



CATCHING SOME RAYS

Ugg surfs into Walt Disney World Resort's Disney Springs with a modern take on heritage.

By Eric Feigenbaum, Editorial Advisor/New York Editor



IN 1978, **BRIAN SMITH** arrived in Southern California from Australia with a suitcase filled with sheepskin surfer boots. Before long, the boots became a big hit, and Ugg was born. Fast-forward to May 2016: Its parent company Deckers Brands (Goleta, Calif.) called on Leicester, U.K.-based design agency Checkland Kindleysides to update and reinvigorate the Ugg brand with the opening of a 2828-square-foot retail space located in the new Town Center neighborhood of Disney Springs, at Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

Continued on page 26



The store's open layout encourages self-navigation and exploration, immersing shoppers in the casual Ugg lifestyle. Digital elements allow access to exclusive brand content.

The goal was to reframe the brand for a new audience with proprietary and recognizable imagery, offering a modern take on Ugg's heritage. It was also imperative to create a fresh and contemporary design solution that would be scalable and translatable worldwide. Recalling its California roots, the concept was inspired by the relaxed feel of a West Coast ranch or beach house.

"We wanted a modern, open plan with no barriers; an open living area that was theatrical in feel," said Joe Evans, creative director, Checkland Kindleysides. "The store is a relaxing social environment that radiates the Ugg brand's luxurious warmth, engages through sensorial brand storytelling and invites you to enjoy the good things in life with good people."

The resultant aesthetic offers a modern twist to midcentury design sensibilities with the use of horizontal, rectilinear lines in the fixtures, furniture and ceiling treatments. Its layout omits barriers, allowing customers to navigate the store in his or her own journey of discovery. In keeping with the brand's DNA,



A natural color palette, inspired by “skylines across the world,” creates a calm, serene atmosphere, ideal for vacationers (and locals) visiting Disney Springs.

there is a strong connection to nature, with doors that open to a grand panoramic vista and the use of diffused natural light entering the environment from various angles.

A series of digital graphics strategically positioned throughout the space offers a sense of tranquility and a connection to the great outdoors, while identifying

in-store destinations. Another vital element of the design is the feel of a communal space akin to an open kitchen or lounging area around a pool. Evans adds, “It was important to create a social area that is comforting. A space where one can try product, but also engage in dialogue.”

The most daunting challenges were climate-related. Florida is routinely subject to high heat, humidity and hurricanes during certain times of the year, so exterior materials had to be fit for climate extremes, and window panes had to be small enough to withstand strong winds. As a result, the storefront has a permanent architectural feel with sustainable hardwood and stucco surface treatments. Another hurdle was quickly changed into an asset: The footprint of the store combined two individual units with two distinct entrances. While an unusual scenario, this helped to control traffic and identify destination points.

With the Ugg flag planted securely in the Sunshine State, its iconic “sunflake” logo, imprinted on the sole of each boot, is creatively applied throughout the environment in a theatrical gesture that projects the spirit of the brand, its heritage and its future direction. ▴