Project 2: Website Proposal for Blissful Bakes

1. Client and Topic

Blissful Bakes is a home-based bakery specializing in tarts, treats, and custom cakes. While cakes are offered for custom design requests, the bakery's main focus is on artisan tarts, cheesecakes, scones, and gluten-free desserts. This website will provide an intuitive, visually engaging platform where customers can browse products, place orders, and use a dedicated cake-building tool for custom cake orders. The website proposal has been designed with usability, aesthetics, and accessibility in mind to reflect the bakery's whimsical yet professional brand.

2. Development Process and Engagement

The website is being created for myself, so development will rely on research, testing, and iterative design:

- **Competitor Research:** I reviewed bakery websites such as Bakery Lorraine, Bakery Nouveau, Thomas Keller's Bouchon, Boudin Bakery, and Dominique Ansel. I identified common UX frustrations: non-clickable images, a PDF-only menu, unclear pricing, multi-step ordering confusion, and excessive pop-ups. I also noted great qualities like high-quality photos, clear allergen icons, and smooth cart experiences. All the research helped me make design choices to prioritize clickable gallery items, transparent pricing, and an easy checkout.

- **Customer Research:** Based on personal experience and informal discussions with local parents and friends, I identified the importance of comparing multiple options in a cart before finalizing a purchase, so I want users to be able to do that here too.

- **UX Methods:** I will use sketches to narrow down what wireframe to create in Adobe XD to make into a prototype. Feedback sessions with family, friends, and the other moms at the bus stop will test usability and content clarity.

- **Content Creation:** Original photos and descriptions of baked goods will be used, supplemented with stock/AI images as placeholders as needed for Project 4. All text, allergen notes, and hover-over tooltips will be written to ensure accuracy.

3. Testing

Testing will ensure the website functions correctly and provides a smooth user experience:

- **Devices/Browsers:** Chrome, Edge, Firefox, Safari, and phones (Apple and Android).

- **Tasks for Testers:** Adding items to cart, customizing cakes, comparing selections, completing checkout, using search and navigation, and viewing gallery details.

- **Criteria:** Ease of navigation, clarity of pricing, mobile responsiveness, accuracy of cart totals, and overall user confidence in completing orders.
- **Iterative Testing:** Feedback from testers will guide adjustments. Example: ensure hover-over details for frosting types display clearly on mobile without clutter.

4. Description of Business and Website

Blissful Bakes provides artisan-quality desserts, focusing on tarts, gluten-free options, and specialty pastries, with custom cakes offered on request. The goal of the business is to provide high-quality, visually appealing desserts while offering convenience and flexibility to customers.

The website purpose is to:

- Showcase the full range of baked goods.
- Allow customers to place orders easily, including using the dedicated cake-builder tool.
- Provide clear pricing, ingredient, and allergen information.
- Highlight seasonal specials and promotions.

Target Audience:

- **Primary:** Adults 25–50, primarily parents, party planners, and dessert enthusiasts, local area delivery/pickup. They value convenience, clear pricing, and visual cues. Most browse on mobile but prefer tablets/desktops for cake customization.
- **Secondary:** Ages 18–24 and 50+, interested in specialty desserts, seasonal treats, or gifting. Prefer a straightforward ordering experience, occasionally using desktop or mobile.

Impact on Design:

- Navigation is straightforward with a horizontal menu and dropdowns.
- Cake-builder is a separate tab, allowing complex customization without interfering with standard ordering.
- Hover-over tooltips explain options without cluttering the page.
- High-quality images, clear pricing, allergen icons, and seasonal highlights guide decisions.

Content:

- Mix of original photography and stock placeholders, text written by me.
- Seasonal updates several times a year; pricing and availability reviewed monthly.

5. Growth and Maintenance

Blissful Bakes will evolve with regular updates and feature expansion:

- **Seasonal Products:** Halloween, December holidays, Valentine's, spring break, and summer specials.

- **Monthly Updates:** Review prices, update product availability, and add new gallery images.

- **Technical Maintenance:** Check broken links, test cart accuracy, ensure mobile responsiveness.

- **Future Features:** Tutorials, short videos for cake techniques, and "buy again" functionality for returning customers.

- **Analytics:** Track page views, popular products, cart abandonment, and user behavior to inform improvements.

6. Goals and Objectives

Primary Goal:

- Simple, user-friendly ordering experience where gallery → product → checkout is intuitive.

Secondary Goals:

- Showcase full offerings beyond cakes like tarts, cheesecakes, scones, and gluten-free treats.

- Transparent pricing with running totals in the cake-builder.

- Mobile-friendly browsing with notes guiding users.

Tertiary Goals:

- Whimsical, approachable brand identity.

- Seasonal menus to encourage repeat visits.

- Reduce cart abandonment via easy comparison and adjustment.

- Accessibility support (keyboard navigation, readable fonts, alt text).

7. Organization

Pages/Subtopics:

- Home
- Specials
- Menu (Tarts & Treats)
- Cake Builder (separate tab)
- Checkout/Delivery
- Gallery
- Contact
- Policies (allergens, delivery, refunds)
- Blog/Specials
- Cart

Navigation: Column menu with dropdowns for sub-pages as needed

Page Layouts:

- Gallery: clickable images that offer adding items to cart.

- Cake Builder: interactive selections, real-time price updates, hover-over descriptions.

Wireframes & Sitemap: Wireframes will be created in Adobe XD with a prototype connecting page elements for flow/usability testing.

8. Security

- E-commerce checkout secured via SSL/HTTPS.

- Optional user accounts for repeat customers; guest checkout available.

- Encrypted payment processing and secure form validation.

- Limited admin access to update content.

- Optional compliance with GDPR/cookie policies to protect user data.

9. Web Hosting

Selection Criteria:

- Reliable uptime, supports HTML/CSS/JS, SSL, and e-commerce scripts.

- Responsive hosting for mobile optimization.

Technologies Needed:

- Shopping cart, SSL, responsive layout, potential video hosting for tutorials.

Scripting Support:

- HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript for interactive cake-builder, optional PHP or backend scripting for order management.

Domain:

- Domain will be made/chosen for memorability and simplicity. Something like BlissfulBakes.com or customizeyourbake.com would represent the brand and offerings.

10. Marketing and SEO

- **Marketing:** Social media promotion, Google Business listing, local search, seasonal campaigns.

- **SEO:**
  - ✓ Meta descriptions for each page.
  - ✓ Alt text for all images.
  - ✓ Keywords targeting local searches (e.g., "custom tarts near me").
  - ✓ Structured data for product pages and specials.

Link to XD Prototype:

https://xd.adobe.com/view/8a335be6-7326-4f13-9b4e-e4d146dd5f0b-df60/

Project Reflection

Wireframe with prototype were created in Adobe XD to ensure the layout would work for users. Competitor research highlighted the importance of clickable galleries, transparent pricing, and a mobile-first design. I had navigation challenges when integrating both standard menu ordering and the cake-builder tool without confusing users. You can order from either or both and it goes into the shopping cart just the same though, so after exploring avenues, I went back to original plan. Early feedback from family, friends, and local community members guided adjustments, especially around mobile layout and cake builder tool. New web designers might struggle with balancing visual appeal and usability. Iterative testing proved essential in avoiding common pitfalls like multi-step checkout confusion or unclear pricing displays.