Cesar Lara.

Brand & Packaging Designer

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SUMMARY

Brand and packaging designer with 15+ years of experience and an illustrator's hand. Takes packaging from dieline to press check, and has produced 50+ brand guidelines. Twice the first in-house designer at companies with no design team, building the function from scratch. Founder of El Charco de Grinb, a tabletop gaming community whose annual festival draws ~7,000 people. Lived and studied in Vancouver, Canada (2017–2019).

EXPERIENCE

Head of Design · CACEP Chocolates Case study — Villahermosa, Mexico · Jul 2023 – Aug 2026

- Joined as the company's first designer, with no design or marketing team in place; grew the role into leading design and marketing.
- Led a design team of 2 designers and coordinated photography and social media (4 more people) across packaging, campaigns and launches.
- Redesigned 20+ products across the CPG line and created the CACEP brand guidelines.
- Designed a premium gift box that sold out before Christmas, and a World Cup collection of 10,000 collectible cups that sold out a month early.
- Developed dielines for new packaging structures with print vendors, and ran print production end to end: prepress, color proofs, Pantone matching, press checks and final file sign-off.
- Worked closely with the Marketing Director, advising on campaign strategy, social media planning and brand decisions.
- Designed point-of-sale displays and stands, including the World Cup counter display, working with PVC, coroplast, corrugated board and aluminum.
- Designed the UX/UI of the company's Shopify store, partnering with a developer on the build; also created the Galletota sub-brand.

Brand Designer & Founder · El Charco de Grinb Case study — Villahermosa, Mexico · Aug 2021 – present

- Built the brand of a tabletop gaming community on a zero budget: identity, mascot and character system, merch, events and streams.
- Founded GrinbFest and design its full identity every year; grew it from ~4,000 to ~7,000 attendees in two days, with ~15 sponsors including the Tabasco State Government.
- Designed and built Club Grinb, a membership app that rewards in-person participation; 50+ members joined in its first three weeks.
- Grew community activity from 1 to 4 days a week.

Freelance Brand Designer & Illustrator Villahermosa, Mexico · 2020 – Jun 2023

- Brand identities and brand guidelines for clients including Life & Live (sports products) and Quiero un Bus (event transportation).
- Illustrated 500+ hand-drawn parts for the modular character system of Heroes of the Metaverse, a generative collection, and built its world: the story of its city and the timeline of its history (2021–2022). **Case study**

Brand Designer · Beefer's Corp (restaurant group) **Case study** Villahermosa & Puebla, Mexico · Aug 2019 – 2020

- First designer at a restaurant group with no design function.
- Led the rebrands of Beefer's and Cajun African Chicken Food: identity, brand guidelines, uniforms, staff image guide and store design.
- Relocated to Puebla to join the team full-time, until COVID-19 closed many of the group's locations.

Freelance Graphic Designer Vancouver, BC, Canada · 2017 – 2019

- Social media content and client presentations for Explore Ideas, a local travel agency, while studying English and 3D modeling.

Web & Digital Design Lead · Government of Tabasco Villahermosa, Mexico · 2015 – 2017

- Joined as a designer and grew into leading the design of Tabasco.gob, the official state government website, within a multidisciplinary team.
- Designed for state fairs and congresses, and created icons for the government's design materials.

Freelance Brand Designer Veracruz & Villahermosa, Mexico · 2012 – 2015

- Brand identity, brand guidelines, illustration and promotional design for restaurants, local businesses and organizations, including Cajun, Tams, Burritos Factory, Nápoles, La Cocina de Juanita and Rotary clubs in Veracruz.
- Designed paper toys and editorial pieces for a cultural project on the Olmec heads.

Earlier: Co-founded a design studio in Veracruz (2010–2012) · Editorial designer at regional newspapers (El Heraldo de Tabasco, Imagen del Golfo, Esto de Tabasco).

EDUCATION

Graphic Design — Centro de Estudios Gestalt, Veracruz · 2007 – 2011 · Coursework completed

English Program — ILAC, Vancouver · Certificate

3D Modeling coursework — LaSalle College Vancouver

SKILLS

Design: Brand identity · Brand guidelines · CPG packaging and product-line systems · Dielines · Print production and prepress · Point-of-sale displays · Illustration and character design · Art direction · Campaigns · Event branding · UX/UI design

Tools: Vector and identity: Adobe Illustrator, Affinity Designer · Image and retouching: Adobe Photoshop, Affinity Photo · Layout and print: Adobe InDesign, Affinity Publisher · Digital and product: Figma · Video: DaVinci Resolve

Languages: Spanish (native) · English (professional working proficiency; lived and studied in Vancouver, 2017–2019)