project::menu
Restaurant Menu Design Project

Assignment ::

For this project you will be creating a menu for a fictional restaurant. Menus require a strong attention to typographic detail as well as a clear easily-scannable hierarchy of information. The final trim size and style of the menu is up to you but take into consideration how it will be used and the mood and style of the restaurant. You will need to have at least a front and back to your menu, so at a minimum two pages are required.

This project has several components, including the creation of 16 thumbnail sketches, an in-class group critique, and finally a revised design that will be the basis of your final grade. Make sure your thumbnails indicate where information will go and have sketches of both the front and back. Each sketched idea should be distinct.

Menu Content ::

For this project, you will be working in small groups in class to develop content for this assignment. You must use the content that has been created by your group, and part of your grade will be based on how well you can represent your group's content. You will need to use the name and feel of your group's restaurant, but you do not need to use all the menu items feel free to create more if necessary.

Objectives ::

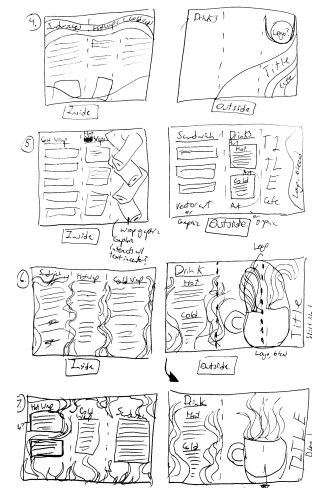As you work on your design, concentrate your efforts on the following areas:

- **Look and Feel**—Find a visual style that matches the mood put forth in the restaurant description.

- **Hierarchy**—Make sure the information is clear, organized, and easy to (ahem) digest. Use of space in menus is an especially important method to create hierarchy.

- **Attention to Detail**—Pay special attention to the typographic details.

Process ::

Begin this project by first determining your **document dimensions**, presentation method, folds (if required) and other page geometry decisions. Make sure your design can be printed on the VC Color Printer—the maximum size is 12×18, including document bleed.

Create a simple folding dummy using scratch paper or an inexpensive B/W print so you have a physical representation of your menu. Once your aspect ratio is set, quickly **sketch out 16 versions** of your menu (including rough content details). Select one of these sketches, and use it as the basis of your final design.

Successful, timely completion of the thumbnails, and attendance for the in-class critique will be factored into your final grade. Neatness counts, so make sure your final prints have a professional fit and finish. You will also be graded on your InDesign file's technical success, so make sure to use good print production practices. The use of color is recommended; if you design in just grayscale it must fit with the overall look and feel of your restaurant.

Resource Hints ::

- I recommend you print your menus on **heavyweight (cardstock)** paper. VC provides two styles for free—glossy and matte—in both 11×17 and 12×18 sizes (matte is my personal favorite). It is available in the paper cabinet—ask a VCPT worked for help if you need it. You must use the "Heavyweight Bypass" printer preset (single-sided or duplex) when printing to the VC Color Printer.

- You have the option of **"die cutting"** your menu—a vector shape that can be use with the VC Laser Cutter—to create unusual contours. It takes a moment to learn but can result in some interesting final products. If you think you'll use this option, please let me know early in the process.

Dates & Deliverables ::

We will be doing one round of revisions for this project. Your initial design is due at the beginning of class for critique on **Wednesday, April 16th, 2025** (Week 03). You must be present at the critique to receive full credit. The 16 thumbnail sketches are also due on this date—photos of your sketches should be submitted as a PDF to the class Drop Box on Google Drive.

For the critique, bring a **printed, full-color, trimmed and folded print** of your menu at full size. In addition to the printed version, place a High-Quality PDF of your design in your class Drop Box on Google Drive and name it `lastname_menu_design_r1.pdf`.

After the in-class critique, revise your design based on feedback from the class critique and prepare a new version. The final version of your menu is due at the beginning of class on **Monday, April 21st, 2025** (Week 04). Turn in one copy of your finished menu, printed in full color, trimmed & folded. No inkjet prints please—use the VC Color printer for all output. Additionally, turn in a packaged InDesign folder named `lastname_menu_design_r2`, making sure to include a High Quality PDF of your final menu.

Participation in the critique is worth 20 points, and the completed project is worth 100 points and is graded using the rubric attached to the project assignment on Canvas (120 points total).