

To Infinity...and beyond!

BY NICKY PESSAROFF

With its purchase of Private Reserve and the creation of the new Infinity Ink, Yafa Brands is more colorful than ever.



Above left—the colorful hues of Private Reserve Ink, now owned and operated by Yafa Brands, Inc.

Above right, clockwise from top—Private Reserve Infinity Ink 60 ml bottles: Infinity Black Blue, Red, Violet, Turquoise, and Green.

What if you could fill a fountain pen with ink, leave the cap off, let it rest on your desk for extended periods of time, and have it still write? How could such a thing be? How could one prevent the ink from drying on the feed? How could that fountain pen possibly still work when the nib lies on the desk, exposed to the atmosphere?

The new Private Reserve Infinity ECO ink collection does just that. Fill your fountain pen with one of the new Infinity inks, leave the cap off, and as long as you use the pen every now and then, the fountain pen will write until there is no ink left in the reservoir.

It's the latest technical innovation from Yafa Brands, Inc., which purchased Private Reserve in late 2020 and has spent 2021 revamping, reintroducing, and re-releasing this U.S. ink company. While Yafa Brands manufactures Monteverde U.S.A. inks and distributes inks from other brands like Pineider and Diplomat, Private Reserve is Yafa's first ink-only brand.

Yafa's CEO and founder, Yair Greenberg, was a fan of Private Reserve before he became its owner: "As an ink consumer, I bought and owned so many of the original, beautiful colors from Private Reserve. To own and operate Private Reserve is a fantastic feeling. It's an iconic ink brand that was founded in the United States, and it fits the Yafa family perfectly. Private Reserve inks are innovative, fluid, and beautiful to look at, and we have the knowledge and facilities to accommodate them."

Yafa has three production and warehouse facilities outside Los Angeles, California, and now one of those buildings—5,000 square feet of space—is dedicated to producing inks. Yafa uses the facility for all filling, capping, labeling, and packaging of both its Private Reserve and Monteverde inks, however Greenberg is careful to keep these two companies separate from one another.

Along with its collection of writing instruments, Monteverde has produced a line of popular and affordable fountain pen ink bottles and cartridges for three decades. Monteverde offers dozens of fountain pen ink colors as well as rollerball and ballpoint refills that are at the forefront of technical innovation. Its ITF ("Ink Treatment Formula") inks have drastically improved ink-flow quality, extended cap-off time, and shortened drying time on the paper. Monteverde ITF inks allow users to leave the cap off a fountain pen for as long as 25 minutes with no scratchy start to your writing.



Left—swatches of the complete Private Reserve collection of inks. Top row—Private Reserve Avocado and Vampire Red ink bottles. Above row—Private Reserve Chocolat and Ebony Purple ink bottles. Below—new Private Reserve Pearlescent Blue-Silver and Pearlescent Red-Silver 60 ml ink bottles. Bottom—Private Reserve Invincible Black and Invincible Blue permanent inks.



But even this technology cannot compare to the new Private Reserve Infinity ECO formula. The “ECO” stands for “Extended Cap Off,” and it was years in the making. Infinity ECO recognizes the reality that many fountain pen users find it inconvenient to constantly cap one’s fountain pen to prevent the wet ink from drying. Additionally, the new Infinity inks are just as fountain-pen-friendly as other Private Reserve inks—pH neutral, light fast, saturated, and with excellent shading.

Yafa currently offers Private Reserve Infinity inks in 60 ml glass bottles in six colors: black, blue, red, green, violet, and turquoise. But Private Reserve’s overall collection of ink colors is quite saturated.

“To the best of my knowledge, Private Reserve was the first ink company to offer over 50 colors at one time. Before Private Reserve, most fountain pen ink companies offered six to 12 basic colors,” Greenberg says. “Between Private Reserve and Monteverde, we offer over 100 colors. I’m sure that we are the largest ink supplier in North America, and we sell our inks and refills in over 30 countries.”

Yafa Brands offers over 30 different Private Reserve standard ink colors in 60 ml bottles and 12-packs of standard international cartridge refills. It also offers six colors of Private Reserve Fast Dry inks, which are formulated to be just as performative as the standard line but with a faster drying time. The Private Reserve Invincible series of 60 ml bottles and 12-pack cartridges in blue and black are archival, permanent inks meant for official documents.

Of note is a special edition series of six new Private Reserve fountain pen ink colors. Private Reserve Pearlescent inks have shades of pearlescent silver that lend a holographic quality to one’s writing. Shake the 60 ml ink bottle to disperse the silver flakes, and once your fountain pen is filled, turn it upside-down and back a number of times for even distribution. Yafa offers six Private Reserve Pearlescent colors: black-silver, blue-silver, red-silver, orange-silver, turquoise-silver, and violet-silver.



Left—new Monteverde U.S.A. Jungle Inks box set of 10 inks.

Above—Monteverde Lion (yellow), Giraffe (orange), and Gorilla (red) Jungle inks.

Below left—Bottom left—Monteverde Emotions Ink box set

Below right—the 10 ink bottles of the Monteverde Sweet Life ink box set.



Creating these new Private Reserve colors requires multiple steps, according to Greenberg: coming up with a collection theme, such as the new Pearlescent series; choosing PMS (“Pantone Matching System”) colors to match the theme; color-matching the color based on the ink lab’s capacities; approving samples; creating artwork for labels, boxes, and sleeves; and finally, marketing.

“In short, it seems easy, but it’s a lot of tedious work with much trial and error to get the colors perfect,” Greenberg says. On the other hand, sometimes inspiration comes from unexpected places: “Lately, I’ve been inspired by songs. Our latest Monteverde ink collection, Jungle Ink, was inspired by listening to a song on my car radio. I called my office from my car with the idea, and my project manager showed me some jungle ideas that same day.”

In 2018, Monteverde began offering collections of 10 thematically-linked, 30 ml ink bottles in single presentation boxes. Monteverde Core has standard colors like Midnight Black and Malibu Blue, while the Noir collection features inks tinged with black like Mulberry Noir and Copper Noir. Gemstones features colors like sapphire and ruby, while Sweet Life reimagines some of your favorite candies and pastries as ink colors with bottles that feature illustrations of the confection. The Monteverde Emotions collection allows users to “write their feelings” with colors like Peace (blue) and Kindness (rose pink) and bottle illustrations that symbolize that emotion.

The new Monteverde U.S.A. Jungle Ink collection is a collection of 10 fountain pen ink colors inspired by the animals of the jungle: bright, vibrant colors like Gorilla Red, Giraffe Orange, and Lion Yellow with ink bottles that feature whimsical, cartoonish illustrations of the animals.

But let's say you want one of these Monteverde bottled inks in an easy-to-use, less messy, cartridge format. Thanks to Private Reserve, Yafa Brands has a solution.

"There are many inks that do not offer cartridges, so we created a new category for Private Reserve that we call 'Essentials,'" Greenberg says. "We offer a microfiber deluxe polishing cloth, syringes, and empty cartridges. The syringes can draw ink from a bottle to the last drop, and you can use the syringe to fill from a bottle to a cartridge. We package the Essentials in a beautiful new gift box. With this system, a consumer can fill a cartridge with any bottled ink."

Between Private Reserve and Monteverde U.S.A. alone, Yafa Brands now has over 100 distinct shades of ink for fountain pen enthusiasts to try. It is also on the cutting edge of ink technology and marketing trends.

Since its founding in 1978, Yafa Brands has managed to stay ahead of trends in the pen and ink community in ways that sometimes seem clairvoyant. But for Greenberg, the process of creating a successful brand or product is quite straightforward: "Listen to the consumer!" he says.

With such a comprehensive array of products, colors, and brands, the possibilities for the Yafa Brands family of inks is "inkfinite."

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