# Aardman blends 2D and 3D animation to refresh Thatcher’s Juicy Apple Cider campaign



Animation studio Aardman, renowned for its beloved characters like Wallace and Gromit and Shaun the Sheep, continues to innovate within the advertising sector with the recent premiere of a new commercial for Thatcher’s Juicy Apple Cider. Debuted on 2 May, this ad showcases a vibrant 2D animation style that enhances the product's summer appeal, setting it apart from Aardman’s previous campaigns for the cider brand.

In previous commercials for Thatcher’s main product line, Aardman employed stop-motion animation. However, for Juicy Apple, the creative team felt a new approach was warranted. Dan Binns, the director of the commercial, highlighted that the distinctive artwork and packaging of Juicy Apple provided "room to play" with a different narrative style. He explained, “For this product, it seemed like a reasonable opportunity to do something a little different.”

The collaboration between Aardman and the advertising agency Bray Leino led to initial concepts revolving around single-frame illustrations that were meticulously iterated upon to achieve the final product. Producer Joseph Bell noted that a crucial aspect of the project was creating a journey through the animated world, which required careful consideration of timing and movement. To illustrate these concepts, a 3D animatic was developed to simulate how the animation would unfold.

Aardman retained a focus on sustainability throughout the commercial, which was in line with Thatcher’s emphasis on using sun-soaked apples and solar energy in their production. Binns remarked on the importance of conveying the crispness and refreshment of the cider visually, stating, “The packaging of the new product has quite a graphic style... it does imply something that feels different to previous Thatcher’s projects.”

The animation process combined both traditional and modern techniques. The team initially conceived a 2D aesthetic, ultimately integrating elements of 3D modelling to enhance depth and perspective. This blend of styles was crucial in crafting a vibrant world in which viewers could fully experience the product’s refreshing qualities. As Binns elaborated, “Everything’s just varying degrees of a blend of all of them.”

An essential feature of Aardman’s work is the tactile, handcrafted feel that permeates its animations. Dan discussed the significance of texture, stating that he spent considerable effort introducing subtle imperfections to evoke a human touch. This is a hallmark of Aardman’s stylistic identity, as the studio values the "evidence that there’s been a human hand."

As animators tackled the project, a diversity of creative techniques was employed to ensure it resonated with viewers. Each frame aimed to capture a sense of joy and attention to detail that Aardman is known for. Bell noted, “You feel like this commercial has had a focused burst of love and attention to get made,” a sentiment that reflects the studio’s commitment to creativity and quality craftsmanship.

The Juicy Apple Cider commercial exemplifies Aardman's ability to adapt and evolve while maintaining the essence of their historical narrative style. The blend of innovative animation techniques captures a summertime vibe, offering a whimsical portrayal that reflects both the brand’s values and the studio's rich legacy in animated storytelling.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.aardman.com/latest-news/2023/may/behind-the-craft-thatchers-cider-pint-sized-perfection> - This article provides insights into the animation techniques used in the Thatchers Cider commercial, detailing the combination of stop motion and CG animation, the use of silicone for puppets, and the addition of CG faces for expressive performances.
* <https://www.thatcherscider.co.uk/news/thatchers-x-aardman-the-perfect-west-country-pairing/> - This source discusses the collaboration between Aardman and Thatchers, highlighting the use of stop motion animation to depict Thatchers' Myrtle Farm and the dedication to craftsmanship in the commercial.
* <https://www.aardman.com/latest-news/2023/may/aardman-produces-pint-sized-perfection-commercial-for-thatchers-cider> - This article details the production process of the Thatchers Cider commercial, emphasizing the team's dedication and the use of stop motion animation to showcase Thatchers' cider-making journey.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cv22rnelk5no> - This BBC News article covers the collaboration between Aardman and Thatchers, focusing on the creation of life-like puppets and the meticulous attention to detail in the stop-motion commercials.
* <https://www.thatcherscider.co.uk/news/thatchers-aardman-ad-collab-named-cider-campaign-of-the-year/> - This source highlights the success of the Thatchers and Aardman collaboration, noting the campaign's impact and recognition as the most impactful cider campaign of the year.
* <https://www.awn.com/news/thatchers-cider-and-aardman-team-new-campaign> - This article discusses the new series of commercials by Thatchers and Aardman, focusing on the use of stop-motion animation to depict Thatchers' Myrtle Farm and the dedication to craftsmanship in the campaign.
* <https://www.creativebloq.com/creative-inspiration/advertising/aardman-thatchers-juicy-apple-ad> - Please view link - unable to able to access data