

Naturally Good

The Goods Mart may be mini, but it is mighty in its mission to bring goodness to its customers and community By Danielle Romano



Photos by Wyatt Conlon

The Goods Mart is designed to be a fresh, socially-conscious rethink of the traditional convenience store, bringing better-for-you options to the neighborhood and building an authentic community.

SUPERMARKETS LIKE WHOLE FOODS MARKET and Trader Joe's have become synonymous options for health-conscious consumers who prefer shopping for everyday essentials in a neighborhood-inspired setting. But what about consumers of the same caliber in the convenience channel?

Enter The Goods Mart, a new kind of convenience store that is dedicated to bringing better-for-you options to the neighborhood, while building an authentic community and inspiring good.

The Goods Mart is the brainchild of Rachel Krupa, who drew her inspiration for the mini-mart concept from growing up in rural Michigan, where she and her family treated the local Sunoco gas station and convenience store not only as a one-stop shop for picking up home staples like milk, eggs and toilet paper, but also as a social catchup spot.

Combining childhood nostalgia and her love of c-stores with a desire to do good by providing more than the “choose-the-lesser-of-two-evils” options, Krupa opened the doors to The Goods Mart on April 17 in Silver Lake, Calif.

“I’m shaking up the archaic 7-Eleven model with a fresh, socially-conscious rethink of the convenience store. ... With looks between shocked and puzzled, my friends asked me why I would create a brick-and-mortar. My answer was simple: I want to do

good,” explained Krupa, who is also founder of Krupa Consulting, a boutique food and wellness public relations firm.

Putting the “Good” in The Goods Mart

When it came to curating the space and product selection of The Goods Mart, Krupa was inspired by the restaurants, snack brands and wellness thought leaders she works alongside at Krupa Consulting, whom she describes as consciously created businesses passionate about ingredient quality and ethical sourcing.

“I’ve been lucky to work with incredible startups in the natural space that have taught me quality matters. As I became more educated on ingredients, sourcing and the food system, I realized how important it is to have food with real ingredients. Not only does it taste better, but it’s also better for your body,” she said.

When dreaming up the reimagined neighborhood store design, Krupa wanted to create a space that was familiar yet different. She and her design team opted for black and white tones so that products would appear to pop off the shelves. In a similar manner, she wanted the store to be bright and clean to represent the kind of products available there.

To bring to life the concept of “good” and “community” in its aesthetics, the store is made with as many recycled materials as

At a Glance The Goods Mart

Location: 3140 Sunset Blvd., Silver Lake, Calif.

Size: 900 square feet

Unique features: 300-plus mission-driven, better-for-you products that are also environmentally friendly; a community “jungle” garden; and Square at checkout, where guests can use the tip function to donate to local charities



Photo by Wyatt Conlon



Photo by Sydney Yorkshire



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Products must check off a list of core standards before being stocked at The Goods Mart, including BPA-free packaging.

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— Rachel Krupa, The Goods Mart

possible and features a community “jungle” garden that was designed by local landscape architect Terremoto. The garden functions as a seating area for guests to enjoy a cup of coffee, read a newspaper or talk with friends.

Krupa also anticipates using this space to host intimate gatherings that spotlight the local chefs who make the prepackaged sandwiches, burritos and salads for the store.

Adhering to the “good” part of The Goods Mart, Krupa’s philosophy is simple: If given an option to do good, people will. And she’s giving her customers that option.

“Using Square at checkout, we’re using the tip function as a way for customers to give to local charities that will rotate each quarter,” she pointed out. “We’ve also partnered with Lunch on Me, which will move food within 24 hours of expiration from shelves to the hands of those who are homeless.”

Knowing that better food and products come with a higher price tag, Krupa’s mission is for The Goods Mart to be accessible to everybody. She makes this possible by democratizing the products the store carries and making it a place where anyone can shop regularly. For example, an 8-ounce cup of La Colombe drip coffee is available for \$1.25, while the 12-ounce option rings up at a flat \$2 price point.

Mission-Driven Products

At The Goods Mart, balanced accessibility meets plant-friendliness. More than 300 great-tasting, mission-driven products have been curated that fit into a range of budgets, fit the better-for-you bill and are better for the environment.

Products must check off a list of core standards before being shelved: free from artificial colors, flavors, sweeteners, growth hormones and pesticides; made from humanely-raised animal proteins that are nitrate-, antibiotic- and GMO-free; and come in BPA-free packaging.

In fact, single-serve plastic bottles are prohibited on the



Photo by Wyatt Conlon



Day by Day, Into the Future

As the founder of two businesses, Krupa manages her time bouncing between the store and her office. Her day begins and ends at The Goods Mart.

In the morning, she'll chat with the store's team member working that day and grab coffee and snacks for the Krupa Consulting team. She makes her way back to The Goods Mart at the end of the day to check in on products, look at feedback and explore new ways to improve the store's operational systems. Additionally, she spends two days a week working out of the store and is there on the weekends.

Thanks to the direction provided by her business management and operational consultant teams, who have helped her learn the ins and outs of the business and product inventory management, Krupa keeps a steady hand on running both businesses.

Next up: She is looking to expand The Goods Mart concept.

"From its conception, The Goods Mart has been a life-changing, immersive learning experience for me, and Silver Lake. We're going to open more locations, look to launch new brands, and build community in all of the neighborhoods where we open doors," she said. **CSN**

Rachel Krupa created The Goods Mart by combining her love of convenience stores with her desire to do good.

shelves, according to Krupa.

The single-store operator is also focused on providing her customers with transparency. In-store, an iPad is mounted on the wall and plays videos from brands The Goods Mart carries to give guests the opportunity to learn more about the products they're buying and consuming.

To that end, the product mix available at The Goods Mart includes:

- Upcycled "ugly" organic fruits and vegetables;
- Freshly baked, gluten-free goods from Sweet Laurel;
- Organic slushies from Kelvin Slush Co. that are served in paper cups;
- Prepackaged sandwiches, burritos and salads prepared by local chefs;
- An array of snacks that extends into salty, sweet and alternative, such as chips, crackers, cookies, jerky and candy; and
- C-store staples, like milk, eggs, toilet paper and paper towels.