, as well as locally. However, each exudes a persona that is its own. The four months researched of corresponding American and French editions proved that while the overriding theme of the brand as a whole was evident and sufficiently delivered, each publication held personal attributes.

The brand attributes of the ELLE Déco network were evident in each edition. Through research of these two segments of the brand, the overlapping personas of **luxury**, **culture**, **accessibility**, **style**, and **femininity** are highlighted in each publication, holding true to the brand's global concept. The cover and layout design of the French and American editions successful deliver these characteristics, but hold their own slightly different styles and characteristics simultaneously.

ELLE Decoration's sleek design holds emphasized characteristics of modernity and originality. The combination of sans serif fonts and the use of white space within the editorial pages create a sleek presence that highlights the design of the furniture and pieces. The different layout design of the features from issue to issue creates an aspect of surprise and uniqueness. Additionally, the centralized theme of each issue— such as color, bohemian, or

vacation—create the feeling that each issue is like a creative album. The publication delivers more international content than the American version and is more photography based.

Because each issue of *ELLE DECOR* is not as centrally based on a singular theme as *Decoration*, one could say that it delivers a wider array of inspiration on the pages of each issue. While the publication uses template designed layouts for the features, the large number of features in each issue, their unique content, and the pairing of images with the layouts are successful and would not be noticeable to a reader not studying these details. *ELLE DECOR* places more emphasis on the exterior of homes by showcasing photos of the architecture and landscaping of featured homes more often than *ELLE Decoration*. The magazine does exude a more luxurious, wealthy persona than many other American shelter publications. The combined use of serif typefaces, vibrant photography, and expensive content create a more aspirational publication as opposed to attainable.

In conclusion, each publication has combined cohesive content and graphic design to solidify its niche position within the market. *ELLE Decoration* and *ELLE DECOR* have spread Gordon-Lazareff and Demachy's vision of inspiration to live a life surrounded by beauty to the masses in both France and America. Each is an individual and important publication that contributes to the global success of the ELLE Dèco brand.

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