Reflection

1. Which existing websites out there most inspired your design?

Markmanson.net- for coloring, use of white space and call to action

stilldrinking.org- for inspiration in getting the quirks of the site to match its vibe, for example having sarcastic link names. While this risks misleading some viewers, executed well overall the approach becomes part of a brand

Squarespace.com- just their templates and previews the vast majority of which seem to heavily use very large, clean image parallax backgrounds. This finally sold me on parallax

1. Which parts of the design are you most proud of?

Probably sounds silly since they’re both really easy, but my clean cut nav menu at the top and the parallax backgrounds are really eye-catching. Other than those, given my severe dearth of graphical design skills and talent I was surprised I was able to create a Wordmark I really like. Yes it uses 3 different fonts in one Wordmark and that will throw some people off, but I carefully choose the three fonts to communicate a singular message that indicates a quirky, retro-tech attitude.

1. What struggles did you encounter?

Mobile and media queries are a pain. I initially didn’t know parallax wasn’t supported on iOS and that threw me for a loop in regards to designing around them.

1. Which struggles did you encounter during page development?

Going back and incorporating media queries to build up to full size. To me it intuitively makes more sense to start at mobile, and then layer in ‘min-size’ arguments one by one. Doing this with a site already built with a lot of styling is not the easiest thing.

1. What did you learn from making your project responsive?

That extra effort and time spent on the conceptual design stage really pays off, and that starting mobile and expanding upward is a lot easier then converting a desktop to a mobile friendly experience.

Reviews

1. Squarespace.com/home/overview

Extremely clean layout with stark black and white color scheme that lets the example content pop, excellent for communicating the message that their product can make your content stand out. The scrawling script typography for the header “build it beautiful” I find distracting to the eye and a little difficult to read, and also that it clashes with the pristine fine-lines, sans-serif typography of literally everything else of the landing page. Navigation is also very clean, with an expanded able side-bar hamburger menu as if on a mobile site. This is good and creates a consistent experience and feel across all sorts of devices, that said this hamburger combined with several links at the top makes me feel like I don’t have a great grasp on the organizational flow of the site. If I want to buy something do I first go to a link in the hamburger? If I want to learn more before buying should I click “Build it Beautiful” before or after checking out the hamburger links? Not earth shattering issues but for me at least a cause of momentary uncertainty and hesitancy. Flow scrolling down the landing page though is excellent, with beautiful parallax backgrounds of examples really communicating the message and drawing your further down and in to the amazing content, all with a clear “Get Started” link in a fixed position in the top right to offer an out at any time.

Overall 4.5/5

+: beautiful and vivid layout that emphasizes the content and message, flow, navigation consistency

-: slight issues with typography and navigation

1. spectrumpowderworks.com/

(I would have done SpaceJam but there’s not way I could have possibly been objective)

Spectrumpowderworks loads up a landing page that immediately gives me vibes of amateur design. To begin with the layout, the logo at the top is not smoothly integrated into the gray background, creating a jarring experience further exacerbated by the apparent poor image quality of the wordmark. I think the text was trying to create some kind of effect, possibly relevant to what powdercoating actually looks like at some stage, but to me it makes the image feel undone, poorly executed, and further amateurish as not only is the image poorly done but the owner and designer were apparently too lazy to even care. The rest of the layout likewise gives me qualms about the expected standard of work. The two different shades of gray sandwiching the black is not a color palette that is easy on the eye, and the links at the bottom are in a third color of gray just slightly different enough to read, but not different enough to pop or be read easily. The typography for the wordpress and links is bland. It doesn’t say much, though at least the sans-serif font communicates some basic level of cleanliness and professionalism. The four layered images in the middle however with their sliding effect are not easy to view or use either. One must mouse over each one to display the full image and read where it takes you… Not good for a first impression, it almost looks at first like the images messed up rendering or someone improperly floated elements.

Overall 1/5

+: nav bar at the bottom (while hard to read due to color) is neatly laid out and in a consistent format, the sliding effect of the central images gives the site indicates at least some base level of flair and creativity, though overall it probably does more damage than good

-: everything else