

UX Rationale: WanderHome – Vacation Rental Homepage

1. Overview

WanderHome is a modern vacation rental homepage inspired by platforms like Airbnb, Vrbo, and Booking.com. The project's goal is to provide a fresh, engaging, and intuitive user experience while avoiding any direct replication of existing layouts. The result is a mobile-first, animation-enhanced, Tailwind CSS-based prototype that introduces the user to a new vacation rental brand through distinctive motion, layout clarity, and curated design.

2. User Journey

Splash Screen

The experience begins with a short animated splash screen. The WanderHome logo appears as a rocket-style animation involving a blue house icon that settles into the site title. This moment sets a friendly and memorable tone, offering brand recognition before the user even interacts with any UI.

Hero Section

Once the animation completes, users are welcomed with a fullscreen background image and a search box placed centrally within a translucent overlay. The form is compact, touch-friendly, and emphasizes quick discovery by location, date, and guest count.

Destination Highlights

A curated grid of featured cities like Paris, Bali, and New York introduces the user to globally attractive locations. This gives immediate value to the user and reinforces the travel theme.

Filterable Categories

Travelers often want to explore based on preferences. A scrollable category filter bar combined with listing cards allows users to refine their search and browse options like cabins, beach homes, or pet-friendly stays.

Call-to-Action and Trust Sections

The CTA block invites both hosts and travelers to engage with the platform, followed by a final trust-building segment featuring reviews, safety standards, and loyalty benefits.

3. Design Decisions

- **Responsiveness:** 4–5 breakpoints have been considered for mobile, tablet, and desktop. A hamburger menu appears in mobile views to maintain clean navigation.
- **Animations:** GSAP was used to add custom animations like the rocket-launch logo, fade transitions, and overall smooth scroll effects to delight the user.
- **Tailwind CSS:** Utility-first styling allows rapid layout changes while maintaining consistency across components. Colors, spacing, and typography are all tightly controlled.
- **Accessibility:** Sufficient contrast between text and background, button hover states, and responsive layouts help meet core accessibility guidelines.

- **Original Layouts:** While inspired by major platforms, none of the components directly clone or replicate their structure. For example, the CTA block layout, splash logic, and filtering categories are designed uniquely for WanderHome.
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4. Optional Component System (Optional)

If extended into a full design system, components like ListingCard, CategoryPill, HeaderNav, and HeroForm would be modularized for reuse. This could be implemented via Web Components or React in a scalable version of the product.

Conclusion

WanderHome's homepage brings together thoughtful UX, branding motion, and travel aspirations into one welcoming page. The decisions made here emphasize both form and function, paving the way for a full platform rollout.

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