NAMING RECOMMENDATION

Penpal

Renaming Daily Grind Club, Austin. Prepared with Brand Naming, by Brand Professor

Rename Daily Grind Club to Penpal: it turns the note you already write about each farm into the name, and because it does not describe coffee, it is the kind of word that can be protected, which Daily Grind is not. The register search below still has to confirm it.

Why this name works strategically

You are renaming because "Daily Grind" describes the product and is shared with cafés across the country. Penpal says nothing about coffee, so it is a stronger kind of mark by its nature: a real word used outside its usual place. It points at what is true and different about you, a person who writes to each subscriber about the farm their bag came from, and it never needs a "bean" pun, "brew", "grind" or "Co." to do it.

Why it fits the brand

It is friendly in the plainest way: a pen pal is someone who writes back. Two syllables, one way to say it, and a picture everyone already holds. It also fits the texts your subscribers get. A text from Penpal reads like a note from a friend, which is the relationship the pause-by-text feature already sets up. My reasoning, not tested with subscribers: because the name describes the relationship rather than the product, it is the shortlist name most likely to feel like the same company under a new name.

The risks

- The exact .com, penpal.com, has been registered since 1998. penpalcoffee.com is registered and parked on a domain marketplace; its price was not shown to my look-up. drinkpenpal.com, penpalroasters.com and penpalcoffeeclub.com showed no registration record on 22 November 2026.
- "Pen pal" is a common phrase, so you will share search results with pen-pal apps and letter-writing sites. People will find you by "Penpal coffee", not by "Penpal" alone.
- The trademark register has not been searched. Mark strength is a desk judgement; a live PENPAL mark for coffee or subscriptions would end it.
- "Curious, a bit nerdy" is not in the name. That work falls to the farm notes and the bag.

Next steps (30 days)

- Run the US trademark search before anything else: tmsearch.uspto.gov, exact "PENPAL", plus "PEN PAL", "PEN-PAL", "PENPALS" and sound-alikes, in Class 30 (coffee) and Class 35 (retail and subscription services). Then take the name to a qualified trademark attorney for a full search and a written opinion.
- Ask the marketplace for the price of penpalcoffee.com. If it is within your $3,000, buy it; if not, register one of the unregistered forms above. A domain is cheap and reversible, so it is safe to secure now.
- Hold the business-name registration and any trademark filing until the attorney's view is in. Those cost more and a filing can be opposed.
- Check the social handles you plan to use on each platform. None was named in the brief, so none was checked.
- Lock the spelling: one word, capital P only, "Penpal".
- Brief your designer with the colours you are keeping, and plan a "formerly Daily Grind Club" line on bags and texts for the first few months so subscribers see one company.

The test matrix

Name	How it sounds aloud	Remembered a day later	Fit with the brief	Ownability: trademark	Ownability: domains and handles	Likely subscriber reaction (reasoning)	Room for a visual identity	Overall
Penpal	Strong: two syllables, one reading	Strong: concrete, familiar image	Strong: friendly, and it is the farm note	Strong (real word used out of place); trademark not yet searched	Concern: exact .com taken, coffee .com parked for sale	Strong: reads as a person writing to you	Strong: envelopes, stamps, handwriting, airmail stripes in your colours	Recommend
Farmletter	Strong: two plain words	Concern: blurs with "farm newsletter"	Strong: names the farm note directly	Concern (close to describing a feature); trademark not yet searched	Concern: .com parked, coffee .com unregistered	Concern: may read as a newsletter, not coffee	Concern: overlaps Penpal's letter idea, long on a bag	Runner-up
Kurio	Concern: "KYUR-ee-oh" or "KOO-ree-oh"; typed as "Curio"	Strong: short, distinctive K	Concern: says curious, indirectly	Strong (reshaped word); trademark not yet searched	Concern: .com parked, coffee .com unregistered	Concern: a children's tablet already trades as Kurio	Strong: specimen labels, a cabinet of curiosities	Hold
Fincara	Concern: stress unclear in US English	Concern: no meaning for most US subscribers yet	Concern: "farm" only to Spanish speakers	Strong (invented word); trademark not yet searched	Concern: .com for sale, coffee .com unregistered	Concern: the biggest jump from a plain-English name	Strong: farm maps, terraced hillsides	Hold
Daytum	Concern: heard once, written "Datum"	Concern: the wordplay needs explaining	Concern: roast date and an echo of "Daily", indirect	Strong (reshaped word); trademark not yet searched	Concern: .com is a live data-tracking service, coffee .com unregistered	Concern: may read as a data app	Strong: date stamps, calendar grids	Cut
Notery	Concern: heard as "notary"	Concern: likely remembered as "Notary"	Concern: notes, but notaries feel formal	Strong (reshaped word); trademark not yet searched	Concern: .com registered, redirects to an unavailable page	Concern: paperwork, not friendly	Concern: seals and stamps lean official	Cut

Weighted scores

Weights used: how it sounds 15, remembered 20, fit 20, ownability 30, subscriber reaction 10, visual room 5, raised for ownability because your top constraint is protecting the name. No trademark register could be searched here, so the raised ownability weight rests on mark strength and on domains, not on a register search. Strong = 5, Concern = 3, Weak = 1; each score is rating ÷ 5 × weight. Ownability uses the lower of its two parts.

Name	Sounds (15)	Remembered (20)	Fit (20)	Ownability (30)	Reaction (10)	Visual (5)	Total /100
Penpal	Strong 15	Strong 20	Strong 20	Concern 18	Strong 10	Strong 5	**88** (trademark not yet searched)
Farmletter	Strong 15	Concern 12	Strong 20	Concern 18	Concern 6	Concern 3	**74** (trademark not yet searched)
Kurio	Concern 9	Strong 20	Concern 12	Concern 18	Concern 6	Strong 5	**70** (trademark not yet searched)
Fincara	Concern 9	Concern 12	Concern 12	Concern 18	Concern 6	Strong 5	**62** (trademark not yet searched)
Daytum	Concern 9	Concern 12	Concern 12	Concern 18	Concern 6	Strong 5	**62** (trademark not yet searched)
Notery	Concern 9	Concern 12	Concern 12	Concern 18	Concern 6	Concern 3	**60** (trademark not yet searched)

Two close calls were decided by tiebreakers. Farmletter (74) and Kurio (70) are within 5 points: Farmletter takes runner-up on the first tiebreaker, the clearer signal, since it names the farm note outright. Fincara and Daytum tie at 62: Fincara holds on distinctiveness and on first-pass ownability, since its .com is for sale while daytum.com is a working service.

Cut before scoring, for breaking your deal-breakers: Daily Grind Coffee Co. (uses "grind" and "Co.").

Fit is capped where the brief is thin. Values and a positioning line are not yet defined, so fit was judged on the personality and the four facts about the service, and only names that plainly say one of those things rate Strong.

The cross-check (run 22 November 2026, first pass only)

- **Trademark:** Trademark not yet searched. The US register's search page loaded, but its results need scripts my tools cannot run, so no register was queried. Run the search listed in next steps.
- **Domains:** penpal.com registered since 1998; the page my look-up reached did not show an active business. penpalcoffee.com registered in February 2025 and parked on a domain marketplace. drinkpenpal.com, penpalroasters.com and penpalcoffeeclub.com showed no registration record. Social handles: not checked in this environment, since none was named in the brief.
- **Search results:** a web search for "Penpal coffee" found no coffee business by that name. It found pen-pal apps, a site called Penpal Café that matches people as pen pals, and a barista stationery kit sold as the "Penpal Club" kit, listed as sold out. Not a collision in coffee, but you will share the first page with them.
- **Pronunciation:** US English, the only language in the brief. One reading, no awkward sound, no slang meaning found in a first pass. Read alone on a bag, in an ad and as the sender of a text, it reads as a name, not an instruction.
- **Visual feasibility:** holds. Envelopes, stamps, postmarks, handwriting and airmail stripes all give a designer room, and airmail stripes can carry the colours you are keeping.

The leader held. No promotion was needed.

The runner-up: Farmletter

It ties Penpal on how it sounds and on fit: it names the note you write about each farm more directly than any other name on the list.

It lost on memory, on likely reaction and on ownability. Two plain words that sit close to "farm newsletter" are harder to remember as a brand, may read as a newsletter rather than coffee, and come closer to describing a feature, which makes the mark weaker by its nature.

Farmletter becomes the choice if the register search turns up a live PENPAL mark for coffee or subscriptions, or if you cannot get a Penpal domain you are happy with inside your $3,000. farmlettercoffee.com showed no registration record on 22 November 2026.

Names to cut

- **Notery:** heard aloud it is "notary", and a notary means paperwork, the opposite of friendly and not snobby.
- **Daytum:** heard once, it gets written as "Datum", and daytum.com is already a working data-tracking service.
- **Daily Grind Coffee Co.:** breaks two of your own rules ("grind" and "Co."), and it rates weak as a mark because it is descriptive: "daily grind" is an everyday phrase and "coffee" names the product, so it carries the same protection problem you are renaming to escape. A logo does not change the words.

Hold: **Kurio** comes back if both letter names fail the register search; it is the strongest mark on the list after Penpal. **Fincara** comes back only if you decide protection matters more than continuity for current subscribers.

Dropped before the shortlist, after the quick search: Postmark (Postmark Cafe in Brooklyn roasts and sells its own coffee) and Almanac (two coffee roasters already trade under it).

The limits

- No trademark register was searched. Every status here is first-pass, and no name is cleared. Only a qualified trademark attorney can give you that view.
- Classes 30 and 35 are a starting point; the attorney confirms the full list.
- Social handles were not checked, because none was named in the brief.
- Subscriber reactions in the matrix are my reasoning, not what subscribers said. A recall test with real subscribers would replace them.
- The brief has no values, no positioning line, no clear picture of who subscribes and no three-to-five-year plan. Fit was judged on less than it could be. If the plan later includes cafés or wholesale, check that Penpal still stretches.
- Visual identity work is a separate job; the directions above are starting points.

The next checkpoint

- Before you print a bag: the attorney's written view on Penpal is in.
- At launch: search "Penpal coffee" monthly and respond to any new business that appears.
- At 6 months: ask new subscribers how they heard of you and whether they recall the name unprompted.