

# Coca-Cola Bottle

## *The Perfect Package*

Next to McDonald's "Golden Arches," the classic Coca-Cola bottle is the most recognized icon in industrial design history. It is one of the few containers ever to be trademarked in the United States.

The name "Coca-Cola" comes from the **coca** leaf and the **kola** nut. Both contain powerful stimulants. Their extracts were two key ingredients in the original formula, invented in May 1886 by John Styth Pemberton, a druggist in Atlanta, Georgia. The name, however, was invented by Pemberton's bookkeeper and partner, Frank M. Robinson. Robinson also changed "**k**ola" to "**c**ola." And he developed the drink's Spencerian script logo, first used in advertising in June 1887.

The famous red color, long associated with Coca-Cola, was contributed by Asa Candler. He acquired the company around 1888. At that time, Coca-Cola syrup was shipped sometimes in recycled whiskey kegs—bad for the drink's non-alcoholic image. So Candler had the kegs painted bright red. The script was colored white for contrast.

At first, Coca-Cola was mixed and sold only at pharmacies and soda fountains. By the 1890s, however, it was also sold in bottles, pre-mixed with soda water. Unfortunately, the straight-sided "Hutchinson" bottles of that era, with loop-and-wire stoppers, sometimes exploded. They were difficult to sterilize: after 10 days, the drink began to stink. They were used by other manufacturers. And it was too easy for unscrupulous competitors to imitate Coca-Cola's paper labels.

The Coca-Cola owners and bottlers wanted a new bottle. They wanted it to be so distinctive that an ordinary person could identify their bottle even from a broken piece—or even by touch, in the dark. The Root Glass Company of Terre Haute, Indiana, submitted the winning design in 1915. They had looked up "coca" and "kola" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. They found no inspiring illustration of those items; but they did notice the bulging, fluted shape of the cacao bean pod (the source of cocoa). Company machinist Earl Dean based his bottle design on that.