



A Sweet First for Starbucks

When David Ryan took on the assignment to create a design for Starbucks' new line of chocolates, he knew it meant coming up with a shape that was recognizably Starbucks. It had to convey a kind of sensuous, playful whimsicality that people associate with the premier purveyor of coffee and coffee culture.

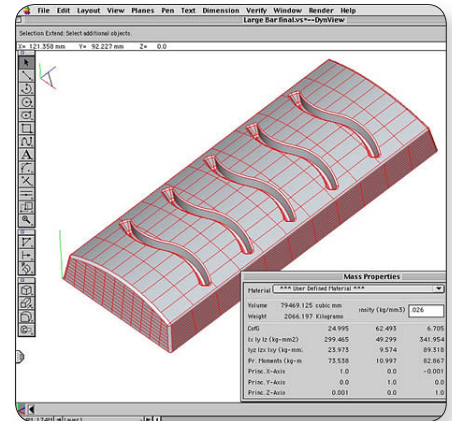
Starbucks planned to develop an entire family of chocolates. Not all the pieces were to be identical, but they were all to be identifiable as part of the Starbucks chocolate family. This requirement added to Ryan's challenge. He had to create a uniquely whimsical, playful design from which he could spin off a range of shapes that would be patentable.

When Starbucks asked Ryan to take on the chocolate project, he chose Ashlar-Vellum™ Cobalt™ to come up with the basic form for the chocolates—a 3D abstraction of the letter S. Once Starbucks agreed upon the design, Ryan modelled the shape in the software. He stated that one of the big advantages of using the Cobalt solid modeller is the program's mass properties function.

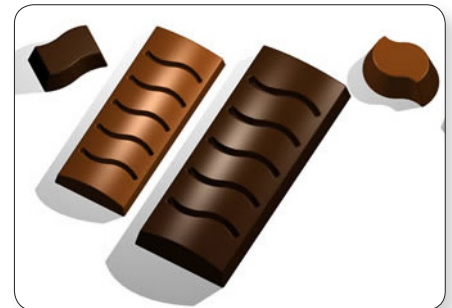
“With the solid model I simply supplied the program with the specific densities of the chocolate and let it determine the weight automatically. Increasing or decreasing the weight was done by altering the geometry.”

Ryan also praised the program's ability to make rapid prototypes. The California company that makes foil pieces for wrapping the chocolates and the German company that makes the candy moulds worked directly from Ashlar-Vellum files to complete their parts of the project. This, of course, significantly reduced the time from design to finished product.

Ryan summed it up by saying, “Although it was a first for everyone involved, the use of CAD and related technologies to create chocolates turned out to be a very tasty experience.”



Ashlar-Vellum's flexibility meant designer David Ryan could let his imagination run, but when it came time to get these chocolates made, wrapped, and at a Starbucks near you, Cobalt had the power to finish the job.



The signature 'S' design for Starbucks.

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