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# Designer's Showcase

**Rutgers alum Craig Gartner, an art director at *Sports Illustrated*, creates covers and layouts for special issues that showcase the best of the venerable magazine.**

If Craig Gartner were an assistant football coach instead of an art director for the nation's most famous sports magazine, he would be the guy you spot high up in the press box surveying the field with binoculars, then quietly making recommendations over his headset to the head coach pacing the sideline. As art director for *Sports Illustrated Presents*, the custom-publishing division of *Sports Illustrated*, Gartner MGSA'86 translates managing editor Terry McDonell's vision of what *SI's* publishing keepsake should look like packaged as a commemorative issue to celebrate the legendary sports teams and famous athletes.

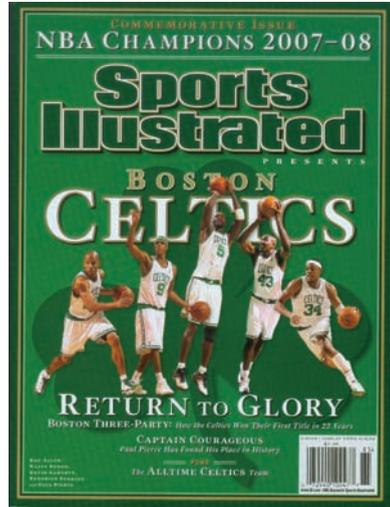
"*SI's* design is commercial and newsy. *SI Presents* is a more beautiful, distinctive look," says Gartner. "We are selling something that costs more than the weekly, with the idea that the reader will take it out of a drawer and cherish it over time."

Analyzing layouts with the precision of a physician examining X-rays, Gartner creates covers and interior pages for these issues with the classical look associated with the men's magazines of yore, the preferred look of McDonell. Still, Gartner, working with the photography of the magazine's top-flight photographers, burinishes the design with his own ideas, which spring from eclectic origins. It could be a Blue Note jazz CD, an MTV video, even an episode of *The Flintstones*. "There's something to notice everywhere—if you pay attention," he says. "The influence of these things on my magazine design ideas can be obscure, but if people buy the product, I've done my job."

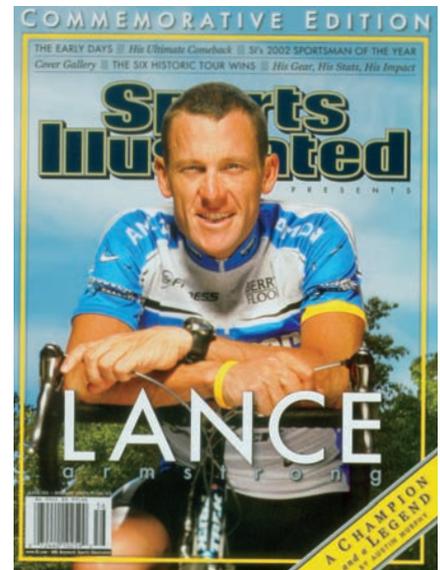
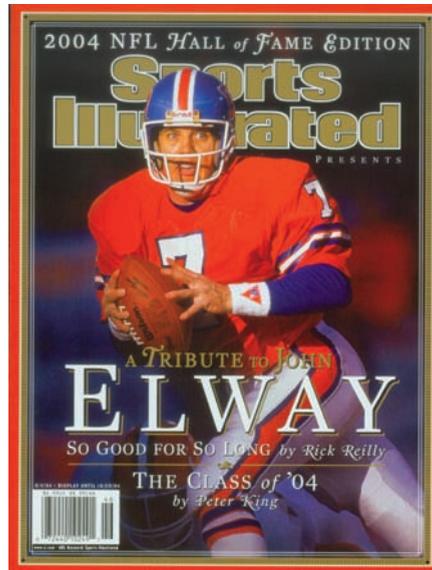
Gartner kick-started his talent at the

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Mason Gross School of the Arts and the *Daily Targum*. He took his share of painting and design classes to cover the basics; just as crucial to Gartner's development, though, were science and humanities courses. Gartner first put sports and art together as a boy watching the Oakland Athletics baseball teams of the 1970s, swathed in their vibrant uniforms of gold and green. His mother and he even spray-painted a sweatshirt to replicate an A's jersey. A budding fan of sports, which bloomed into his lifelong obsession, he could never have anticipated that his art would lead him to meeting many of pro sports' most famous athletes and coaches.



Craig Gartner shoots for a more distinctive look for *SI Presents*.



Gartner, who lives with his wife, attorney Mary-Jane Oltarzewski RC'82, in Milltown, isn't sure what he'll be doing in 10 years. "I enjoy creative writing and painting watercolors, intellectual endeavors that can never be met by magazine design." But the thought of his father's career as a comptroller for AT&T continues to motivate him. "My dad would come home and there was nothing emblematic, no tangible result of what he did. When I'm sitting in a rocking chair at 70, the idea that I'll be able to open a scrapbook and look over my entire career will hopefully make me feel like I've accomplished something." — *Bill Glavin*

