



CASE STUDY
THE CHARLIE
SANTA ANA, CA

CATEGORY: Mixed-Use **UNITS:** 228
BUILDING TYPE: Wrap **CLUBHOUSE:** 10,900 sf

Located in Orange County, California, just 40 minutes south of Los Angeles, The Charlie OC is a vibrant urban infill community offering proximity to a variety of transportation lines, retail, and entertainment venues. Occupying 3.91 acres, the mixed-use development features 228 units and 4,248 square feet of ground-level retail with street-level plaza space, in a 4- and 5-story wrap- structure.

Designed as a lifestyle property, The Charlie comes with a robust amenity package that includes a 60-foot lap pool and spa, a 2,000 square foot state-of-the-art fitness center, a club room with outdoor dining area; a dog run; outdoor/indoor children's play center; co-working spaces; and a rooftop lounge with sweeping views of the city and Disneyland fireworks.

Downtown Santa Ana is lively with several entertainment options, from movies, clubs, and bars, to a monthly art show, street-style food, and festivals. Entertainment options are quite eclectic, yet cater to everyone. With a variety of restaurants and markets, Santa Ana boasts a melting pot of culturally diverse foods, making shopping and dining options more plentiful and varied.





CHALLENGES

The first step when starting any project is the research or programming phase. After getting to know the client's needs, desires, and inherent aesthetic, we identified design intent and purpose.

As with most apartment communities, often renters share a floor with multiple neighbors, but don't take the time to know their names or say hello. Our client wanted to allow residents to break down common social barriers and create multiple ways to connect through an environment that encourages community engagement and conversation as well as one that expresses the artistic and eclectic vibe of downtown Santa Ana.

Due to tight budget restraints and low ceiling heights, the HPAD team had to create a vertical focus to ultimately activate the space of the combined clubhouse and lobby area. Additionally, considering how residents would interact in this interior space and travel from one end to the other in the most direct and efficient route possible was key to creating various social zones.

Another critical objective was finding a way to tie in the distinctive, artsy culture of downtown that is home to a remarkable number of fun and funky art galleries, theaters, boutiques, and sidewalk cafés.



SOLUTIONS

Since the lobby and clubhouse acted as the heart of The Charlie, the space planning, furniture, and materials were selected after the floor plan was set. This ample space was strategically broken up into zones, allowing more than one activity to take place within the same area.

The unique leasing wood partition, ceiling element and living wall near the main entrance add depth and visual interest while helping to section off two seating areas. Overhead, wood beams accent the spacious community kitchen for chef demonstrations. At the same time, floor to ceiling folding glass doors leverage the sunny California weather and invite residents to interact with the open-air courtyard and pool area.

Various outdoor environments create an extension of the Charlie's active social nature with a communal pool and barbecue area for larger community gatherings, and several smaller, more intimate, courtyard environments each with their own branded personality.



Inspired by the quirky vibe of the area, the client requested an oversized, acrylic giraffe act as the mascot of the property with the appropriate name – "Charlie." Besides adding a unique twist to the community, the client stated that "... the giraffe stands for the fun-loving, creative spirit that lives in all of us. We are a brilliantly crafted community that rises above the rest, just like our tall friend."

Various local graffiti artists were also commissioned to lend their distinctive point of view. Adrian Orozco utilized his skills in branding, lettering, and murals to the garage and parcel lockers while Free Humanity painted a positive message with multi-colored hearts on the gym wall. A vivid pink and blue portrait of Charlie can be found on the Sky Lounge deck wall, painted by local artist Carly Ealey.



Overall, a strong sense of community and vivacious local flair was achieved and maximized throughout the property by incorporating colorful interiors, artistic design elements, and the area's most community-driven collection of amenities.

