



A look inside Soda & Swine, a bar and restaurant located on the campus of the University of California San Diego. Photo: Zack Benson

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

This Restaurant Is Actually a College Dining Hall Unlike Any Other in America

Nestled under a grove of eucalyptus trees, University of California San Diego's Soda & Swine allows students to feel transported from campus life



Eschewing greasy spoons and cafeteria lines, one California college campus recently took an haute twist with its new dining experience. Although it's the third Soda & Swine outpost in San Diego, designing [the University of California San Diego location](#) allowed Paul Basile, founder of [Basile Studio](#), more creative freedom. That's because the other two were in urban settings where the only atmosphere came from within. (While located on a college campus, the UC San Diego branch is open to the public.) Basile Studio's other hospitality projects include the other two Soda & Swine locations, plus Raised by Wolves, a wildly popular San Diego cocktail bar since its 2018 opening; and Born and Raised, a two-year-old steakhouse in San Diego's Little Italy neighborhood.

"We had a lot more space to play with here," says Basile about transforming a former campus pub into a hip eatery. "The UCSD location has the most beautiful architecture, and the building is nestled under a grove of eucalyptus trees." As a result, dangling ferns stretch from the ceiling, and vases—arranged with lush greenery—are on the wall. Milk-glass globe lighting organized like ceiling beams is a fun yet timeless look. With bamboo-like thin vertical slats on the walls and open-slat arms on the booths, the look is more island-chic than it is beach-city. Black-and-white floor tiles and plush red barstools (with fringe trim) lend classic accents. Still, "one of the design statements we brought from the other two locations was the quilted-steel fireplace, inspired by antique alcohol kilns that might be found in the forest," says Basile.



The exterior of Soda & Swine, a space designed by San Diego-based Basile Studio. Photo: Zack Benson

And because it's a California campus, creating alfresco dining and drinking spaces was key. That signature fireplace soars 14 feet in the air, paired with a 30-foot-long communal fire table—all outside. That fireplace, says Basile, “allowed us to transport students away from campus life and build on the sense of community.”

Discover AD PRO

The ultimate resource for design industry professionals, brought to you by the editors of *Architectural Digest* →



Sense of place drove all design decisions at the new Soda & Swine location. Riffing off the craft-beer scene, a reverse tap system fashioned out of brass drops from the ceiling, says Basile. Other more technical design details are custom interior benches, “merging old craftsmanship and modern tools,” says Basile, designed in Rhino and brought into SolidWorks (two design-software programs) before being cut on CNC routers. These benches are also ideal for conversation-style seating and drop-in dining at offbeat hours, both characteristics of campus life. “All of the finishing was done by hand. I think this is where the future of design is because you can do something completely intricate and well-done without it being too costly,” says Basile.







The space has a warm feel because of the wood walls, along with moments of verdant harmony. Photo: Zack Benson

How has college dining changed over the last 10 or 15 years and how can a project like this inform other collegiate hospitality projects? “The buffet line doesn’t really cut it anymore. Our custom design flips the narrative and allows students to feel elevated in an unexpected setting,” says Basile.

Explore [architecture](#)

[READ MORE](#)
