

The Shape of Conklin

BY NICKY PESSAROFF

New releases celebrating the brand's 125th anniversary share the same DNA as vintage Conklins: elegant design and innovative technology.



Left—Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Futura Limited Edition fountain pen in matte black with 14 karat gold bicolor nib. From top—Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Classic Limited Edition fountain pen in matte black with gold-plated Word Gauge, crescent clip, and blind cap; Conklin Nozac Word Gauge Limited edition rollerball in red with black PVD-coated trim; Conklin 1898 Misto fountain pen in green Misto acrylic and chrome-plated trim including special “1898” cap band and stainless steel nib.

On occasion, a visionary arises with both the technological acumen to imagine new inventions along with the business acumen to create a brand based on the innovation. Roy Conklin was such a man. When he incorporated Conklin Pen Company in Toledo, Ohio, in 1898, the innovator presented to the public a new, self-filling fountain pen, finally ending the conundrum of messy eyedropper-filling. When Conklin introduced the Crescent filling system in 1901, it cemented the reputation of this young company as a major U.S. fountain pen producer, and enlisting writer Mark Twain as an official spokesman two years later showcased the founder's innate marketing sense.

In 2009, a man with a similar confluence of innovation and marketing know-how—Yafa Brands, Inc., CEO Yair Greenberg—realized a professional dream by attaining the rights to Conklin Pen Company. A life-long collector of vintage Conklin writing instruments, Greenberg combined his knowledge of Conklin history, innovative pen production, and incomparable marketing skills to completely revivify the Conklin pen brand.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of Conklin Pen Company, and 2024 will mark 15 years of Conklin pens under the umbrella of Yafa Brands. As one might expect, Greenberg has a slew of anniversary products to celebrate Conklin's 125th birthday; and as one might further expect, these new releases feature major technical and aesthetic innovations that celebrate vintage Conklin manufacturing techniques while updating them for the 21st century.

The Future is Nozac

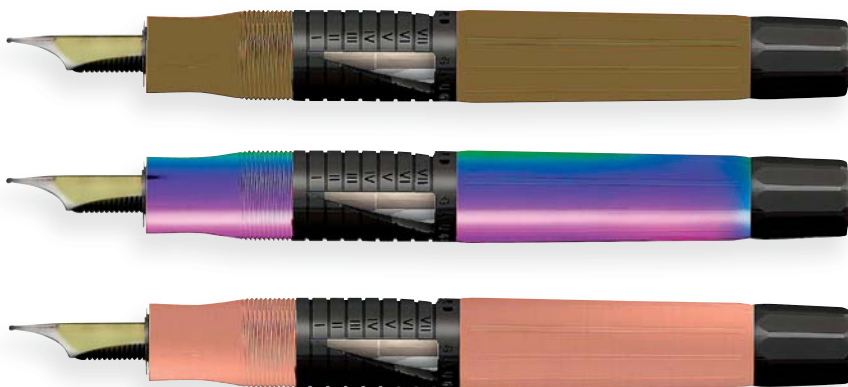
Conklin originally released the Nozac model in 1931, making it the first U.S.-made piston-filling system. The name is a corruption of the phrase “no sac,” alluding to the Nozac's lack of a rubber sac for the ink reservoir. It featured a faceted, polygonal body and an innovative Word Gauge system, which allowed users to measure the amount of ink remaining in the fountain pen.



Left and above—close-up of the matte black 125th Anniversary Nozac Classic Limited Edition cap with Conklin-engraved crescent clip; matte black bodies of the fountain pen and rollerball versions showing the barrel's Word Gauge section and deep engraving.

Below left—125th Anniversary Nozac Classic Limited Edition fountain pens in dark bronze, Shiny Rainbow, and rose gold matched to black PVD-coated trim.

Below right, from left—Nozac Word Gauge limited edition uncapped fountain pen in green, uncapped rollerball in orange, and capped fountain pen in red, all with black PVD-coated trim, and fountain pen in blue with palladium-plated trim.



The new Conklin Nozac Word Gauge Limited Edition and the 125th Anniversary Nozac Classic Limited Edition collections take the modern Nozac model even further in innovation and beauty. Based on Conklin Nozacs from 1933, the bodies feature 10 facets of 3D-printed anodized avionic aluminum, which is resistant to tarnish and damage. To create the pen, Greenberg partnered with longtime friend Dante Del Vecchio, founder of Italy's Visconti and currently head of design for Italy's Pineider, which is distributed in North America by Yafa Brands.

The pen features a Conklin crescent clip with Conklin signature engraving along the side. Just above the section's reliable threading is the redesigned Conklin Word Gauge. Many modern fountain pens feature an ink window so that users can gauge how much writing capacity is available, but the Word Gauge takes things another step: the triangular-shaped ink window runs top to bottom, with the widest part of the triangle toward the top, joined by a recessed section of seven columnar rings, each deeply laser engraved and bearing Roman numerals between I and VII. Each numeral represents the number of words left in the filling system in the thousands: so, a full reservoir allows for 7,000 words, while Roman numeral I indicates that the writer has 1,000 words-worth of ink left.

Furthermore, these Nozac Word Gauge limited edition collections feature the brand-new Fast Filler piston system, which holds up to 1 ml of ink. The only filling system of its kind, the Fast Filler activates and fills with a single turn, making it up to five times faster than other piston-filling systems on the market. The collections also feature a magnetic twist mechanism for reliable closing.

The overall collection has two iterations. The Conklin Nozac Limited Edition Word Gauge is already released and comes in four anodized aluminum color combinations, each limited to 125 fountain pens or rollerballs: green, orange, and red bodies matched to black PVD-coated aluminum trim on the Word Gauge and piston-filling knob, and blue aluminum matched to palladium-plated trim.



Above, from left—Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Futura Limited Edition fountain pen in Shiny Rainbow with matte black Swirl-Twist barrel; matte black PVD-coated rollerball, capped and uncapped; matte black fountain pen matched to rose gold Swirl-Twist barrel; titanium rollerball matched to gold Swirl-Twist barrel, capped and uncapped; titanium rollerball, capped and uncapped, matched to matte chrome Swirl-Twist barrel.
 Below—matte black fountain pen; matte titanium fountain pen, capped, with gold trim; matte titanium rollerball with matte chrome trim and polished chrome Floating Crescent clip; and matte black fountain pen, capped.

The new Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Classic Limited Edition collection writing instruments come in matte black bodies with matte black trim, limited to 55 fountain pens; matte black bodies with rose gold trim, limited to 70 fountain pens; matte rose gold bodies matched to black PVD-coated trim, limited to 40 fountain pens; matte dark bronze matched to black trim, limited to 55 fountain pens; and iridescent Shiny Rainbow bodies matched to palladium-plated trim, limited to 55 fountain pens. Each rollerball version is a limited edition of 15.

Each fountain pen has a JoWo 14 karat gold bicolor nib with a crescent-shaped breather hole and Conklin logo engraving in fine, medium, or Omniflex. The custom wood and leather presentation box has a crescent-shaped top secured by magnets.

Another variation on the theme is the new Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Futura Limited Edition. It also features the new Fast Filler piston-filling system, Word Gauge section, magnetic closure system, and bicolor 14 karat gold Conklin nib in fine, medium, or Omniflex.



The body type is also a 3D-printed design in partnership with Del Vecchio, and it is the body itself that strikes the viewer first. The cap, front section, and blind cap are made of Grade 5 matte titanium, which is also used in luxury watch making and surgical instruments. The barrel is something else. A brass skeletal structure, the barrel design resembles the double helix of DNA, a proprietary design called “Swirl-Twist.”

The cap of the Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Futura Limited Edition features a brand-new spring-loaded “Floating Crescent” clip: an aesthetically-pleasing curve with Conklin signature engraving along the side, composed of two slopes surrounding a crescent moon, reminiscent of the original Conklin Crescent-filler. It comes in the same crescent-shaped wooden presentation box as the Nozac Classic Limited Edition.

The Conklin 125th Anniversary Nozac Futura Limited Edition fountain pens and rollerballs come in colors of fully matte titanium, fully black PVD coating, matte black PVD-coating matched to rose gold trim, matte titanium matched to yellow gold trim, and matte black matched to “Shiny Rainbow” iridescent trim. Each fountain pen is limited to 50 editions, and rollerballs are limited to 10 editions each.

With price points in the low four figures, the Conklin Nozac 125th Anniversary writing instruments represent a new level of luxury for a brand known for its EDC-level pricing, marking also a new level of collectability.

Out of the Misto

Speaking of those EDC-level writing instruments, Greenberg is pleased to simultaneously release a new, regular-edition line of Conklin pens, aptly called the Conklin 1898 collection. A cigar-shaped body with the typical Conklin rocker clip, the Conklin 1898 collection is far more classic in concept while offering a large surface area for extended writing sessions. The 1898 collection showcases bodies of swirling “Misto” resins of uniquely blended colors, meaning no two pens are the same. Those resins are matched to a cap ring with an original Conklin vintage pattern initially used on the 1898 self-filling pens, engraved with the Conklin founding year. The Conklin 1898 Misto writing instruments in purple and orange feature rose gold trims, while green sports chrome-plated trim.

The cartridge/converter-filling Conklin 1898 Misto fountain pen has a JoWo stainless steel nib in extra-fine, fine, medium, broad, 1.1 mm stub, or Omniflex; bicolor 14 karat gold nibs in fine, medium, or Omniflex are available for an additional price, and rollerball versions take standard international refills. With a price point of \$135 for fountain pens with stainless steel nibs and \$435 for 14 karat gold nibs, the 1898 Misto is a little piece of luxurious design at a very reasonable price.

At no time since its founding has Conklin presented such vibrant, varied, and innovative products, but at no time since its founding has Conklin had a leader as passionate about the brand as Greenberg and Yafa Brands. Based on the mutual passions of the founder and Conklin’s current overseer, one would think that Roy Conklin and Yair Greenberg actually shared DNA. But some connections are spiritual, not biological, and in that regard, Conklin and Greenberg are practically blood brothers.

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From left—Conklin 1898 Misto green fountain pen, capped and uncapped, with chrome-plated rocker clip, cap band with “1898” engraving, and stainless steel nib with crescent-shaped breather hole; 1898 Misto orange rollerball, capped and uncapped, with rose gold-plated trim; 1898 Misto fountain pen in purple resin with rose gold-plated trim.