

University California Riverside



ybORNoOZ

Entry details

| | |
|--|--|
| Entry Name: | The Den |
| Institution Name: | University California Riverside |
| Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>): | Kourtney Gilbert, Marketing and Communications Manager |
| Email Address: | kourtney.gilbert@ucr.edu |
| Phone Number: | +19097327088 |
| Address: | 500 W Big Springs Road |
| City: | Riverside |
| State: | CA |
| Zip Code: | 92507 |
| Country: | United States of America |

Introduction:

Located within North District 2 the first co-living university apartment community in the country The Den Café serves as a vibrant neighborhood hub at University of California, Riverside. Designed to intentionally bring together UCR students and those from local community colleges, the community reflects connection, access, and belonging. The Den features award-winning, sustainably sourced coffees alongside handcrafted espresso drinks, cold brew, matcha, and spritz beverages. Fresh bagel sandwiches and pastries are served all day, while rotating limited-time offerings like Ube Cold Foam and the Golden Latte keep the menu innovative, culturally inspired, and student-centered.

Essay:

At The Den Café, the menu is intentionally crafted to reflect the energy, diversity, and lifestyle of students living in North District 2—the nation's first co-living university apartment community. In partnership with Klatch Coffee, UCR's official coffee partner, The Den delivers an elevated café experience rooted in quality, sustainability, and innovation.

The beverage program features award-winning, house-roasted coffees including single-origin selections and signature blends, alongside expertly crafted espresso drinks such as lattes, cappuccinos, mochas, and Americanos.

Cold brew, matcha, chai, and refreshing fruit spritzers expand the menu to meet evolving student preferences. Signature favorites like the Lavender Latte, Crème Brûlée Latte, and Vanilla Bean Latte balance comfort with creativity.

Complementing the beverage lineup is a robust all-day food menu designed for convenience without compromising flavor. Freshly prepared bagel sandwiches—ranging from the Turkey Club and Caprese to the Cheesy Breakfast Bagel and Avocado Toast—provide satisfying, customizable options for breakfast, lunch, or late-afternoon study breaks. Rotating limited-time offerings, including the vibrant Ube Cold Foam and the warming Golden Latte, introduce global flavors and seasonal variety, ensuring the menu remains dynamic, relevant, and community-driven.

Introduction:

The Den is thoughtfully designed as a modern campus marketplace serving the daily needs of students living in nearby apartment communities. The facility blends clean, contemporary aesthetics with highly intentional merchandising strategies that prioritize speed, accessibility, and convenience. Store flow is intuitive and shopper-friendly, with grocery items grouped by meal type and ingredient pairing to simplify preparation and reduce decision fatigue. High-visibility snack displays activate primary traffic paths, while a quick-stop layout supports fast shopping between classes. A discreet on-site commissary kitchen powers the “students feeding students” grab-and-go program, reinforcing affordability and community impact.

Essay:

The Den is intentionally designed to function as both a modern retail marketplace and a welcoming community hub at UCR. Located near major apartment communities, the facility’s design prioritizes accessibility, efficiency, and student lifestyle integration. Clean sightlines, open pathways, and clear departmental zoning create an intuitive shopping experience that supports both quick visits between classes and longer, purposeful grocery trips.

Merchandising strategies are highly intentional and data-informed. Grocery items are grouped by meal type and ingredient pairing—placing pasta near sauces, breakfast items together, and snack components in line to simplify meal planning and reduce shopping time. High-visibility snack and beverage displays are positioned along primary traffic paths to drive impulse purchases while maintaining smooth flow. Essential household goods, health and beauty items, and cleaning supplies are clearly merchandised to reinforce The Den as a one-stop campus solution.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated commissary kitchen supports the university’s “students feeding students” grab-and-go program, helping control costs while expanding affordable fresh options. Checkout placement is strategically positioned to minimize congestion and maintain steady traffic flow. Every design element from layout to product adjacency reflects a thoughtful balance of operational efficiency, student convenience, and community-centered retail innovation.

Introduction:

Marketing for The Den was intentionally developed to reflect its unique residential community at the University of California, Riverside, where students from both UCR and Riverside City College (RCC) live together. Because community college residents can purchase a customized dining plan aligned with their academic schedules, we introduced a Meal Swipe Combo exclusively for RCC Dining Plan holders. This bundled offer—one market entrée, one side, and one beverage was supported by bold, icon-driven signage to simplify selection and improve wayfinding

Clear visual iconography and step-by-step instructions ensured accessibility, streamlined transactions, and reinforced The Den as an inclusive, student-centered retail destination.

Essay:

Marketing at The Den is strategically designed to reflect the diversity and shared identity of students living at the University of California, Riverside and Riverside City College. As the only retail marketplace serving this co-living community, our approach blends clarity, visibility, and inclusive branding to ensure every student feels represented and informed.

Inside the café, dynamic digital menu boards positioned at the coffee counter provide high-impact, visually engaging content that highlights signature beverages, limited-time offerings, and value-driven promotions. These screens allow for flexible, real-time updates—supporting seasonal campaigns like Ube Cold Foam or the Golden Latte while maintaining clean, modern design consistency. The digital format enhances readability, speeds up ordering decisions, and elevates the overall café experience.

Externally, bold street flags and strategically placed A-Frame signage activate high-traffic pedestrian areas, driving awareness of meal swipe options and daily specials. Branding elements intentionally incorporate both UCR and RCC mascot representation, reinforcing a sense of belonging and unity within the shared residential community. Through cohesive interior and exterior marketing touchpoints, The Den's visual identity celebrates partnership, accessibility, and the vibrant diversity of its student population.

Introduction:

Nutrition and wellness are key priorities at The Den, with a focus on providing convenient, balanced options that support student wellbeing. The marketplace offers a variety of fresh grab-and-go meals, nutritious snacks, and fresh fruit options to help students make healthier choices throughout the day. Through the on-site commissary kitchen, The Den supports UC Riverside Dining's "students feeding students" grab-and-go program, which produces fresh items and affordable fruit offerings for the campus community. Products are thoughtfully merchandised to highlight wholesome choices and quick meal solutions, making it easier for students to find nutritious foods that fit their busy academic schedules.

Essay:

Nutrition and wellness are central to the dining experience at The Den, with a focus on offering convenient, balanced food options that support the health and wellbeing of UC Riverside students. The marketplace provides a wide selection of nutritious grab-and-go meals, fresh fruit, wholesome snacks, and beverages designed to help students make better food choices throughout their busy academic schedules.

A key component of The Den's nutrition initiative is the on-site commissary kitchen, which supports UC Riverside Dining's grab-and-go program known as "students feeding students." This program prepares fresh food items that are distributed across campus markets, helping expand access to nutritious meal options while keeping prices affordable for the student community. Fresh fruit offerings are also prioritized as part of this initiative, making healthy choices more accessible and convenient.

Product placement and merchandising strategies further support wellness by highlighting fresh foods and quick meal solutions that encourage balanced eating. By combining convenient access, thoughtful product selection, and campus-supported food programs, The Den promotes a dining environment that prioritizes student health, affordability, and everyday wellbeing.

Introduction:

The Den at North District reflects UC Riverside Dining's commitment to convenience, community, and thoughtful retail design. Centrally located near several campus apartment communities, The Den provides students with easy access to groceries, household essentials, and fresh grab-and-go meals. The store layout was intentionally designed to create an intuitive shopping experience, with products strategically grouped by meal type and ingredient pairing to simplify meal preparation and reduce shopping time. In addition, The Den houses the commissary kitchen that supports the university's grab-and-go program, "students feeding students," helping deliver affordable, fresh options while supporting the campus community.

Essay:

The Den at North District was thoughtfully designed to serve the evolving needs of UC Riverside's residential community while delivering a convenient and intuitive retail experience. Centrally located near multiple campus apartment communities—including the newest residential hub, North District 2—The Den provides easy access to groceries, household essentials, health and beauty products, beverages, and a variety of sweet and savory snacks.

Fresh grab-and-go meal options further support students seeking quick, convenient dining solutions between classes and campus commitments.

The store layout was intentionally designed to create a shopper-friendly flow that allows students to locate items and move efficiently through the space quickly. Grocery items are strategically merchandised by meal type and ingredient pairing, with complementary ingredients grouped together to simplify meal preparation and reduce shopping time. High-visibility snack displays are positioned along primary traffic paths to encourage discovery and impulse purchases, while the checkout area is designed to maintain smooth traffic flow and minimize congestion during peak hours.

Together, these elements make The Den a vital resource that supports convenience, affordability, and student well-being.

Log in to nacufs.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.



TheDen_1.jpg 1.1 MiB



TheDen_2.jpg 1.2 MiB



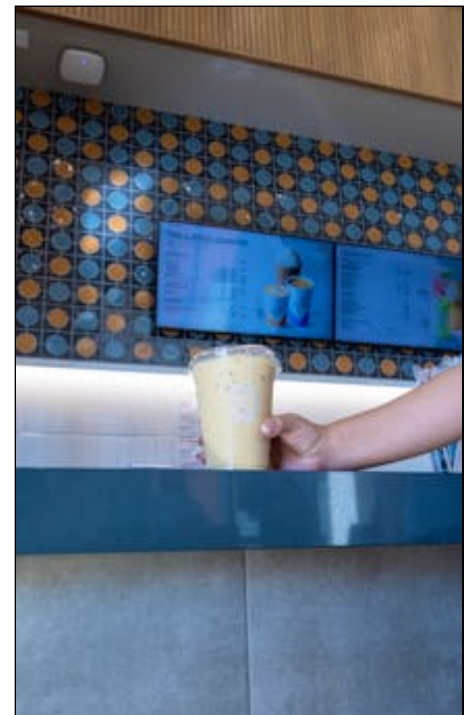
TheDen_3.jpg 1.0 MiB



TheDen_4.jpg 1.4 MiB



TheDen_5.jpg 1.3 MiB



TheDen_6.jpg 995 KiB



TheDenMenuB... 213 KiB



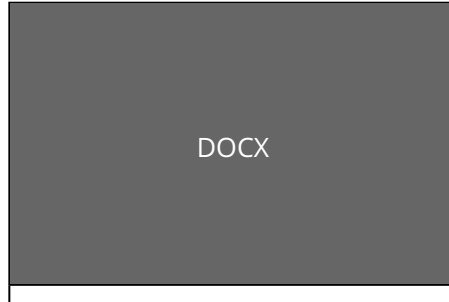
TheDenMenuB... 239 KiB



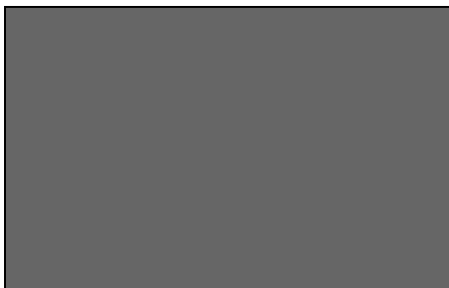
TheDenMenuB... 329 KiB



TheDenFB.jpg 1.3 MiB



The Den Nutritt... 9 KiB



Attachment name
North District 2 Ribbon ...

<https://youtu.be/EuLP4...>