

EVIAN

“LIVE YOUNG”  
FRANCE  
2000–2011

# CAN YOU BOTTLE YOUTH?

Anywhere you go, the chemical formula for water is the same: two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen. For Evian devotees, however, nothing could be further from the truth. Since its eighteenth-century discovery, Evian water has been renowned for its singular source in the French Alps, its exceptional purity, and its reputation for healthfulness. For hundreds of years, spa-goers have sought out the fabled thermal springs at Evian-les-Bains. But by the twenty-first century, new competitors were springing up, and Evian was losing European market share to cheaper bottled waters. The brand needed a rebirth.

# THE VOICE OF YOUTHFULNESS

## POP VIDEO ERA

Past advertising had focused on the water's authenticity, but that sales pitch was no longer enough. Consumers of bottled water were mostly choosing the cheaper varieties. Even in France, Evian's home market and still its strongest, 54 percent thought the brand was too expensive; 32 percent said they couldn't think of a good reason to buy it. Evian needed to reestablish its *raison d'être*. But how?

BETC Paris knew the target audience was health conscious as well as intent on maintaining their youthfulness as long as possible. The Creative Business Idea was to marry the brand's legacy as a health water with these aspirations in an entirely new way. In France, expectant and young mothers bought the water for its exceptional purity, good for

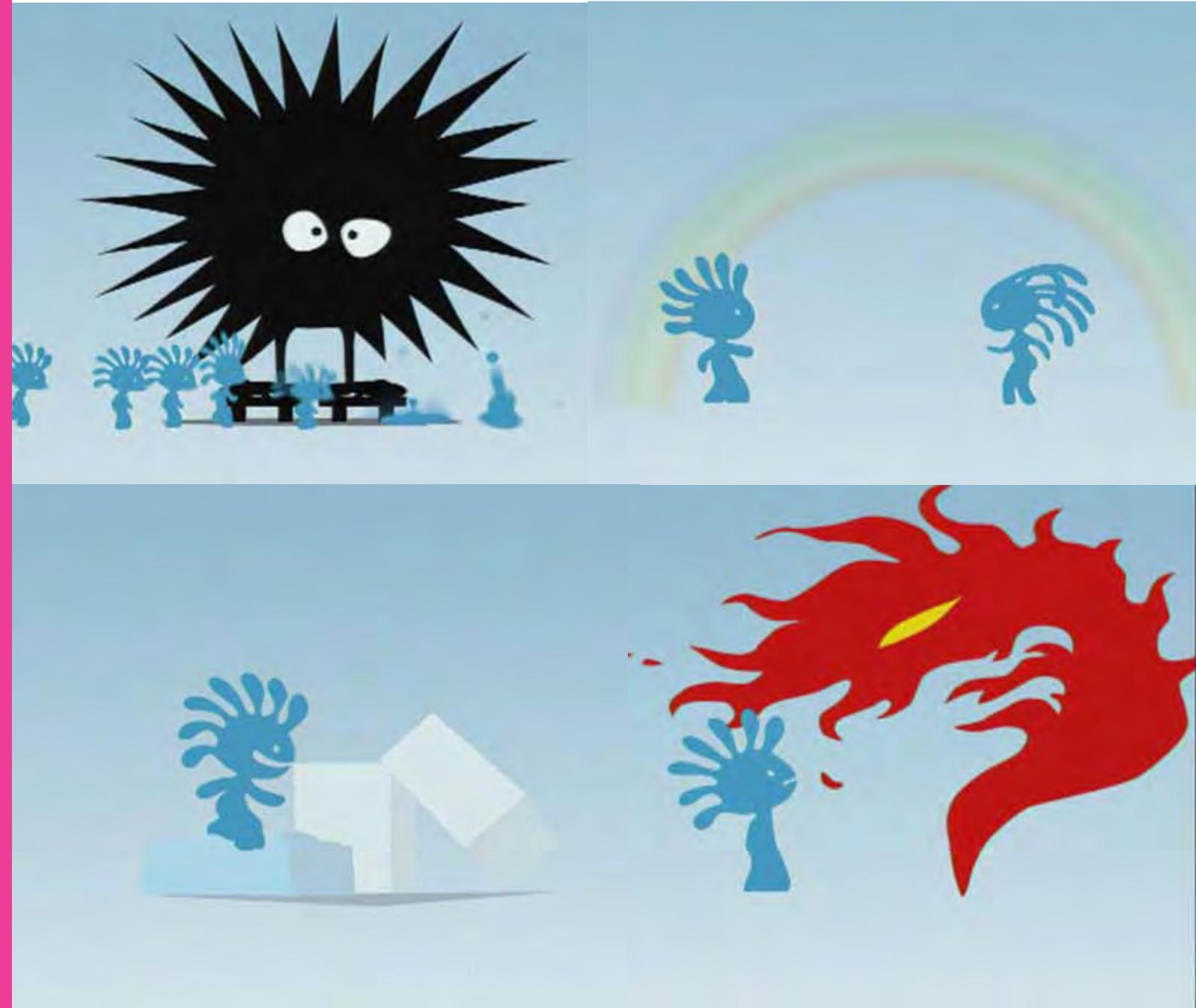
the kiddies. In export markets, Evian's presence in the world of sport—chugged courtside by Andre Agassi, for example—reinforced its reputation as a restorative agent. Coupled with longer life expectancies and the intensified desire for vitality in old age, the brand message would have to be more pointed than just health. Evian would become the voice of youthfulness—literally.

Backing the agency's 2003 "Voices" campaign was a recording of the Queen rock single "We Will Rock You" with adult office workers and athletes lip-synching music clearly being sung by children. An on-screen message read, "Drinking pure, balanced mineral water every day keeps your body young." "We tried to reinforce the message that youth is not only a question of age but a state

of mind—and body. You have to take care of your youth at every age," said Evian account manager Marielle Durandet. With a clear visual reference to the brand on the jacket, Universal Music released the track as a single. It sold 600,000 copies.

A video clip, "Water Boy," soon followed; in it an animated boy, formed from a drop of water, sings the Queen song while walking through rain, dipping into a glass of water, and hopping through puddles. The clip ran online and was picked up by European music video channels. Children loved the track and the video, and "We Will Rock You" became a schoolyard anthem.

This innovative combination of a television ad, a CD, and a music video showed that Evian was truly at the vanguard of advertainment, as early as 2003.



**EVIAN "WE WILL ROCK YOU" SINGLE SOLD 600,000 COPIES WORLDWIDE.**

## SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

Five years later, in 2008, Evian faced another hurdle. This time a global recession was denting demand for the premium water and environmental concerns were driving down sales of bottled waters in general, but Evian couldn't lower prices because of high export costs. The brand needed to reinforce its youthful message in a way that would grab consumers' attention.

Aware of the stakes, BETC Paris decided to let loose improved technology on a concept it had used with great success eleven years earlier: its "Water Babies" ad, featuring babies performing water ballet. French TV audiences had loved it, going so far as to write letters of congratulations to the Paris office and calling television stations to acquire copies of the

film. For its new iteration, the agency created the blockbuster hit "Roller Babies." As with the first film, it was preceded by the line, "Let's observe the effects of Evian on your body." The 2009 film showed computer-animated babies skate-dancing to the iconic hit single "Rapper's Delight"—cruising, jumping, flipping, and break-dancing to the hip-hop beats.

Once again, the babies were an instant hit. Within three days of the spot's launch in France and Belgium, television news was giving the brand unpaid media time. It was also becoming a viral phenomenon online, ultimately earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most-watched viral video ever (currently, 130 million views and counting).

The economic climate continued to hammer Evian in 2009 and 2010, but the message of its "Live Young" strategy, emphasizing the brand's youthful effects, traveled around the world. Parent company Danone sponsored a clinical study demonstrating the youth-preserving benefits of water, and two new Evian spas were launched, in Singapore and Argentina, inviting guests to indulge in rituals intended to "reveal your youthfulness."

Most important, the campaign gave the brand a warmth that cool mountain waters could not. In engaging the public in a truly enjoyable brand experience, Evian established an emotional connection with consumers and an instant brand association with eternal youth.



# LIVE YOUNG



**AWARDED GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR**



**MOST-WATCHED VIRAL VIDEO — 130 MILLION VIEWS**

