



Jan 1985

### Puttin' On the Ritz

Fashion designers have for some time now have promoted themselves and their products in a way industrial designers could only dream about. Never mind that Industrial Designers contribute much more to the visual and physical environment, I guess we're just not marketing-savvy guys.

Many fashion designers, on the other hand, promote their name alone as a marketing tool. This has brought great comfort to the insecure, knowing that whatever piece of crap they just purchased has been given a Designer Seal of approval. The French can be heard laughing all the way to the bank over America's fetish for designer jeans and designer bubbly water. They have uncovered a Primal Packaging Paradigm that if you combine the terms "designer" with "imported" sales will increase *up to 50%*.

But this trend just reached a new low with RJ Reynolds introduction of Ritz Cigarettes "designed" by Yves St. Laurent. Reynolds and their advertising agency, as a last gasp attempt to regain flagging sales, is trying to re-establish status to smoking in a world that increasingly sees smoking as offensive and smokers as hapless drug addicts, not to mention walking health hazards.

Yes, I know that cigarettes are legal products but it strikes me as nothing short of unprofessional, unethical, and irresponsible for a famous designer to lend credibility to a product that, when used according to the directions, will most likely kill you.

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