



30 AND COUNTING

One milestone anniversary is a tribute to inside-out thinking.

As Yafa celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, Italian penmaker Delta celebrates its 25th anniversary. Delta has been distributed in the US by Yafa for more than twelve years now. Yair Greenberg says, "It has been an incredible partnership on both a personal and a professional level." A pen (shown opposite) created in honor of the event features a precious metal overlay and gemstone embellishments. There are 250 pieces in sterling silver, 25 pieces in yellow gold with sapphires, 25 pieces in rose gold with diamonds and 25 pieces in white gold with black diamonds. For more, telephone 800.923.2736 or visit yafa.com.

at left—Monteverde's painted pen with reverse painting applied inside the transparent barrel.

ANY BUSINESS THAT SUCCEEDS over the long term is bound to experience numerous ups and downs along the way. Yair Greenberg, who founded his company, Yafa, 30 years ago has seen his share but has always come through them with aplomb and enthusiasm. This year, the company he built reaches a milestone anniversary—30 years. And Greenberg has much to celebrate.

Based in Southern California, Yafa has grown to operate on a global scale with agents in 20 countries and to comprise numerous manufacturing and distribution businesses. It manufactures Yafa and Monteverde brand pens and distributes the Delta and Aldo Domani pen brands as well as Schmidt and Hauser refills. There is also a profitable promotional products business. And Yafa is coming off a banner year. In 2007, the

Monteverde Mega, an oversized rollerball that fills like a fountain pen, directly from an ink bottle, became a bestselling product. As Greenberg puts it, "The Mega pen has been a mega-success." A similarly large Monteverde fountain pen decorated on the inside of its transparent acrylic barrel with various hand-painted designs has also found an enthusiastic audience. In 2008, Monteverde will add a 14 karat gold nib—the brand's first gold nib offering—to this painted pen.

Also this year, Yafa introduces its comprehensive catalog of ballpoint and rollerball refills to retailers. The catalog is the latest development in the company's refill manufacturing and distribution business, which has been moving from research and planning toward implementation over the past couple of years.



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Here, Greenberg's ambition is to provide any color refill for any pen by any maker. "It used to be that refills came in black, blue, red and green," says Greenberg. Yafa's new catalog presents at least eight and as many as thirteen colors in each mode—colors such as turquoise, brick, purple and hot pink, which have not been seen before in roller-ball or ballpoint refills, in addition to the standard blue and black.

The ability to fit a refill to any pen is one that has been demonstrated by Yafa staffers who have fitted more than 2,000 refills for walk-up customers in promotional giveaways around the country over the past year.

Asked about the difference between Yafa's new refill business and others', Greenberg answers in one word, "marketing." He equates the marketing of ink

refills to the marketing of toothpicks. "No one has taken it seriously," he says. But where others saw no real opportunity, Greenberg saw unlimited potential.

There is no doubt that Greenberg's optimism and creative thinking have helped him to reach this anniversary. His approach can be summed up in a single phrase, what Greenberg calls "creating new ideas from the inside out." He explains, "We found out that through innovations, our business can continue to grow despite the state of the economy, the retail trends and so on. It's working very well for us. When others are complaining, we are experiencing success."

It's a formula that is likely to sustain the business that Greenberg founded in 1978 well into the future.

For more, telephone 800.YAFA.PEN or visit yafa.com.

Reported by Marie A. Picon.

