

# COUPA CAFE

**Rebranding Case Study**  
Written & Designed by Alex Fitzpatrick

# WHAT IS COUPA CAFE?

## BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

### Who are they?

Coupa Cafe is a local chain of coffee shops and restaurants located in Palo Alto, California, about 30 miles south of San Francisco. It has seven different locations, two of which are in downtown Palo Alto, and the other five spread around the Stanford University campus. While they are mostly known for their unique coffee beverages, they also feature Venezuelan cuisine for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, along with an extensive beer and wine list at their two full service restaurants.



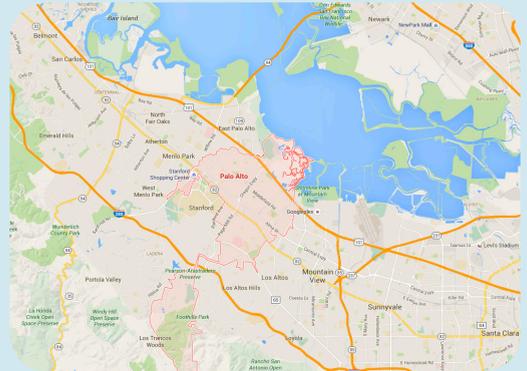
The entrance and patio of one of their downtown Palo Alto locations.



Original Coupa Cafe logo.

### About Palo Alto

Located on the southern end of the San Francisco Bay, Palo Alto is a suburban college and tech town in California. It is home to the prestigious Stanford University, as well as several tech giants such as Hewlett Packard, Tesla Motors, PayPal, Skype and Pinterest.



With a year-round population of around 66,000, not counting the students at the University, it is a fairly decent sized city. While being one of the more expensive cities in the United States, it is also known for being one of the most well-educated. Most of its residents work in the surrounding tech companies, the University, or they commute to San Francisco. Palo Alto received its name from the coastal redwood tree, the "El Palo Alto."

## BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH, cont'd

### Primary Customer Base

Their primary customers vary by location, but across the board are typically college students or workers in the many surrounding companies. In the early hours, they are looking for a quick cup of coffee and possibly a bite to eat, but all other times of day they are using the seating inside the restaurants to go about their daily business, be it studying, work, or socializing.

To get a good idea of what the majority of people think of the restaurant, I visited Tripadvisor.com. Some of the most used words in reviews are:

- Arepas
- Crepes
- Great coffee
- Chai Tea
- Order at the counter
- Great atmosphere
- Laptop
- Stanford

### Why are you telling me all of this?

I have been assigned to re-brand this coffee shop for an assignment in my graphic design program. The first step to rebranding anything is to do as much research as possible. This includes researching the brand, its competition and the area around it, along with its customer base.

As noted above, I used Tripadvisor to do much of the research of the customer base of Coupa Cafe, as it is 3,200 miles away on the opposite coast of the United States. Still, this helped me gauge well on the kind of consumers who go there, and why they go there.



The original Coupa Cafe in downtown Palo Alto.

### Competition

In town, they have competition from many other small coffee shops in a few block radius, including a few locations of larger chains like Starbucks and Peet's. On the Stanford campus, Coupa Cafe is the only coffee shop available that is not run by the school.

Street fair on Ramona Street in Palo Alto.



# DESIGN PROCESS

## IDEAS AND SKETCHES

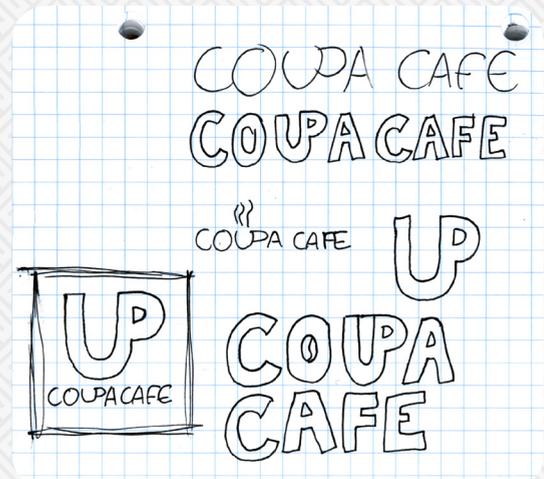
### Why are you rebranding Coupa Cafe?

Coupa Cafe, as they stand, have a very successful business, and are pretty recognizable in the Palo Alto area. However, as with any brand, a refresher is always good. Their current branding is very 1990's, and what is to be expected from a local coffee shop. However, they have grown to be much more than that, with full service restaurants and even a traveling food cart on a local golf course. In order to improve the brand, the first step would be modernizing it, in a way that shows the public that they are more than just a breakfast cafe. With their USP being their specialty Venezuelan menu items, I focused on that for a design point.

### My Design Process

After my initial research, as noted on the past two pages, I look at where their affordances and limitations are, along with their unique selling propositions. This helps me gauge where to start, and what needs improving. I feel that while already a successful business, Coupa Cafe needs to be modernized and shown as a cafe as well as a full service restaurant. I began sketching some ideas, and found one solid solution to play off of. Once I finished this, I brought

it into Adobe Illustrator to further expand on my idea. In Illustrator, I like to make several different versions of my sketches, allowing me to see the progression of my work, and giving me the option to revisit past ideas that could be successful.



Initial branding sketches. I like to test variations of ideas that I like on paper before attempting anything digital.

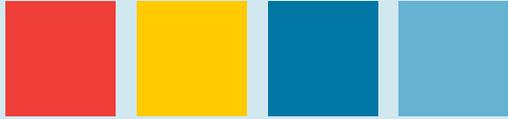
### What are those terms you're using?

Affordances, limitations and USP's (unique selling propositions) are all UI/UX terms. UI stands for user interface, and UX means user experience.

- UX helps enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by improving ease of use and interaction with the product.
- Affordances are the things that work for the brand, and how they continue to be successful.
- Limitations are what hold the brand back, not necessarily a negative point but something that the brand is not too successful at.
- USP is the unique selling proposition, or what makes their brand stand out amongst the competition.

## Color Palette

The color palette for this rebranding was based on two things: their original logo and the Venezuelan flag. The family that started Coupa Cafe came from Venezuela, and much of the menu is cuisine from that area.



The colors were sampled from both the country's flag and the Coupa Cafe logo, and slightly muted down to fit in more with modern design standards. The blend of cool and warm colors are very inviting to all types of people and can be easily recognizable from a distance.



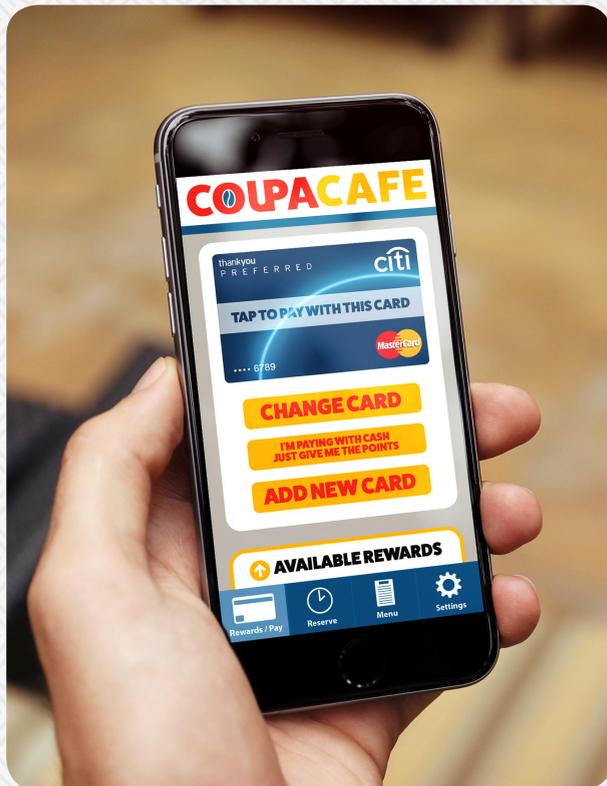
## COMPUTER AND COLORING



# FINAL PRODUCT

## DIGITAL PRODUCT MOCKUP

The final step to rebranding Coupa Cafe was applying the new identity to several different practical applications, both digital and physical. Digitally, I recreated their desktop homepage, and a mobile app interface. For physical products, I created a Keurig® K-Cup and a box, plus a paper to-go coffee cup.



# PHYSICAL PRODUCT MOCKUP





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