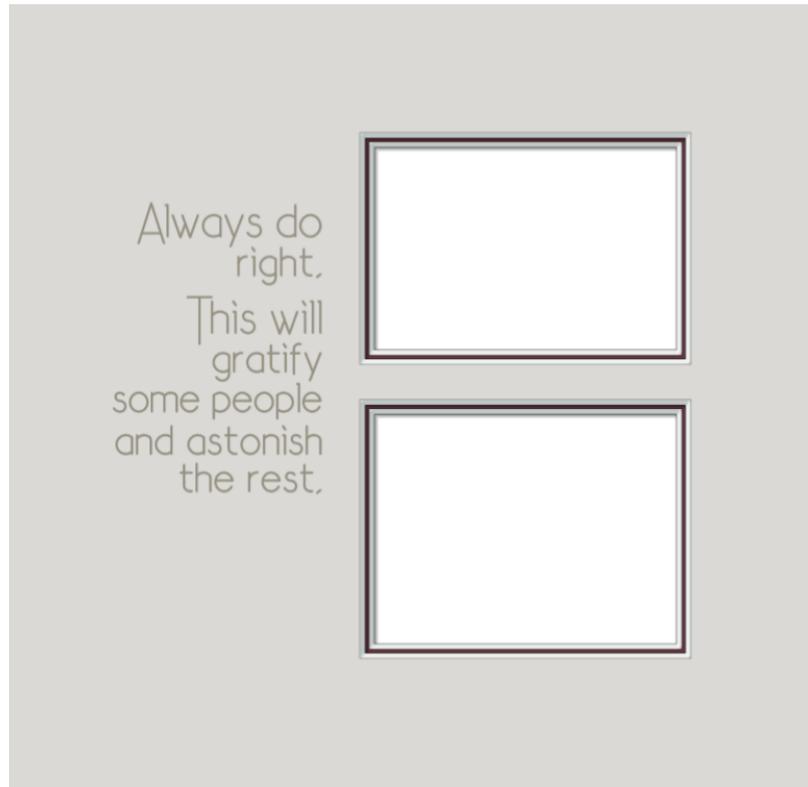# WORKING WITH LETTERMAT CAPTIONS

The pen and debossed fonts make informative and
artistic captions a reality



Debossed and pen captions can be less than half an inch high, so they can be much longer. They can be entire names, even whole sentences. They should look their best, and the first step is spacing. Pay attention to the software settings, and to the individual improvements that can be made. And never ignore the artistic touches that can be made with the size and placement of capital letters.

## LetterMat Review
Select the LetterMat caption in the design. Click the **Properties** tab at the top. Here are a few reminders of some important fields down the left side of the screen.

## The Caption
Type to caption into the **Text** field.
Select the font by clicking the drop-down arrow at the right of the **Font Name** field then select the font from the list that appears.

## Size
Enter the letter's size in the **Height** field.

Several items in the **Parameters** section below are important to understand.

## Look at the Minimum Height
This field displays the minimum recommended height for the font.
The machine will form the strokes of smaller debossed and pen letters easily, but keep in mind that the details of smaller letters may be blurred because of the width of the chosen tool.
This will impact readability.

Remember that the Minimum Height value does not change if the font is set to draw with the pen - though the caption can be smaller with the pen than if it is debossed.

## Check the Keep Aspect Ratio Button
This locks the letters' original proportions. While letters look best at their original proportions, it is a viable option with debossed and pen captions to uncheck **Keep Aspect Ratio** to condense or expand the caption.

**Kerning** is the size of the spaces between the letters.
**Tracking** is the size of the spaces between the words.
These two settings will be the key to refining every caption.

## Changing the Cartridge
The button at the bottom that currently reads **Deboss** is the cartridge selection button.
Click it to select the Pen, for example.

Below, the **Type** field offers the choices for each cartridge.
For example, when **Deboss** is selected above, click the **Type** field to pick the Wide, Medium, or Thin debossing cartridge.
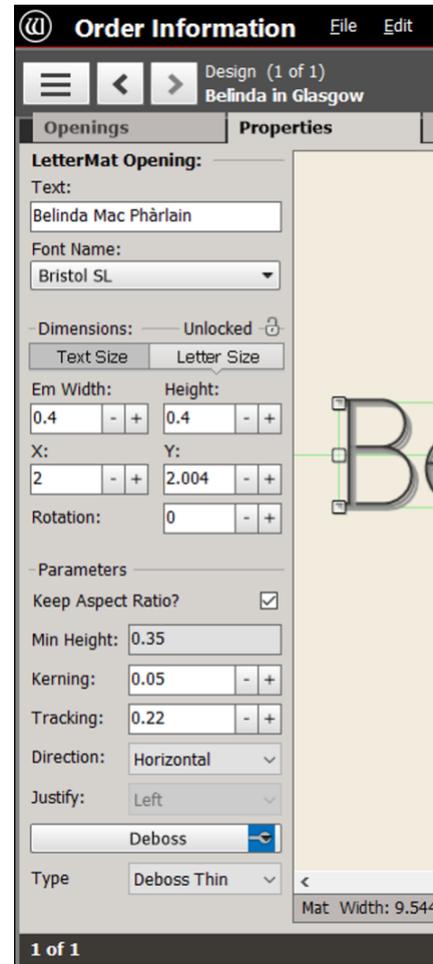
## LETTERMAT SPACING QUESTIONS

The Wizard design program measures the distance between letters as if they were rectangles. As a result, letter pairs with angles against curves appear incorrectly spaced. Some would say that these spacing problems, particularly in the lower-case letters, are too insignificant to notice. But every framer will evaluate and decide.

Many capital letters, though, will need spacing repair. The overhanging horizontal stroke of the **T**, for example, creates a wide space when the next letter is short. The angles of letters like **V**, **W**, and **Y** create wide spaces when round letters follow them.

The surgical approach to spacing capital letters is to first add the lower-case part of the caption. There will still be kerning and tracking adjustments to refine that portion of the caption. Then add the capital letter separately. It can be aligned and moved into better spacing independently – without disturbing the spacing of the lower-case characters.

The illustration below shows some common capital letter spacing problems in all fonts. The version of each name on the left shows how the program spaces the letters using the Kerning setting.

The names on the right show the capital letter as a separate LetterMat item and moved closer to the lower-case letters.
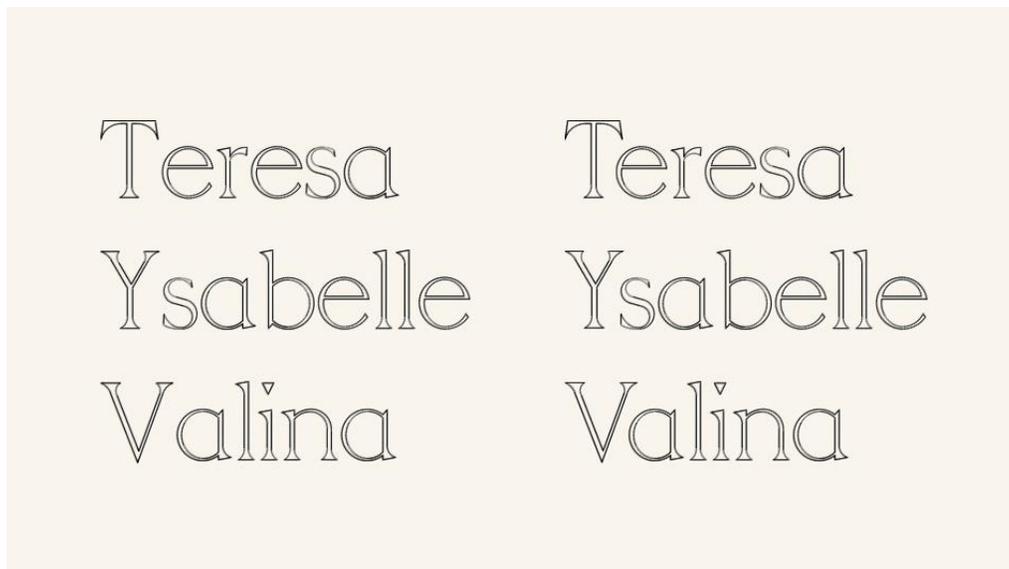
# MORE CAPITAL LETTER IDEAS

While the capital letter is separated from the lower-case letters, why not make the caption more distinctive by changing its size and placement?

In the following examples, the height of every name is 0.5 inch. The top version of each name shows how the program spaces all the letters with only the Kerning setting. The bottom version of each name has a separate larger capital letter – and each has a positioning variation. The capital letters' sizes are noted as examples of the changes that might be made.

# THE ARIADNE FONT

## *Julietta*

There is nothing wrong with this name as it is, but it is a good example for this typographic change.
**Keep Aspect Ratio** is checked for all the larger capital letters in these 4 examples.
The **J** is 0.57 inch high. Its top is positioned so that the name appears normal.
Then the descending element of the **J** extends further down.



## *Katharina*

Letters with angles on their right sides cause spacing problems in many fonts, but they can be good examples to demonstrate more positioning options.
The **K** is 0.63 inch high.
The lower-case letters are above the baseline of the **K** so that the **a** fits nicely into the angle of the **K**.

## *Monroe*

Again, there is nothing wrong with this name as it is, but it can illustrate another positioning idea.
The **M** is 0.6 inch high.
The lower-case letters are all short. They are a bit above the center of the **M**.

## *Theodora*

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **T** is checked so that when it is disproportionately taller like this, it will still slant at its original angle. It is 0.7 inch high.
Its bottom is only a little below the baseline of the lower-case letters.
The **h** can be spaced nicely with the **T**, and the overhanging element of the **T** is comfortably higher than the top of the **h**.

## THE BRISTOL FONT

### Natasha

There is nothing wrong with this name as it is, but it is a good example for this typographic change.

The **N** is 0.6 inch high.
**Keep Aspect Ratio** is checked.
Its bottom is positioned slightly lower than the baseline of the lower-case letters.

### Wednesday

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **W** is unchecked so that it can condensed and taller.
It is 0.6 inch wide and 0.65 inch high.
The top of the **W** is slightly higher than the tops of the lower-case letters.

### Kathleen

The angled strokes of any capital K will cause spacing problems – and offer some spacing options.
**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **K** is checked.  It is 0.64 inch high.
The lower-case letters are positioned so that the **a** nestles into the angle of the diagonal strokes of the **K**.  The baseline of the **K** is noticeably below the baseline of the lower-case letters.

### Tommy

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **T** is unchecked so that it can be disproportionately taller.
It is 0.6 inch wide and 0.85 inch high.

The lower-case letters are lined up with the **T** so that the name appears normal, except that the vertical stroke of the **T** descends much farther than normal.

# THE THORNDIKE FONT

## *Jasmine*

There is nothing wrong with this name as it is, but it is a good example for this typographic change.

**Keep Aspect Ratio** is checked for the **J** so that its height can be exaggerated.

The **J** is 0.59 inch wide and 0.63 inch high.

The top of the **J** is slightly higher than the dot of the **i** in the lower-case letters.

The name appears normal, except that the curved bottom stroke of the **J** descends much farther.



## *Irene*

Letters with vertical right sides seldom cause spacing problems, but they can be good examples to demonstrate positioning options.
**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **I** is unchecked so that it can be wider and more prominent.
It is 0.65 inch wide and 0.62 inch high.
Its bottom is positioned somewhat lower than the baseline of the lower-case letters.

## *Rosiland*

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **R** is checked.  It is 0.56 inch high.
The lower-case letters are lined up with the **R** so that the o nestles into the angled strokes at the right of the **R**.

## *Foster*

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **F** is unchecked so that it can be disproportionately taller.
It is 0.52 inch wide and 0.62 inch high.
The lower-case letters are lined up with the **F** so that the name appears normal, but the vertical stroke of the **F** descends much farther than normal.

# THE VIENNA FONT

## *Drummond*

There is nothing wrong with this name as it is, but it is a good example for this typographic change.

The **D** is 0.6 inch high. **Keep Aspect Ratio** is checked.

Its bottom is positioned slightly lower than the baseline of the lower-case letters.



## *Arianna*

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **A** is unchecked so that it can wider and taller.
It is 0.68 inch wide and 0.65 inch high.
The top of the **A** is slightly higher than the dot of the **i** in the lower-case letters.

## *Maureen*

Letters with vertical right sides seldom cause spacing problems, but they can be good examples to demonstrate positioning options.
**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **M** is checked.  It is 0.65 inch high.
The lower-case letters are positioned at the middle of the **M**.

## *Yohanna*

**Keep Aspect Ratio** for the **Y** is unchecked so that it can be disproportionately taller.
It is 0.65 inch wide and 0.75 inch high.
The lower-case letters are lined up with the **Y** so that the name appears normal - except that the vertical stroke of the **Y** descends much farther.

## Decorative Line Digital Content in the WebStore

There are Digital Content packages available in the Wizard Webstore. These mat design files are tested and ready to use. They are designed to make names, dates, and captions easier and more attractive in your customers' projects.

Some are single line fonts. The letters' strokes are lines, not outlines of letters' shapes. Single line letters can be quite small.

All the new debossed and pen fonts now have over 50 additional characters to write foreign language captions correctly.

And the tools in the FrameShop design software can make any of the fonts into captions with striking typography, too.

shop.wizardcutters.com