



WEB DESIGN BY NUMBERS

AN INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDEBOOK

How to Use this Guidebook

When people go bird watching, 80% of their time is spent looking for birds. They're busy climbing up trees and trekking through fields. They don't bother studying up beforehand because they don't know which birds they'll encounter that day. When they see a bird they don't recognize, they consult their Peterson bird guide.

You probably see where I'm going with this. The best way to become a skilled birdwatcher is by practicing birdwatching. And the best way to get good at design is by designing.

I want you to use this guidebook as a reference tool. After you read it over, make sure you start practicing after. The sooner you start practicing, the sooner you'll get better. You'll certainly have some questions during this process, so when you do, come back to this guidebook for help.

best, Mason



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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

– Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

Novice designers often want to jump right into Photoshop when starting a new project; however, that puts you in a position of having to do research while you design which isn't as ideal. It will pull your brain in opposite directions. Doing your research is like going backpacking, the more you prepare up front, the fewer headaches you'll encounter later on. When you're prepared, you can focus on the design tasks in front of you.

You'll be tempted to skip doing research (I'm guilty of this!) but if you do, it will come back to pester you in some way and force you to change course – likely after you've already poured many hours into your design. If you do your research beforehand, you'll yourself save time later.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- The Creative Brief
- Competitive Analysis
- Mockup Work vs. Real Work
- Getting Inspired
- Wireframes

The creative brief

Reading the creative brief is the first step in creating a website. All agencies, design firms, and other creative places use them in some manner. The creative brief is a one to two-page document that sums up the deliverables of the project. Below is what it looks like at large, medium, and small creative firms. If you work at a startup or other non-design-

focused business, this section still applies, although it may vary slightly from the info below.

Large agency & design firm briefs

If you're at a big studio (50+ people), someone will provide you with a creative brief before you start a new project. Creative briefs at large companies usually come from a producer, brand person, or account person. That's because these people have a relationship with the client and understand the client's business objectives.

If you don't have a brief, ask for one! Otherwise, you won't know what the client expects, and you won't know what your design objectives are.

[Here](#) is a mock creative brief I made for TrueCar. It's identical to other briefs I've had in the past. Read it closely but don't let it intimidate you! The brief is meant to help you understand a long series of conversations the account team has had with the client.

Often there will be a meeting set up specifically for the creative team (designers, writers, creative directors) where the account team will go over the creative brief. This is called "getting briefed."

To summarize: At a big studio, it's the account teams job to define (with a creative brief) what the problem is that needs to be solved. And it's the designers job to come up with a creative solution.

Boutique shop briefs

If you're part of a medium-sized team (5-20 people), it's more likely that you'll be given the brief verbally by a coworker who met with the client. It would be great to have a brief written for you like at the bigger companies, but in my experience, shops of this size don't do this because it's not a task that will make the company money. Smaller places are much more concerned with efficiency and they prefer to keep people busy with revenue-generating tasks. Since you may be told the brief verbally, take notes and ask questions.

Individual briefs

In this scenario, you're in charge of the brief. You'll need to get into the client's head and figure out what problems she's trying to solve. Take good notes and summarize back to her the key things she's trying to accomplish. These will mainly be business goals.

It's good to write down these business goals because later on you'll come up with some wild and creative website ideas, some good, some bad. If you have the site's objectives written down, you'll be able to see how your ideas measure up.

Competitive analysis

Once you have the creative brief, you can start researching the competition. If you're part of a large team, sometimes the strategy department (if there is one) will have already done some of this work.

This competitive analysis exercise is to identify places where the competition is doing

poorly, or can't compete with your client. In the late 90's every computer was beige and ugly. Then Apple came along and made beautiful multicolored iMacs. Consumers took notice, but competitors didn't copy them because they didn't understand design. It was like a foreign language to them. But design was one of Apple's core strengths, so they ran with it.



Apple made these brightly colored computers because others couldn't.

Here's another example of competitive analysis. I once had an assignment where I had to design a new website for a custom home builder. When I printed out the websites and brochures of their competitors, every one of them used American flags or some kind of Normal Rockwell imagery.

Their competitors all looked the same. That informed our decision to push the client into having a more modern looking site. And it worked! Most of the their key website metrics improved after the new site launched.

The basic idea here is to look for places where

your design can significantly improve their bottom line.

Questions to ask when looking at the competition:

What does your client do well that the competition can't (like Apple in the late 90's.) Maybe your client manufactures their blue jeans in the U.S., unlike their competition. Highlight that!

What does the competition have in common?

If they all use photography on their site, consider doing illustrations. If they all use American flags on their site, think about going modern. Research the competition and write down your findings. You'll be surprised at how often this research will help shape the design direction of your website.

When should I copy the competition?
I won't pretend copying doesn't happen. I'm guilty of it. We once had a fashion client who loved the online retailer Nasty Gal. So we implemented a lot of the same features as Nasty Gal for the client's new site.

But after a while, the good parts of our site that were original and fresh lost their importance. We were measuring ourselves against Nasty Gal and not thinking for ourselves. It's difficult to be innovative while simultaneously copying others.

It's wrong to copy. But clients don't care

about the moral arguments against it. Hell, Samsung's entire business model is to copy other companies. A better argument is to tell your client that copying puts them in this mindset of being a follower. That's a dangerous place to be because consumers will be able to sniff that out and you'll lose their respect. They'll also pay you less money because your brand is weaker.

Our Nasty Gal copycat site didn't work out because when we launched, those features that we copied were gone from their site. Either they tried it and it didn't work, or users grew tired of it. Who knows.

Worse still, we didn't have a hypothesis or data that suggested we make each feature. So when it came time to judge if it should stay or go, there was nothing to measure it against because it was simply something that we had copied.

Mockup or real site?

This is an important step that often gets overlooked. We need to know the nature of the site we're designing before we can begin. Is this a mockup or a real site?

The creative brief should give you a sense of this in a section called "deliverables" or something similarly named. The scope of work is written here by the account team. It won't use the words "mockup" or "real", but it will say things like:

- **5-6 web pages needed for client's board meeting (a mockup site)**
- **20-30 page website (a real site)**

- Three different home page styles to be assessed for look and feel (a mockup site)
- Vendor will design and do front-end development of site (a real site)

It's important to get clarity on what kind of site you're designing. Because if it's a mockup site, you can use images from anywhere! This can dramatically improve the look of your design.

Mockup site

The goal of a mockup site is to give the client a glimpse of what their site could be. The designer can use imagery from anywhere. It doesn't matter that you're "stealing" images because they won't ever be on a live site. These images are called "for placement only" or F.P.O for short. They're meant to give a sense of what you want the site to look like it if the client gives the approval to make it real.

Real Site

If you know your website design will eventually go live, then it's a good idea to pick images that you'll be able to buy later. Stocksy.com is a useful resource, and occasionally gettyimages.com will have good stuff too. If the project has a small budget, keep that in mind while searching for imagery (Stocksy is cheaper than Getty).

[Here's more](#) about the difference between mockup and real sites, as well as some good places to find imagery.

Getting inspired

This step is to look for imagery that inspires you. It's meant to inspire you and form a path your design might take. When I see something I like, I'll drag it to an "inspiration" folder on my desktop.

Here are some places where I look for inspiration:

<http://mindsparklemag.com>

<http://designspiration.net/>

<http://ffffound.com/>

<http://awwwards.com/>

<http://thedsgnblog.com>

<https://dribbble.com/>

<https://www.behance.net/>

Sometimes this step will heavily inform your site design and sometimes it won't; I've had it go both ways. Don't feel bad if you don't feel "inspired" by what you've gathered.

Here's an example of the inspiration process:

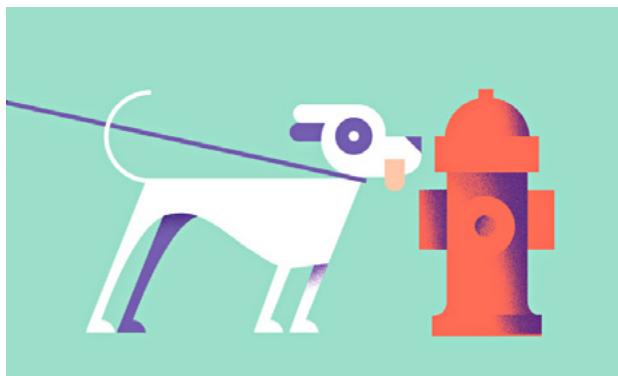
A few years ago, I had to design a new website for a mortgage company. I had a brief and the strategy dept. said they wanted the company to move to a more human, customer-centric approach with its messaging and how they did business. So we wanted the site to reflect that.

My first step was to look for examples of design that inspired me. Both related and

unrelated to homes, mortgages, etc. Together the creative team liked the idea of illustrations because they were friendly and none of the competition was doing it.

Specific inspiration

After deciding to go with illustrations, we narrowed our search to five illustrators. We finally decided on [Andrew Colin Beck](#) because his work was beautiful, had a friendly vibe, and he used these unique shadows which were subtle but gave objects a nice dimensional feel. [Here's](#) a zip file of the final five illustrators we considered if you're curious.



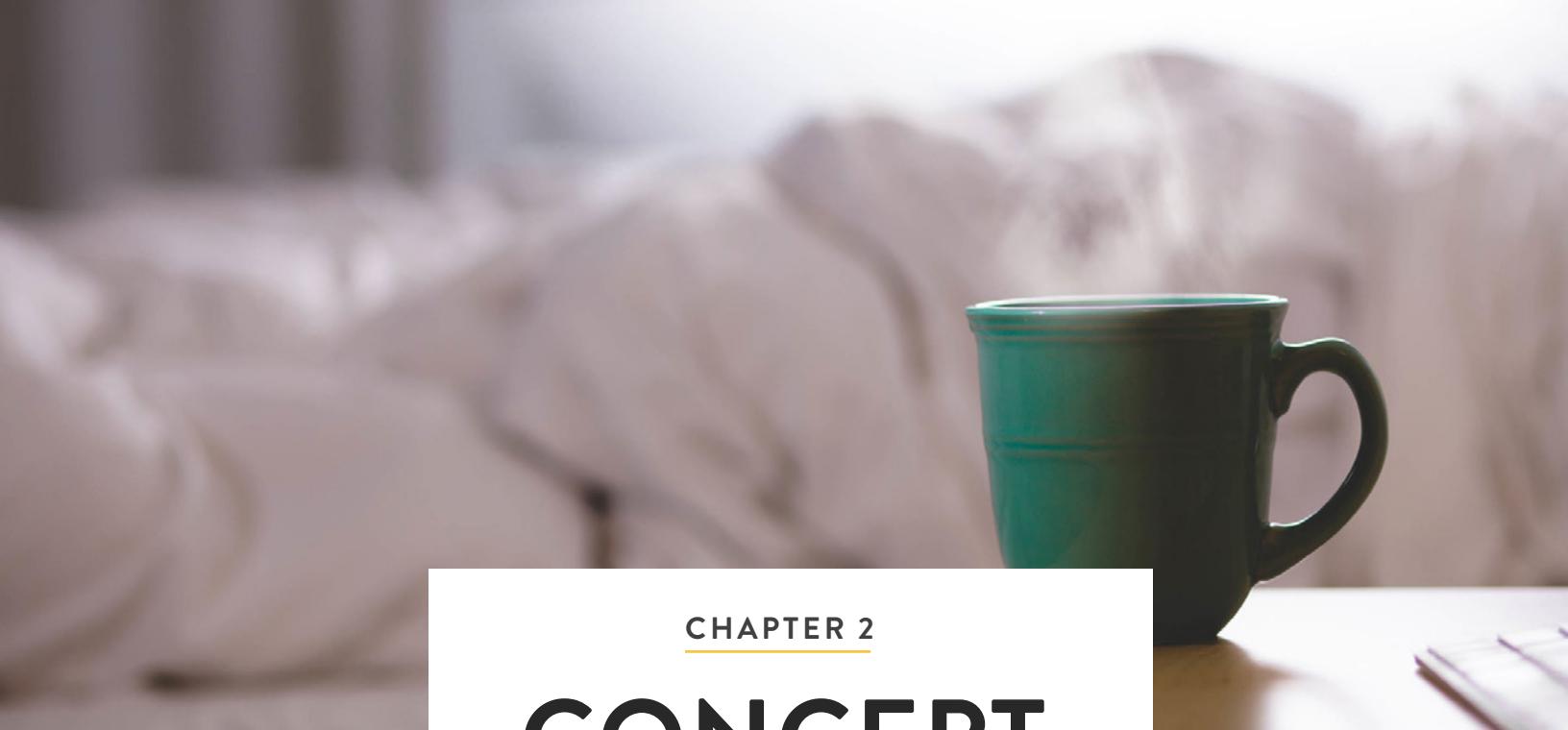
An Illustration by Andrew Beck

Wireframes

The last step in the research phase is getting wireframes from the UX team (if there is one). Sometimes you'll get wireframes when designing a site and sometimes you won't. Real sites are more likely to have wireframes than mockup sites. Larger sites are more likely to have them commissioned too.

For our purposes don't worry too much about wireframes yet. You need to sharpen your design chops first. Just know that wireframes

are meant to be a rough guideline about what elements should be on a page.



CHAPTER 2

CONCEPT

“Practice Safe Design, use a concept.”

– Petrula Vrontikis

Introduction

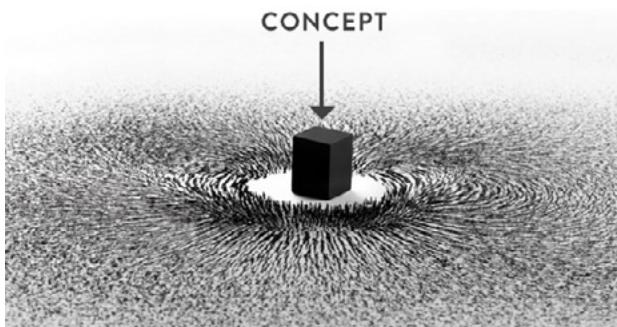
In graphic design, it's often useful to use a concept while designing. A concept is an idea or style that you build your website around. Concepts are valuable because they turn your website into a story. And as you may know, people love stories. It makes the content on your site more accessible.

In this chapter we will discuss:

- The Concept Magnet
- ‘Preserve’ case study
- What determines the concept
- Guess the concept exercises

The Concept Magnet

A good concept is like a magnet. It commands every element on the page. Typography, color, style, and copy – they're all attracted to the magnet and do what they're told. This is a good thing because it creates order. All of the



The magnet attracts everything around it

elements work together. Think of a themed wedding. When a bride chooses a concept, there are dozens of items that need to work together to support the idea. The invitations,

the cake, place settings, dresses, food, and photography - all map back to the central concept. The wedding theme is the magnet holds it all together. If the concept is vintage,



Everything here supports the wedding's concept

everything will look old. If the concept is beach themed, there will be plenty of starfish and seashells around.

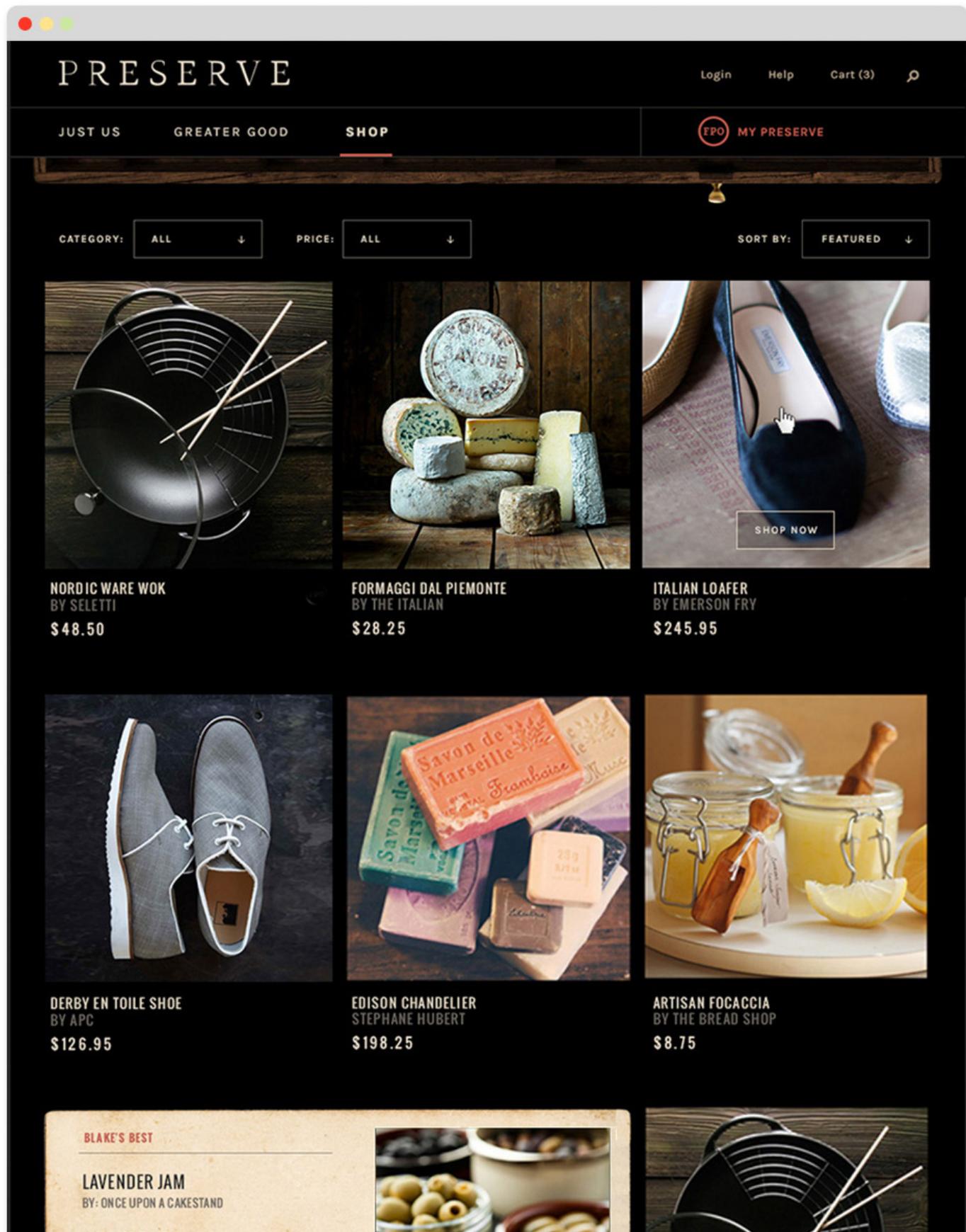
‘Preserve’ case study

Preserve is a website that is part editorial, part e-commerce. They highlight stories about woodworkers, tailors, blacksmiths, and other artisans. Each of these craftspeople makes their products from scratch.

Once the site's designer determined the purpose of the website from the creative brief, she decided that the concept for the site design should be “handmade”. She reasoned that if all the stories were going to be about these artisans, the site should reflect that.

From there she made many deliberate design choices, all of which mapped back to that concept. Look at the final site on the next few pages. Is the “handmade” concept evident?

Enlarge



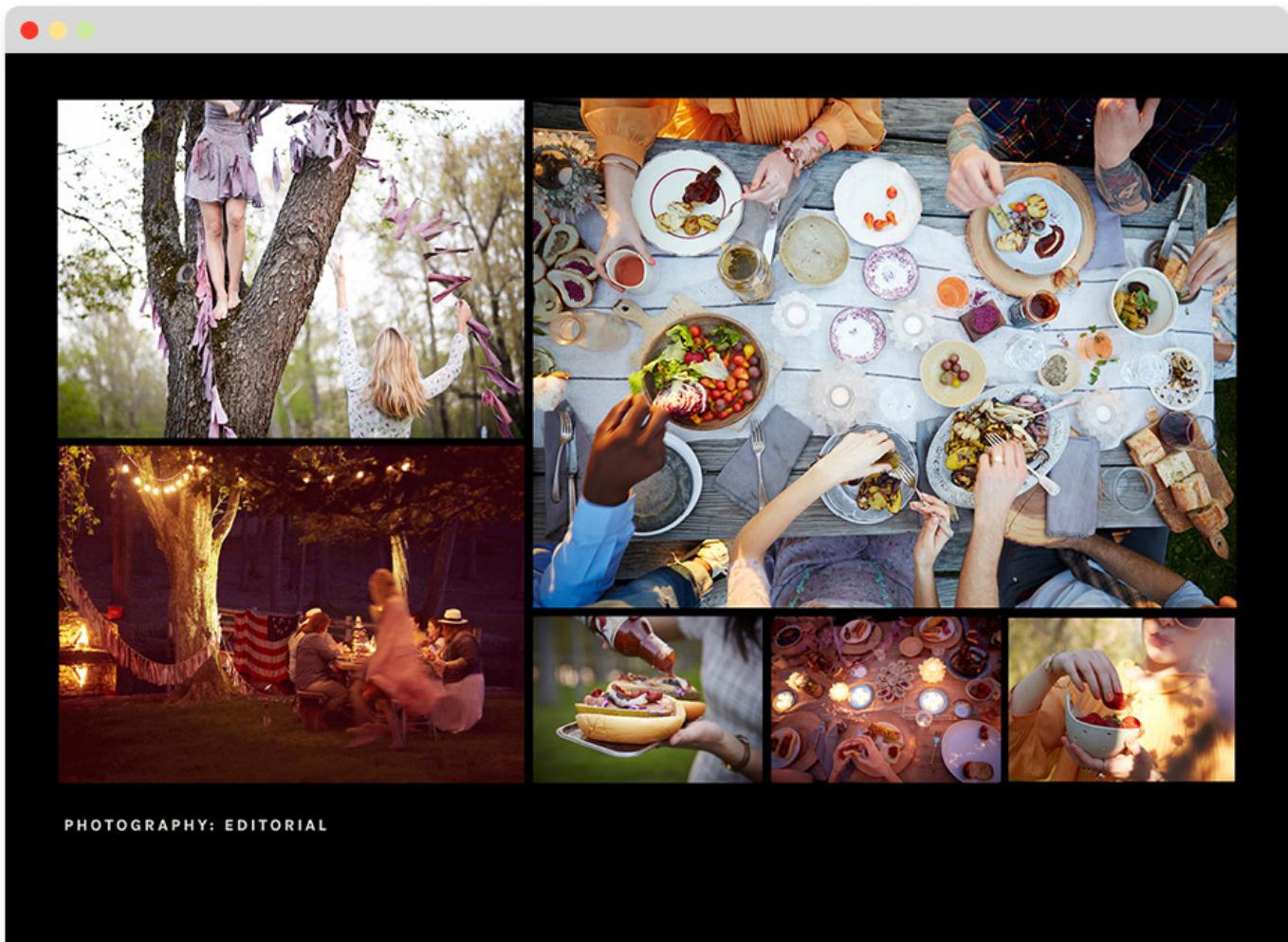
The screenshot shows the homepage of the Preserve website. At the top, there are navigation links: JUST US, GREATER GOOD, SHOP (which is highlighted in red), Login, Help, Cart (3), and a search icon. Below the navigation is a header bar with a dark wood background featuring a black wok with chopsticks. On the right side of the header is a circular icon with 'FPO' and 'MY PRESERVE' text.

Below the header are three filter boxes: CATEGORY: ALL, PRICE: ALL, and SORT BY: FEATURED. The main content area displays six product cards in a 2x3 grid:

- NORDIC WARE WOK** BY SELETTI \$48.50
- FORMAGGI DAL PIEMONTE** BY THE ITALIAN \$28.25
- ITALIAN LOAFER** BY EMERSON FRY \$245.95
- DERBY EN TOILE SHOE** BY APC \$126.95
- EDISON CHANDELIER** STEPHANE HUBERT \$198.25
- ARTISAN FOCACCIA** BY THE BREAD SHOP \$8.75

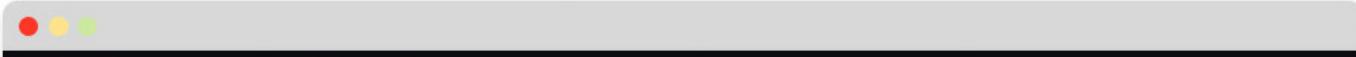
At the bottom left, there's a section titled "BLAKE'S BEST" with a "LAVENDER JAM" item by ONCE UPON A CAKESTAND. To the right of this section is a small image of the wok from the header.

 [Enlarge](#)



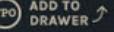
PHOTOGRAPHY: EDITORIAL

 Enlarge

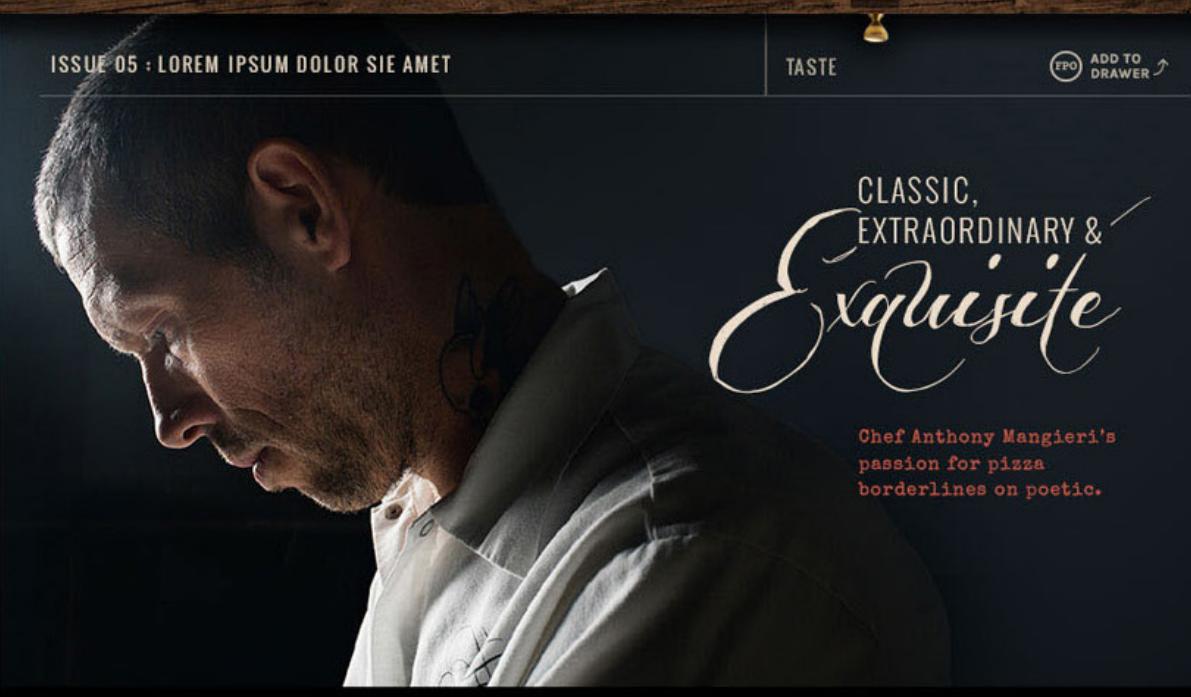


PRESERVE

JUST US GREATER GOOD SHOP  MY PRESERVE

ISSUE 05 : LOREM IPSUM DOLOR SIE AMET  TASTE  ADD TO DRAWER

 > SHOP THE STORY



CLASSIC,
EXTRAORDINARY &
Exquisite

Chef Anthony Mangieri's
passion for pizza
borderlines on poetic.

Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incident ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitit.



Yes, I think the “handmade” concept comes through very well. Notice all of these elements in the design:

- **Textured Typography**
- **Wooden drawer to save favorites**
- **Typewriter font**
- **Intimate editorial and lifestyle photography**
- **Textured recipe cards**
- **Products photographed on textured surfaces**

All of these elements support the concept of “handmade”.

These design choices were not solely a reflection of the designer’s ego. If she made the site based only on her whims, it may have been done in a trendy style like “flat design”. But it would be weird seeing images of craftspeople with dirt on their hands on a clean and minimal website.

The *concept* led her down this design path. In a way, this is freeing because many of the things that determine the concept aren’t decided by you.

What determines the concept?

There are three things that inform what the concept will be. They are as follows:

33% of the concept is shaped by the creative brief. The audience and business objectives described in the brief should work with the concept. For example, if the brief says the

purpose of the site is to build awareness for a musician, then [this](#) experimental site would be fine. In that case the brief would be very open to wild ideas. On the other hand, if the brief said the site was meant to drive *sales* for that musician, a site like [this](#) would be better.

33% of the concept is determined by the client’s brand. It’s how they present themselves and what they stand for. For example, a well-worn and textured site like Preserve wouldn’t work for a company like Target because they have a clean red and white aesthetic. And none of the products Target sells are handmade. Using textures on a Target website would be off-brand.

33% of the concept is influenced by the images you collected in the Inspiration section from chapter 1. This is where your personal preferences come in to play. Look at the images. What do you like? Are there visual elements or concepts in those designs that resonate with you? Is there a style that you think would be a good fit for the project? (Note: for the purposes of this course, we recommend choosing one of the five styles in chapter ten.)

Guess the concept

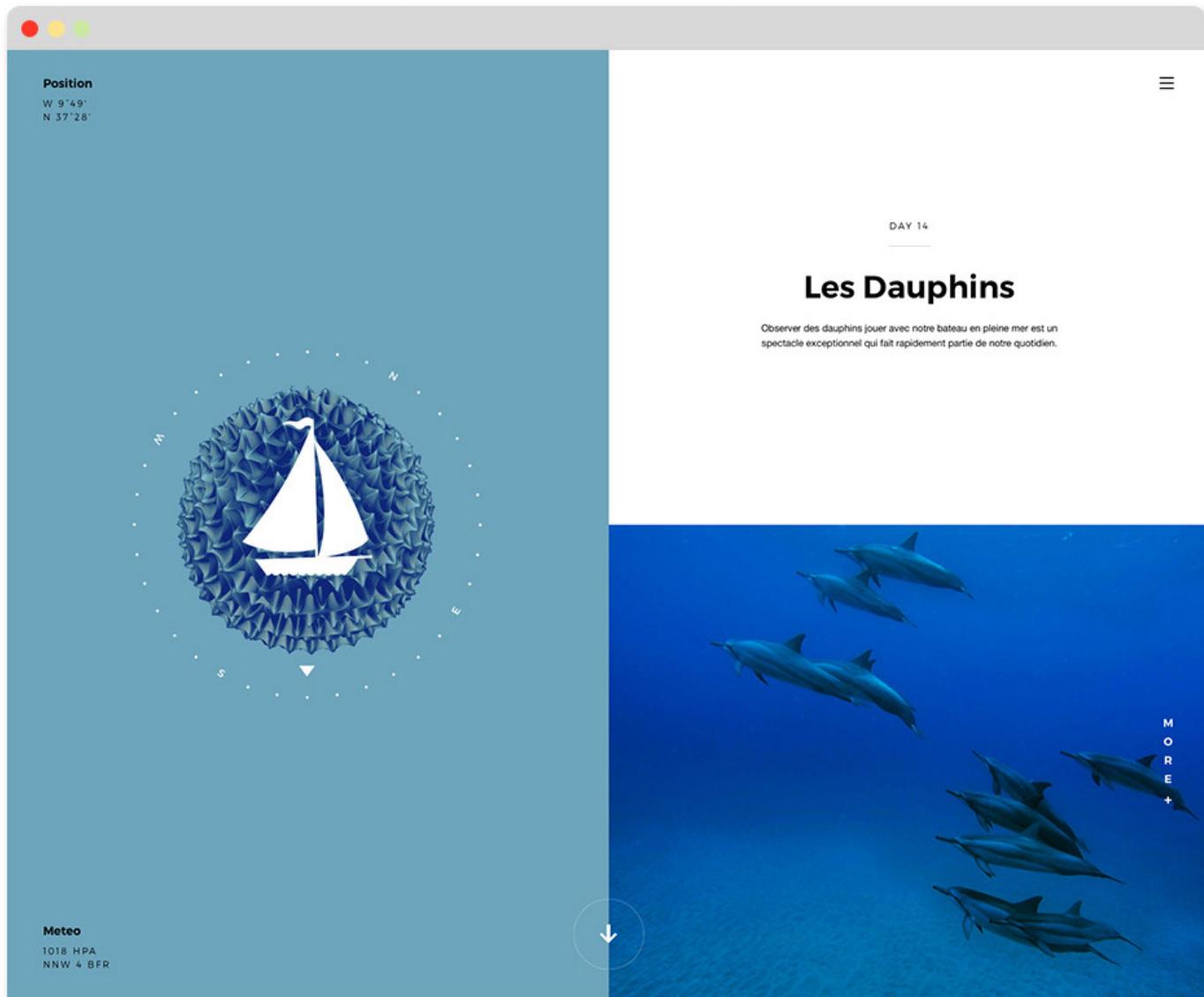
Let’s do some exercises. Check out these examples below and try to figure out what the concept is before looking at the answer. Btw, these will get progressively harder as we go along.

Si Le Soleil

<http://silesoleil.com>

What's the concept? Answer at the bottom.

Enlarge



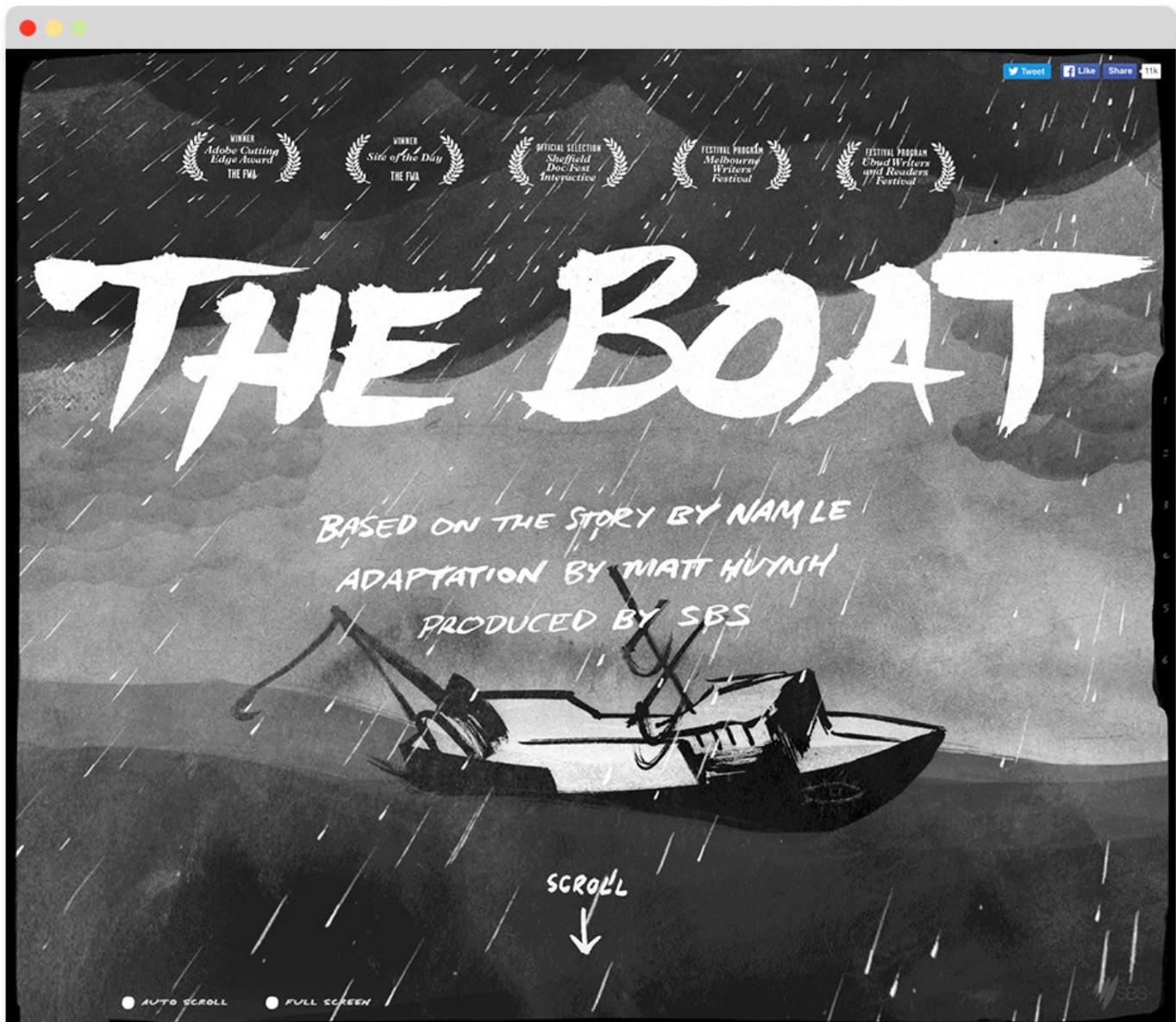
A: The Ocean

The Boat

<http://sbs.com.au/theboat/>

This one is tricky because it's not really "designed"- the whole thing is animated. But it does have a concept. See if you can guess.

Q Enlarge



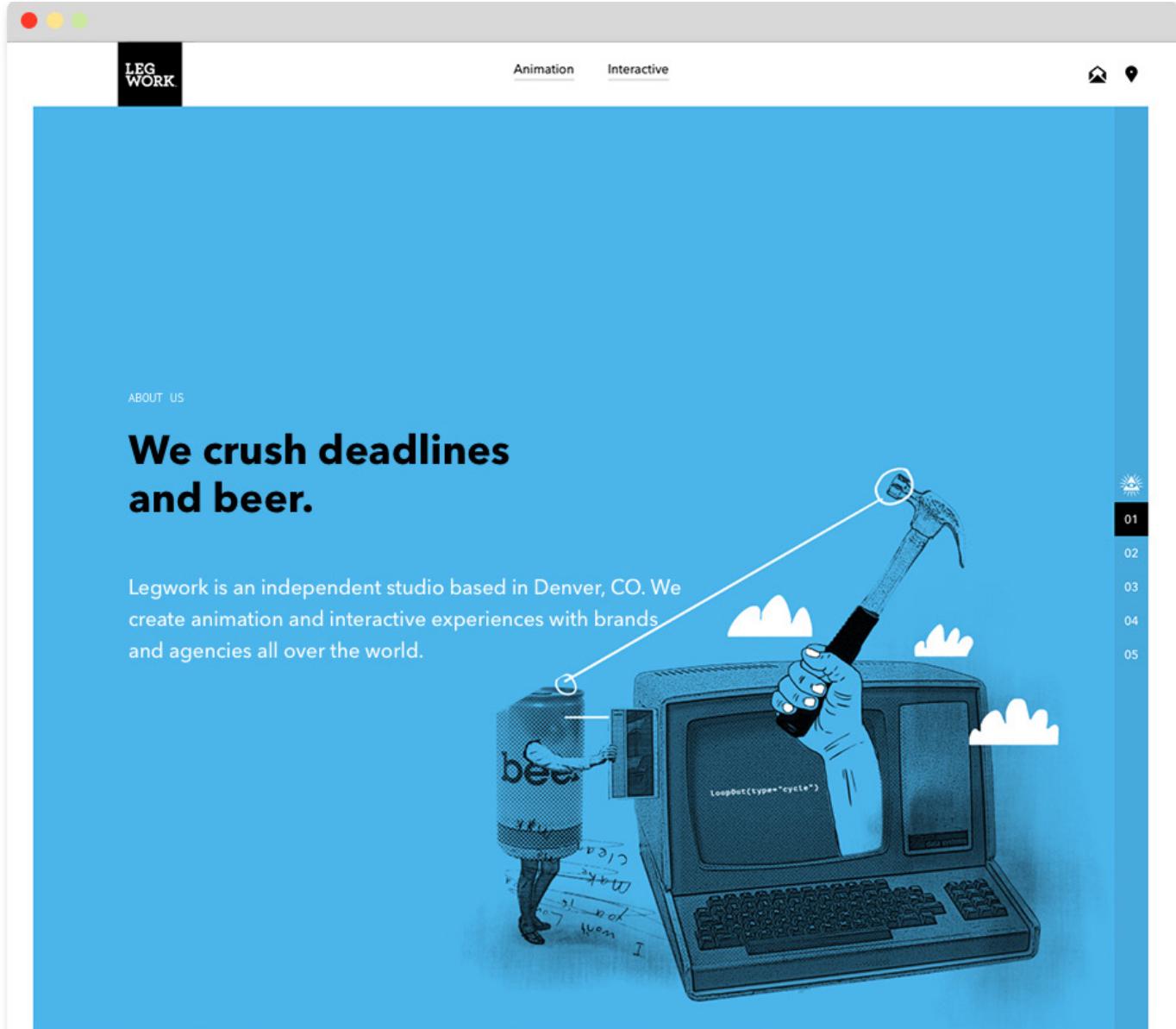
A: They're using the entire site to tell a story. So I'd say the concept is "narrative". If you thought the concept was a boat or the ocean, that's partially true, but if you zoom out even further the entire site is a vehicle for the story.

Legwork Studio

<http://legworkstudio.com>

Visit their site ^ for the full effect. What's the concept?

Enlarge



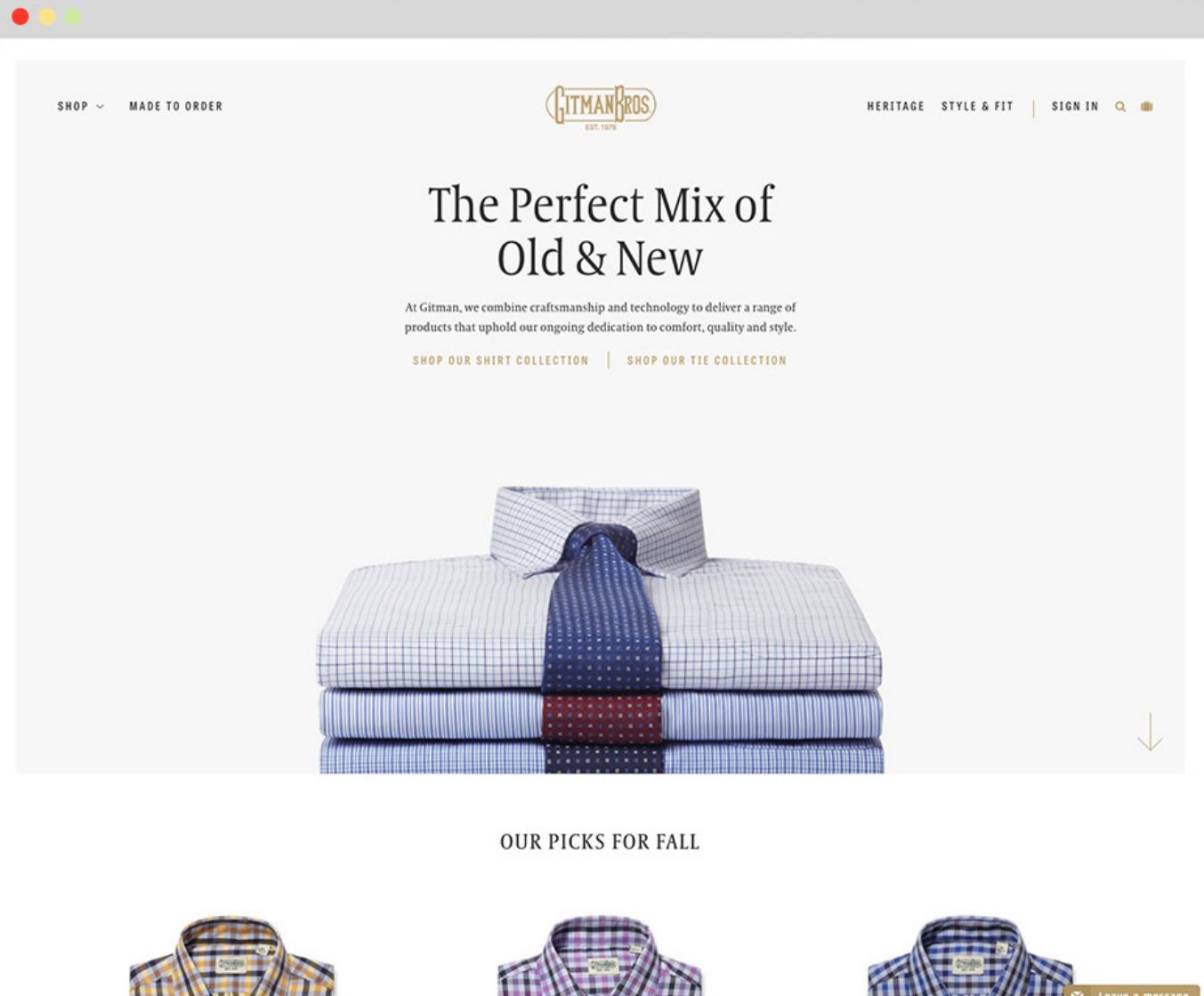
A: The concept is whimsy. Every illustration has a silly face of some kind. The copy is super playful too.

Gitman Bros.

<http://gitman.com>

This company makes men's shirts and ties.
What's the concept? Answer at the bottom.

 [Enlarge](#)



The screenshot shows the Gitman Bros. website homepage. At the top, there are navigation links for "SHOP" (with a dropdown arrow), "MADE TO ORDER", the "GITMAN BROS." logo (which includes "EST. 1970"), "HERITAGE", "STYLE & FIT", "SIGN IN", a search icon, and a shopping cart icon. The main headline reads "The Perfect Mix of Old & New". Below the headline is a subtext: "At Gitman, we combine craftsmanship and technology to deliver a range of products that uphold our ongoing dedication to comfort, quality and style." There are two buttons: "SHOP OUR SHIRT COLLECTION" and "SHOP OUR TIE COLLECTION". The central visual is a stack of folded shirts and ties, with a blue and white checkered shirt and a dark blue patterned tie prominently displayed. Below this image is a downward-pointing arrow. Further down the page, there is a section titled "OUR PICKS FOR FALL" featuring three shirts: a yellow and blue plaid shirt, a purple and white plaid shirt, and a blue and white checkered shirt. To the right of the third shirt is a "Leave a message" button with an envelope icon.

A: The concept here is clean/minimal. The product is high quality, so they wanted that to be the focus. Now “clean/minimal” seems like more of a style than a concept right? That’s true! Since there’s no analytical concept, the style becomes the concept. It’s usually a bad idea for the style to be the concept but in this case, it’s fine.

Virgin Airlines

<https://virginamerica.com>

This one is tricky. Visit the site and click around a bit. What's the concept?

Q Enlarge

The screenshot shows the Virgin America website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for BOOK, CHECK IN, MANAGE, Deals, Flying With Us, Where We Fly, Fees, Flight Status, Flight Alerts, elevate, Sign In, and Sign Up. Below the navigation bar, there are three radio buttons for trip types: Round Trip (selected), One Way, and Multi City. The main search area asks "Where would you like to go?" with input fields for Guests (1 ADULT), From (LOS ANGELES), To (CITY), and a "SEARCH FLIGHTS" button. A banner below the search area features three promotional offers: "Super Bowl 50" (with a Visa 50 logo), "Crème De La Crème" (with a waiter logo), and "Take Off Faster" (with a credit card logo). At the bottom, there are six service-oriented icons: SWIPE FOR THE SKY (film strip icon), FIRST ONE ON, FIRST ONE OFF (two people icon), FEEL THE UPGRADE. (arrow icon), TAKE THE FAST TRACK. (checkmark icon), CORPORATE REWARDS (dollar sign icon), and PACK YOUR POINTS. (airplane icon).

A: If you tried to buy a ticket you probably noticed how simple and intuitive it is. It's easier than any plane ticket I've ever bought. The concept here is "easy to use/friendly". The creative team put a lot of thought into optimizing the user experience. Everything else had to fit within that experience. As for the friendliness, that's evident in the colorful icons used throughout out the site.



CHAPTER 3

BRAND

“We use brands to project who we want to be in the world, how we want people to perceive us, and how we want to feel about ourselves.”

– Debbie Millman



Introduction

Let's look at two companies, Dell and Apple:

Dell was innovative in the 90's because they cut out the middleman in their supply chain. You could configure and buy your new computer on their website. And because there was no retailer to take a cut, the computers were cheap. The Dell brand was price-focused. This tactic worked great until other manufacturers figured out how to sell on the Internet and at that point, Dell no longer had a competitive advantage. Worse still, Dell's previous customers weren't loyal to them because all they cared about was price.

Apple, on the other hand, was one of the most expensive computers available in 2000. Their brand was design-focused. They labored over how the plastic felt, what color it was, and if it was transparent or not. The result was a drastically different computer than every beige desktop on the market. These handmade touches made customers smile, and they became devoted Apple fans. Apple could charge more because they created a feeling of delight. They influenced emotions.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- **What's the Point of Branding**
- **How to Determine your Client's Brand**
- **How to Define the Client's Brand**
- **Sample Target Audiences**

What's the point of all this branding stuff?

Branding is the way a company talks to you, what it looks like, and how it makes you feel. Brands exist because marketers want us to have a relationship with their business. They want to connect emotionally because emotion-based decisions lead people to spend more money on products.

I think a good way to understand branding is by first looking at famous people. See if you agree with the characteristics I've listed next to the people below. I've also added some visuals and colors that come to mind.

Batman:

Moody. Lone wolf. Single street light on a dark corner. Bats. Technology. Psychologically vulnerable. Cropped photos of his face. Photos with his back toward the camera. Strong but silent.

Possible colors:

Dark blue, grays, blacks. Maybe some yellow as a highlight color.

The Pope:

Sacred. Illustrations from Renaissance painters. Lots of white space. An overall mood of quiet and respect. Muted pastels. Textures. Serif typography.

Possible colors:

Maroon, pale yellow (like old weathered paper), white, light gray.

Oprah:

Warm. Curious. Helpful. Motivated. Generous. Photos of her helping people or learning something. Happy.

Possible colors:

Warm hues of orange and yellow. Maybe purple as an accent color.

Audrey Hepburn: Classy. Elegant. Stylish. Gracious. Modest. Photos of her dressed up. New York. Walking a dog. Friendly with animals.

Possible colors:

Lot's of white, yellows, pinks. Or black and white with a bright accent color like pink.

Jay-Z:

Iconic. Brooklyn. The street. Marcy projects. Strong contrast in photos. Authentic. Successful. Entrepreneurial. Sincere. Self-made. Wise.

Possible colors: Blacks, whites, golds.

All of these people conjure up an image in your mind, right? Their unique accomplishments and personality traits make them easy to remember.

Companies want to be remembered too. And they want you to have a strong opinion about them. Coke and RC cola are the same product but only Coke has distinct brand attributes that make it memorable. RC cola has no brand attributes. So when you see it at the store you won't pay much money for it.

Here are characteristics (both good and bad) of some famous brands:

Apple:

Designed. Obsessive. Elitist. Focused. Expensive. Minimal. Easy to use. High quality.

Porsche:

Speed. History. Design. Performance. Technology. Sophistication.

Starbucks:

Comfort. Atmosphere. Personalization. Ritual. Customer service. Consistent.

Google:

Smart. Innovative. Powerful. Experimental. Visionary.

Target:

Value. Clean. Design conscious. Friendly. Red.

Notice all of these companies have a distinct attributes, just like the personalities from earlier.

So how do you determine the nature of your client's brand?

If the company has over 100 people, they'll probably have a brand guideline, brand book, or both. These documents define in specific terms how the brand should be portrayed. They describe things like the typography you should use, colors, and tone of voice.

Here are some sample brand books:

[Adobe](#)

[Nike Football](#)

[Unicef](#)

How do you define the brand if the client hasn't done it themselves?

For small or new companies, you may have to determine what imagery, typography, and copy is appropriate for their site. This can be tricky because if they haven't defined their brand, then all of their past marketing materials, ads, and sites will likely look disjointed and you probably can't reference them.

I suggest doing two things:

1) Find the things in their business they do well. Ask why their customers choose them over competitors. If they're a regional web hosting company, maybe they have more personal customer service than Go Daddy. If they're a wood flooring company, perhaps they only harvest wood that is environmentally certified.

All of these things are competitive advantages and a big part of their brand. Find out what these things are and communicate them in your design and site copy.

2) Find out who the target audience is. A person who buys clothing from Luis Vuitton has a different worldview than someone shopping at Ross. Figure out what kinds of

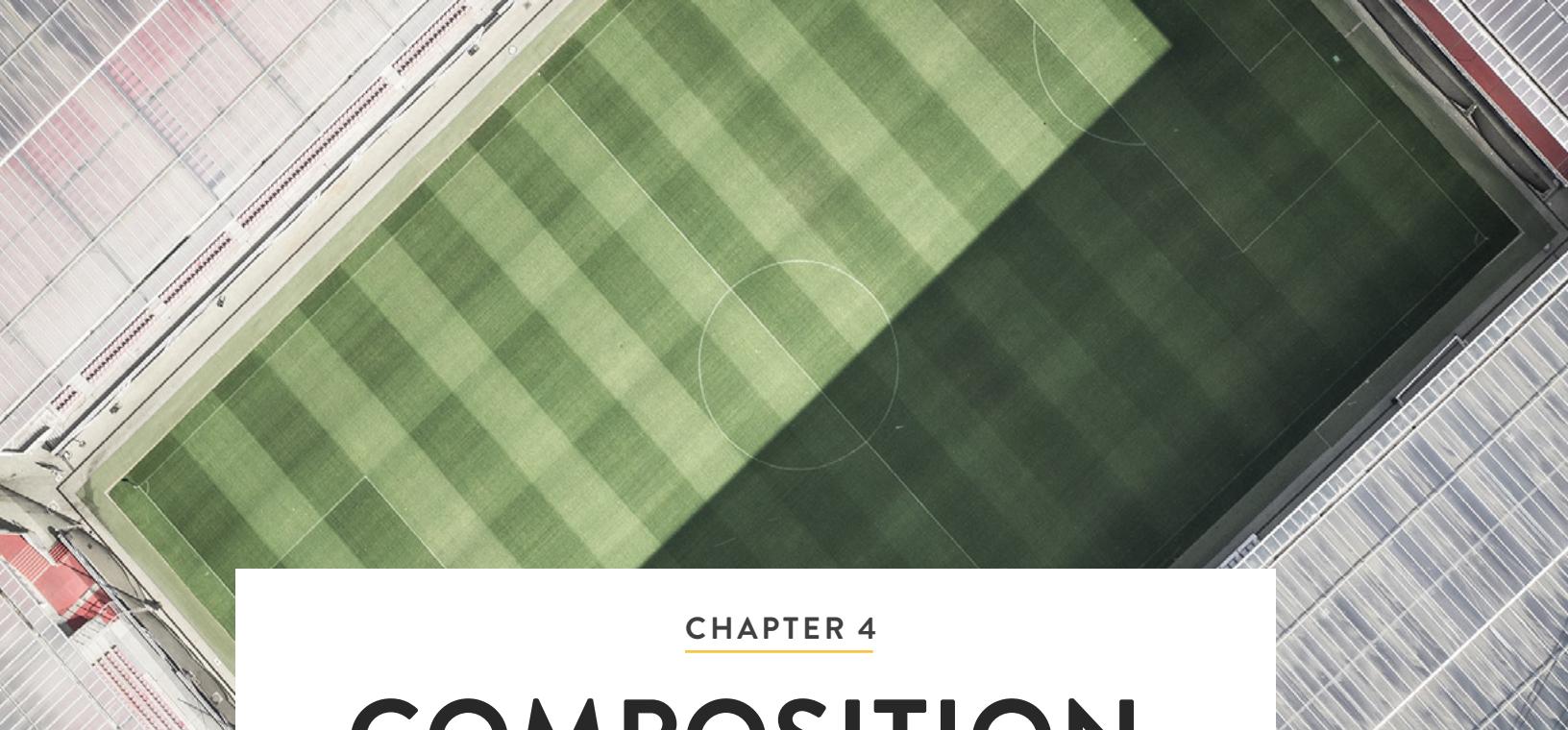
messages the customer responds to and work backward from there.

Look at Axe body spray. We know the target audience of young men who are into sex, sports, and adventure. So from that, we can start to define the brand and figure out what types of imagery would be appropriate to show them.

Here are some more examples of target audiences:

- Senior Citizens
- Price Conscious moms
- College Athletes
- New home owners
- Nascar fans

Each of these groups has a worldview. Certain words, colors, and ideas will resonate with them. If you understand what the business is good at, and you know who the target customer is, that will go a long way toward defining a brand.



CHAPTER 4

COMPOSITION

“Design should never say, look at me. It should always say, look at this.”

– David Craib



Introduction

Composition is the placement of visual elements on a page. A good composition will create visual interest. It will present information in a way that doesn't overwhelm the user.

On the web, once you've created a design you love in Photoshop, the entire composition will get translated into [DIVs](#) to make it a website. DIV's are rectangles your design fits into created with code. When you're designing your site, sometimes it's helpful to imagine each section being contained by a rectangle. If you want to see how other sites are broken up, download [Firebug](#) and it will highlight DIV's in blue when you hover over them.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- Examples of Good Compositions

Grids

"How wide should my photoshop file be?" There can be multiple answers to that question, but for our purposes, make it 1200px wide. [Here's](#) a .psd and .ai file with those dimensions courtesy of [1200px.com](#).

Examples of good compositions:

The following pages have some examples of websites with nice compositions. Notice how there's never too much information on the page. Even when a page contains many elements ([33](#)), there's a logical grid

structure to hold everything in place. Some of the layouts are simple ([27](#)) and some more complex ([37](#)) but they all have a grid of some kind that supports the content.

After each screenshot, the gray layouts show how the page is broken up visually (and programatically with DIVs), along with primary links and navigation elements. When you look at each example, ask yourself if the composition is simple or complex. And notice that influences the way in which you digest the page.

 [Enlarge](#)



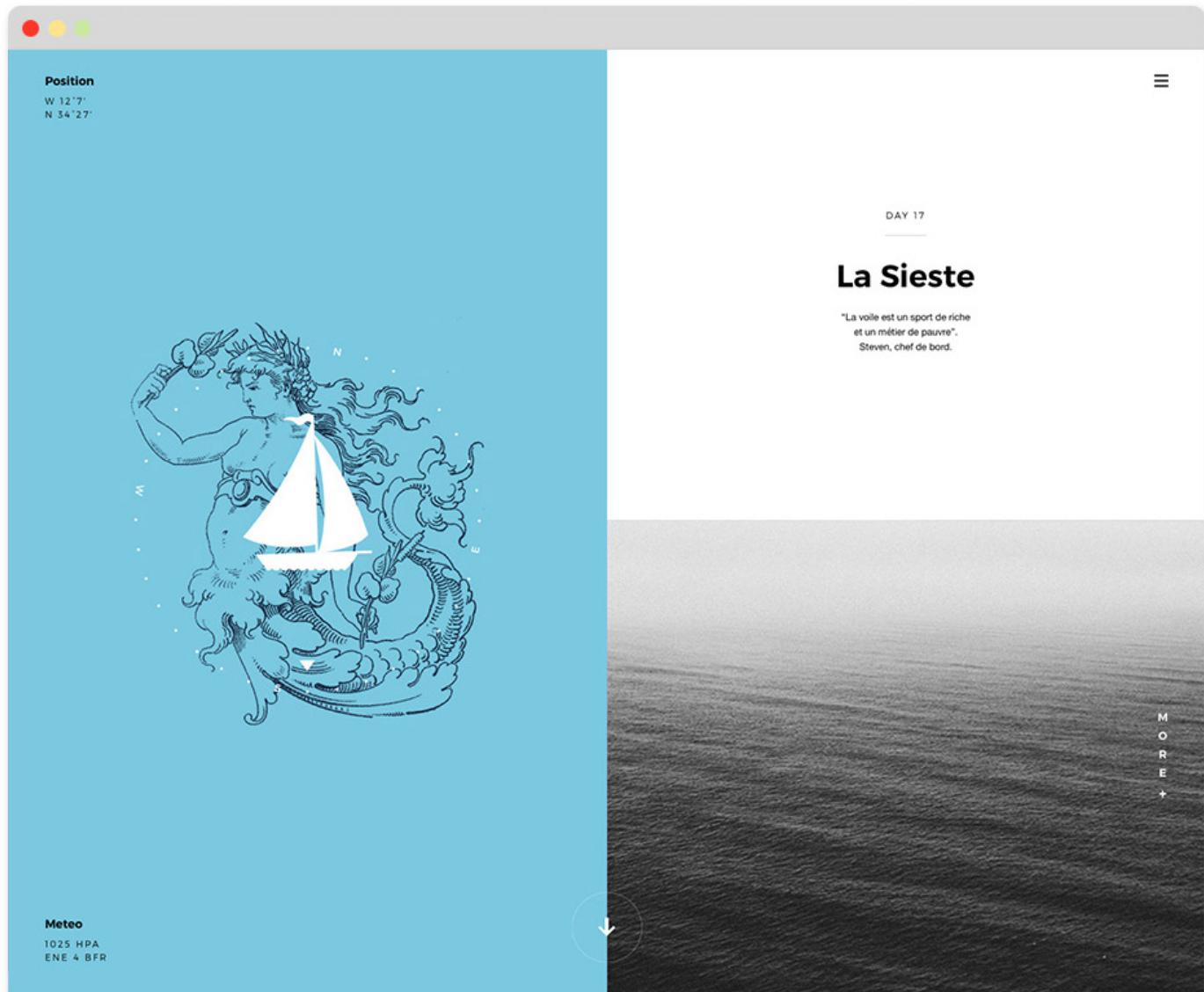
A page with all the DIV's highlighted in blue.

Si Le Soleil

<http://silesoleil.com>

This site contains many interactive elements. Because there is so much animation, they decided to use this simple layout.

Q Enlarge

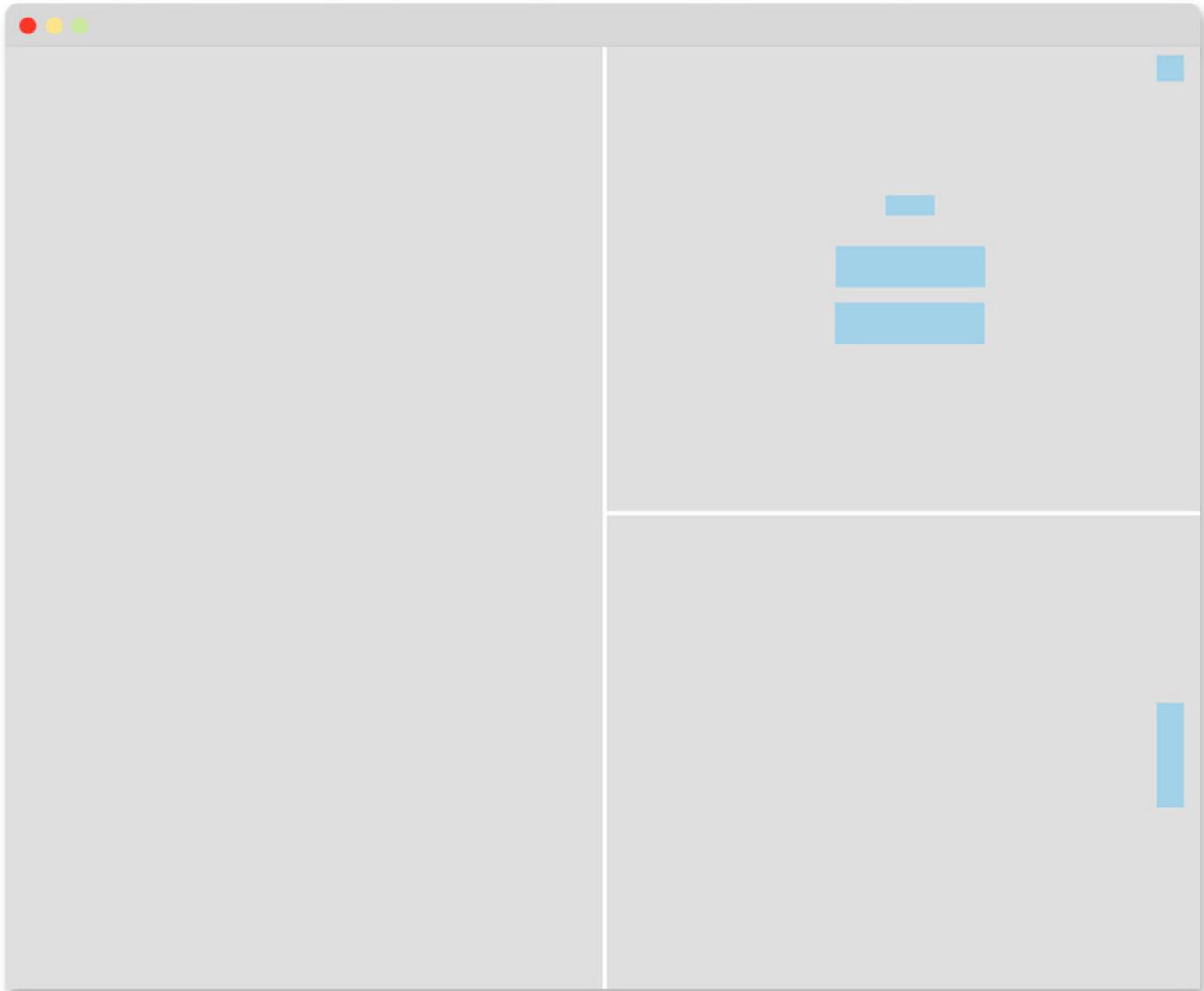


Si Le Soleil Ctnd.

<http://silesoleil.com>

Here's how the page is broken up:

Enlarge



Bartaile

<http://bartaile.com>

This is a fashion site, so the mood they convey is important for the brand. On the first screenshot below, the entire page is a branded image. However when you click the

button below the woman's feet, the page becomes highly functional.

 [Enlarge](#)



Bartaile Ctnd.

<http://bartaile.com>

Here's how the page is broken up:

 Enlarge

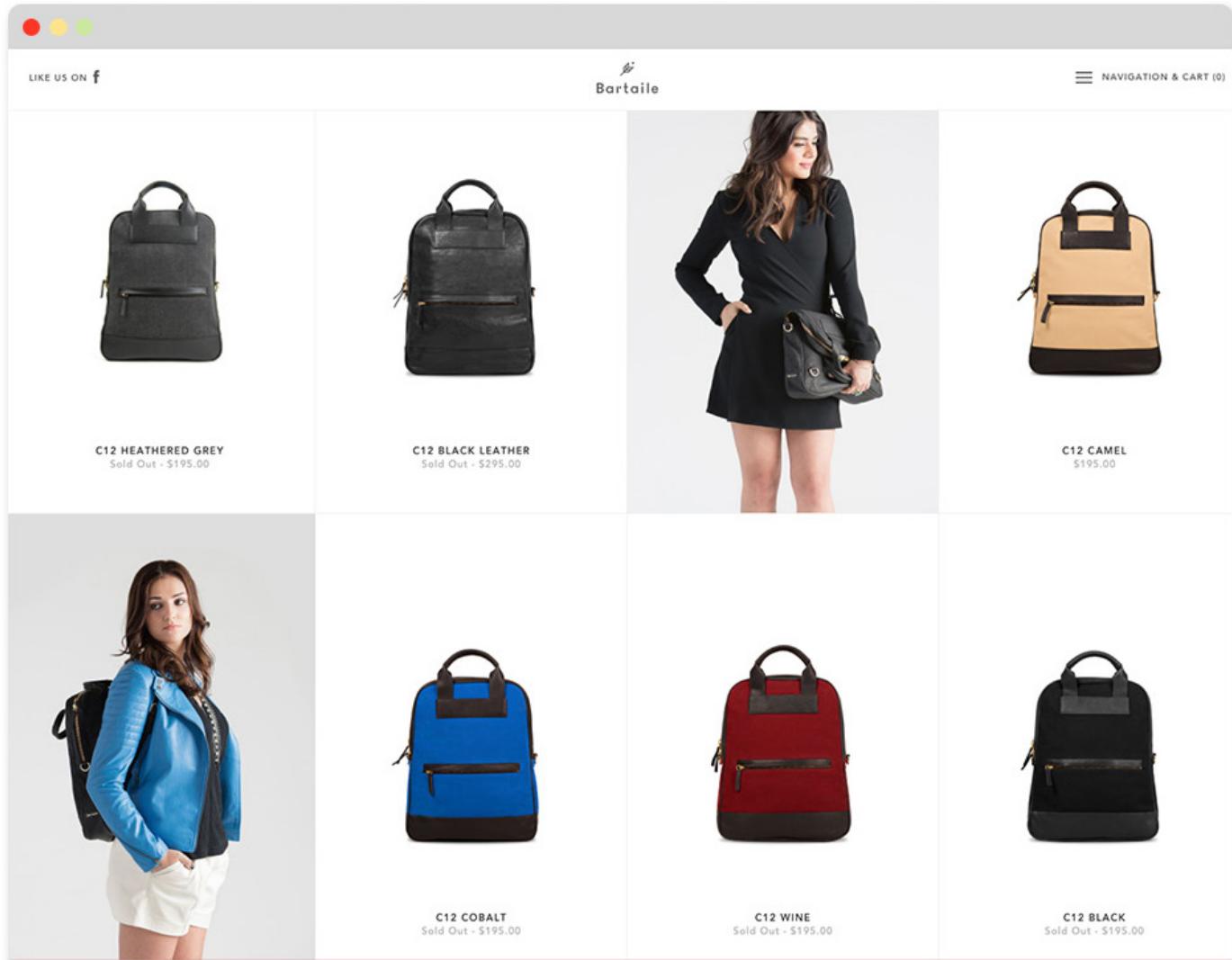


Bartaile ctnd

<http://bartaile.com>

Here's the functional bit. It's more complex than the first image with the single woman, but the two compositions still feel related.

 [Enlarge](#)

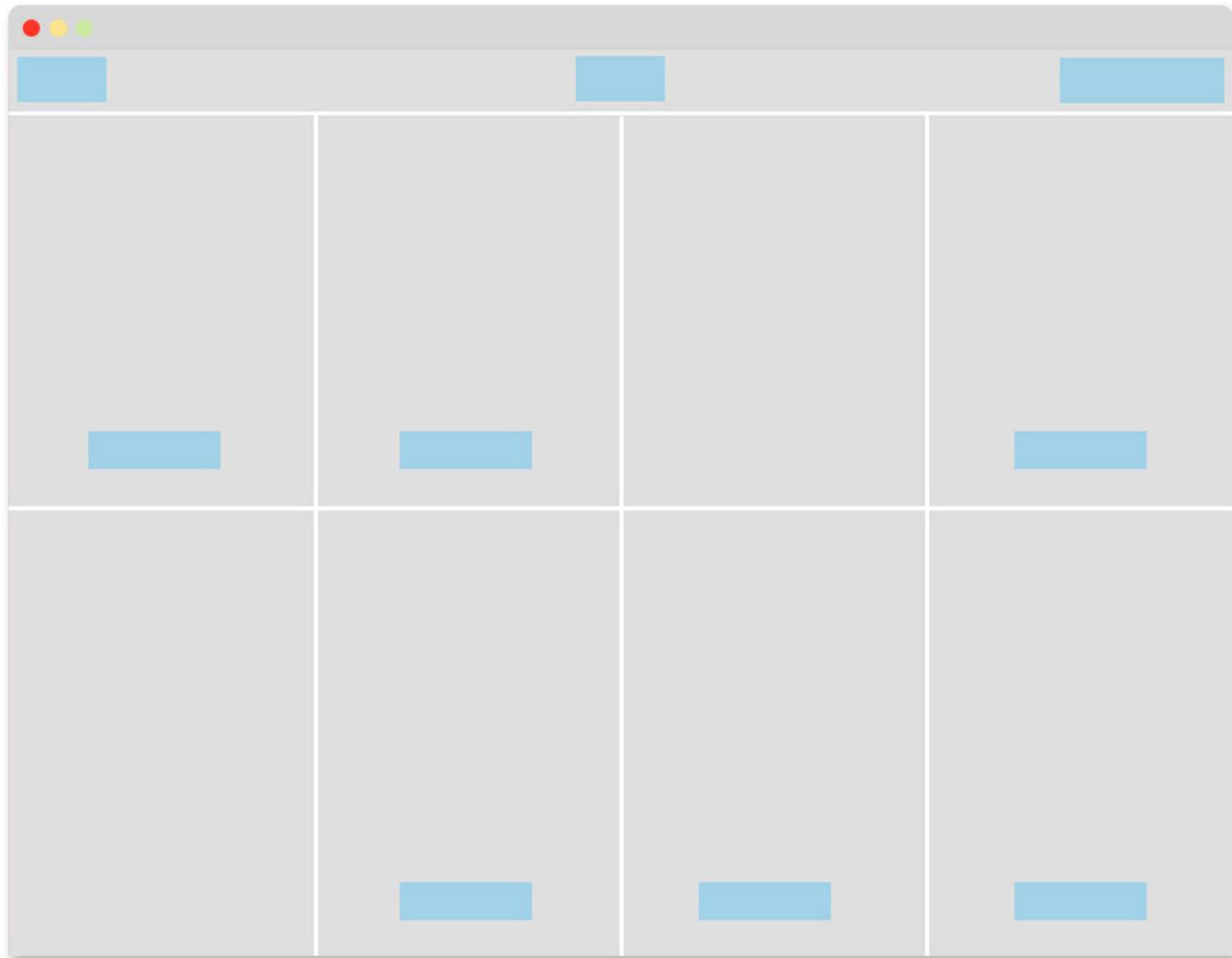


Bartaile Ctnd.

<http://bartaile.com>

Here's how the page is broken up:

Enlarge

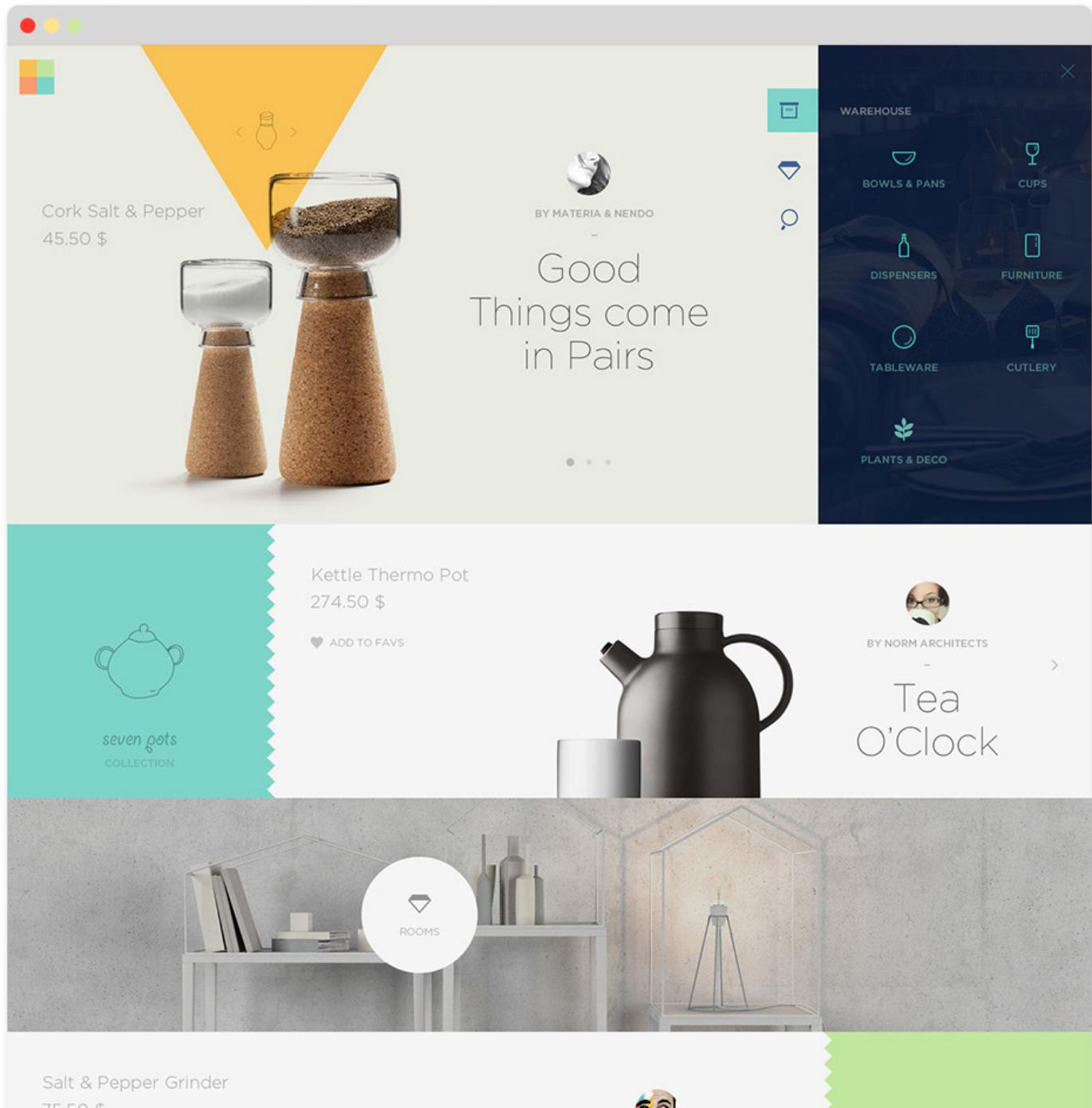


Warehouse Kitchenware

<http://bit.ly/1roms7V>

This composition has sections that are always split at the 3/4 or 1/4 mark (it flips back and forth). This creates a nice variety. And to ensure it's not too repetitive and chaotic, they

Enlarge



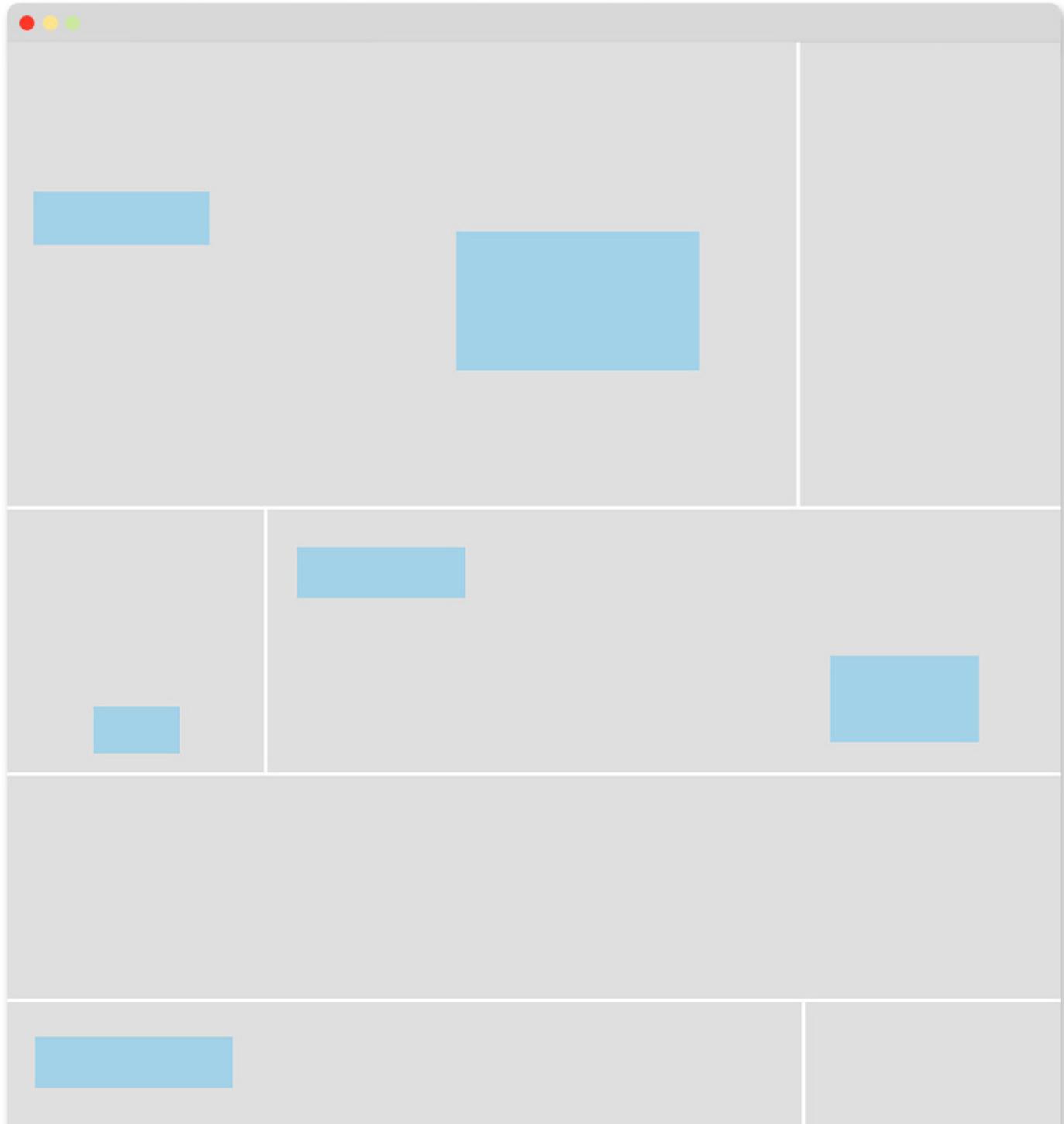
include a full bleed section immediately after. There's a lot going on here, but the "3/4ths, 1/4th" pattern provides structure to make it work.

Warehouse Kitchenware Ctnd.

<http://bit.ly/1roms7V>

Here's how the page is broken up:

Q Enlarge

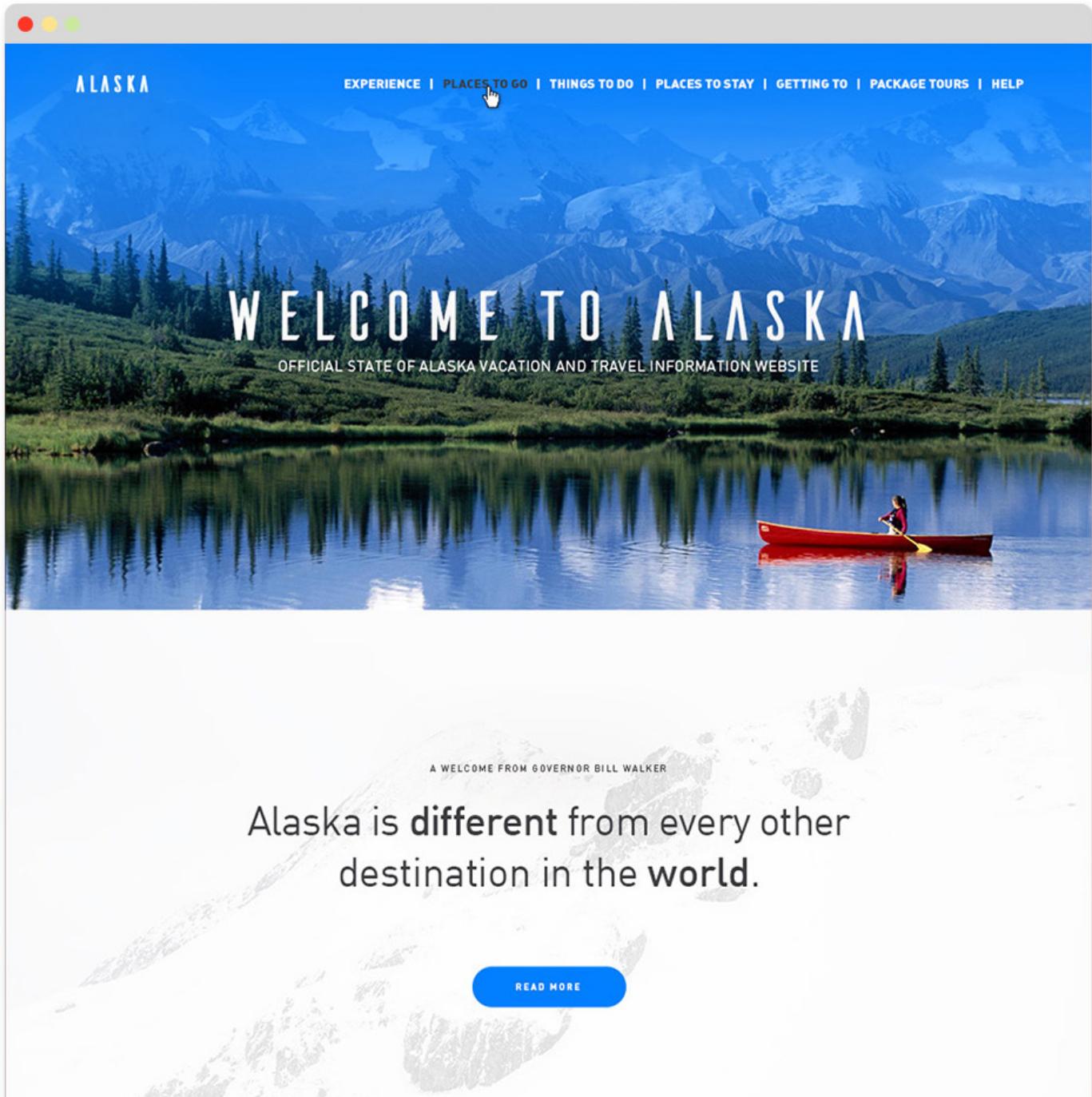


This is Alaska

<http://bit.ly/1OT5FRo>

Similar to the previous example, the image and copy alternate back and forth midway down the page. It's a good way to lead the viewers eye where you want it to go.

 [Enlarge](#)

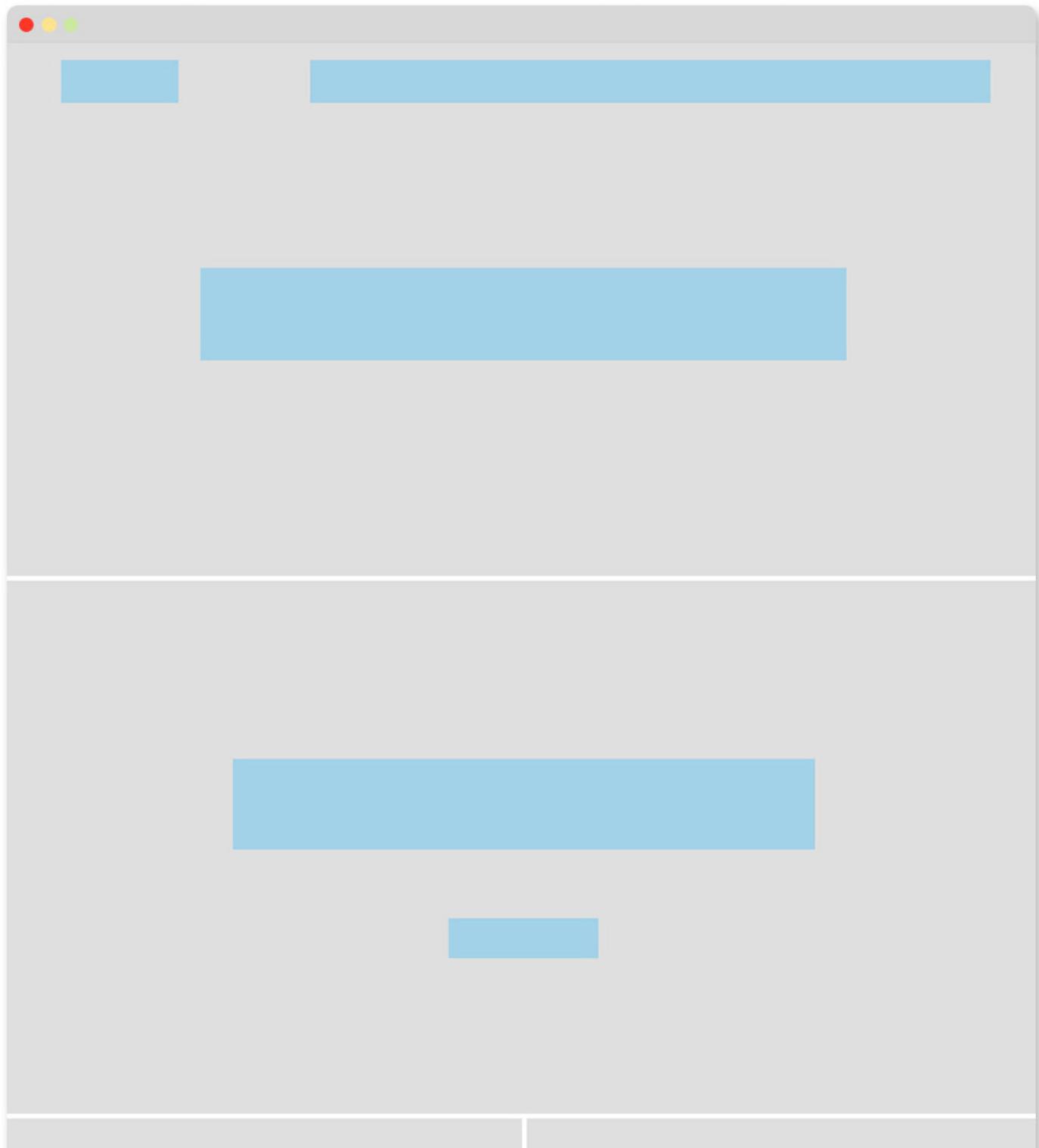


This is Alaska Cntd.

<http://bit.ly/1OT5FRo>

Here's how the page is broken up:

Q Enlarge



Hermes

<http://bit.ly/1UmvC05>

This is a more complicated layout than the others we've seen but notice there is still a clear grid.

Q Enlarge

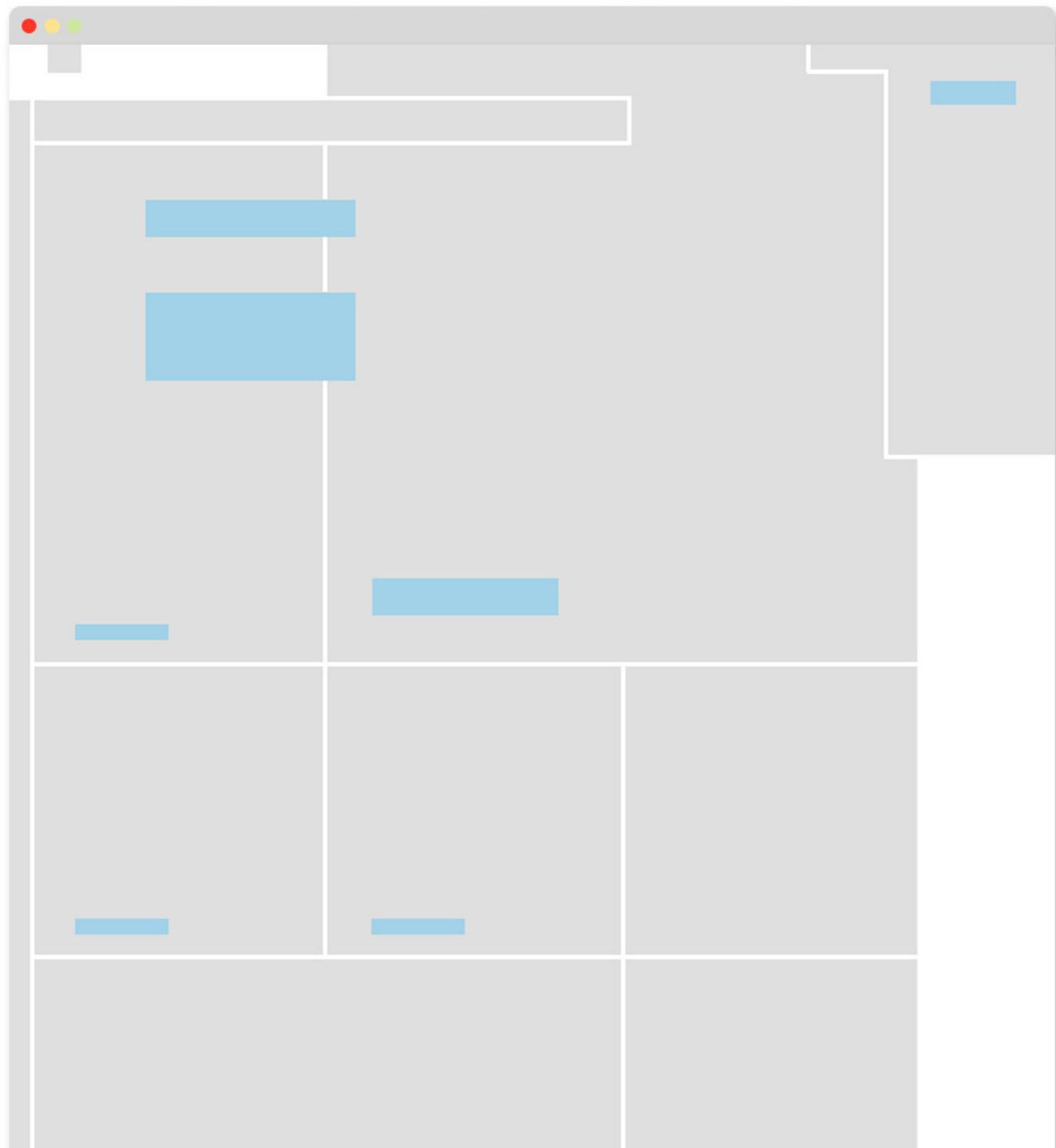
The screenshot shows the Hermès website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a search icon, a shopping cart icon (0), and filters for TYPE, TAILLE, and COLLECTION. The main header features the word "Automne" with a small "pe16" above it and a date "67" below it. To the right of the text is a pair of dark brown leather boots. Below the main image, there are two sections: "Ceinture Femme" featuring a tan belt with a large gold "H" buckle, and "Bottes Homme" featuring the same pair of boots again. Further down, there are two more sections: "Sac a main" featuring a white handbag with red piping and a matching pouch, and another "Sac a main" section featuring a tan pouch. The right side of the page has a vertical orange sidebar with the Hermès logo and links to categories like VUE D'ENSEMBLE, FEMME, HOMME, CUIR, SOIE FEMININE, BIJOUX, MONTRES, PARFUM, MAISON, and EQUITATION. The footer is mostly cut off but includes a copyright notice for 2012 and a link to "www.hermes.com".

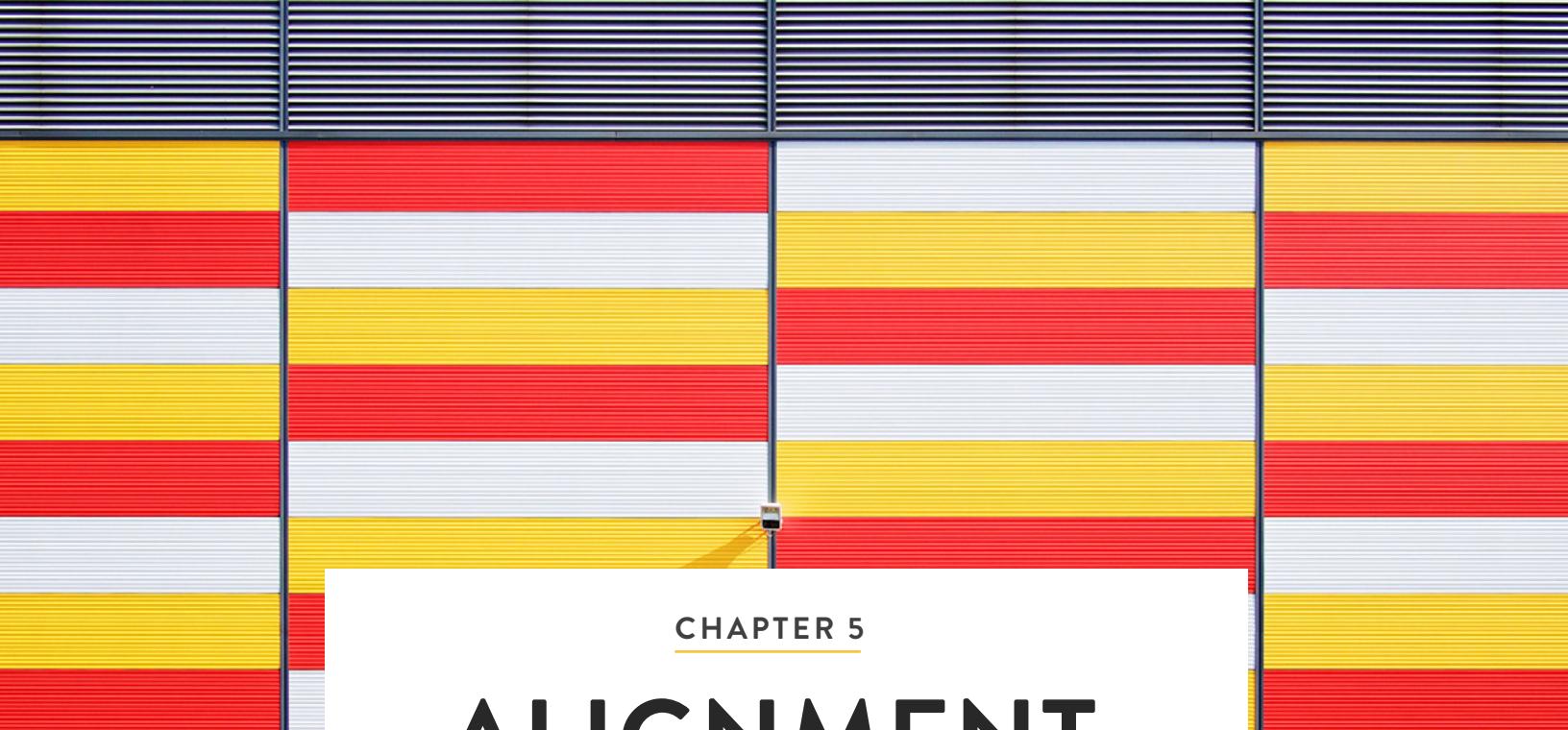
Hermes Cntd.

<http://bit.ly/1UmvC05>

Here's how the page is broken up:

Enlarge





CHAPTER 5

ALIGNMENT

“Design is the conscious effort
to impose a meaningful order.”

– Victor Papanek



Introduction

Alignment is stacking elements on top one another, either along the edges or down the center.

When elements on a page are aligned, it creates order. If you have several dissimilar elements on a page, aligning them can make them feel related. It helps your design communicate quickly and clearly.

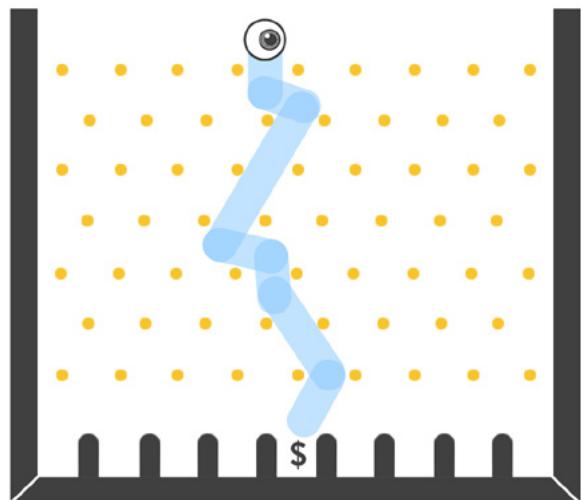
In this chapter we'll discuss:

- Why alignment matters
- Alignment of page elements
- Typographic alignment

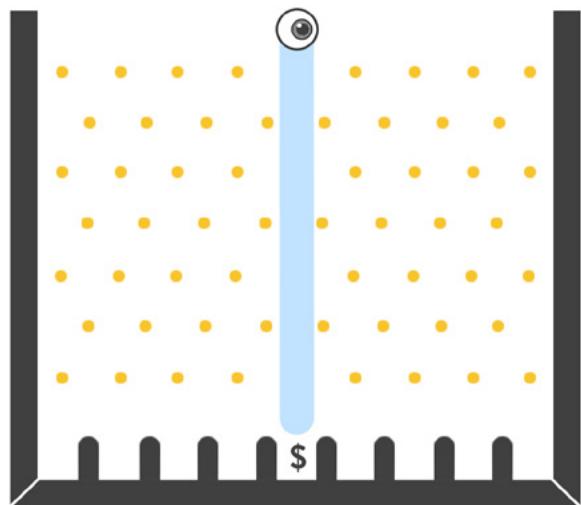
Why alignment matters

Think of alignment like a Plinko board. When your typography or imagery isn't aligned, your eye bounces around as it moves down the page (Note: there are a few exceptions to the rule, but not many. Some examples of those appear at the end of chapter 10).

A website that uses alignment communicates much faster. When type and images are aligned, it's like a Plinko board with the middle pegs removed. Your eye can move straight down the page quickly.



When elements are not aligned.



When elements are aligned.

Alignment of Page Elements

Take a look at this product page. What works and what doesn't? The typography is pleasant, the product photography is clear, but something feels off. Can you see it?

The screenshot shows a product page for 'White Etheriana Hand Crème' on a website. At the top left is a product image of a tube of hand cream. To its right is the product title 'White Etheriana Hand Crème'. Below the title is a price box containing '\$8.99' and a 'BUY AT TARGET' button. Underneath the title is a section titled 'ABOUT' with a descriptive paragraph. Below the 'ABOUT' section are two columns: 'DIRECTIONS' and 'TIPS'. The 'DIRECTIONS' column contains instructions to apply the cream to clean, dry hands. The 'TIPS' column suggests using it with other products from the family. At the bottom of the page is a 'INGREDIENTS' section with a dropdown arrow.

White Etheriana Hand Crème

\$8.99 [BUY AT TARGET](#)

ABOUT

The non-greasy, non-sticky hand crème is enriched with natural shea butter, vitamin E, aloe vera and botanical oils to nourish hands. The healing treatment provides ultimate hydration and protection against drying elements, while absorbing quickly into the skin.

DIRECTIONS

Apply to clean, dry hands as often as needed.

TIPS

Use with the other products from this family for a cohesive fragrant body routine.

INGREDIENTS ▾

Cntd.

You guessed it; the alignment is off.

White Etheriana Hand Crème

\$8.99 [BUY AT TARGET](#)

ABOUT
The non-greasy, non-sticky hand crème is enriched with natural shea butter, vitamin E, aloe vera and botanical oils to nourish hands. The healing treatment provides ultimate hydration and protection against drying elements, while absorbing quickly into the skin.

DIRECTIONS
Apply to clean, dry hands as often as needed.

TIPS
Use with the other products from this family for a cohesive fragrant body routine.

INGREDIENTS ▾

Cntd.

Now look at this one. Isn't it easier on your eyes?



White Etheriana Hand Crème

\$8.99

BUY AT TARGET

ABOUT

The non-greasy, non-sticky hand crème is enriched with natural shea butter, vitamin E, aloe vera and botanical oils to nourish hands. The healing treatment provides ultimate hydration and protection against drying elements, while absorbing quickly into the skin.

DIRECTIONS

Apply to clean, dry hands as often as needed.

TIPS

Use with the other products from this family for a cohesive fragrant body routine.

INGREDIENTS ▾

Cntd.

When everything is aligned, it reads better.

White Etheriana Hand Crème

ABOUT

The non-greasy, non-sticky hand crème is enriched with natural shea butter, vitamin E, aloe vera and botanical oils to nourish hands. The healing treatment provides ultimate hydration and protection against drying elements, while absorbing quickly into the skin.

DIRECTIONS

Apply to clean, dry hands as often as needed.

TIPS

Use with the other products from this family for a cohesive fragrant body routine.

INGREDIENTS ▾

\$8.99 [BUY AT TARGET](#)

Typographic Alignment

Alignment happens on a smaller scale too, within individual paragraphs. One thing to keep in mind is once you decide on how you want your type to be aligned, anywhere else it appears on the site should be aligned in the same way. This creates a consistent viewing experience. Here are the most common ways to align type:

Flush left

Having your copy be flushed left and ragged right is the norm for most websites.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris hendrerit euismod augue vitae placerat. Duis at ex metus. Nam quis volutpat odio, non aliquet nunc. Quisque eleifend, orci nec tincidunt dignissim, nisl massa maximus eros, eu convallis lacus justo egestas quam. Vestibulum in ultrices tellus, eu molestie velit. Integer id eros ac sapien fermentum vehicula. Nullam feugiat consectetur dapibus. Etiam risus velit, viverra posuere vehicula at, efficitur in sem. Nulla nisl arcu, mollis sed erat a, vehicula iaculis metus. Donec ac arcu a quam egestas ullamcorper.

Flush right

You may find that flush right works better in your design.

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Centered

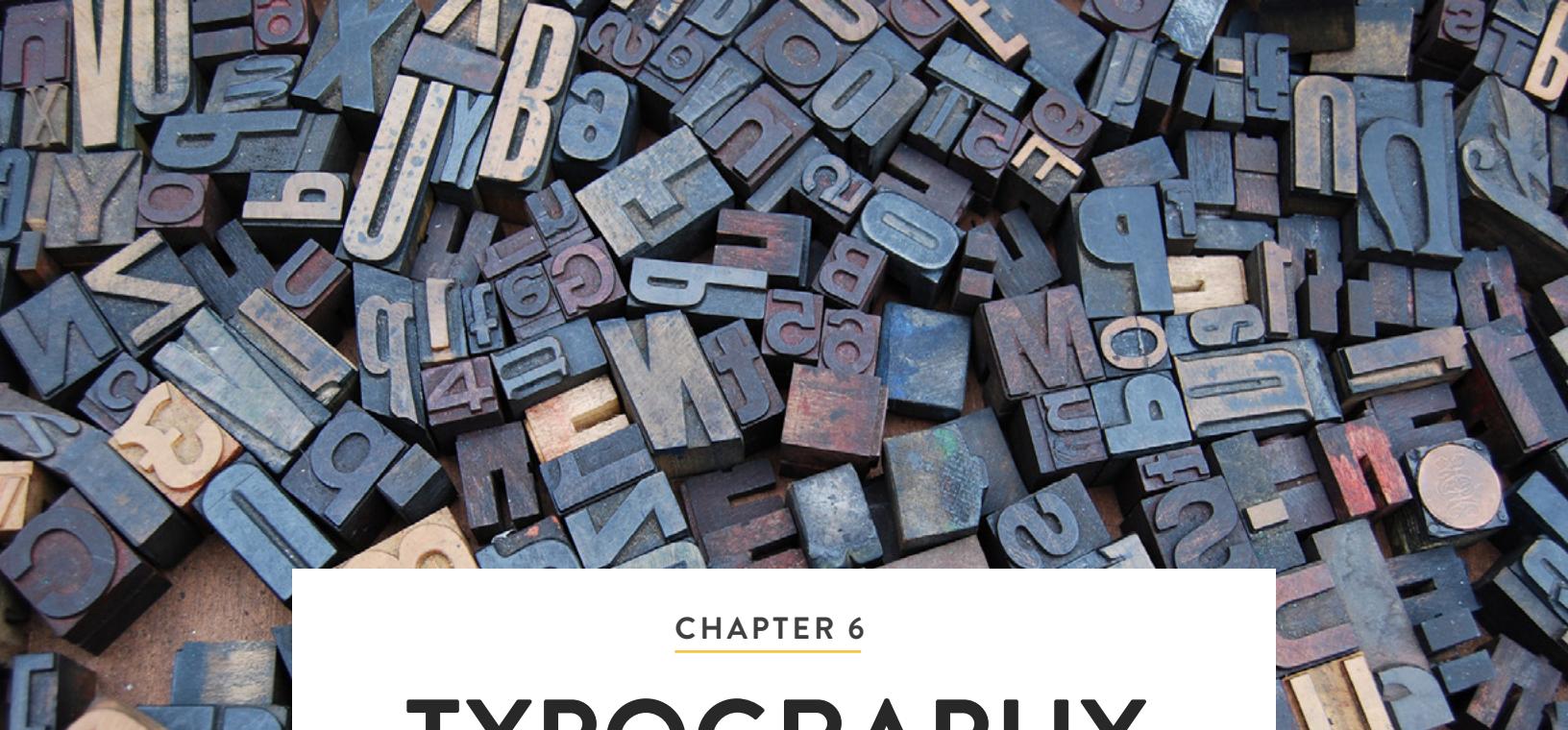
Center aligned copy has been used more often in recent years due to the rise of responsive sites.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris hendrerit euismod augue vitae placerat. Duis at ex metus. Nam quis volutpat odio, non aliquet nunc. Quisque eleifend, orci nec tincidunt dignissim, nisl massa maximus eros, eu convallis lacus justo egestas quam. Vestibulum in ultrices tellus, eu molestie velit. Integer id eros ac sapien fermentum vehicula. Nullam feugiat consectetur dapibus. Etiam risus velit, viverra posuere vehicula at, efficitur in sem. Nulla nisl arcu, mollis sed erat a, vehicula iaculis metus. Donec ac arcu a quam egestas ullamcorper.

Justified

This guidebook has justified type. It looks nice, but avoid developing too many gaps in your paragraphs called "["Rivers"](#)".

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Mauris hendrerit euismod augue vitae placerat. Duis at ex metus. Nam quis volutpat odio, non aliquet nunc. Quisque eleifend, orci nec tincidunt dignissim, nisl massa maximus eros, eu convallis lacus justo egestas quam. Vestibulum in ultrices tellus, eu molestie velit. Integer id eros ac sapien fermentum vehicula. Nullam feugiat consectetur dapibus. Etiam risus velit, viverra posuere vehicula at, efficitur in sem. Nulla nisl arcu, mollis sed erat a, vehicula iaculis metus. Donec ac arcu a quam egestas ullamcorper.



CHAPTER 6

TYPOGRAPHY

“Times New Roman is not a font choice so much as the absence of a font choice, like the blackness of deep space is not a color.”

– Matthew Butterick

Introduction

Good typography is tricky for beginners to pin down. A great typeface isn't easily recognizable like a finely crafted suit or a beautiful photo.

You need to be exposed to good and bad type repeatedly before you start to appreciate what looks good. These are the basic things about typography you should know when designing for the web.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- Using fonts on the web
- Usage tips
- Leading
- Tracking
- Kerning

Using fonts on the web

For many years, web designers could only use [web safe](#) fonts. Web safe fonts are those that are common on popular operating systems, like Windows and OS X.

Then around 2010, [Typekit](#) was launched and it opened up a whole new world of fonts. With Typekit, the actual font libraries are stored on their server, and if you want to use one, you just paste some code on your site to make it work. As a bonus, if you have Photoshop CS, you can import the Typekit fonts into your document.

Type foundries liked this solution because

it allowed font usage to be tracked and monitored.

Google fonts

If you don't want to use a subscription service, you can host fonts on your own server. Most free fonts are not good, but you can find some if you search carefully. [Here](#) are the 30 best designed Google fonts as determined by TypeWolf. That's a good place to start.

Personally, I use Typekit 90% of the time. The rest of the time, if I want a particular font not there, I'll use the font's own hosting package. For example, we used Hoefler for a site once and that font is only licensed by [Typography.com](#). They have their own font hosting system that works much like TypeKit.

I never use free fonts, but that's mainly due to the flexibility Typekit gives me.

Usage tips

Serif fonts are often used for body copy, and sans-serif fonts are often used for headlines. That's because sans-serif copy is easier to read when there's a lot of it. And sans-serif is easier to read quickly, so it makes sense to use it for headlines; however those are not strict rules. If you have a good reason for not doing that, it's fine.

Leading

(Pronounced led-d-ing)

Leading is the space between the baseline of each line of text. The word itself is a reference to how they used to separate lines of type -

they would literally insert strips of lead. On the web, leading is referred to as line-height.

Tracking

Tracking is the space between multiple letters. On the web, it's called letter spacing.

Kerning

While tracking is the space between a group of letters, kerning is the distance in between individual letters. For the longest time, it wasn't possible to kern on the web. Now you can with tools like kerningjs.com, although it's rarely done.

Kerning is a critical concept in print and other mediums, so why is it ignored on the web?

I think this is mainly due to technical limitations. When you edit type on a page with CSS, it affects how those words look sitewide. So when you have a headline in one place, it changes it everywhere. To kern a single word would run contrary to that idea. For our purposes, I think it's good to know the concept of kerning, even though you probably won't use it on the web.

On the following pages, you'll see examples of both good and bad leading and tracking.

Leading too Tight

If the leading (the space above and below) is too tight your eyes will have a hard time separating one line from another. So when you finish a line of text and go to the next

one, it's difficult to tell which line you had just read.

Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus. Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in viverra turpis luctus.

Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, pharetra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hendrerit lorem faucibus congue. Nunc dapibus, arcu ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu molestie risus nunc ut felis. Aliquam iaculis cursus nulla sed congue. Phasellus porta molestie purus, sodales aliquet nulla eleifend vel. Donec in ultricies justo.

Sed et erat augue. Nulla et quam at felis imperdiet fringilla at eu enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam gravida dictum ultricies. Praesent venenatis posuere velit. Donec aliquet at erat at volutpat. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor. Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum, lectus ex placerat felis, in iaculis metus sem vitae nibh.

Mauris varius aliquet augue in blandit. Vivamus sed hendrerit dolor. Proin rhoncus mauris velit, nec aliquet nibh ultricies quis. Vestibulum maximus leo quis nisl sollicitudin, vehicula pulvinar ex tincidunt. Duis vestibulum tellus tortor, sit amet vehicula sapien pellentesque id.

Mauris nisl risus, elementum et malesuada at, hendrerit sed nunc. Aenean blandit dolor porttitor, viverra ex quis, ornare nisl. In aliquet pulvinar justo, sit amet porttitor mi aliquet facilisis. Phasellus ut rutrum justo. Aliquam ac cursus erat, quis egestas massa. Duis vehicula, risus ut finibus euismod, tortor felis gravida lectus, a aliquet elit vitae nibh.

Nam congue, massa a semper vehicula, urna diam aliquam justo, ac tempus purus arcu in sem. Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus. Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in viverra turpis luctus. Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, pharetra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hendrerit lorem faucibus congue.

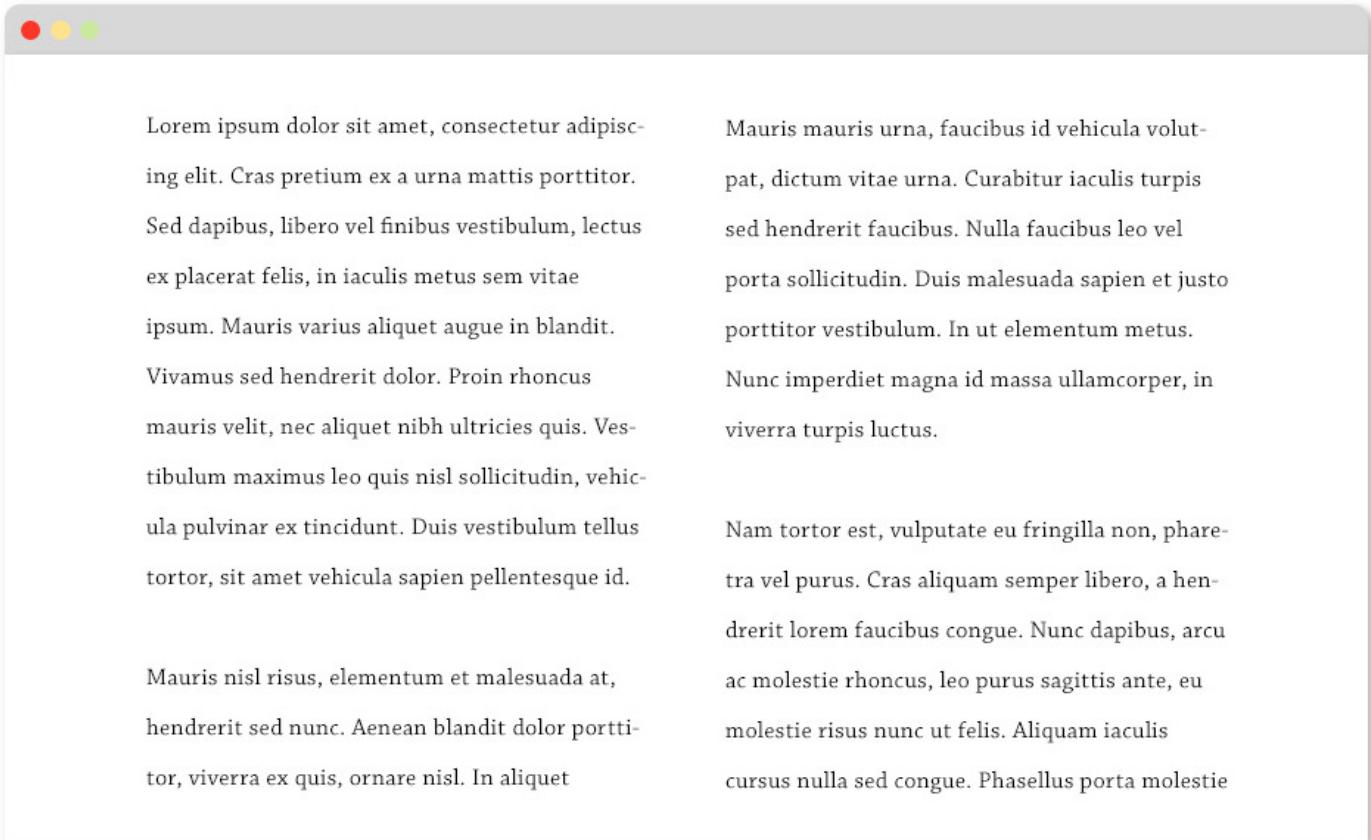
Nunc dapibus, arcu ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu molestie risus nunc ut felis. Aliquam iaculis cursus nulla sed congue. Phasellus

Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, 14pt leading

Loose Leading

Leading that is too loose makes the eye have to jump too far from line to line. While loose leading can be pleasant to look at, just make sure it's readable. Fashion or artsy sites have more of a tolerance for loose leading than a

news site. The difference is the artsy site can be more expressive, but the news site needs to be focused on conveying information.



Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, 34pt leading

Proper Leading

The sweet spot is somewhere in between. Your leading should be at or a little bit above the size of your type. So if your font is 16pt, then your leading should probably somewhere between 16pt and 22pt. Try a few values and see what looks good.

The paragraph below is 16pt, and the leading is 22pt. (I prefer my leading a little more open as I feel it helps the design breathe.) But if you think 18pt leading looks good with the 16pt font you're using, go for it.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor. Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum, lectus ex placerat felis, in iaculis metus sem vitae ipsum. Mauris varius aliquet augue in blandit. Vivamus sed hendrerit dolor. Proin rhoncus mauris velit, nec aliquet nibh ultricies quis. Vestibulum maximus leo quis nisl sollicitudin, vehicula pulvinar ex tincidunt. Duis vestibulum tellus tortor, sit amet vehicula sapien pellentesque id.

Mauris nisl risus, elementum et malesuada at, hendrerit sed nunc. Aenean blandit dolor porttitor, viverra ex quis, ornare nisl. In aliquet pulvinar justo, sit amet porttitor mi aliquet facilisis. Phasellus ut rutrum justo. Aliquam ac cursus erat, quis egestas massa. Duis vehicula, risus ut finibus euismod, tortor felis gravida lectus, a aliquet elit vitae nibh.

Nam congue, massa a semper vehicula, urna diam aliquam justo, ac tempus purus arcu in sem.

Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus. Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in viverra turpis luctus.

Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, pharetra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hendrerit lorem faucibus congue. Nunc dapibus, arcu ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu molestie risus nunc ut felis. Aliquam iaculis cursus nulla sed congue. Phasellus porta molestie purus, sodales aliquet nulla eleifend vel. Donec in ultricies justo.

Sed et erat augue. Nulla et quam at felis imperdi et fringilla at eu enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam gravida dictum ultricies. Praesent venenatis posuere velit. Donec

Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, 22pt leading

Tracking Too Tight

When there's not enough space between letters, it can be difficult to read. And in some instances, it may even cause words to form that you didn't intend!



The screenshot shows a web page with a header bar at the top. Below the header, there are two columns of text. The left column contains several paragraphs of placeholder text (Lorem ipsum) with very tight letter spacing, making it difficult to read. The right column contains similar placeholder text with standard letter spacing, which is easier to read. This visual comparison illustrates how tracking (the space between letters) affects readability.

Left Column (Tight Tracking):

...
Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor. Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum, lectus ex placerat felis, in iaculis metus sem vitae ipsum. Mauris varius aliquet augue in blandit. Vivamus sed hendrerit dolor. Proin rhoncus mauris velit, nec aliquet nibh ultricies quis. Vestibulum maximus leo quis nisl sollicitudin, vehicula pulvinar ex tincidunt. Duis vestibulum tellus tortor, sit amet vehicula sapien pellentesque id.

Mauris nisl risus, elementum et malesuada at, hendrerit sed nunc. Aenean blandit dolor porttitor, viverra ex quis, ornare nisl. In aliquet pulvinar justo, sit amet porttitor mi aliquet facilisis. Phasellus ut rutrum justo. Aliquam ac cursus erat, quis egestas massa. Duis vehicula, risus ut finibus euismod, tortor felis gravida lectus, a aliquet elit vitae nibh.

Nam congue, massa a semper vehicula, urna diam aliquam justo, ac tempus purus arcu in sem. Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel

Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus. Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in viverra turpis luctus.

Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, pharetra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hendrerit lorem faucibus congue. Nunc dapibus, arcu ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu molestie risus nunc ut felis. Aliquam iaculis cursus nulla sed congue. Phasellus porta molestie purus, sodales aliquet nulla eleifend vel. Donec in ultricies justo.

Sed et erat augue. Nulla et quam at felis imperdiet fringilla at eu enim. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam gravida dictum ultricies. Praesent venenatis posuere velit. Donec aliquet at erat at volutpat. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor. Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum,

Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, -50 tracking



I'd rather not, thank you.

Tracking Too Loose

When there's too much space between lines, it forces the eye to jump too far from line to line.



The screenshot shows a Mac OS X window with a title bar and three red, yellow, and green buttons. Inside the window, there are two columns of text in the Chaparral Pro font, both set at 16pt and 200 tracking. The text is justified and spans multiple lines. The spacing between the lines is significantly larger than the character spacing, creating a 'tracking too loose' effect where the eye has to jump between lines.

Left Column Text:

... ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor. Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum, lectus ex placerat felis, in iaculis metus sem vitae ipsum. Mauris varius aliquet augue in blandit. Vivamus sed hendrerit dolor. Proin rhoncus mauris velit, nec aliquet nibh ultricies quis. Vestibulum maximus leo quis nisl sollicitudin, vehicula pulvinar ex tincidunt. Duis vestibulum tellus tortor, sit amet vehicula sapien pellentesque id.

Mauris nisl risus, elementum et malesuada at, hendrerit sed nunc. Aenean blandit dolor porttitor, viverra ex quis, ornare nisl. In aliquet pulvinar justo, sit amet porttitor mi aliquet facilisis. Phasellus

Right Column Text:

Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volutpat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus. Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in viverra turpis luctus.

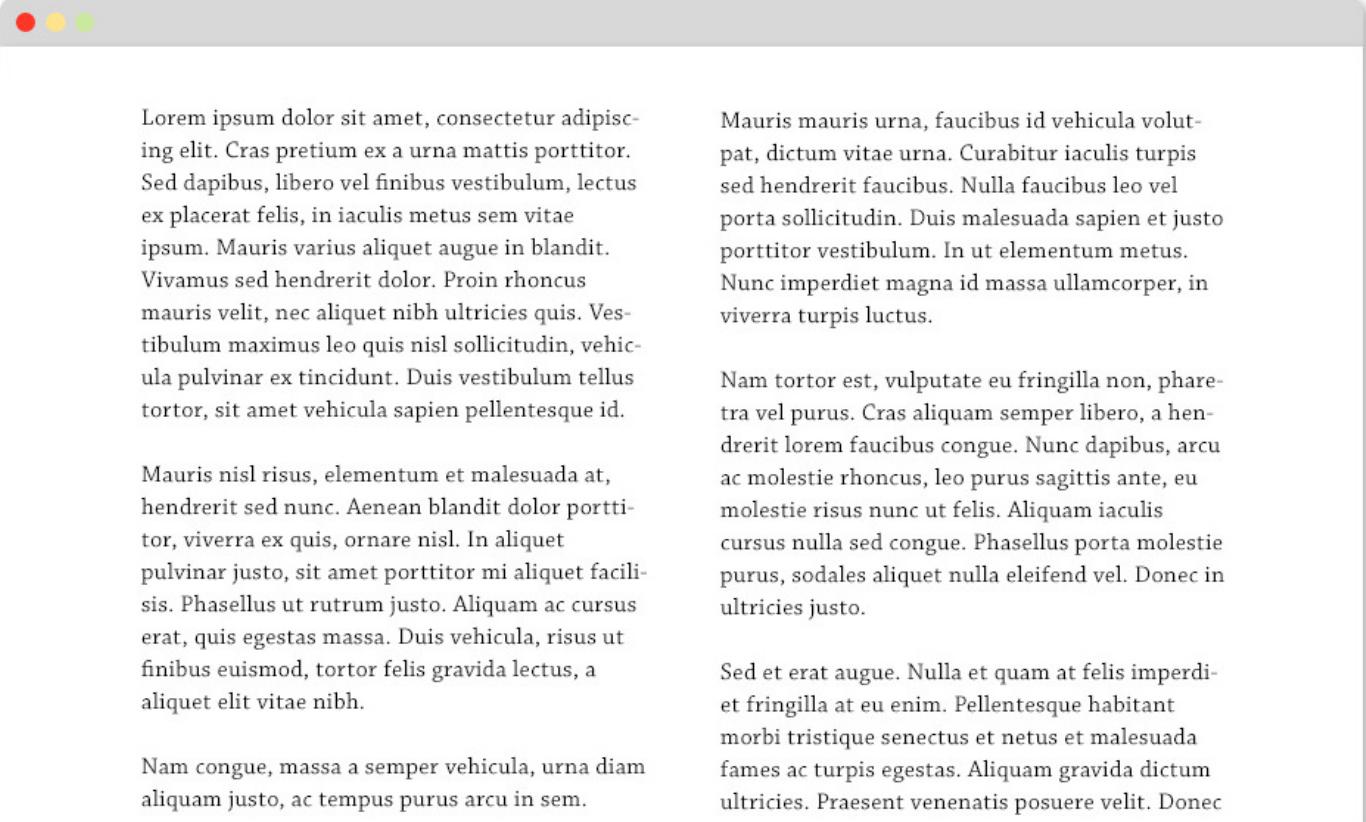
Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, pharetra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hendrerit lorem faucibus congue. Nunc dapibus, arcu ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu molestie risus nunc ut felis.

Phasellus porta molestie purus, sodales aliquet nulla eleifend vel. Donec in ultricies justo. Aliquam iaculis cursus nulla sed congue.

Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, 200 tracking

Proper Tracking

This has a nice amount of space between the letters. It's not too cramped and not too loose.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a light gray header bar featuring three colored circular icons (red, yellow, green). The main content area contains two columns of text. The left column has approximately 10 lines of text, and the right column has about 8 lines. Both columns use a serif font and have a consistent letter spacing (tracking) that allows each letter to be clearly legible without appearing cramped or too spread out. The background of the browser window is white.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipisc-
 ing elit. Cras pretium ex a urna mattis porttitor.
 Sed dapibus, libero vel finibus vestibulum, lectus
 ex placerat felis, in iaculis metus sem vitae
 ipsum. Mauris varius aliquet augue in blandit.
 Vivamus sed hendrerit dolor. Proin rhoncus
 mauris velit, nec aliquet nibh ultricies quis. Ves-
 tibulum maximus leo quis nisl sollicitudin, vehic-
 ula pulvinar ex tincidunt. Duis vestibulum tellus
 tortor, sit amet vehicula sapien pellentesque id.

Mauris nisl risus, elementum et malesuada at,
 hendrerit sed nunc. Aenean blandit dolor porttitor,
 viverra ex quis, ornare nisl. In aliquet
 pulvinar justo, sit amet porttitor mi aliquet facilis.
 Phasellus ut rutrum justo. Aliquam ac cursus
 erat, quis egestas massa. Duis vehicula, risus ut
 finibus euismod, tortor felis gravida lectus, a
 aliquet elit vitae nibh.

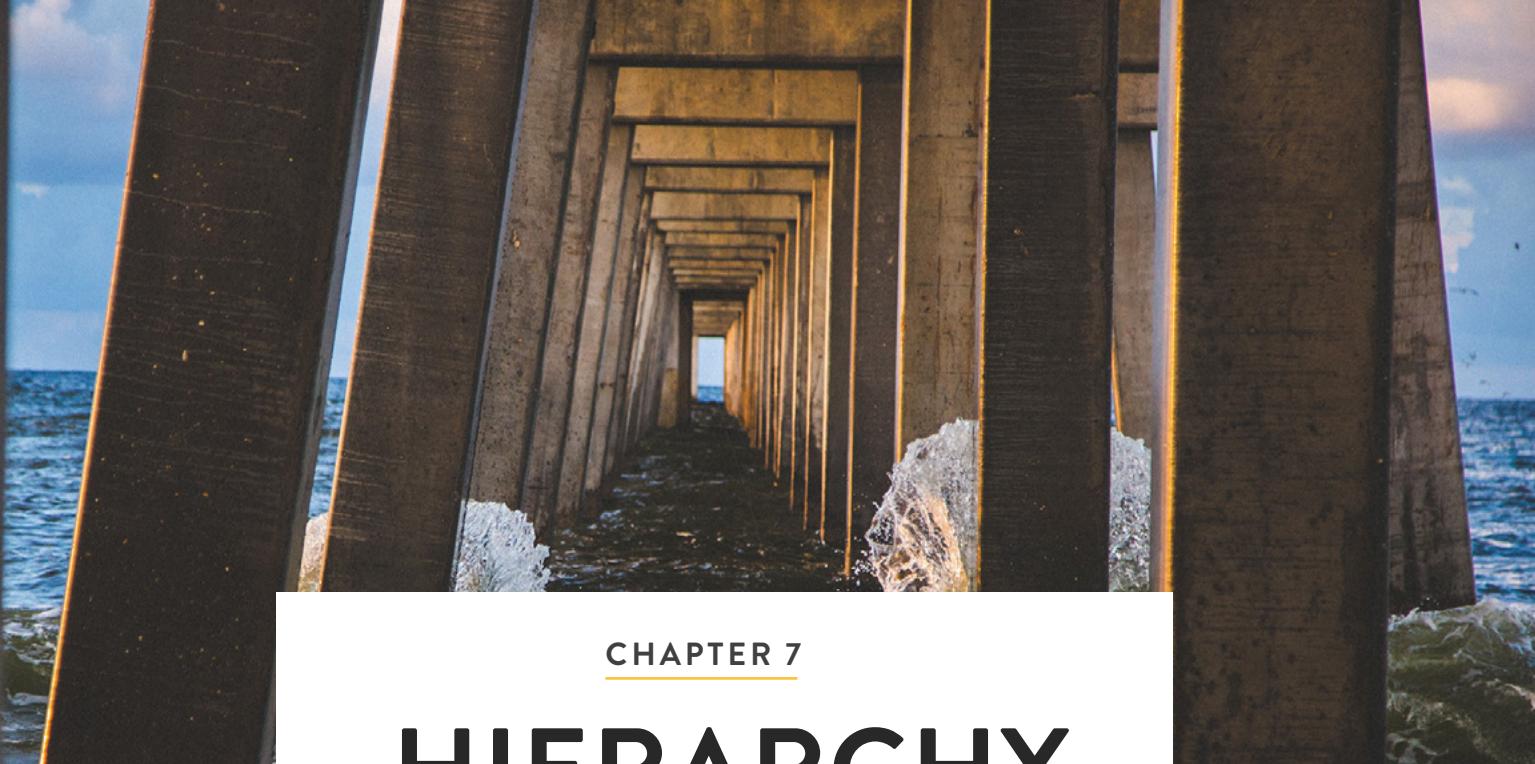
Nam congue, massa a semper vehicula, urna diam
 aliquam justo, ac tempus purus arcu in sem.

Mauris mauris urna, faucibus id vehicula volut-
 pat, dictum vitae urna. Curabitur iaculis turpis
 sed hendrerit faucibus. Nulla faucibus leo vel
 porta sollicitudin. Duis malesuada sapien et justo
 porttitor vestibulum. In ut elementum metus.
 Nunc imperdiet magna id massa ullamcorper, in
 viverra turpis luctus.

Nam tortor est, vulputate eu fringilla non, phare-
 tra vel purus. Cras aliquam semper libero, a hen-
 drerit lorem faucibus congue. Nunc dapibus, arcu
 ac molestie rhoncus, leo purus sagittis ante, eu
 molestie risus nunc ut felis. Aliquam iaculis
 cursus nulla sed congue. Phasellus porta molestie
 purus, sodales aliquet nulla eleifend vel. Donec in
 ultricies justo.

Sed et erat augue. Nulla et quam at felis imperdi-
 et fringilla at eu enim. Pellentesque habitant
 morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada
 fames ac turpis egestas. Aliquam gravida dictum
 ultricies. Praesent venenatis posuere velit. Donec

Chaparral Pro, 16pt font, 25pt tracking



CHAPTER 7

HIERARCHY

“Good design is a lot like clear thinking made visual.”

– Edward Tufte



Introduction

Every website will have some elements that are more important than others.

Often the first element a user sees is large, and the less important parts are smaller. Some beginners have a tendency to want to make everything big and important. They'll use lots of colors, big images, and large typography. But that doesn't work. As the saying goes, "If everything is important, then nothing is."

As you work through the examples, you may notice that hierarchy and composition are closely related. A good composition often has nice hierarchy.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- Good examples of hierarchy

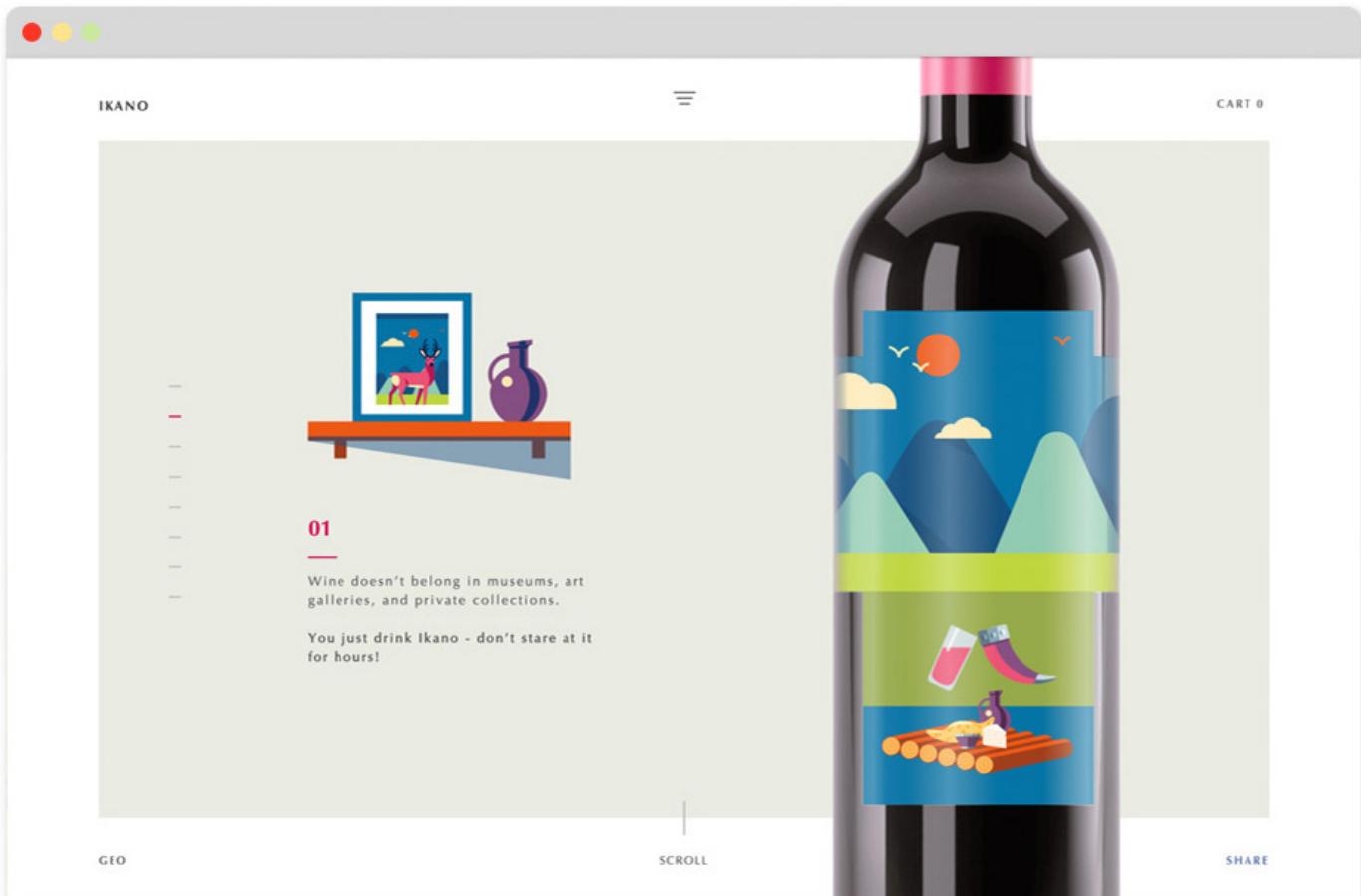
Ikano Wine

<http://ikano.ge>

Comedians use contrast in their jokes for greater impact. Contrast can be used in design in a similar way. Here the difference in scale between the large bottle and small shelf

is striking and draws you in. On this page, hierarchy is used to create visual interest.

[Enlarge](#)



Compliments Furniture

<http://compliments.dk>

A person's eye moves from top to bottom when they look at a web page. So if your site has a lot of content, you'll want to put the most important stuff at the top. This

furniture store recently released their new collection. It's important to them, so they feature it at the top.

[Enlarge](#)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Compliments Furniture website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'PRODUCTS', 'FIND STORE', the 'compliments' logo ('MAKING HOME HOME'), 'ABOUT', and 'MENU'. The main visual is a large photograph of a grey sofa with several pillows and a blanket, with the text 'NEW COLLECTION' overlaid. Below this, a smaller text reads 'Check out our Autumn/Winter Collection 2015'. A 'SEE CATALOGUE' button is visible. The overall theme is 'MAKING HOME HOME'. Below the main image, there are three product categories: 'CUSHION' (showing a black chair with pillows), 'BED LINEN' (showing blue bedding), and 'YOU & ME' (showing a bed with blue and white bedding). Each category has a 'View all' link.

Hoover-Mason Trestle

<http://hoovermason.com/>

This site documents the historic Hoover-Mason trestle in Pennsylvania. That first black and white module is the largest because it links to the main interactive experience on

the site. The smaller modules on the right are first-hand accounts from workers and a page that has directions to the Trestle. Those aren't as important, so they're less prominent.

 [Enlarge](#)



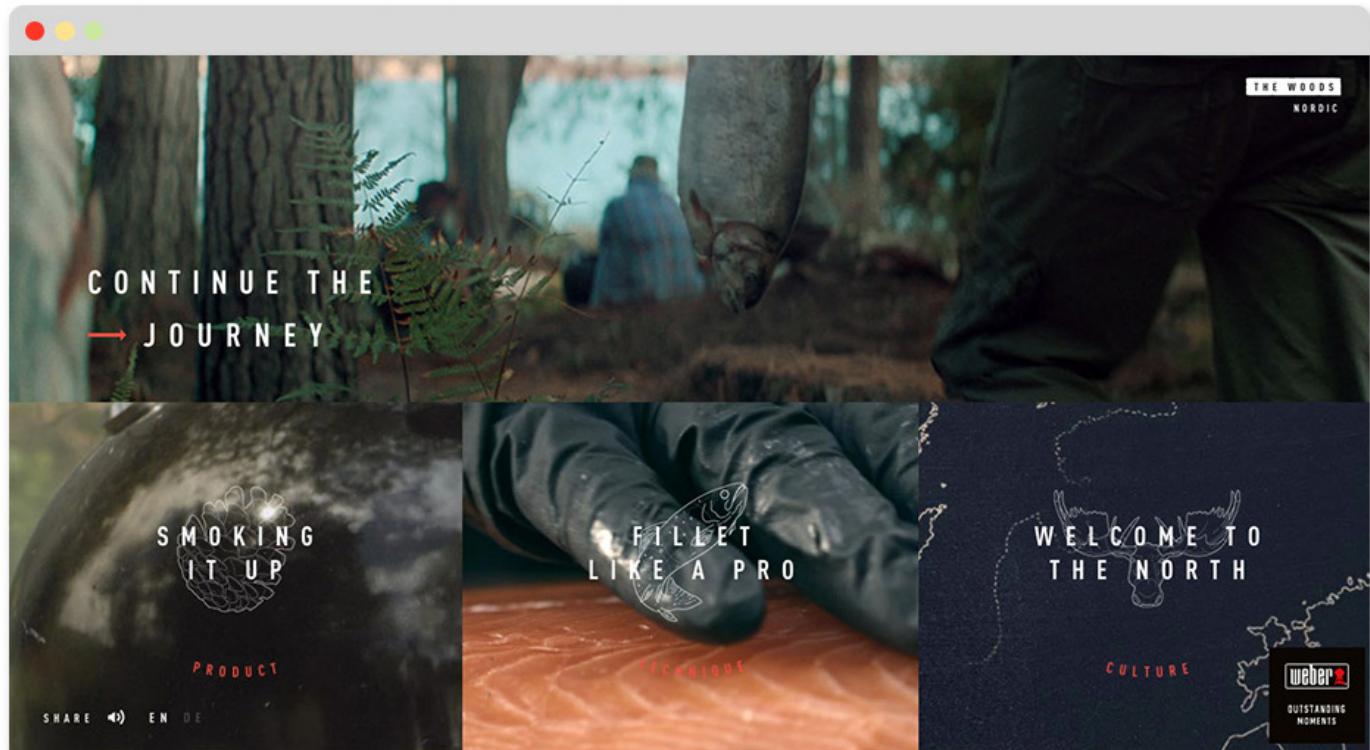
Weber Grills

http://bbqcultures.com/en_GB/intro

This is a microsite for Weber Grills. The primary experience is a journey around the world which explores how different cultures bbq. It makes sense that this “continue the

journey” module is large and at the top - it's what's most important.

 [Enlarge](#)



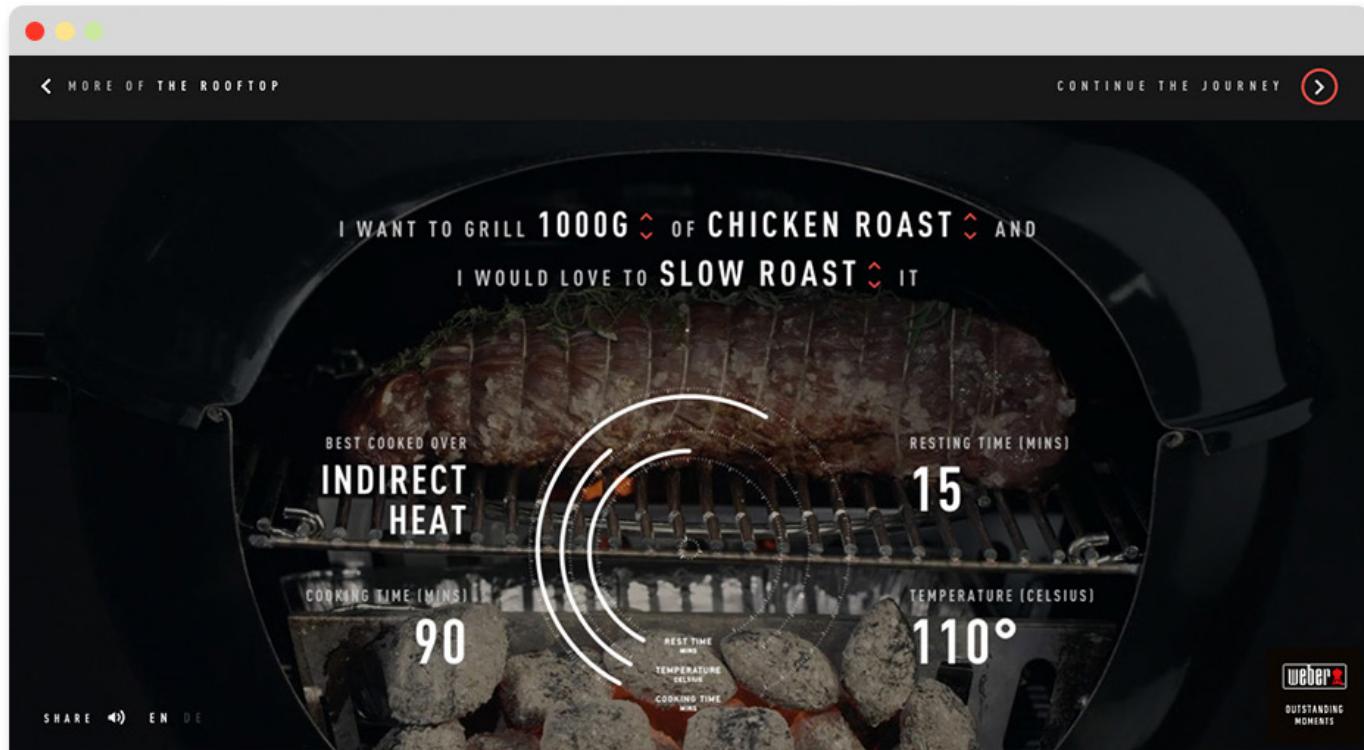
Weber Grills

http://www.bbqcultures.com/en_GB/intro

Here's an interactive grilling experience within the Weber Grills site. The grill options here have a good hierarchy. Notice the primary options at the top: weight, type of meat, and type of cooking. If you think

barbecuing process, those three things are thought of first. Only later do you consider the less important details like temperature and cook time. And those settings are further down the page, as you would expect.

 [Enlarge](#)



Oribe

<http://www.oribe.com>

Hierarchy in typography is an important thing to master. The headline below (Colorful Secret) is large, and the subheadline below it is small. This allows the reader to see the headline and if they're interested, they can read more. But if not, they haven't invested

too much time. If the headline and the subheadline were the same size, it would flood the user with too much information. That's a lot of what design is about - giving the user just the right amount of information at the right time.

 [Enlarge](#)

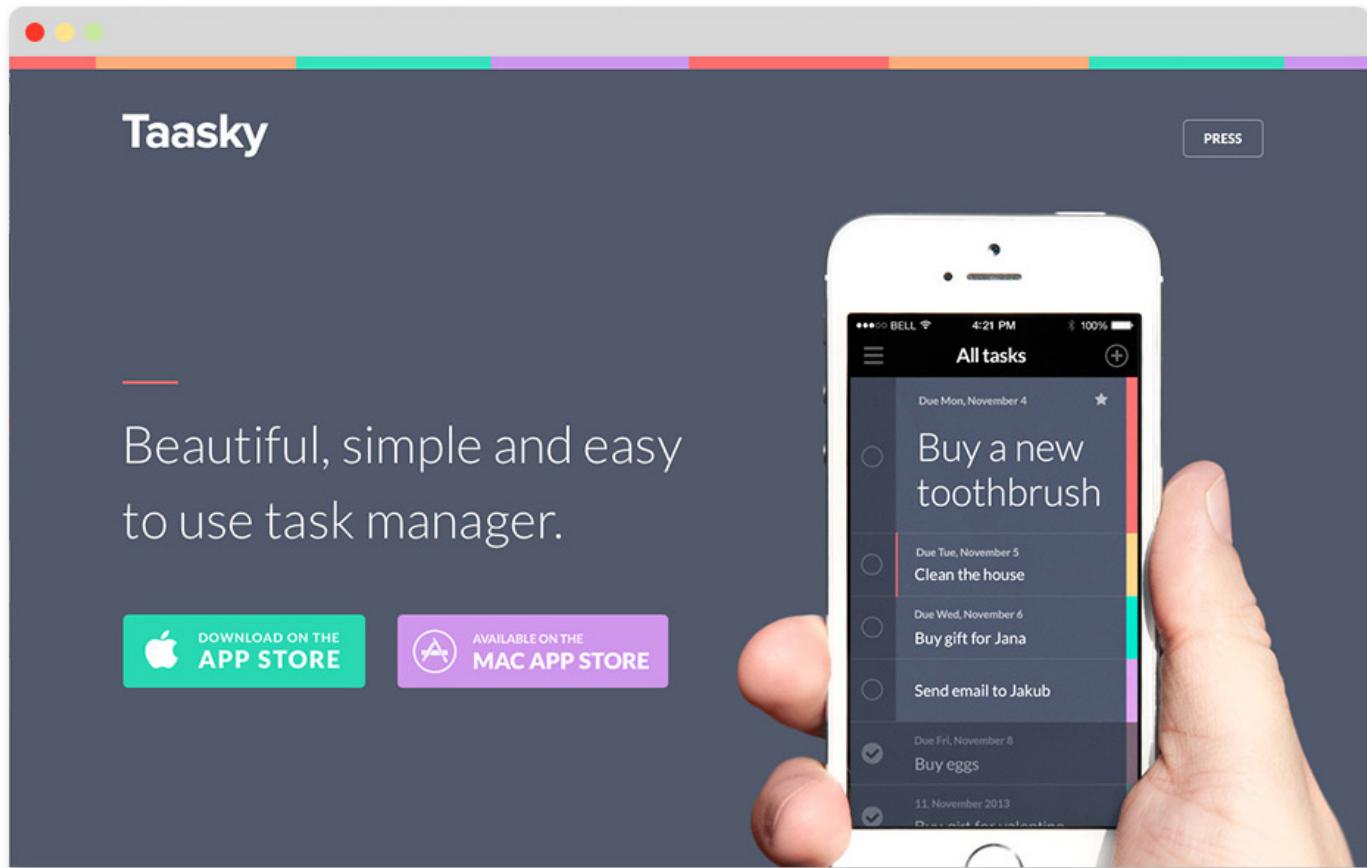


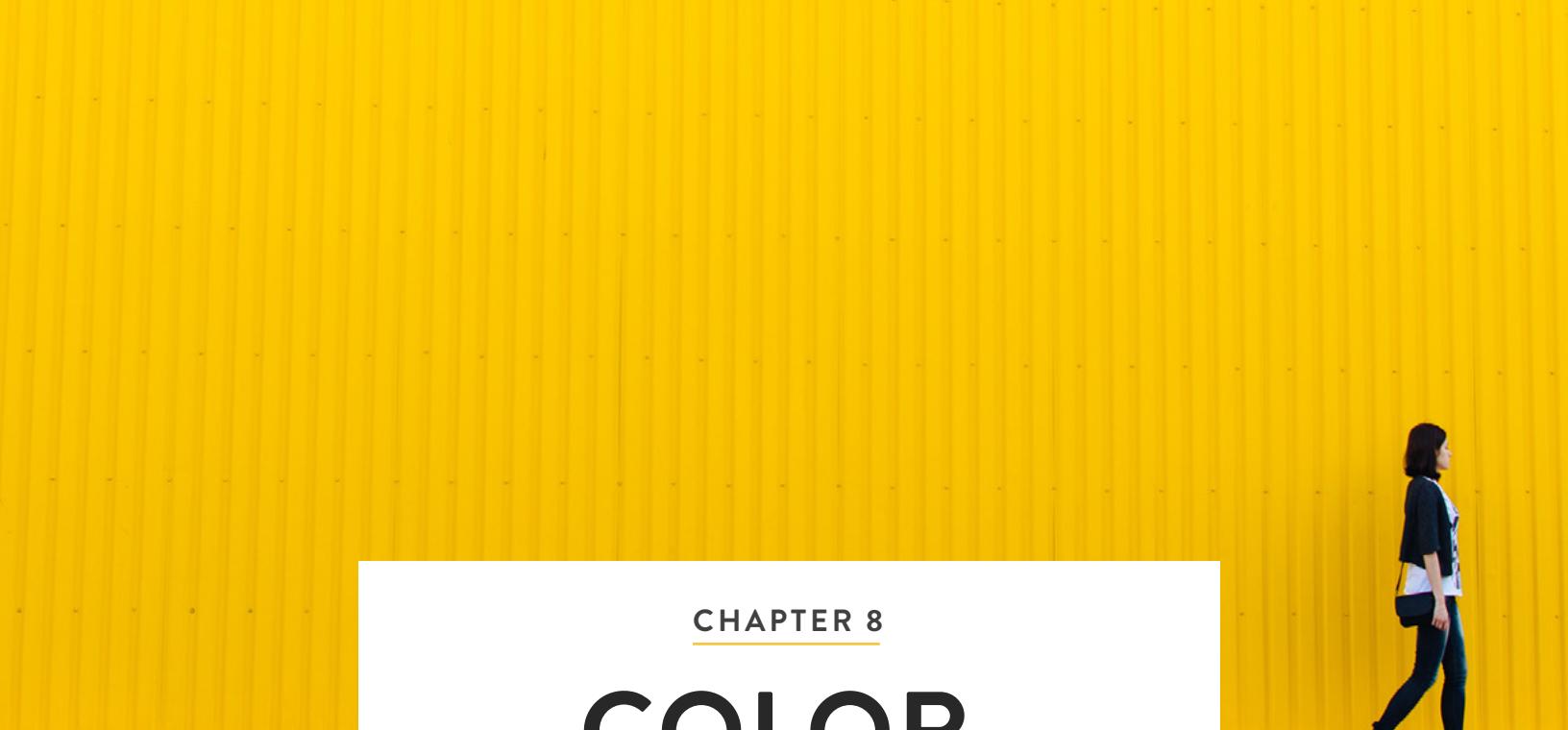
Taasky

<http://www.taasky.com>

Even your website's colors can have a hierarchy. Here the bright colors serve to highlight things like buttons. Whereas the warm gray is always used in the background.

 [Enlarge](#)





CHAPTER 8

COLOR

“Color does not add a pleasant quality to design – it reinforces it.”

– Pierre Bonnard

Introduction

Color is an underrated design tool. When used correctly, it can make a website sing. When I was a beginner designer, I often used too many colors in my designs. This section will help you avoid that mistake. It will also help you approach your color choices methodically. You'll have tangible reasons for why you picked that dark purple or that candy apple green. Most importantly, all your colors will work with your website's concept, brand, and style to tell a cohesive story.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- What influences your color choices
- B&W + One Color
- Analogous
- Complementary
- Split Complementary
- Triad

What influences your color choices

When thinking about colors, you should keep in mind the following three things:

Concept (Chapter Two):

If your concept is water-related, using lots of red probably won't work well. Water & the color red live in different worlds. Your colors should support your concept. Or at the very least, not conflict.

Brand (Chapter Three):

Say you're doing a site for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. That's a very serious subject. The tone of any war memorial is respectful and serious. So your color choices should reflect that. Bright happy colors would feel out of place, in the same way that someone selling balloons near the memorial would feel tacky.

Also, respect the client's brand guidelines. If you're doing a microsite for Ikea, it's likely you'll have to use their signature blue and yellow.

There are some instances when the site experience is so far removed from the brand that you can use other colors. But before doing this, make sure you clear it with your creative director or the client.

Style (Chapter Ten):

Here's where your personal tastes can have a voice. What style(s) are you considering from the style section? Your color choices should support that style. Design trends can be considered too. As you explore the color options on the following pages, imagine what colors might work well with the design style you're considering.

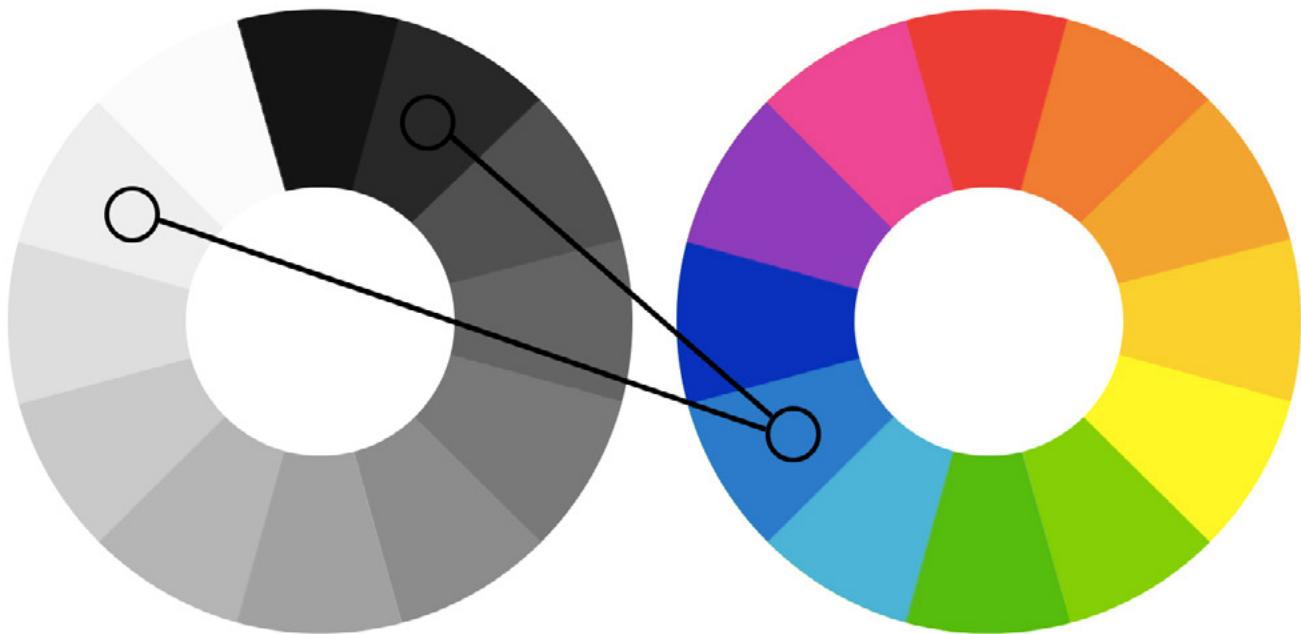
COLOR STYLE ONE

B & W Plus One Color

This first style isn't a part of color theory like the rest of the chapter but it is a simple and effective approach that can work well.

POSSIBLE USES:

- To make dissimilar images cohesive
- To bring attention to conceptually important colors

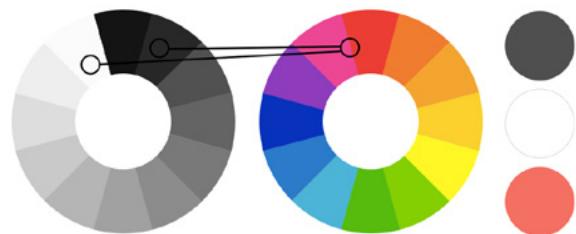


Necon

<http://www.necon.pl/en/>

This is a portfolio site for an ad agency. Necon has executed dozens of projects for clients with various photography and art direction styles in them. This is problematic because showing multiple projects in full color on their site could make it feel disjointed. They solved this by using a coral color as an overlay on top of all the images. It makes the page cohesive. When every image has coral in it, they have a common denominator that anchors them. You can still hover over an image to reveal

a full-color screenshot of a project or click through to view the individual project page. I think the color coral was a stylistic choice rather than a conceptual one, although it's hard to say without knowing the background of the project.



[Enlarge](#)

The screenshot shows the Necon website with a red header bar. On the left is the logo (a stylized 'N' in a laurel wreath) and the word 'NECON'. On the right are language ('Polski') and user ('Client Panel') dropdown menus. Below the header are navigation links for 'Agency', 'Offer', 'Work', and 'Contact'. The main content area features a large headline: 'Necon is a multidisciplinary creative agency. We do creation in the field of branding, print and new media. This is our site.' Below this is a section titled 'OUR LATEST PROJECTS' with three projects shown: 'PRIORI MANUFAKTURA' (a living room interior), 'LINGUA VIVA' (a silver car), and 'EUROPEJSKIE CENTRUM PODATKOWE' (a target icon). At the bottom, there's a banner for 'BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR'.

PRIORI MANUFAKTURA

— PRIORI

Branding Web

BANANAZ CLUB

NAPIDEA

LINGUA VIVA

Branding Print Web

EUROPEJSKIE CENTRUM PODATKOWE

Branding Print Web

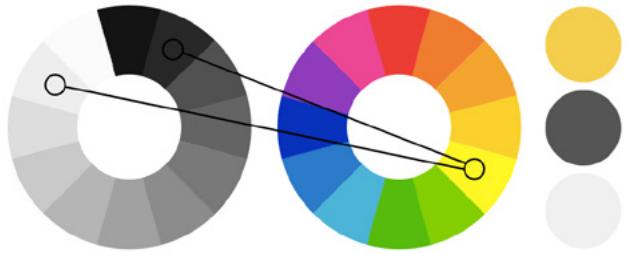
TERRA

BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

Givventory

<http://www.givventory.co>

This is a promotional page for a gin recipe app. The yellow color comes from the concept. Gin is a pale straw color, so it's a nod to that.



[Enlarge](#)

A promotional image for the Givventory app. In the center is a white iPhone displaying a mobile application interface. The screen shows a search bar with the word "DRY FLY" and a list of gin names: "ADLER BERLIN DRY GIN", "AQUA MONACO GOLDEN MONACO...", "BEEFEATER LONDON DRY GIN", and "BLACKWOODS VINTAGE DRY GIN". Below the list is a category section labeled "Dry" with a radio button. At the bottom is a standard QWERTY keyboard with a blue "Search" button. The background of the image is a solid yellow color. Overlaid on the yellow background are faint, large, stylized letters spelling out "GIN" and "TOPY". Above the phone, there is a faint illustration of a bottle of gin with botanical leaves. At the top right of the phone screen, there are download links for the App Store and Google Play, along with a "Contact us" link. The top left of the phone screen shows a signal strength icon, the time "4:21 PM", and a battery level of "22%".

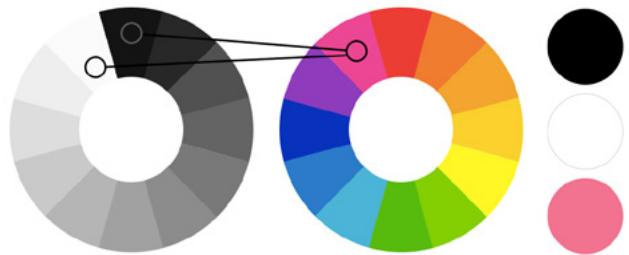
BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

Beoplay/Rapha Headphones

<http://bit.ly/1QwCemQ>

This is a cross-promotional product page that Beoplay made for their 'Rapha'-style headphones. Rapha is a company that makes cycling clothing and accessories. Pink is their signature color, so Beoplay wanted to highlight *it*, rather than use their own colors and photography style.

 [Enlarge](#)



Speakers Headphones All Products The Journal Shop

H6 RAPHA EDITION EXPERIENCE TECH SPEC BUY

USD 429 BUY

BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

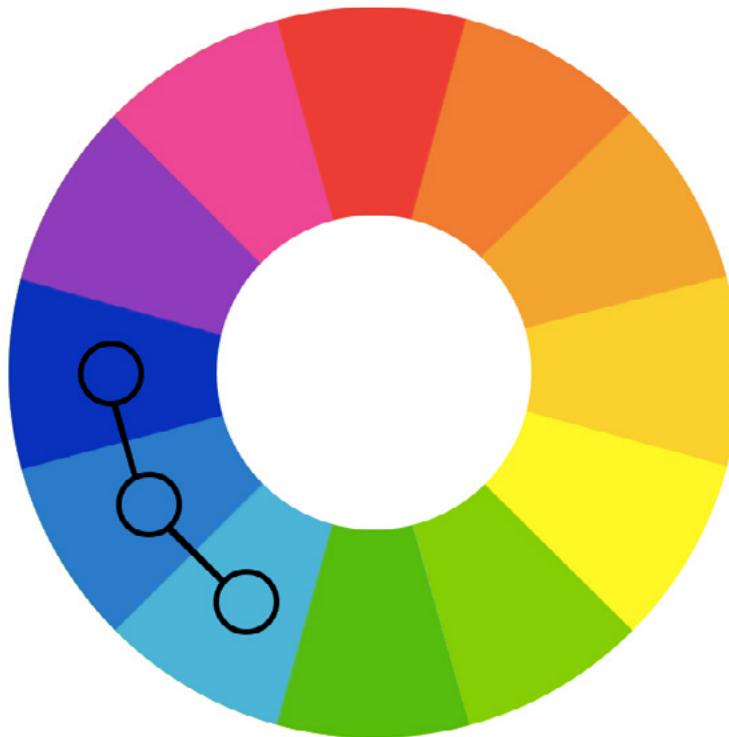
COLOR STYLE TWO

Analogous

Analogous colors are near each other on the color wheel. This style works best when three or four colors are used. Often there will be one dominant color which the other colors defer to.

POSSIBLE USES:

- To convey a harmonious mood
- When the content of the site is friendly

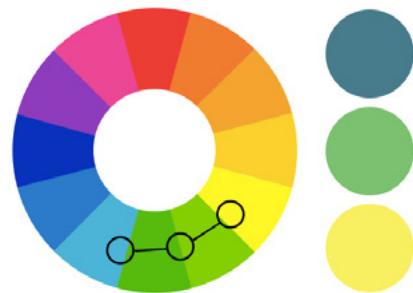


Mambo Mambo

<http://mambomambo.ca>

This is a portfolio site for a creative agency in Québec, Canada. I think the tropical aesthetic here is done ironically because Québec is awfully cold! The green and yellow creates a happy and friendly feeling.

 [Enlarge](#)



services

art direction

ANALOGOUS

Concept Car Site

<http://bit.ly/1QwCkuO>

A homepage mockup designed by Vivek Venkatraman. The blues and blue grays here create a pleasant and consistent mood.

Q Enlarge

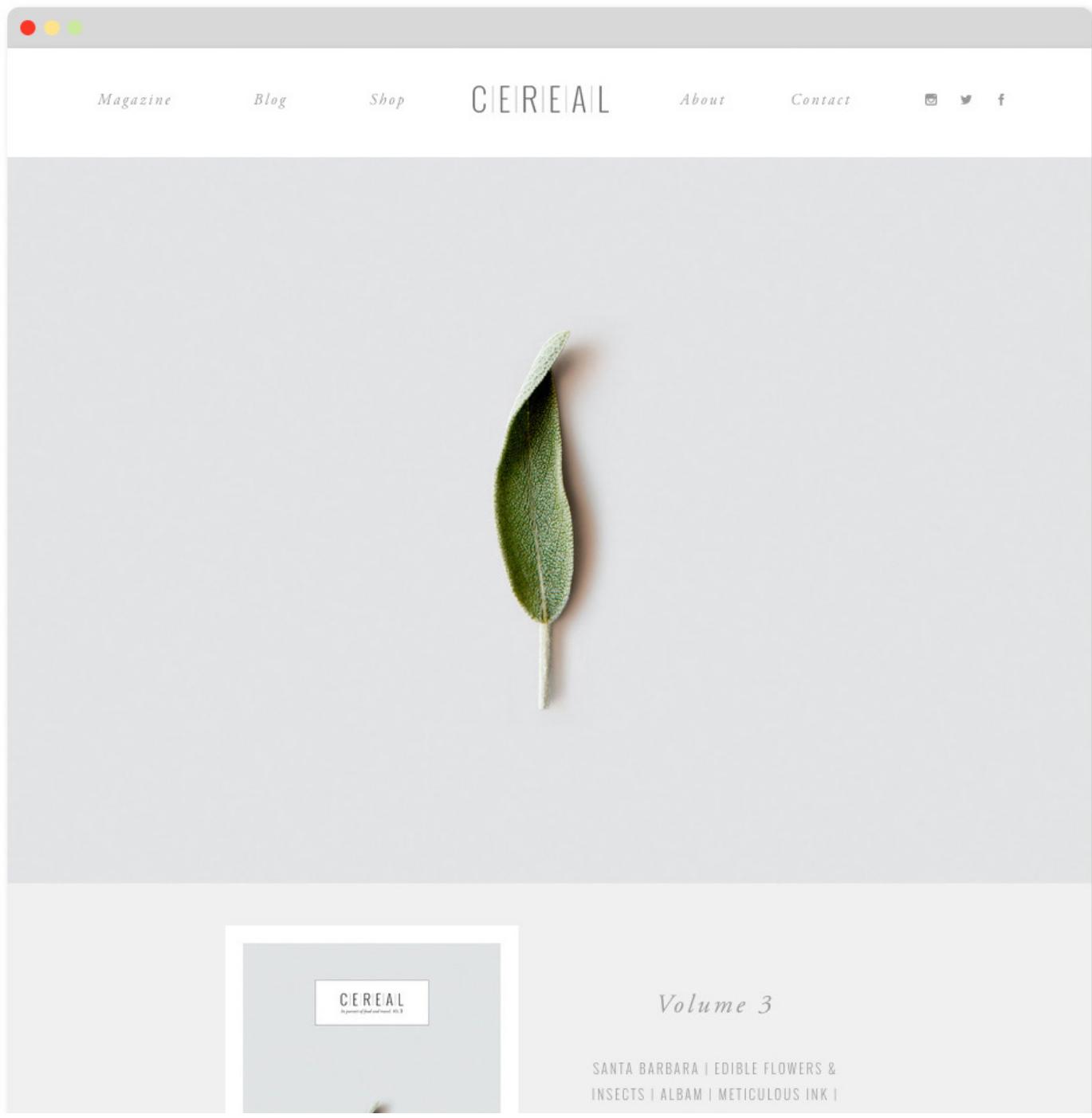
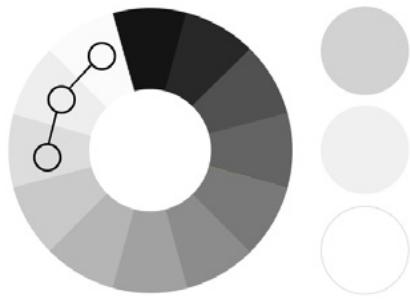
The screenshot shows the homepage of the QUANT Concept Car website. At the top right is a circular color wheel with a central white circle and colored segments. To its right are three vertically aligned circles in dark teal, medium teal, and light gray. The main header features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the word "QUANT". Overlaid on this is the text "PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF". Below the car image, two large numbers are displayed: "634" with the subtitle "PEOPLE AHEAD OF YOU" and "12" with the subtitle "DAYS LEFT TO DRIVE". At the bottom left is a full view of the QUANT e-Sportlimousine. On the bottom right, there is a section with the text "2.8S OF BLISS." followed by a detailed description of the car's performance: "0-100 Kilometers in just under 3 seconds. Elegant, sporty and with an extraordinary design that underscores the special character of this car as the platform for a revolutionary new powertrain technology – this is the QUANT e-Sportlimousine in its world premiere." At the very bottom right, the word "ANALOGOUS" is written.

Cereal Magazine

<http://readcereal.com>

This site uses a lot of grays throughout. Because these grays are neutral, it allows you to put just about any style or color of photo you want over it.

 [Enlarge](#)



Magazine Blog Shop **CEREAL** About Contact   

Volume 3

SANTA BARBARA | EDIBLE FLOWERS &
INSECTS | ALBAM | METICULOUS INK |

ANALOGOUS

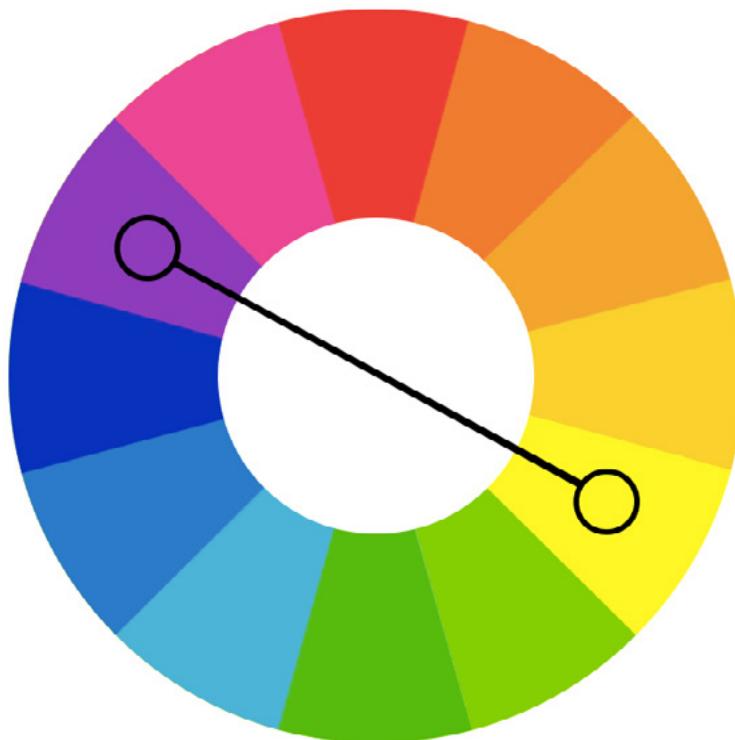
COLOR STYLE THREE

Complementary

Complementary colors are on the opposite sides on the color wheel. Complementary colors should be approached with caution on the web because they create a lot of tension. If you have large areas of the page with these colors, it can hinder communication. The examples below are a few examples that work ok.

POSSIBLE USES:

- When you want the page to pop
- To create excitement if the content of the site is dull

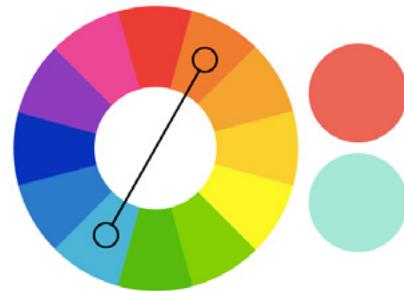


Sonor Design

http://radium.ro/?page_id=530

Here he uses a muted red/orange and a light blue/green. In fact, there's just a hint of blue in there. The design works because the colors aren't too intense.

Enlarge



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Sonor Design website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, PORTFOLIO, ABOUT US, BLOG, and CONTACT, along with social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. Below the navigation is a large teal-colored header section. In the center of the header, the word "SONOR" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo, there is a small graphic of three overlapping circles in red, teal, and light blue. The main headline "Welcome to Sonor design" is displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the tagline "Clean & bright graphics for your projects" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. On the left side of the header, there is a paragraph of placeholder text (Lorem ipsum) and a red "DEMO" button. On the right side, there is another paragraph of placeholder text and a red "DEMO" button. Below the header, there are three categories: "User interface", "App development", and "Webdesign", each with a small icon and a brief description of placeholder text. The main content area features a large image of a smartphone displaying the Sonor logo, flanked by two stylized, purple, hand-drawn style numbers "00". Below this, there is a section titled "From the logofolio" with the subtitle "A selection of beautiful logos & typafaces". This section shows a grid of various logo designs displayed on a laptop screen. The overall design is clean and modern, using a palette of muted reds, oranges, blues, and teals.

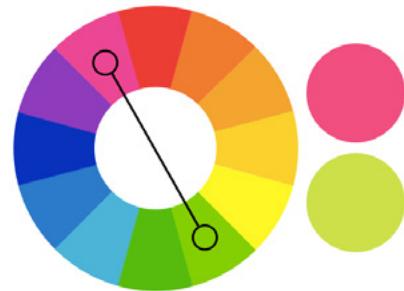
COMPLEMENTARY

Orange PR & Marketing

<http://bit.ly/22o2V4S>

The use of color is leaned upon heavily in this design, more than any other example shown. It works well here because the colors aren't fighting other elements for attention.

 [Enlarge](#)



INCREASE PRESENCE



The standard chunk of Lorem Ipsum has been used since the 1500s is reproduced below for those interested. Sections from de Finibus et Malorum are extremely ancient artifacts.

[READ MORE](#)



PICTURE PERFECT PR & MARKETING



The standard chunk of Lorem Ipsum has been used since the 1500s is reproduced below for those interested. Sections from de Finibus et Malorum are extremely ancient artifacts.

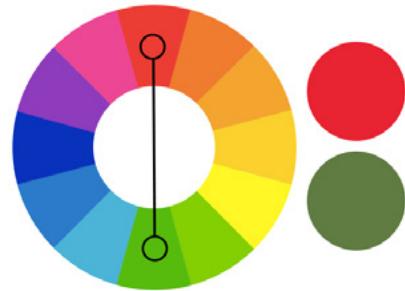


COMPLEMENTARY

Specialized

<http://bit.ly/1OUUqo9>

From the designer: "The design itself was largely inspiring by the angular shape of the frame which is translated through the cutaways and diamond shapes throughout the design."



[Enlarge](#)

S-WORKS
Camber Carbon

◆ **FEATURES**

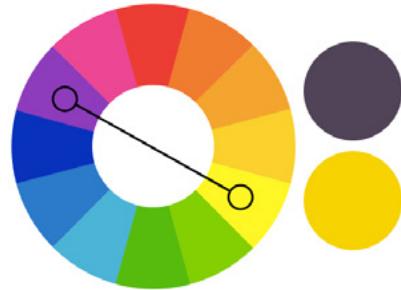
The top-shelf S-Works Camber 29 combines 110mm of plush and efficient FSR suspension with a Kashima-coated FOX Float CTD Factory Series shock and premium component package for uncompromising and versatile trail performance.

COMPLEMENTARY

Financial Claims Made Easy

<https://financialclaimsmadesimple.co.uk>

Notice how they use the purple sparingly. It allows the lightness of the yellow to come through.



[Enlarge](#)

The screenshot shows the website's layout. At the top, there's a dark blue header bar with the company logo 'Financial Claims Made Simple' and navigation links for 'Find your PPI', 'PPI Claim Calculator', 'Track your claim', 'About us', 'FAQs', 'Testimonials', 'Our fees', and 'Contact us'. Below the header is a large yellow section featuring a cartoon character named Sam. Sam is standing next to a computer monitor that displays the text 'No forms to fill in'. To the right of Sam is a dark purple call-to-action box containing the text 'Let's get started!' and three input fields for 'Full Name', 'Email', and 'Phone number', followed by a red 'Call me back' button. Below this section is a heading 'Why choose us?' with a subtext: 'Because we've made financial claims so simple! We simply make your life easier by doing all the work for you.' The page then lists three main services in separate boxes: 'Not sure if you had PPI?' (with a question mark icon), 'Track your claim anytime online' (with a stopwatch icon), and 'No need to complete any forms' (with a document icon). Each service box contains a brief description and a link to learn more.

**Financial Claims
Made Simple**

Find your PPI PPI Claim Calculator Track your claim

About us FAQs Testimonials Our fees Contact us

Claiming back mis-sold PPI never felt so simple

No forms to fill in

Sam

Let's get started!

Full Name

Email

Phone number

Call me back

Why choose us?

Because we've made financial claims so simple!
We simply make your life easier by doing all the work for you.

Not sure if you had PPI?

You're not alone. We take calls every day from people who suspect they were mis-sold PPI, but aren't sure. We are able to track down your PPI even if you don't have your old paperwork or account details.

[Find your PPI Now](#)

Track your claim anytime online

Our online claim tracker allows you to check on the progress of your claim at any time (even when offices are closed) from almost anywhere.

[Track your claim online](#)

No need to complete any forms

You probably want to appoint a claims management company because you simply don't have the time or the patience to deal with the banks in reclaiming your PPI (and we don't blame you). We will complete every form, send every letter, make every call and check every possible detail to ensure that you get the compensation you deserve.

COMPLEMENTARY

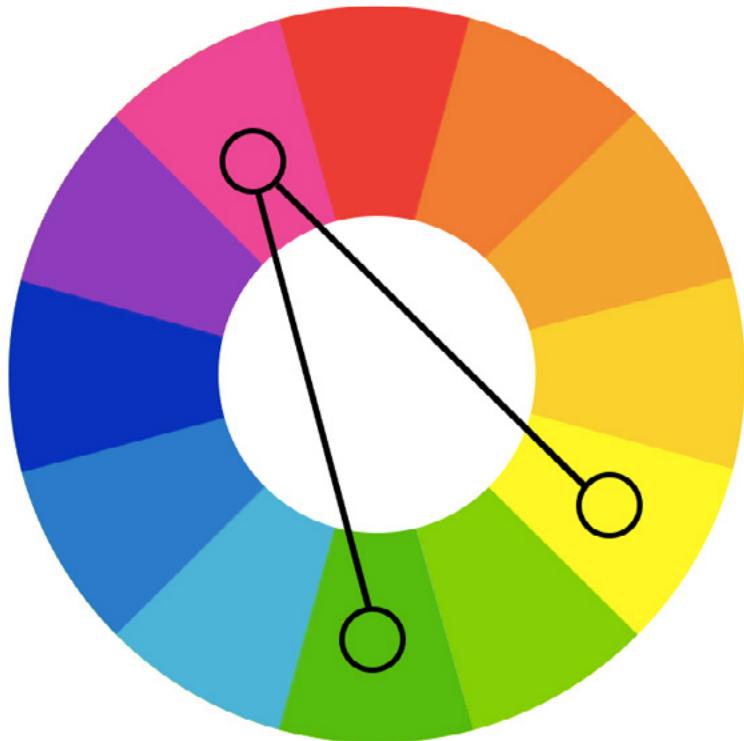
COLOR STYLE FOUR

Split Complementary

Split complementary colors are nice because they combine the pleasantness of analogous colors with a bit of spunkiness that complementary colors have.

POSSIBLE USES:

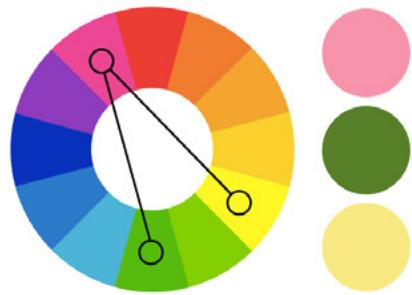
- Almost anywhere



Spina

<https://spinanydc.com>

Spina is a flower shop in NYC. You could almost say this color scheme is complementary because the greens and pinks are so dominant, but I think there's enough yellow sprinkled throughout for it to be split complementary.



Enlarge

The website for Spina uses a split-complementary color palette. The dominant colors are various shades of green (from dark forest green to bright lime green), which provide a strong base. Interspersed among these greens are vibrant pinks and yellows. A large, prominent monstera leaf serves as the central visual element, its green color accented by bright yellow veins. In the bottom left corner, a cluster of white orchids is shown, adding a soft pink/purple hue. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on natural, organic elements.

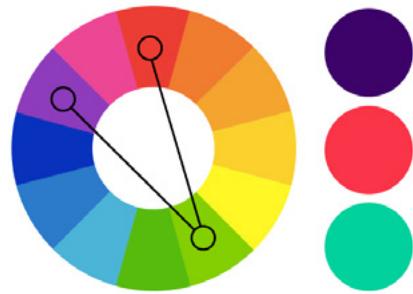
SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

Drug Addiction PSA

<http://www.addiction.mobydigg.de>

This site explores what causes drug addiction. The purple and red are very bold and impossible to ignore. Notice that the green has a little blue in it, that's ok! I bet they started with a more normal looking green but then tweaked it to feel more dangerous and drug-like.

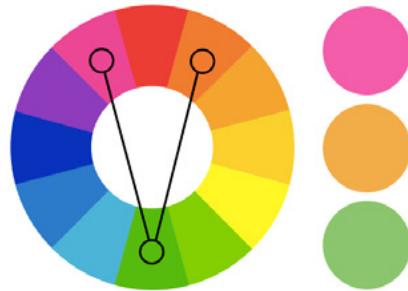
[Enlarge](#)



El Burro Mexican

<http://elburro.no>

This site is for a Mexican restaurant in Norway. Notice how the colors also appear in photos of the food. That helps hold the composition together. And it was possibly the inspiration for the pink, orange, and green color scheme.



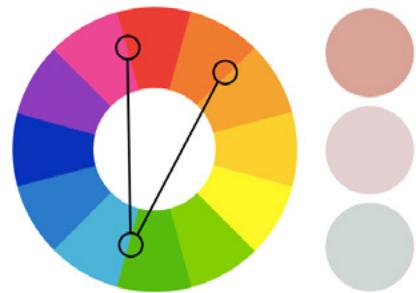
[Enlarge](#)

SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

Guess

<http://bit.ly/1p3Drf1>

Here the designer wanted people to focus their attention on the spring / summer line, so she used colors from the actual products and photo shoots. Notice how muted the colors are - it makes the contrast between the colors less intense, thus allowing MORE color to be used. If the colors were not muted, the page would likely be too intense.



[Enlarge](#)

The screenshot shows the Guess website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Guess collection', 'Guess by Marciano', 'Guesskids.pl', 'Shop online', 'Join the newsletter', and 'Language'. The main feature is a large, full-page photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink top and matching tights, sitting in a wire chair. She is holding a large, patterned handbag with a floral and animal print. To the left of the main image, there's a circular logo for 'GUESS ACCESORIES Spring / Summer 2012'. Below the main image are two smaller promotional boxes: one for 'NEW ARRIVALS' showing a man and a woman in sunglasses, and another for 'Women's accessories - New collection!' showing a close-up of a tan leather bag with the 'GUESS' logo. The bottom of the page has a footer with links for 'GUESS New's jewellery'.

SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

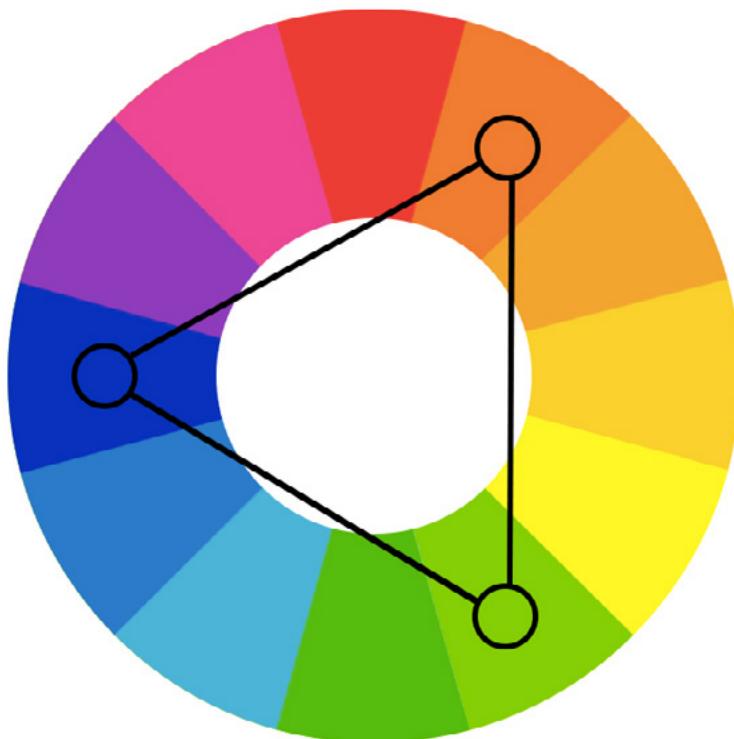
COLOR STYLE FIVE

Triad

Triads use three colors, all equidistant from one another. Triads create a more mature kind of variety of color, as opposed to energetic split-complementary colors. If split-complementaries are the lively 1963 'She Loves You' Beatles, Triads are the more mature 1970 - "Let it Be" - Beatles.

POSSIBLE USES:

- To create variety without much drama
- To convey a sense of strength

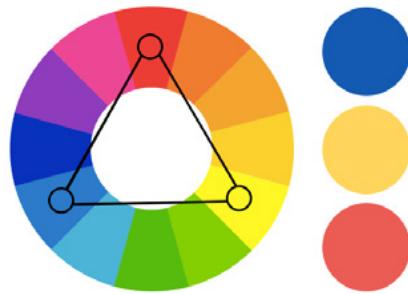


Lorenzo Verzini

<http://lorenzoverzini.com>

This is the online portfolio of an art director / designer. Online portfolios can use just about any color scheme, so perhaps he just liked how these colors looked.

 [Enlarge](#)



The screenshot shows a website with a yellow header bar containing a logo, 'WORK', 'PROFILE', and 'JOURNAL' buttons. Below the header is a large yellow section featuring three icons: a stylized 'L' composed of red, blue, and white, a head profile with a blue eye, and a pencil with a red eraser. A blue footer section contains a small eye icon and the word 'HELLO'. The main text area in the blue section introduces Lorenzo Verzini as an Italian designer and art director living in London, working in digital branding for over 9 years. It also mentions his availability for work via email. A 'VIEW PROFILE' button is at the bottom.

My name is Lorenzo Verzini, italian
designer & art director living in
London, working in the field for more
than 9 years. I create digital branding
experiences for small and big
companies.

PS: I am currently available for work, get in touch at l@lorenzoverzini.com.

[VIEW PROFILE](#)

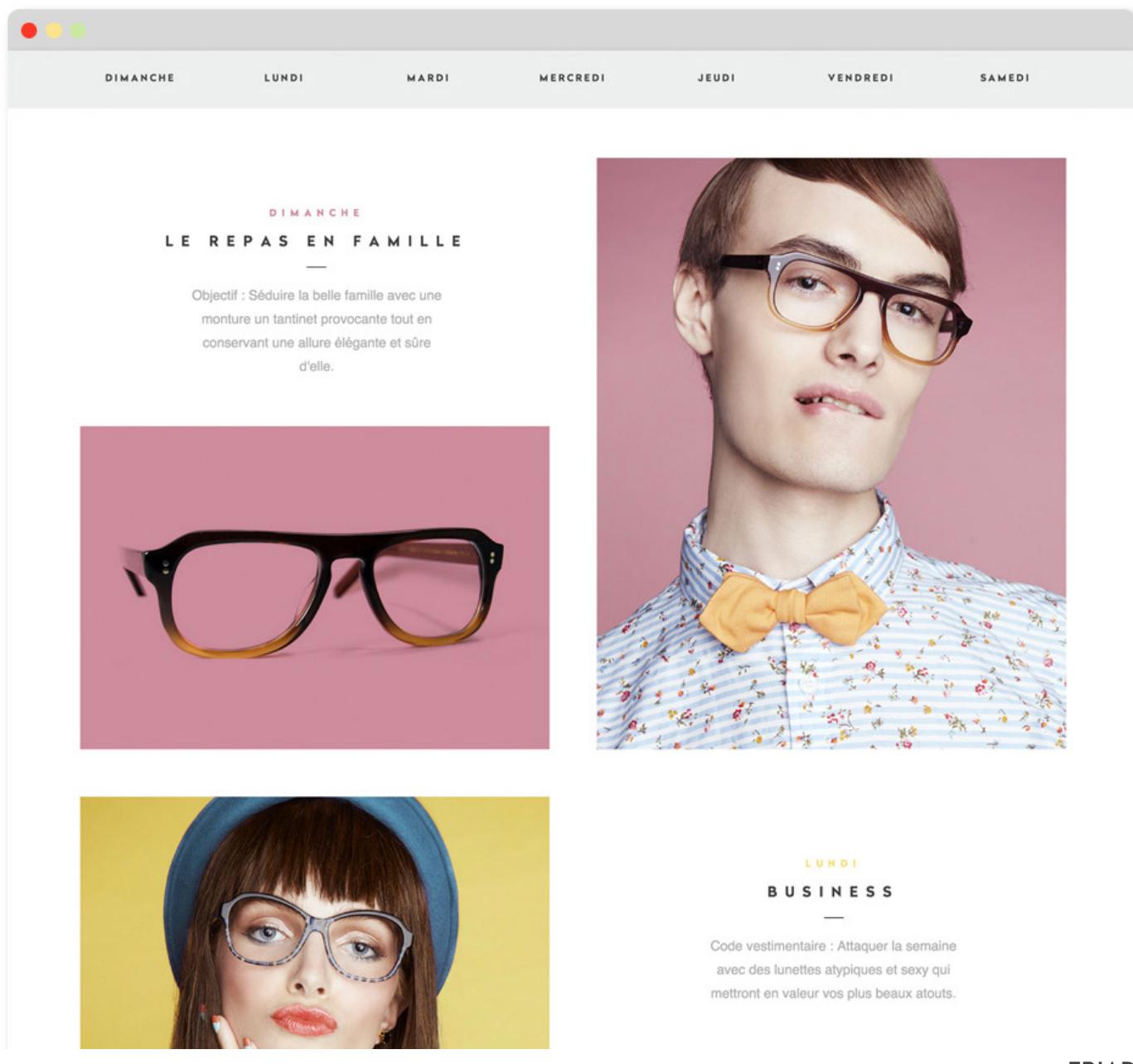
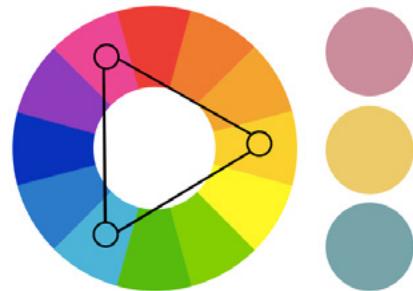
TRIAD

Antoine Laoun

<http://antoinelaoun.com>

Antoine Laoun makes stylish glasses. Personally, I have mixed feelings about this design. I like the colors and the layout, but it's unclear why each pair of glasses was designated that particular color (besides the blue pair). So in this example, the colors and concept aren't quite working together.

 [Enlarge](#)



DIMANCHE LUNDI MARDI MERCREDI JEUDI VENDREDI SAMEDI

DIMANCHE
LE REPAS EN FAMILLE

Objectif : Séduire la belle famille avec une monture un tantinet provocante tout en conservant une allure élégante et sûre d'elle.



LUNDI
BUSINESS

Code vestimentaire : Attaquer la semaine avec des lunettes atypiques et sexy qui mettront en valeur vos plus beaux atouts.

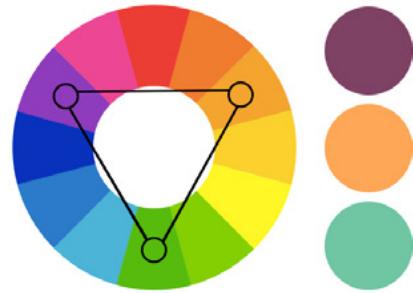


TRIAD

Triplagent

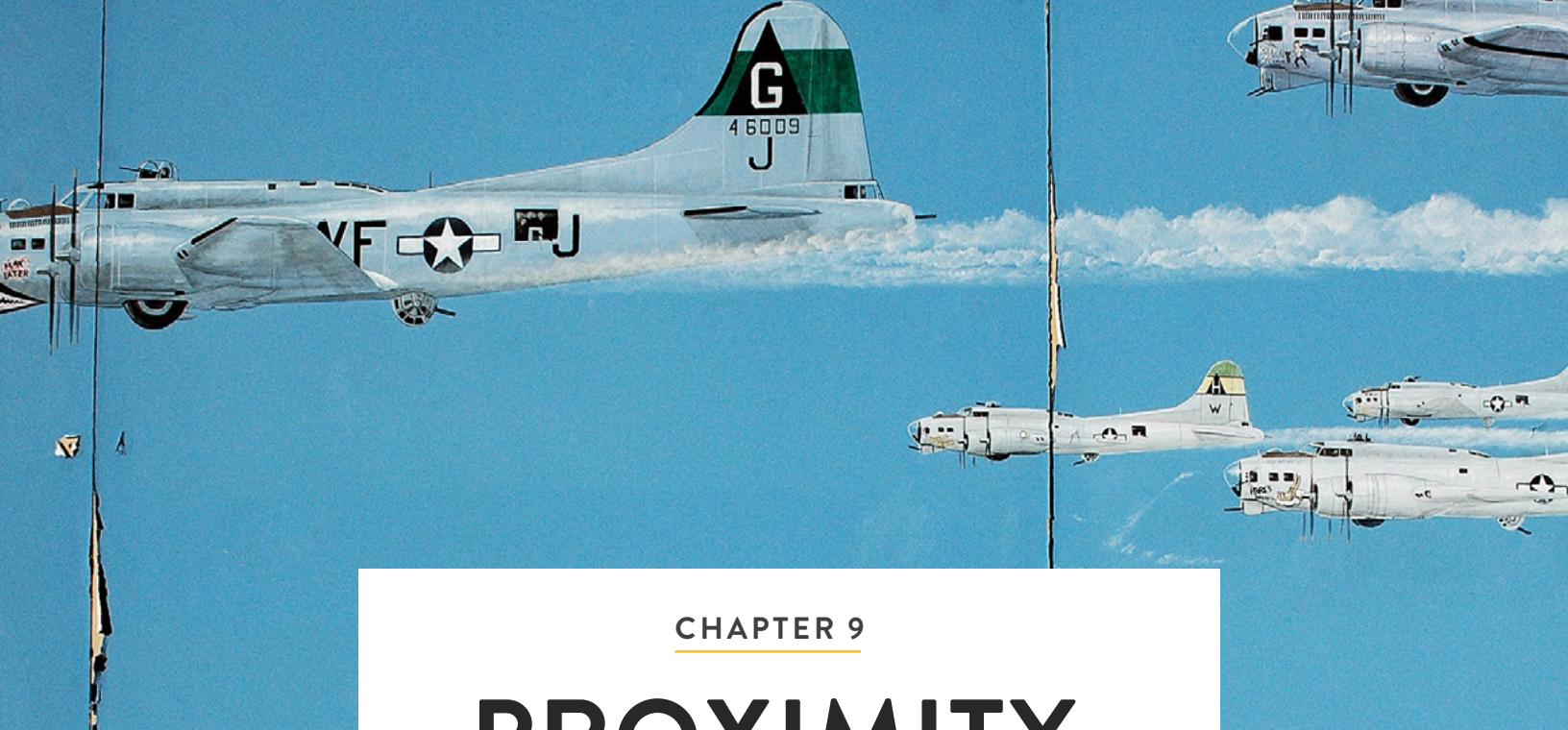
<http://www.triplagent.com>

Triplagent is a website and travel app. The rich colors on the page pull you in.



Enlarge

TRIAD



CHAPTER 9

PROXIMITY

“A user interface is like a joke. If you have to explain it, it’s not that good.”

– Martin LeBlanc



Introduction

When two or more graphic elements are close to one another, it implies there's a relationship between them.

The concept of proximity wasn't created out of the thin air. It was informed by the way we humans observe and interpret our surroundings. When we see a herd of elephants walking across the Savanna, we assume they're together. If we see a broken window and a baseball on the ground next to it, the closeness of the ball to the window implies it broke it.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- Proximity in nature and design
- Proximity on the web

Proximity in nature and design

Even two scenes with the same elements can give different messages if the proximity of the elements is altered.

Proximity in design works the same way: when elements are close to one another, it implies a relationship.



These two people are strangers.



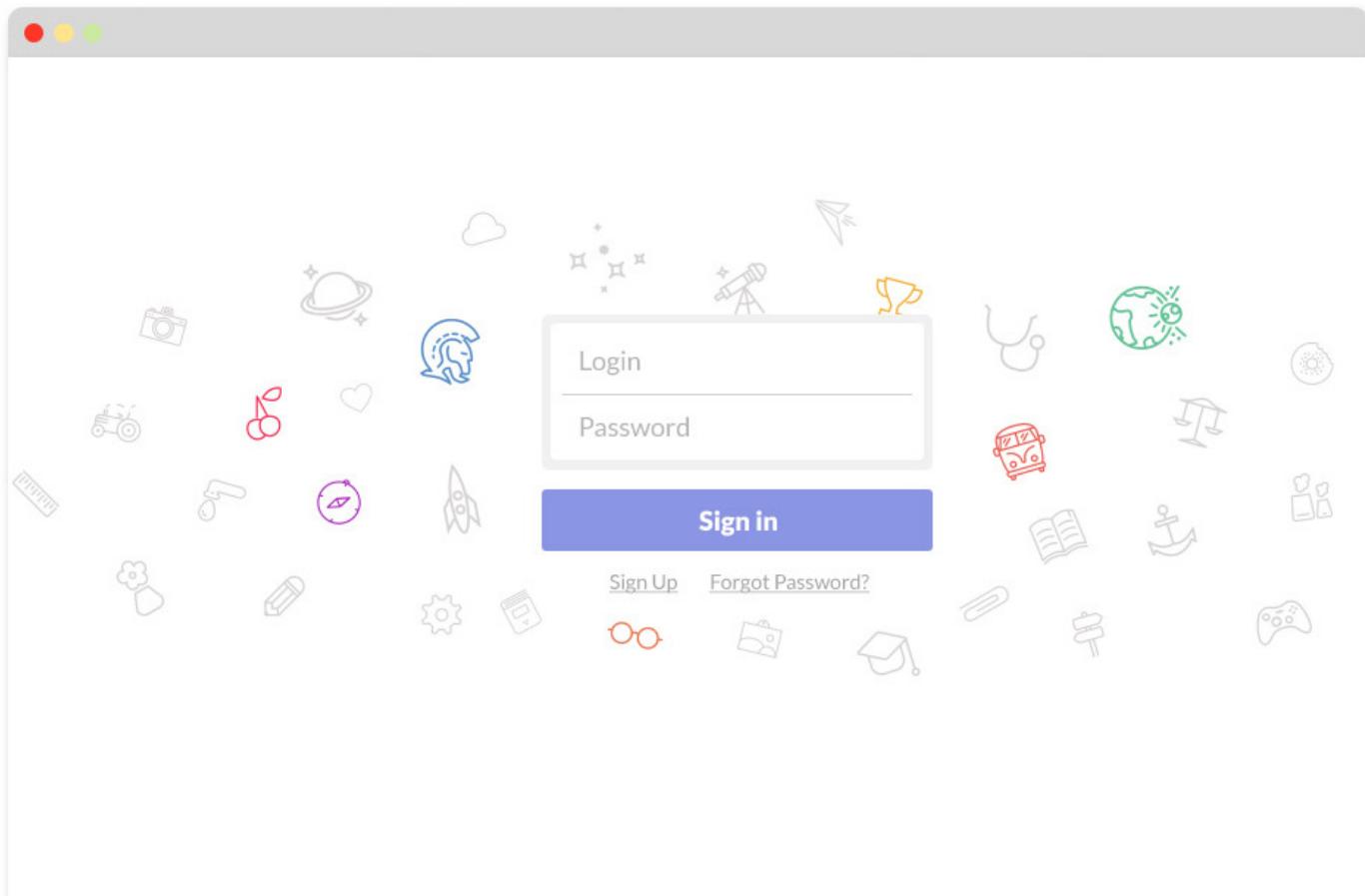
But this is a couple.

Simple Login Form

<http://bit.ly/1r3GFiQ>

These three things, login, password, and the sign in button are all needed to sign in to the site. By putting them close together, the user can assume they're related.

 [Enlarge](#)



E-commerce Prototype

<http://bit.ly/1r3GOTE>

All of the filters on this page are in the same place. Here's the thought process that occurs: once the user understands the filters are always on the left, they will assume that even

a filter they haven't used yet is located there. Putting features with similar functionality near one another reduces the users cognitive load.

Q Enlarge

The screenshot shows a web-based e-commerce interface. On the left side, there is a sidebar containing several filter categories:

- CART**: Shows "No items in cart."
- CATEGORIES**: Includes checkboxes for New Arrivals, Accessories, Bags, Dressed, Jackets, Jewelry, Shoes, Shirts, Sweaters, and T-shirts.
- COLORS**: Shows color swatches and corresponding labels: Beige, Black, Blue, Brown, Green, Grey, Orange, Purple, Red, and White.
- SIZES**: Includes checkboxes for XS, S, M, L, XL, and XXL.
- PRICE RANGE**: A horizontal slider with a green progress bar indicating a price range.

The main content area displays a grid of eight dresses, each with a thumbnail image, name, description, and price (\$39). The dresses are:

- FLUTED HEM DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- PLEAT PRINTED DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- FLOWY SHIRT DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- DOUBLE LAYER DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- BEAD DETAIL DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- PLEATED DETAIL DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- PRINTED DRESS: Summer dress, \$39
- PRINTED DRESS: Summer dress, \$39

At the top of the page, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, BRANDS, DESIGNERS, and CONTACT. To the right of the navigation, there is a message: "Add to cart interaction prototype by Virgil Pana" and "Follow me on [Dribbble](#) | [Twitter](#)". There are also icons for a heart and a search bar.

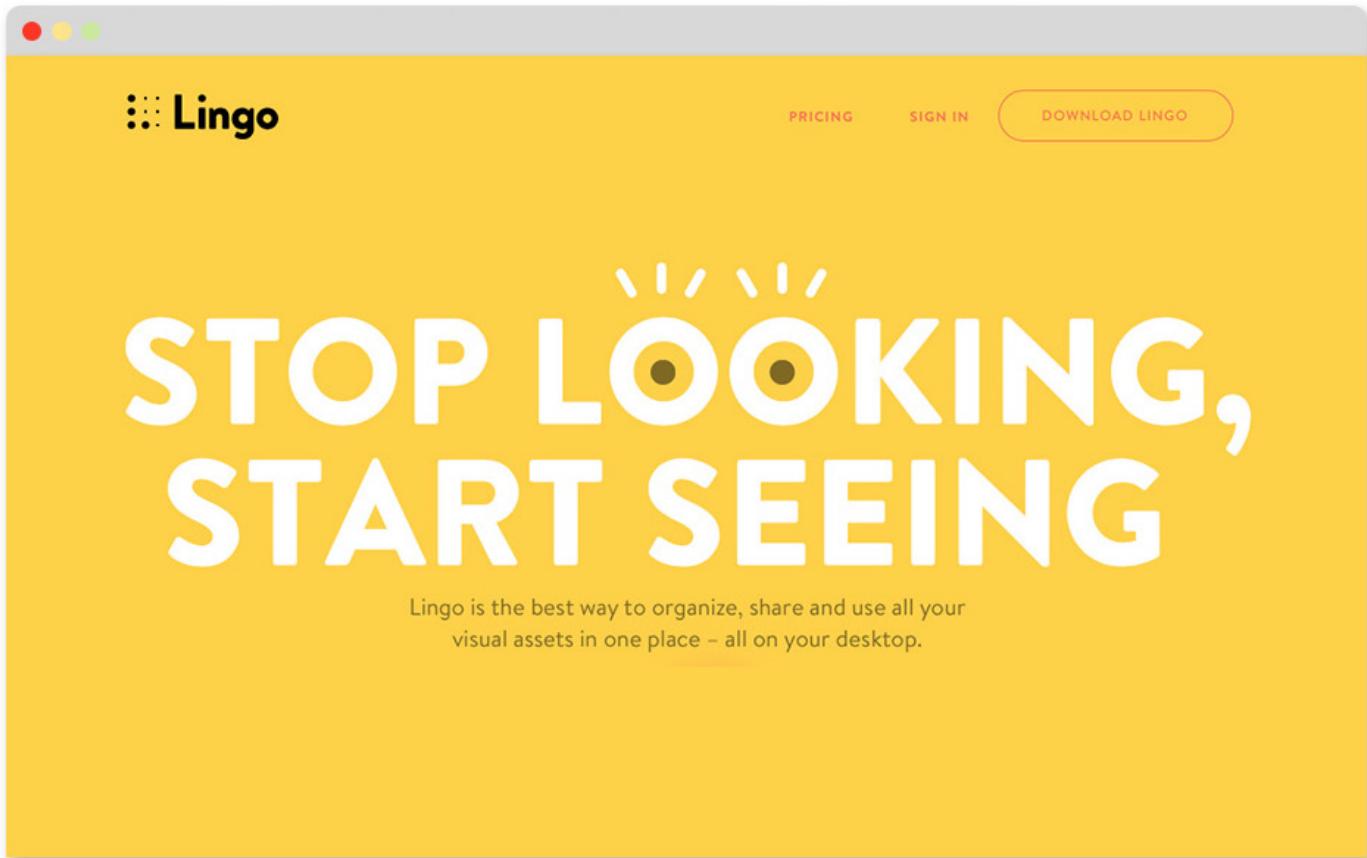
Lingo

<https://www.lingoapp.com>

This headline and sub-headline here are related, that's why they're so close together. The headlines catches their attention and the

sub-headline explains it. Note that this is also a good example of heirarchy.

 [Enlarge](#)



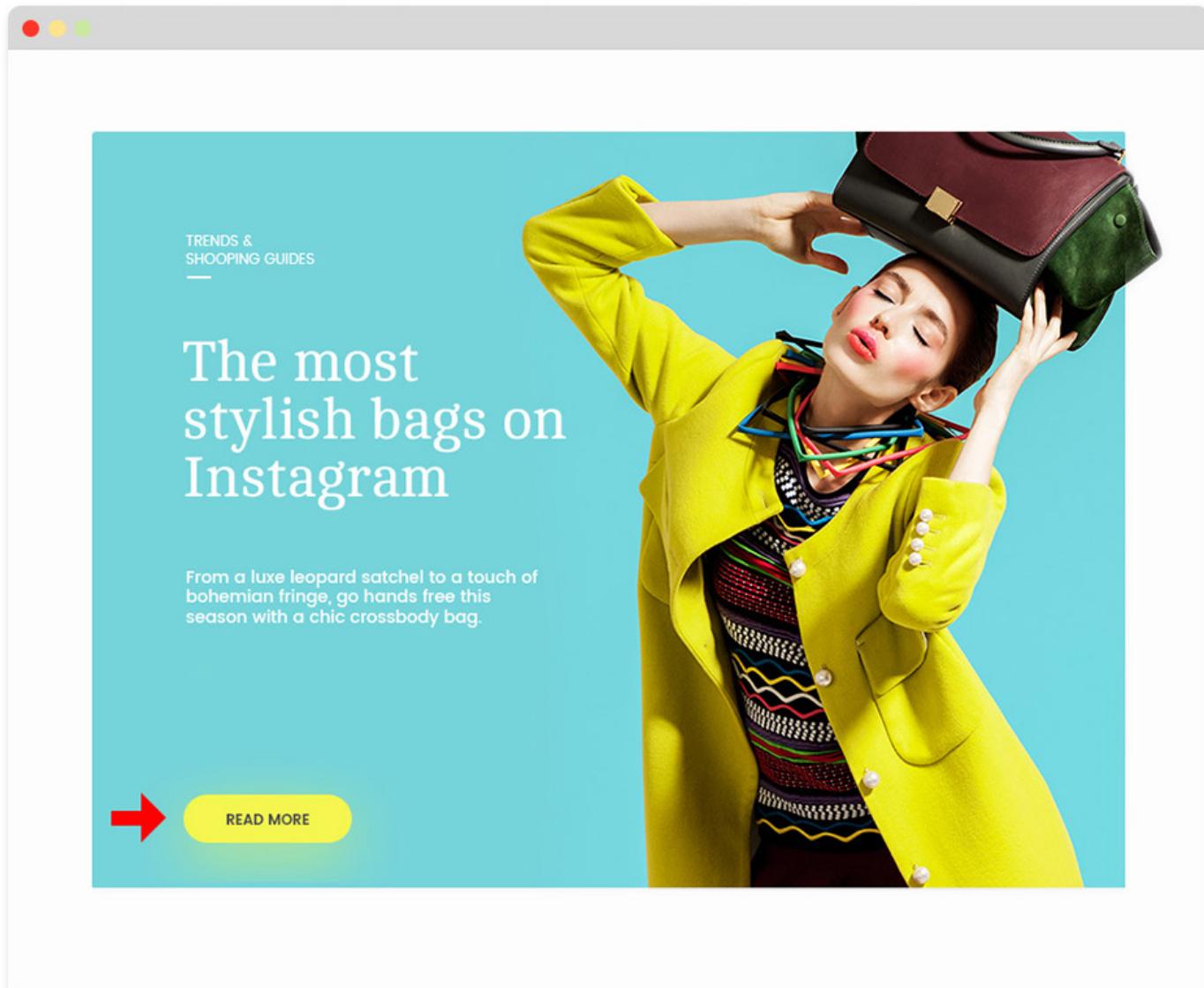
Stylish Bags

<http://bit.ly/1YWCH6V>

Look at this “read more” button. It’s not near the paragraph in the middle of the page. But it should be because the designer wants the user to read that paragraph and then click “read more”. Remember that couple in the

field sitting far apart? That’s what this is.

Q Enlarge



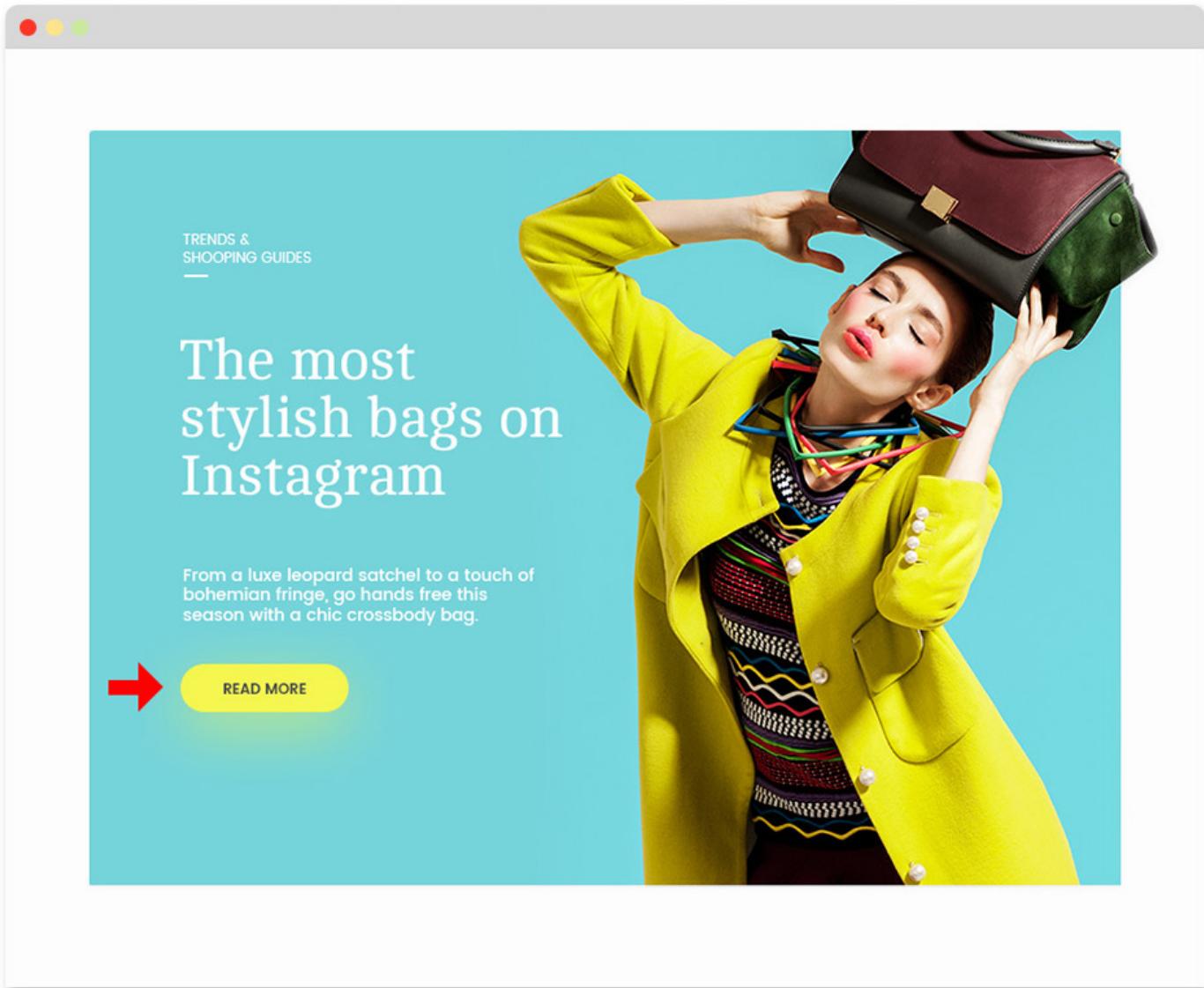
Cntd.

<http://bit.ly/1YWCH6V>

This position is much better. Now we have a headline, subheadline, and a call to action (the “read more” button) all similarly spaced apart. It’s a group. So when you quickly scan the page and see those three elements, your

intuition tells you they’re related in some way. In the same way, if you were to glance at the couple near each other in the park.

Q Enlarge



Vibrant Composites

<http://www.vibrantcomposites.com>

Sometimes combining type and image will make something more striking than if they were separate. The way the type touches the hand here is nice. It draws you in. The

photo of the hand is also a good example of imagery - it's an indicator that what's to come is related to touch in some way (the page is about haptic sensors).

 [Enlarge](#)

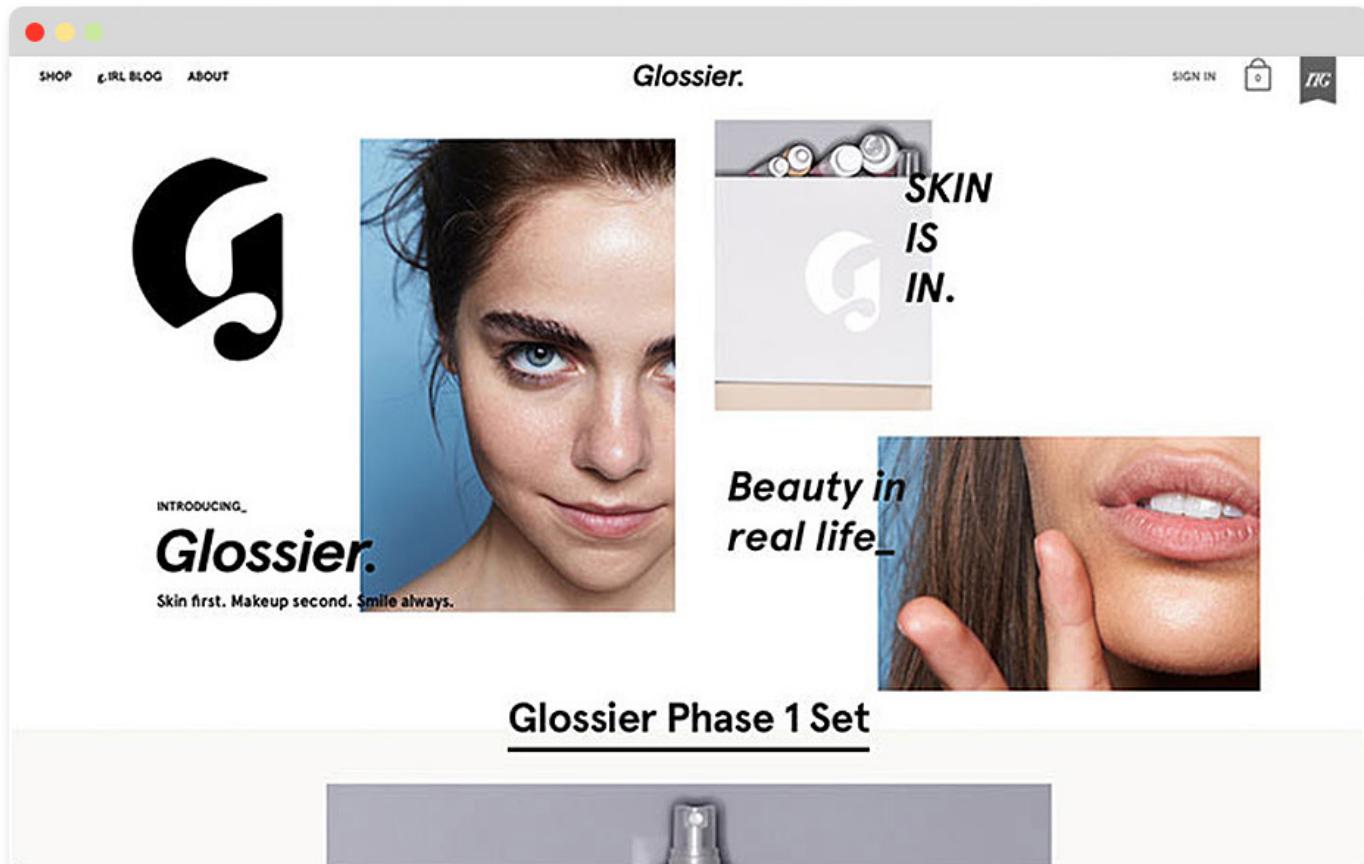


Glossier

<http://www.godynamo.com/project/glossier>

Even though this type is placed over the images without much structure, each title still touches an image, implying a relationship.

Enlarge



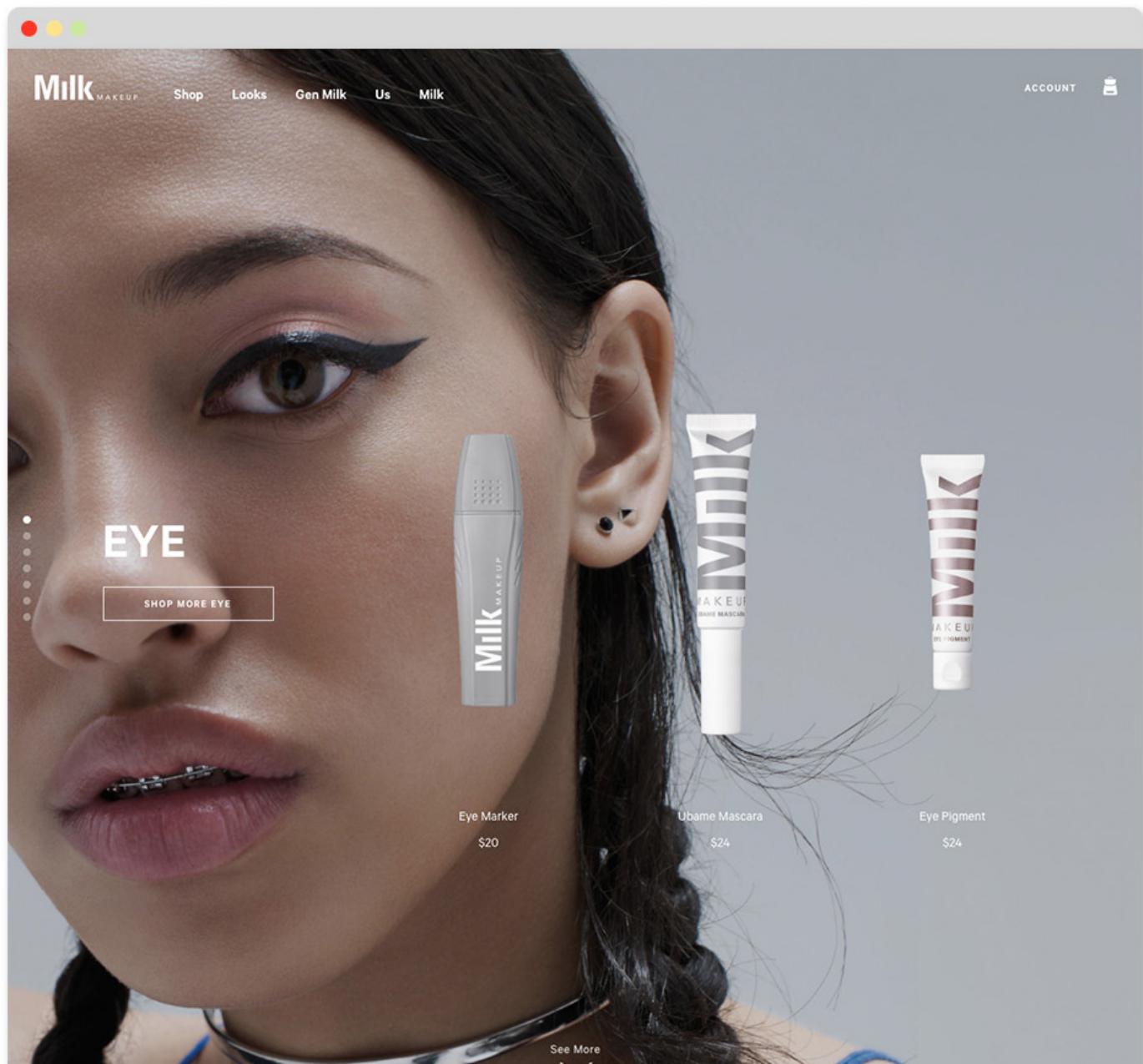
Glossier

<https://milkmakeup.com>

This one is interesting. Everything we've seen so far has been examples of proximity along the x and y axis. But this one uses it along the z axis. It's a nice approach because on one plane you see the makeup, and on the

other plane you see the woman's eye with the makeup applied. They don't have to compete for space so both can use the entire canvas of the page.

Q Enlarge





CHAPTER 10

STYLE

“An artist should never be a prisoner of himself, prisoner of style, prisoner of reputation, prisoner of success, etc.”

– Henri Matisse



Introduction

The style of a website helps set the mood, much in the same way color does. Beginners often mistakenly think that design and style are the same thing.

It's an easy mistake to make because style is so easy to see and describe. On the web, there's an overemphasis on style, often at the expense of the lessons in the previous nine chapters. There are just five kinds of styles in this section because I didn't want you to get overwhelmed with options. When you start to practice, I recommend you pick one of the five styles featured here.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- **Style Mapping**
- **The five DxN styles**
- **Full-Color Photo**
- **Duotones**
- **Black & White**
- **Illustration**
- **Collage**

Style Mapping

When you sit down to design a website, there are a dozen different visual directions it can go. Should it be illustrated? Black & White? Full color?

Many designers will choose whatever style is popular at the moment. Currently, that style is "flat design". But choosing something trendy is shortsighted because it's probably not the best way to communicate your site's

message.

I prefer an approach I like to call "style mapping." It's a relatively simple technique once you get the hang of it.

Here's how it works. First, ask yourself the following three questions, and write down your answers:

1) What is the essence of the brand?

If you're doing a project for a large client they'll have a distinct brand. Think of Starbucks, Lego, Nike, or Hyundai. They're all very different, so a style that's right for one company may not be right for another. For example, a website for Lego can be illustrated because the company caters to kids and is playful. But that style probably wouldn't look right for Hyundai, a company which needs full-color photos of cars on its site.

If they have a brand book, look to see what they allow. Can you use any colors you want, or is it limited? Are there pre-determined fonts you must use? If the client's brand always uses the colors blue and yellow, like Ikea, then a black and white style won't work. If they're a large client like McDonald's, then the collage style is probably out because it's too edgy. If they only use photography in their marketing material, then the illustration style won't be a good fit.

Smaller clients won't have a well-defined brand. For them, you're going to be more at the mercy of their tastes. Before starting, ask them for a list of five websites that they think are well-designed and ask them what they like about each. That last part is important

because it's going to tell you what's important to them. Write it down and keep them in mind while designing. Later, when you present your design, show them how their initial feedback influenced your design. It will make them feel like they're contributed and it's more likely you'll get approval.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

What is the concept of the site and what is its purpose? If the concept is "handmade" like in the example from chapter two, the style should support that idea. The style of a site should compliment its purpose. For example, an e-commerce site is highly functional and wouldn't work well in a loose collage-style. And an educational website for kids may not keep them engaged if it were done in black & white.

3) What do You Like?

Now you can think about what you like. For this step, browse the web for examples of sites and design styles you might like to mimic. Don't hold back, just throw anything in there that looks cool. I like to save these images to a folder on my desktop and name it "inspiration".

Putting it all together

After you've done the previous three steps, compare the inspiration images from step three to the answers you gave on questions one and two. Ask yourself, which images in the inspiration folder would work well with the brand and purpose of the site you're making. This is style mapping.

Notice that you haven't started designing yet,

you're just comparing other people's work to the brand guidelines and concept. After you find inspiration that works well with both of those things, you'll have a much clearer idea of how you should style your site.

Once you decide on a style, try designing one or two pages before moving on to the rest of the site. That way, if you later find the style won't work, you haven't used too much time.

The five possible design styles:

The Design by Numbers framework contains five possible styles you can use for your site; Full-color photo, duotone, black & white, illustrative, and collage. There are certainly more ways to visualize a website than these five, but try to limit yourself for now. Remember, when you're learning design on the side, you have limited energy and time, so it's best to keep it simple.

The five styles are described further on the following pages, along with several examples of style mapping.

STYLE ONE

FULL-COLOR PHOTO

Many sites use full-color images. One thing to keep in mind for this style is that whenever possible, you should choose photos that were shot in the same style. If you have five images on your homepage and they'll all taken by different photographers, it's going to communicate five different moods. Not good.

WHEN TO USE IT:

- **Wide Variety of Uses**



Molino

<http://bit.ly/1N8leaP>

These photos were all taken under similar lighting conditions and they're all food shots. So when viewed together the design feels cohesive, through all the photo sets. The site may have worked if all the photos were thumbnails on one page, but it wouldn't have been as striking.

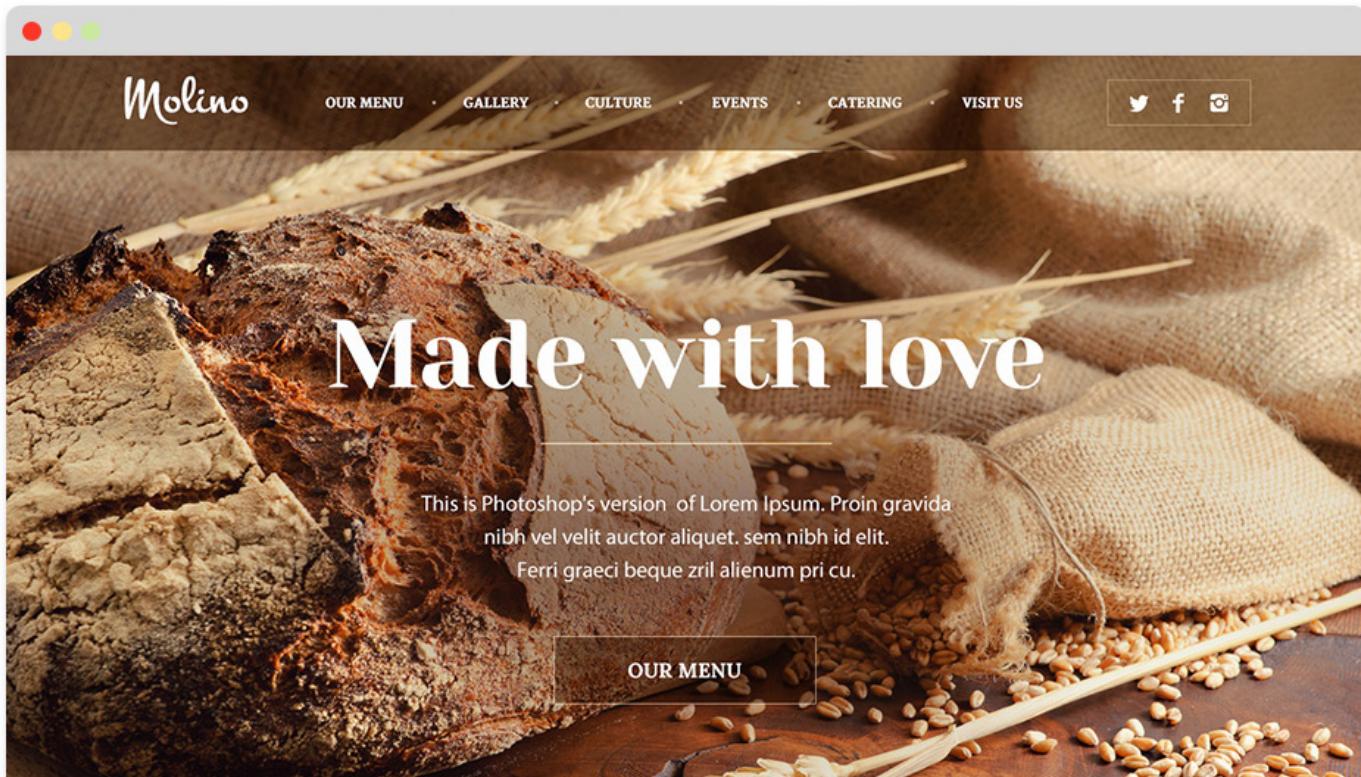
1) What is the brand like?

Customers love to look and smell the freshly baked goods on display. A large part of the store experience involves delighting the senses.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

The business owner stated her goal for the site was to promote her business. Some new

 [Enlarge](#)



FULL-COLOR PHOTO

customers had found her on Yelp and she wanted to send them to a site where they could see more.

3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for styles that evoke the senses).

Designer's Comments:

"We wanted to mimic the in-store experience of looking through the glass at all the fresh baked goodies. Of course, there's no smell on the Internet, so we used rich and colorful photos of everything they make to delight the eyes."

Meshable

<http://meshablewatches.bigcartel.com>

Here's a simple site that sells watches. Very minimal. Note the top section is reserved for branded imagery - it's meant to convey what Meshable represents. In this case, luxury with a little bit of quirk.

1) What is the brand like?

Elegant but not quite luxurious.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To sell watches and portray the brand in a

strong light

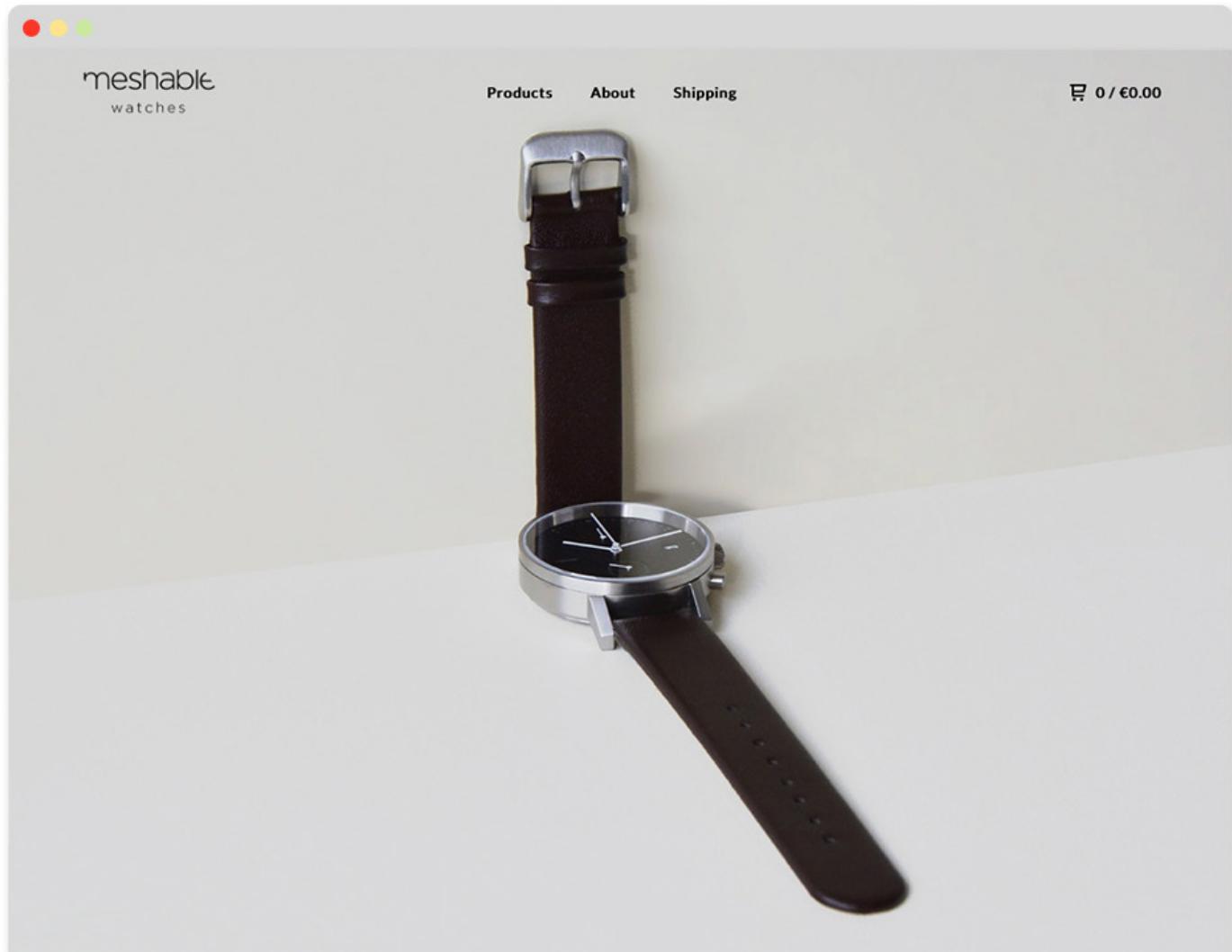
3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for styles that tackle high-end products).

Designer's Comments:

"When the client came to us, they had already invested in some great photography. We also knew there would have to be photos of the watches so we picked a full-color photo style. "

 [Enlarge](#)



FULL-COLOR PHOTO

Jetlag Photos

<http://jetlag.photos>

The idea behind the Jetlag project is for two photographers to take a photo at the same time in different parts of the world. To highlight that concept, the screen is simply divided in half as you navigate through all the photo sets. The site may have worked if all the photos were thumbnails on one page, but it wouldn't have been as striking.

1) What is the brand like?

There's no brand per-se, however, we wanted all those photos to have a similar contemplative mood.

 [Enlarge](#)



FULL-COLOR PHOTO

2) What's the purpose of the site?

It's part art, part promotion for the photographers involved.

3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for styles that cover photo essays).

Designer's Comments:

"The concept steered us into doing this split screen approach and the style of the site was determined months earlier when we picked photographers who had personal styles we thought would be a good match."

Bonham Hats

<http://bit.ly/26ChJ2F>

In contrast to the previous site, this design uses photos sparingly. On the previous design, the full bleed photos engage the viewer in a loud way, whereas this site chooses to have fewer photos. This makes for a more contemplative mood.

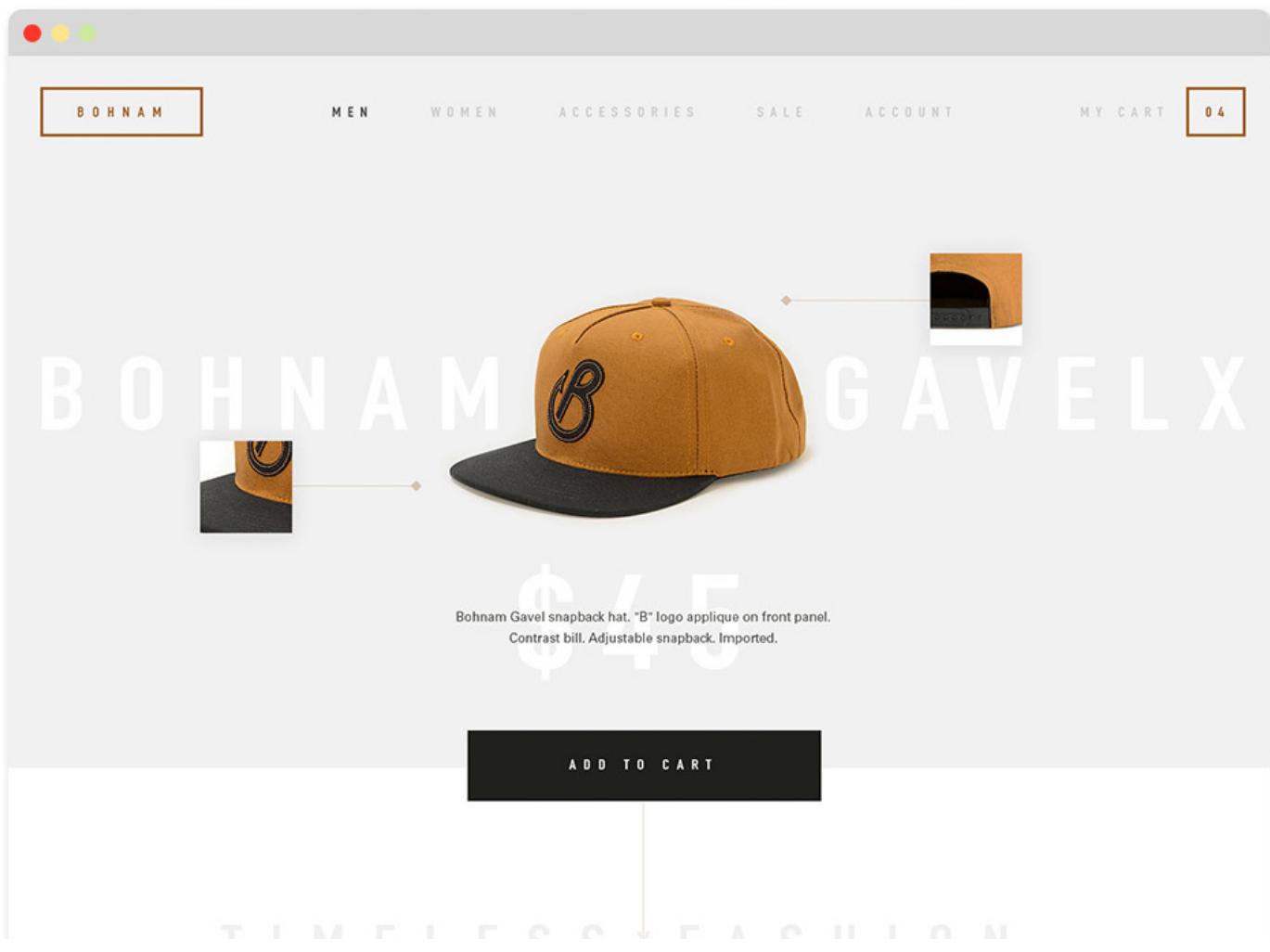
1) What is the brand like?

Bonham is an upscale surf brand.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To sell hats.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for styles that cover upscale and beach fashion).

Designer's Comments:

"A lot of the competing surf sites in our research were loud and over the top. We wanted to convey a sense of calm. That also served the brand well because it's pricier than competitors."

STYLE TWO

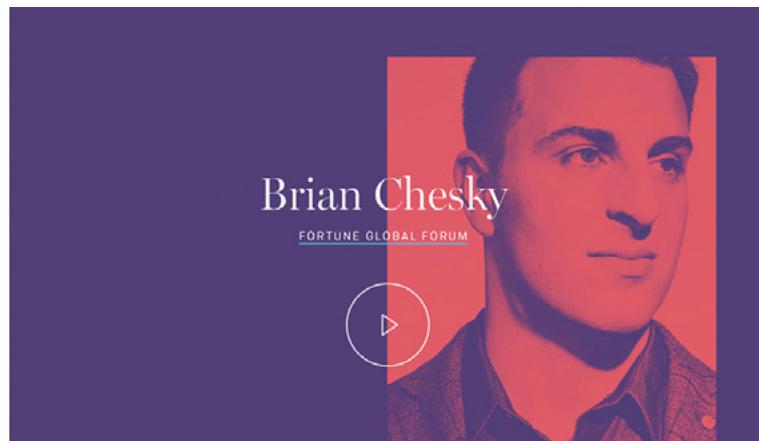
DUOTONES

Duotones help make a photo look more graphic, which in turn makes it quicker for the viewer to internalize the message. This look can be achieved in two ways:

- 1) The easiest way is to use the multiply blend mode in Photoshop. Simply convert your image to black and white, create a solid color layer on top of it, and then set the blend mode of the color to multiply, screen, or overlay. This doesn't work with all images though, so play around and see what looks best.
- 2) If you aren't getting good results, here's another method which gives you more control: [Duotone Tutorial](#).

WHEN TO USE IT:

- **If you have photos taken from multiple people**
- **If you want an artsy vibe**



Saloon

<http://www.saloon.li>

Here's a great example of the designer converting multiple disparate images into duotones to make them all connect.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

Saloon does a broad range of creative work from industrial design to illustration, to graphic design. Clients like that they can handle any kind of project.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

Saloon wanted a new site to show all of their past work.

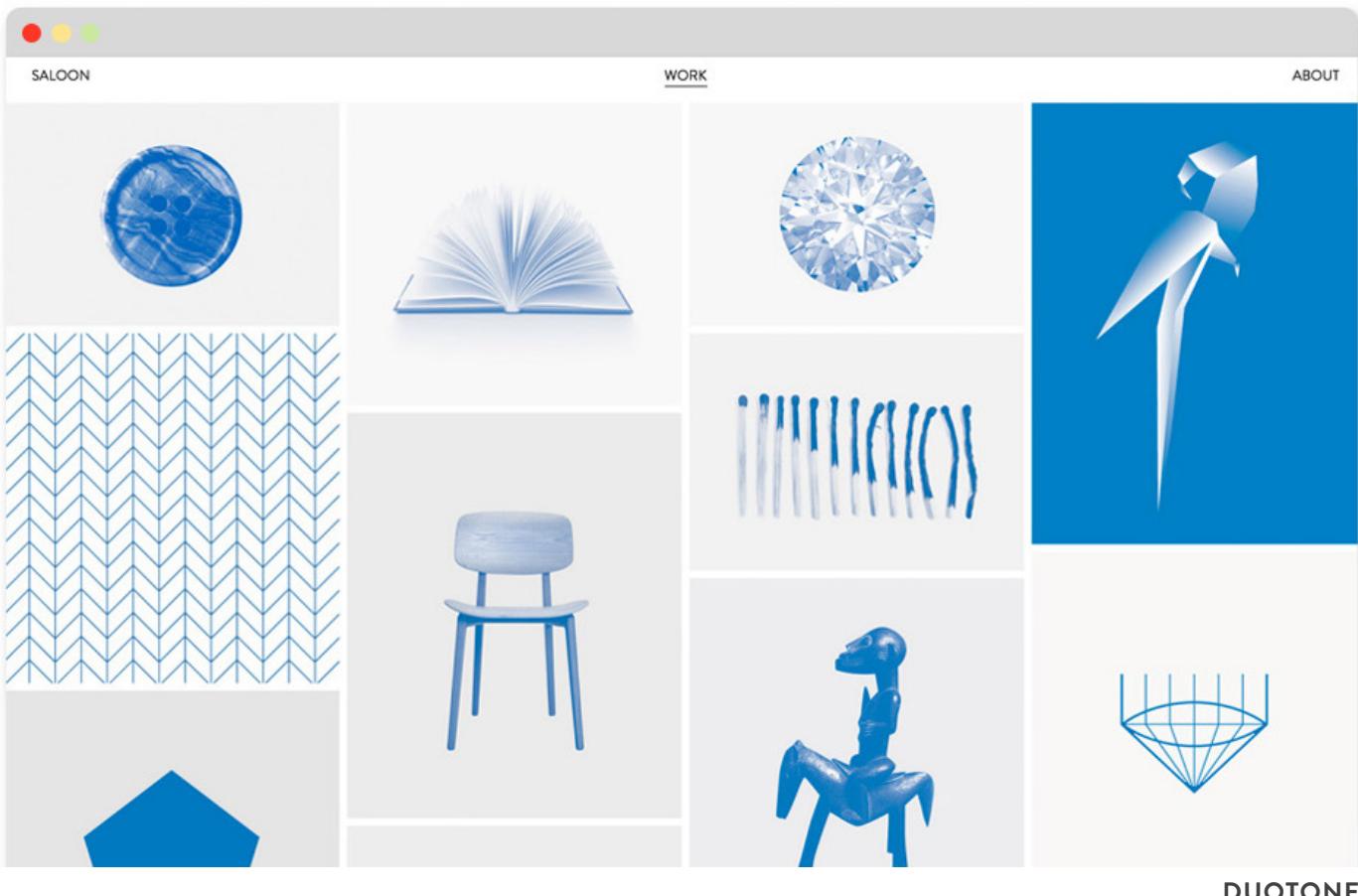
3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for websites that tackle multiple topics).

Designer's Comments:

"Having such a wide variety of projects presented a challenge. Each project had its own style so to feature them all on the same page would make it feel disjointed. So we made all the project thumbnails Duotones and that pulled it all together successfully."

 [Enlarge](#)



Sublime

<http://sublime.fyi>

The rich colors and thoughtful poses make these interviews feel important.

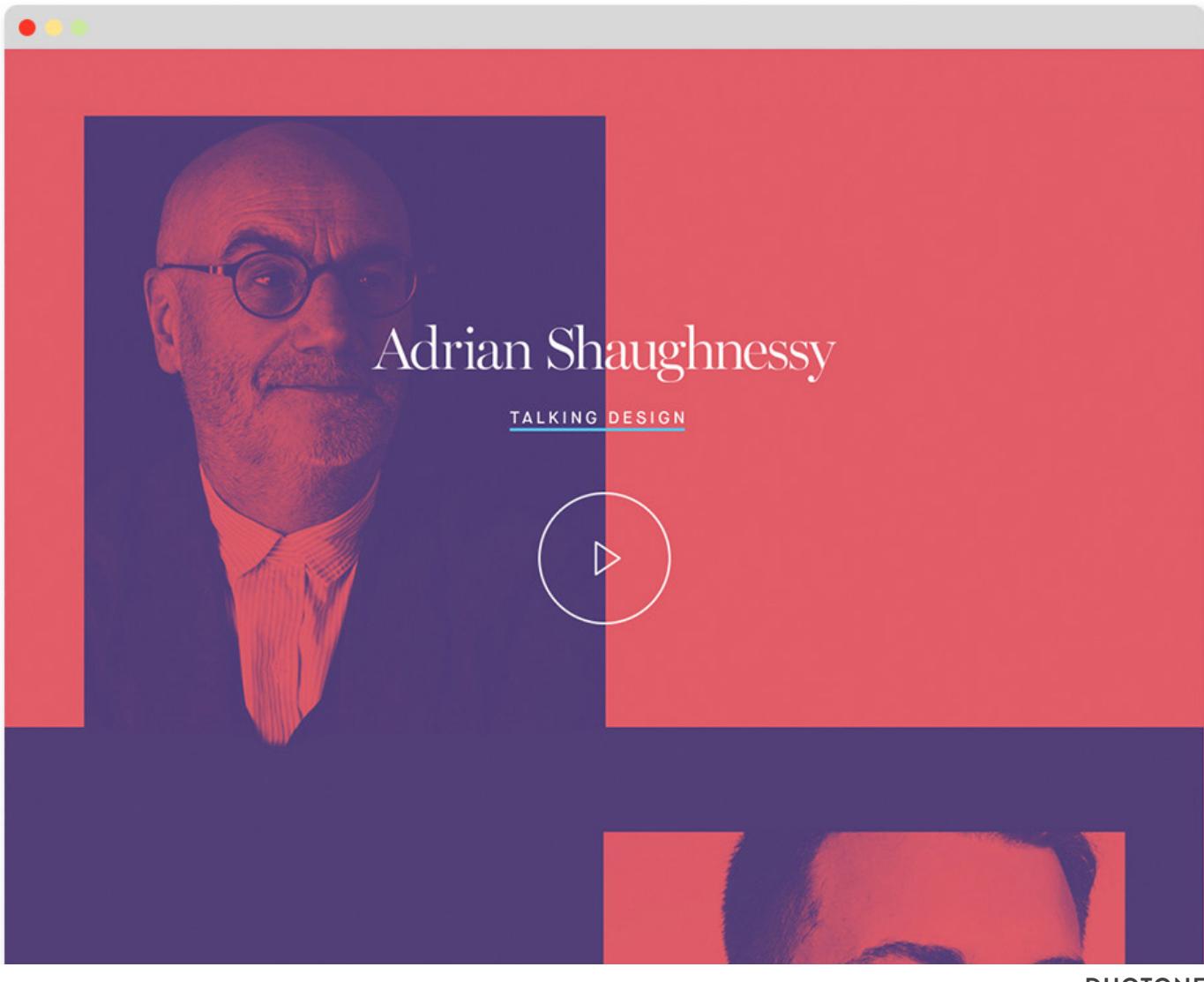
1) What is the essence of the brand?

There's no brand, but they are targeting creative types.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

It's a promotional device for Brand + Co, a design agency in Vienna.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for websites that tackle artsy topics).

Designer's Comments:

"This was an internal project for our agency. We had a limited budget, so we took high-quality photos of the speakers from their media kit and turned them into compelling duotones."

Smile Bar

<http://bit.ly/1QFV7CF>

The bright colors match the happy mood of this dentist office.

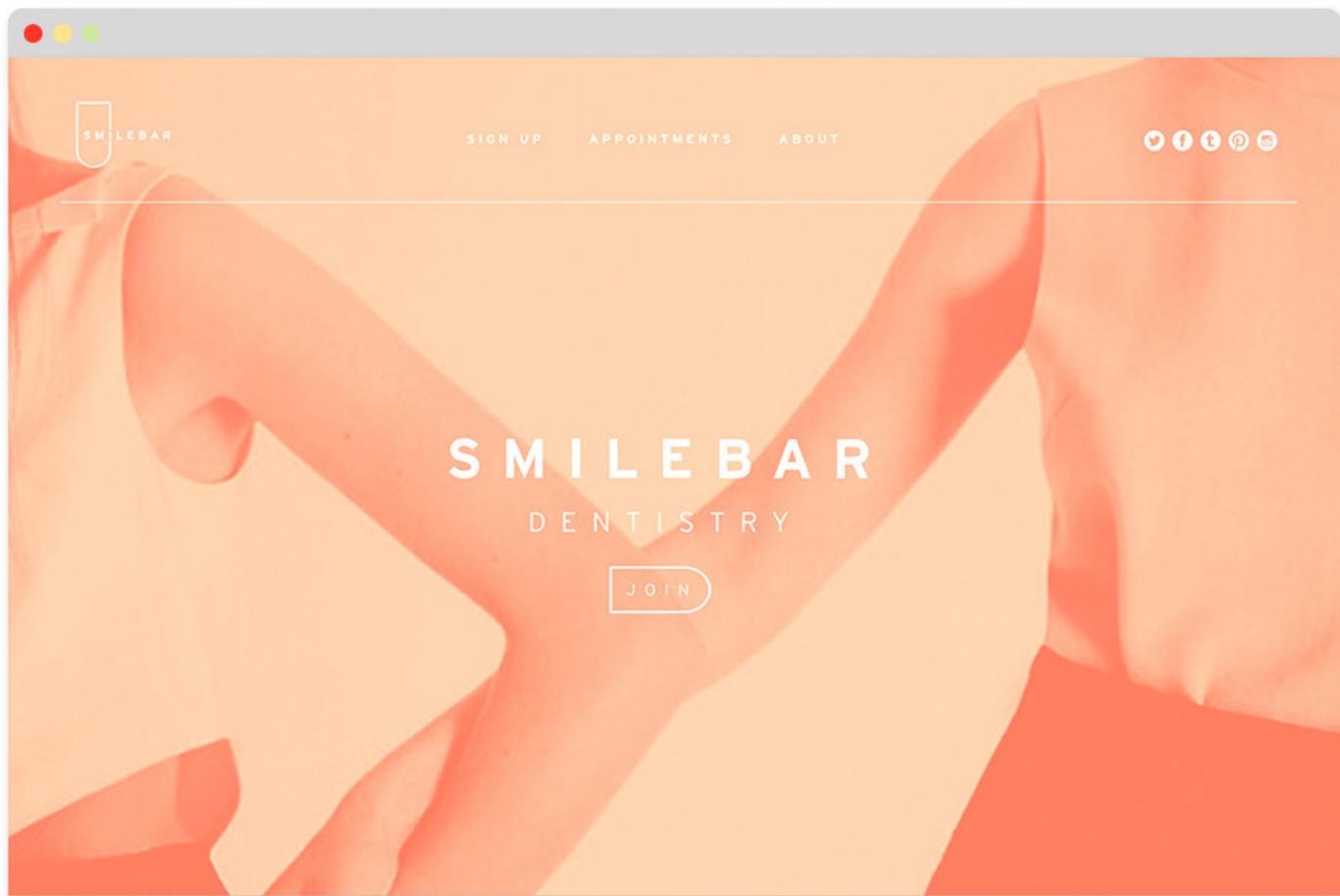
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Smile Bar's waiting room is well designed and friendly. The staff always wear bright scrubs.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To promote the business and make it easier for existing customers to book appointments online.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Most websites in the dentist and medical fields are bad. So look for all kinds of sites).

Designer's Comments:

"Dr. Bolar didn't trust his creative eye so he was happy to let us do what we wanted for the site – as long as we made it easy for patients to book appointments. We took inspiration from the interior of the office space."

DUOTONE

Holm Marcher & Co

<http://holmmarcher.dk/en/n>

The photos here take a back seat to the copy.
The photos are a bit generic, so this was
probably a good choice.

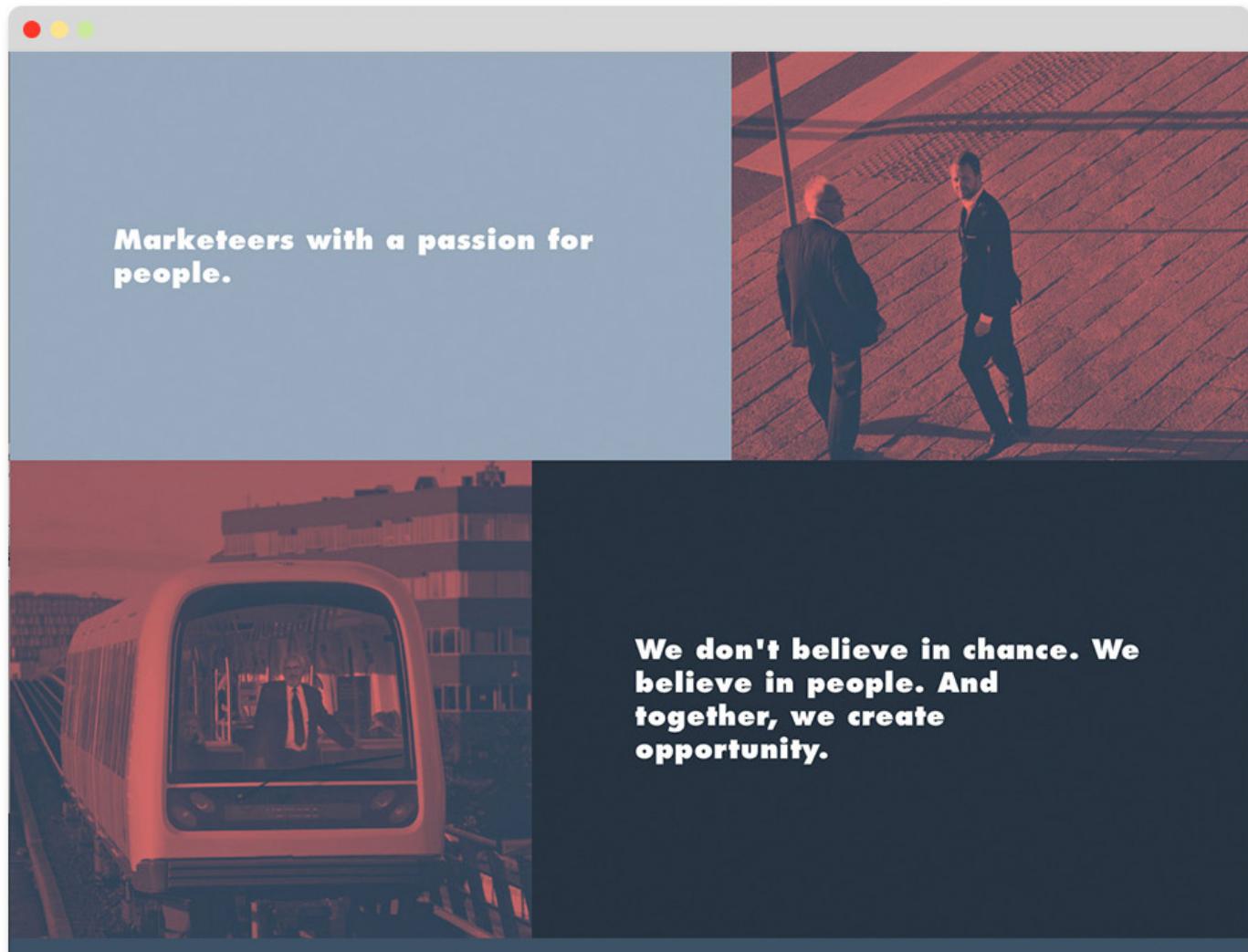
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Holm is one of the better headhunting services in their niche.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To attract both employers and employees looking for work.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Most websites in the headhunter field are bad. So look for all kinds of sites).

Designer's Comments:

"This industry is kinda boring to be frank. To attract the target audience we felt it was important to make them stand out visually. Also they had photos they wanted used that were poor quality, so we converted them to duotones."

STYLE THREE

B&W PHOTO

This style is simple. You either use photos that were shot in black and white or carefully convert full-color images to black and white. If the concept of your site is sophisticated, consider doing it in black and white.

WHEN TO USE IT:

- **If the concept is sophisticated**
- **If the concept is contemplative**



St. James's Square

<http://www.3sjs.london>

This site was made to attract tenants to the building. It's located in a posh part of London which explains why the site feels so sophisticated.

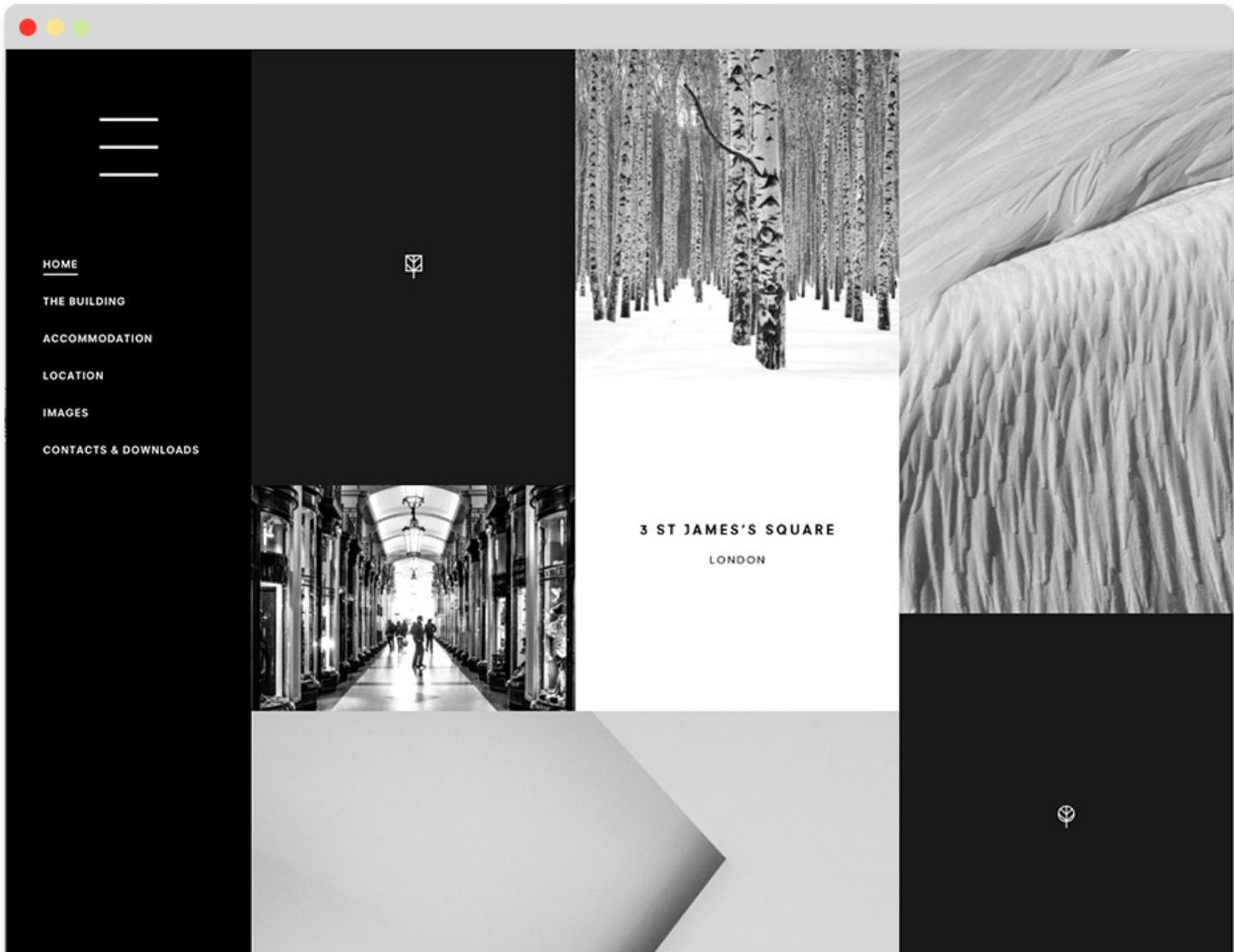
1) What is the essence of the brand?

It's a high-end exclusive commercial building.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

The building owner wanted to attract tenants who appreciated immaculate office spaces.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for luxury images).

Designer's Comments:

"We wanted to treat the building as if it were a luxury brand. We wanted people to have a similar feeling visiting the website as they did when they entered the lobby. We decided to do the site in black & white because it's a style people associate with luxury."

Twofold

<http://twofold.com>

The designer used just a touch of gold here and there as a highlight color. It works well.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

Twofold is a creative agency.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To be a portfolio to send to potential clients.

3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and

Q Enlarge



look for agency sites and other portfolio sites).

Designer's Comments:

"We did the site in black & white because there were so many projects in different styles in our portfolio. To have multiple dissimilar full-color thumbnails on the same page, have made it feel disjointed."

Mario Frigerio

<http://fotofrigerio.verganiegasco.com/en>

Notice the black color isn't black at all. It's a very dark gray. Often you'll find that 100% black or 100% white is too intense.

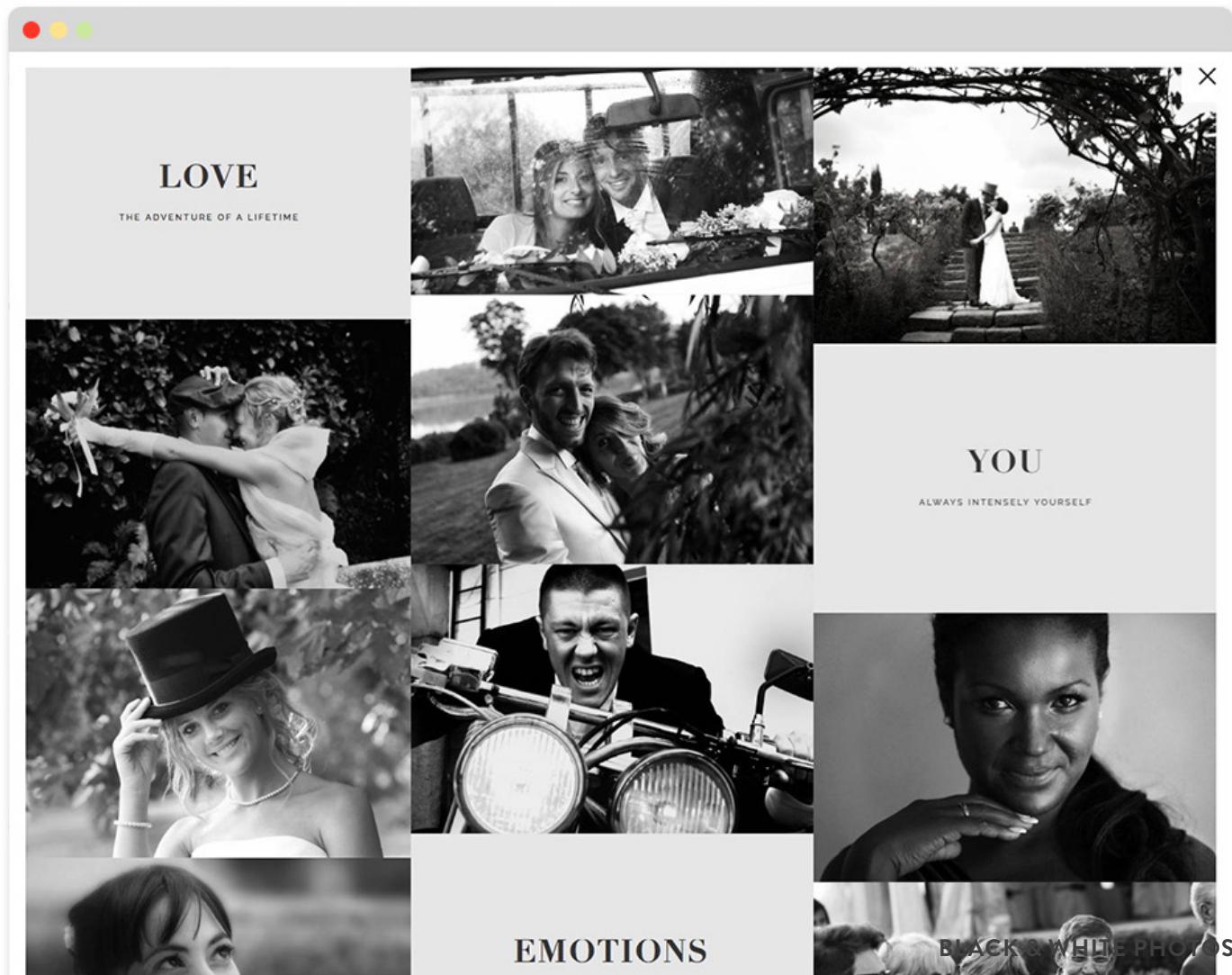
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Mario's wedding photography has the feel of lifestyle photography.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To be a portfolio to send to potential clients.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for portfolios of photographers).

Designer's Comments:

"Mario is more expensive than many wedding photographers and he wanted his site to reflect that."

Valentinvezinat

<http://valentinvezinat.com>

Portfolio for a graphic design firm. When you rollover each project, part of it will become colored.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

This is a graphic design company with a penchant for art direction.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To be a portfolio to send to potential clients.

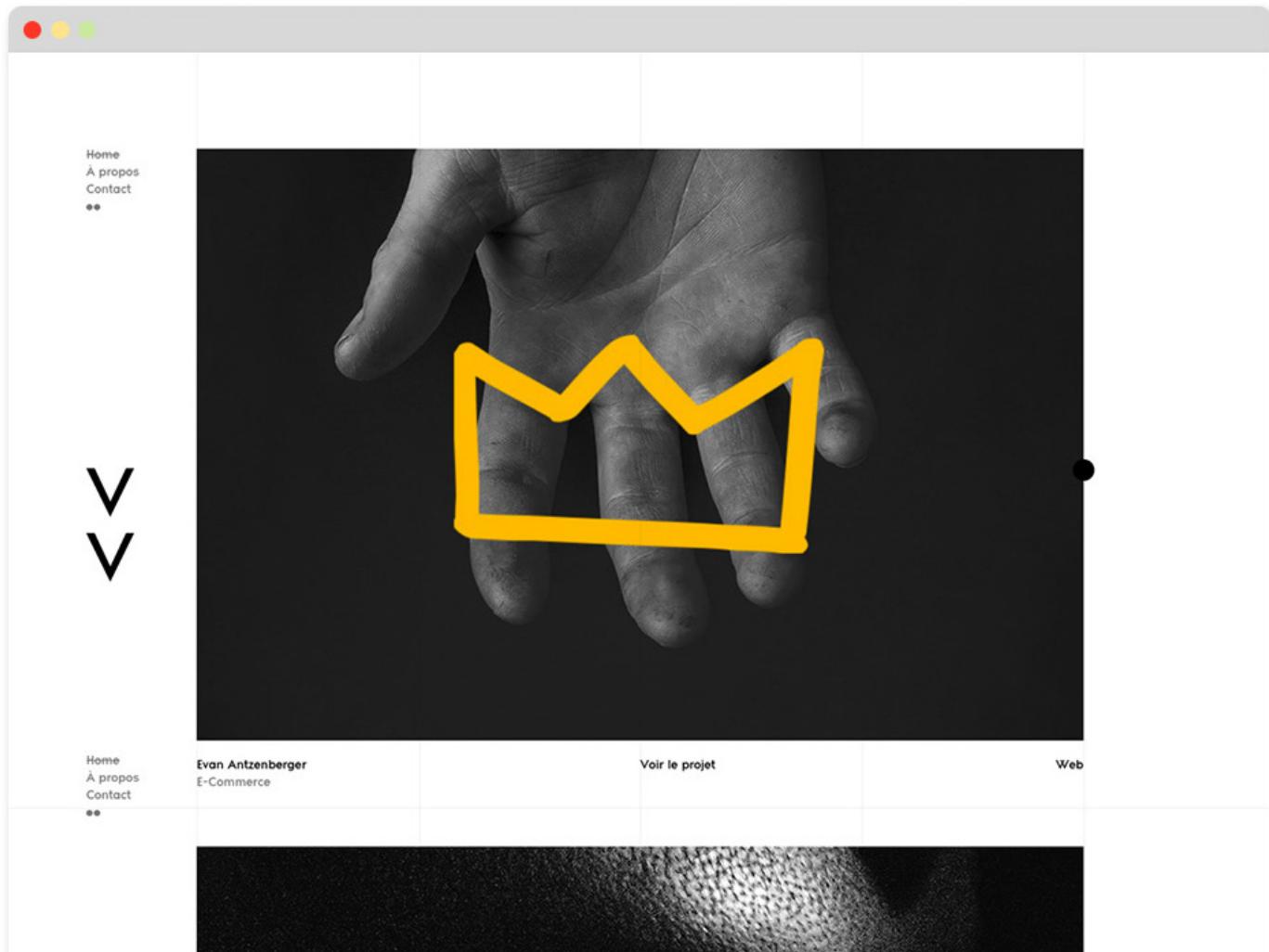
3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for agency sites and other portfolios).

Designer's Comments:

"This was an in-house project. All of the highlight colors and elements on rollover are part of the portfolio piece."

 [Enlarge](#)



BLACK & WHITE PHOTOS

STYLE FOUR

ILLUSTRATION

I can't draw well, so whenever I do an illustrative site, I either purchase illustrations somewhere or work with an illustrator who was specifically hired for the job. Sometimes beginner designers see an amazing site and think that one person created it all. Unlikely! More often it's often a collaborative process between several people.

Like the other styles, you should aim for consistency in styles. That means every illustration should look related.

Btw, since you'll be creating mockups in this course, you can use illustrations from anywhere on the web.

WHEN TO USE IT:

- Wide variety of uses



Hotel Esencia

<http://hotelesencia.com>

The hand-drawn illustrations here elicit a feeling a relaxation. Perfect for a resort like this. The main image almost feels like a New Yorker cartoon which would be confusing, but the nondescript scene steers it away from that.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

A high-end hotel in Mexico with a rich history.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

The owners wanted to attract foreign tourists and convey that this wasn't an ordinary hotel.

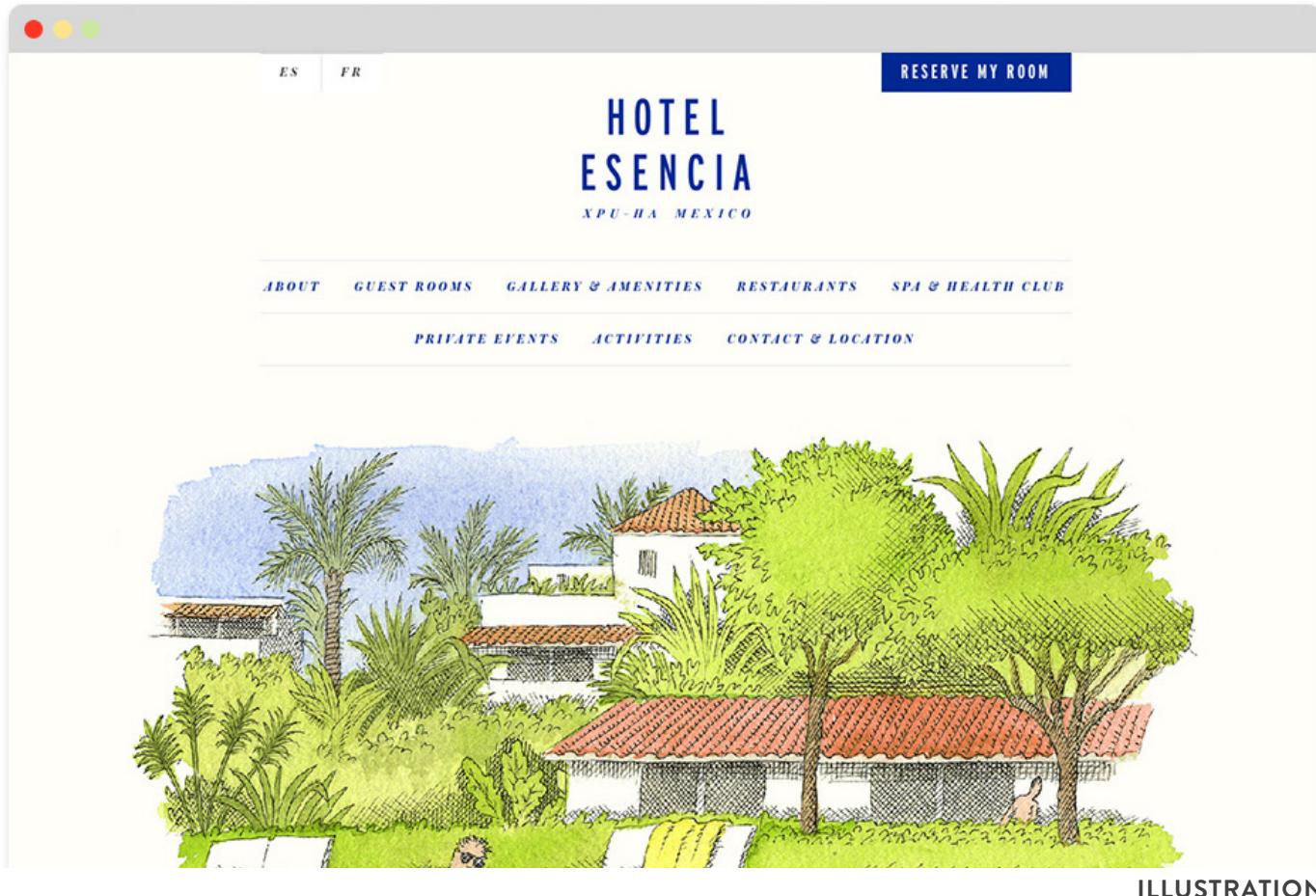
3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for hotels and travel destinations).

Designer's Comments:

"During our research, we noticed that 100% of the hotel imagery we found used photos. And while we liked many of them, it made us realize this was an opportunity to help the client stand out from competitors. In our pitch, we said people would be immune to yet another hotel site with pretty pictures. The client agreed! So we told the story of the hotel with illustrations instead."

 [Enlarge](#)



Be Visionare

<http://www.bevisionare.com/>

This is a micro-site to promote a goal tracking app. It's likely that an illustrator was hired to create imagery for this site.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

The visionaire app is meant to inspire people to create and track goals they set for themselves.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To provide information and entice people to download the app.

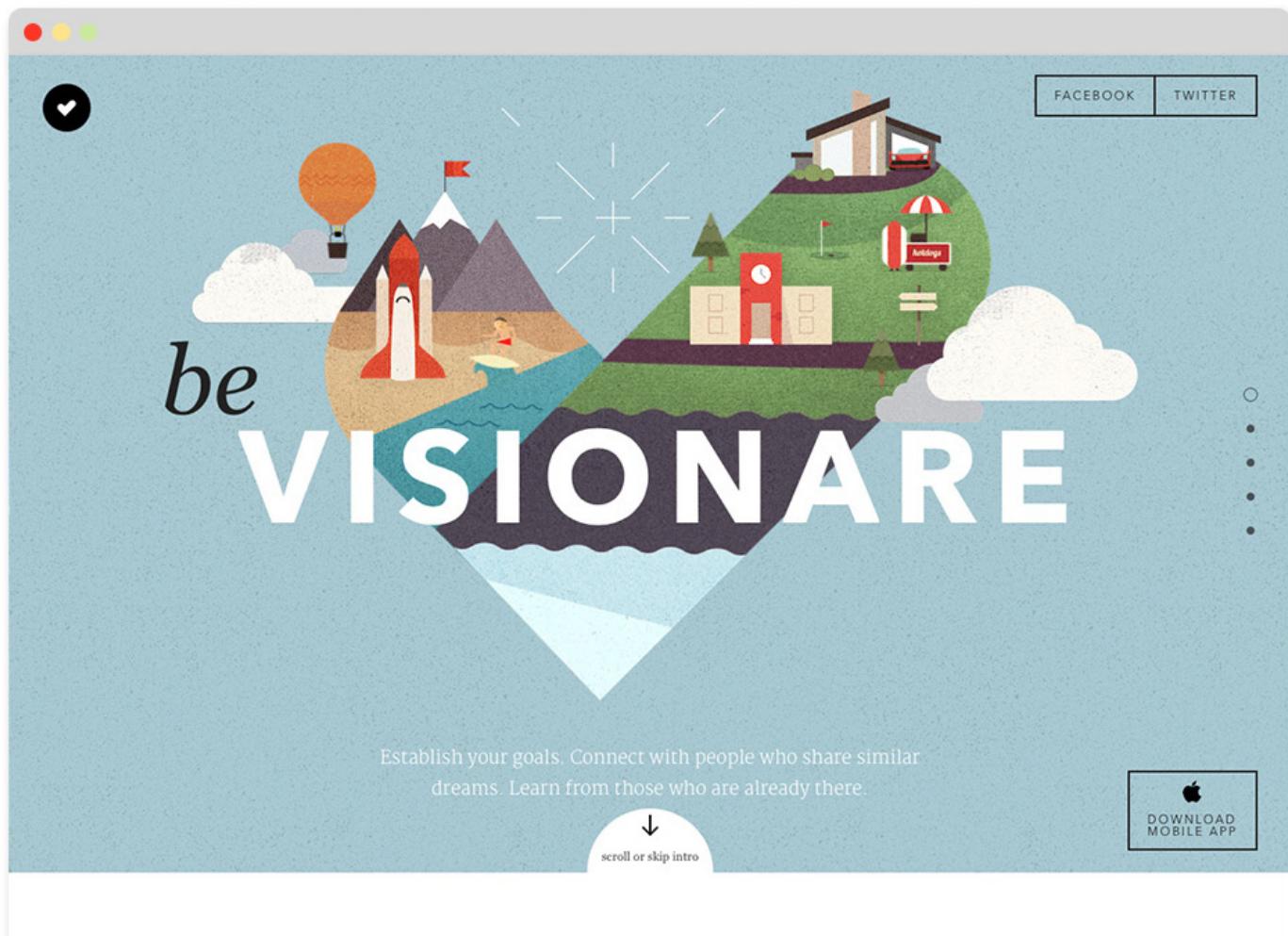
 [Enlarge](#)

3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for sites that want to inspire or change people. Weight loss and therapy sites for example).

Designer's Comments:

"We wanted a destination site for people to visit when our app was written about in articles and blogs. With so much noise in the app store, we wanted to provide a wonderful web experience, which would in turn endear users to us when they were considering downloading the app."



Sun Valley

<http://portfolio.tofslie.com>

Sometimes vintage clip art illustrations can be used to create a fun retro vibe. The designer here used clip art as an homage to 1950's ski resorts.

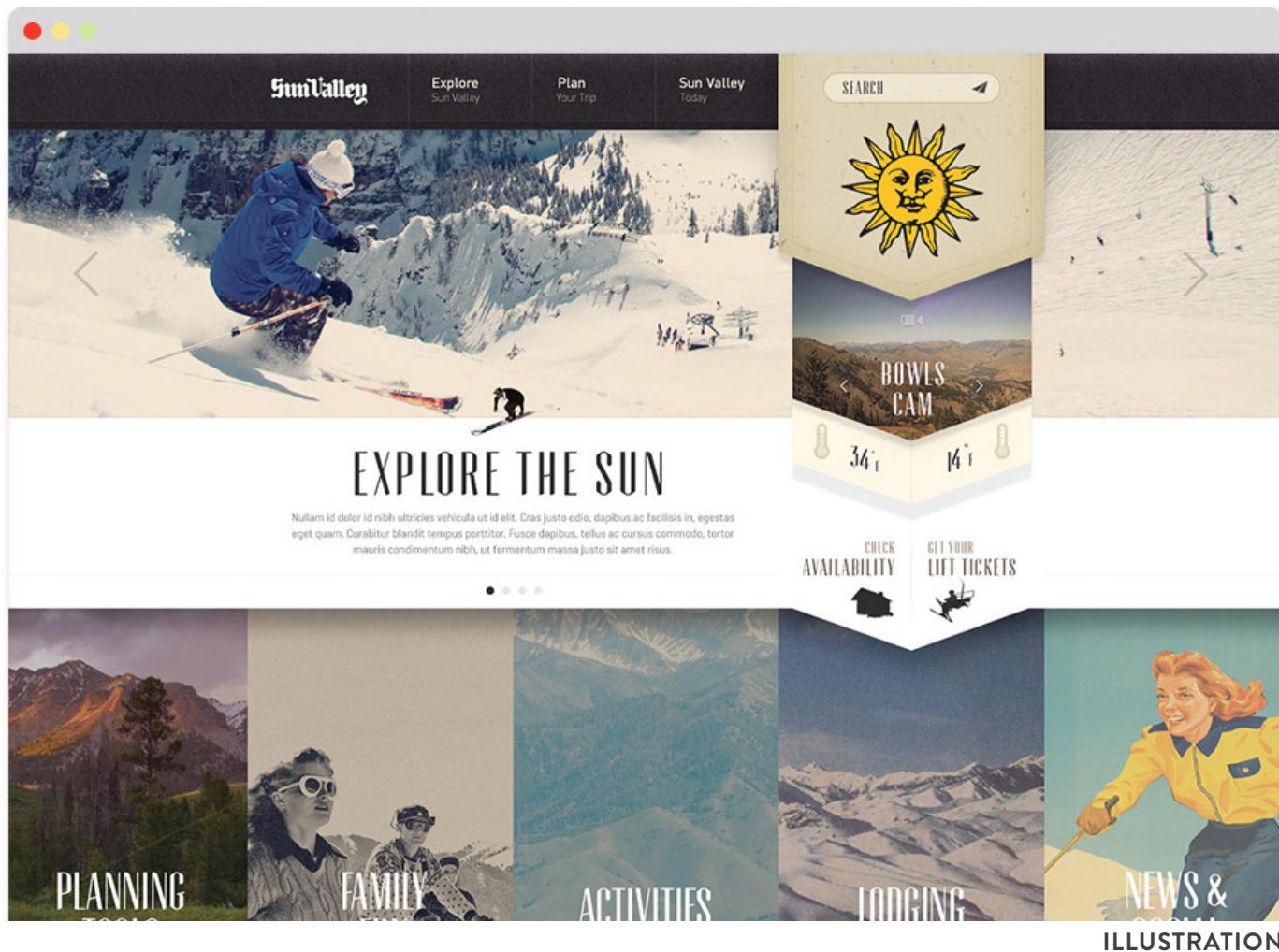
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Sun Valley is a ski resort in Idaho that's known for catering to families. They've been around since 1936.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To entice skiers to vacation at the resort.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for travel and vacation sites).

Designer's Comments:

"All of the competitors sites used similar looking photos. You couldn't tell any of them apart. So we pitched the client on these vintage illustrations. They thought it was a good match for their family-friendly resort and gave us the greenlight to design the rest of the site."

Beyond this Point

<http://beyondthispoint.design>

The illustrations here are very basic, but combined with the color, it's enough to create a distinct mood.

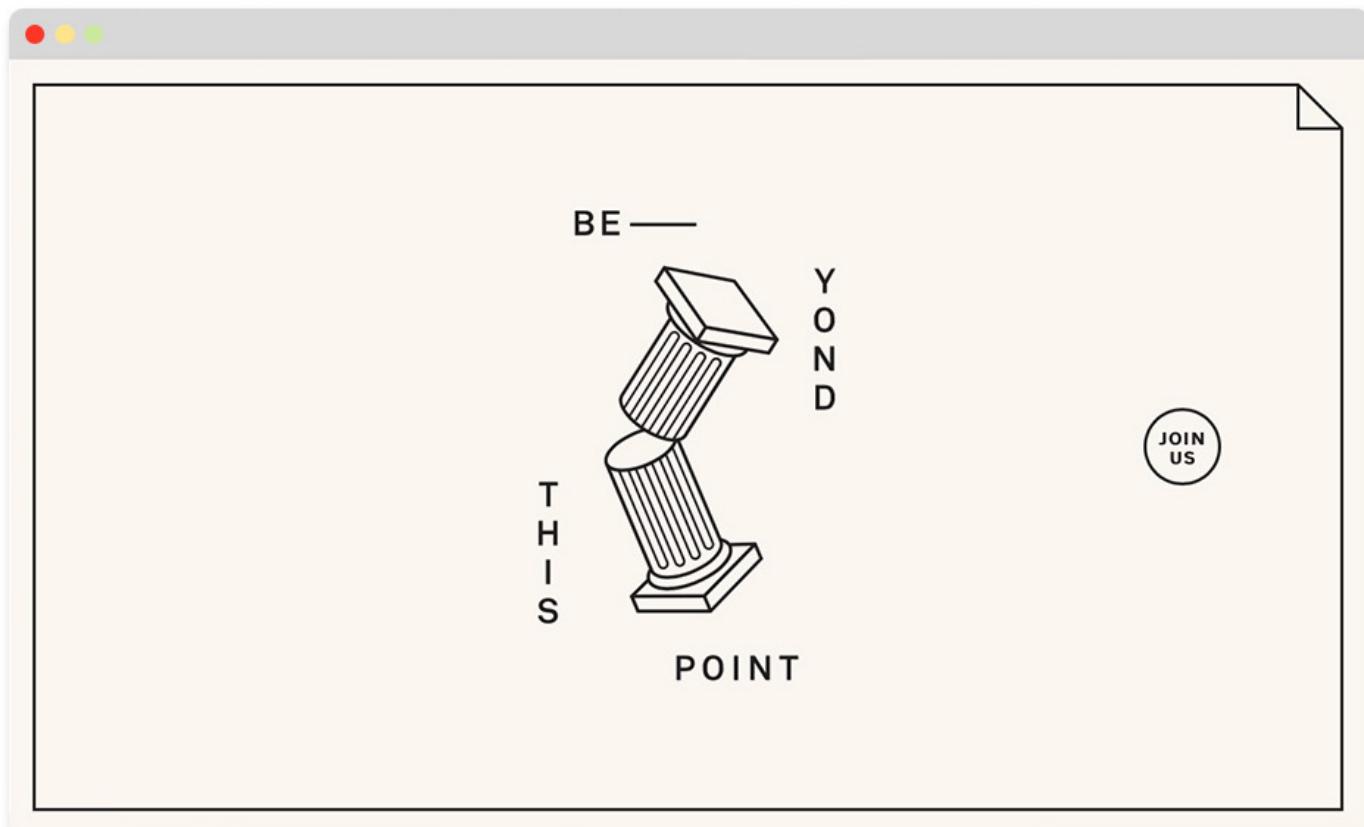
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Beyond this Point is a podcast which interviews artists, business owners, and leaders of all types to put a spotlight on different ways of seeing, thinking, and making.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To be thought-provoking, and to promote “Civilization”, a company that develops brands and experiences.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for sites with a single focus).

Designer's Comments:

“The client wanted a place outside of iTunes where people could go to learn more about the podcast. When deciding the color and illustrations, we just tried to portray the tone of the show.”

STYLE FIVE

COLLAGE

Collage uses multiple elements to make a cohesive design. Unlike earlier styles, you have more liberty to use photos of a different style, because if enough elements look different, that can create a kind of cohesion in itself.

WHEN TO USE IT:

- If the concept is experimental
- If the concept is artsy



Everything was

Each invention shows that it is malleable, from the stool to the screen you're reading this. We make what we need, things in the process, connect them like, and connect what we've got to where we're going.

Frank Chimero

<http://www.frankchimero.com/writing/>

This is a personal site for designer, writer, and illustrator Frank Chimero. He works in several mediums and the design reflects that.

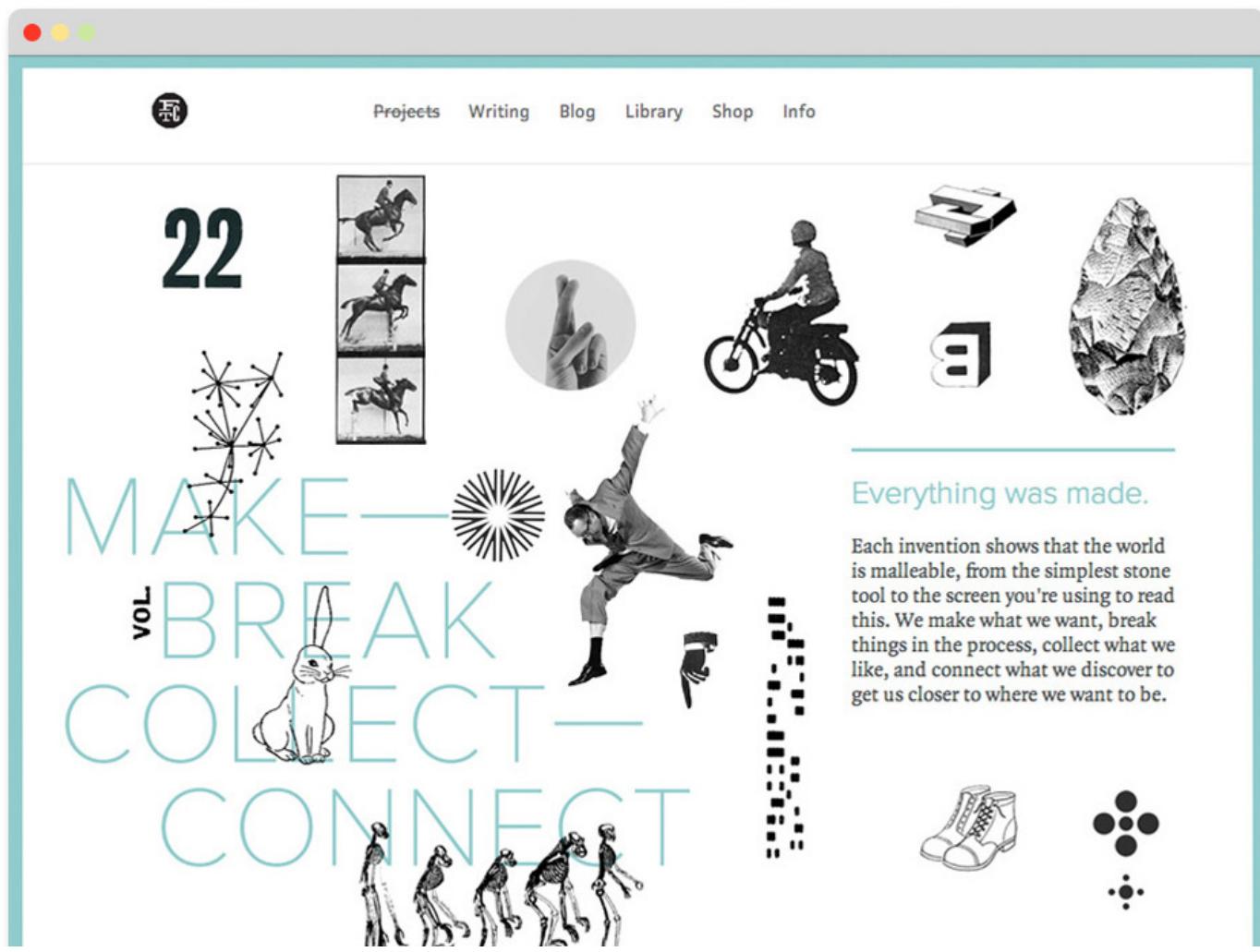
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Frank is a playful designer, writer, and illustrator.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

Frank wanted a new site for his projects.

 [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder and look for websites that tackle multiple topics).

Designer's Comments:

"Frank is a creative person with many talents. We didn't want to show those talents in a literal way on the homepage, rather we wanted to reference them in an abstract way by using a variety of clip art and other ephemera. Because this was his personal website he gave us a lot of creative license and let us go nuts."

Rogue Society

<http://roguesocietygin.com>

This is a website for a gin company. They distill their gin in a hand-beaten, 19th-century copper pot still, which explains some of the vintage-feeling imagery.

1) What is the essence of the brand?

Rogue approached gin making as a fine craft.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To promote the gin to potential distributors.

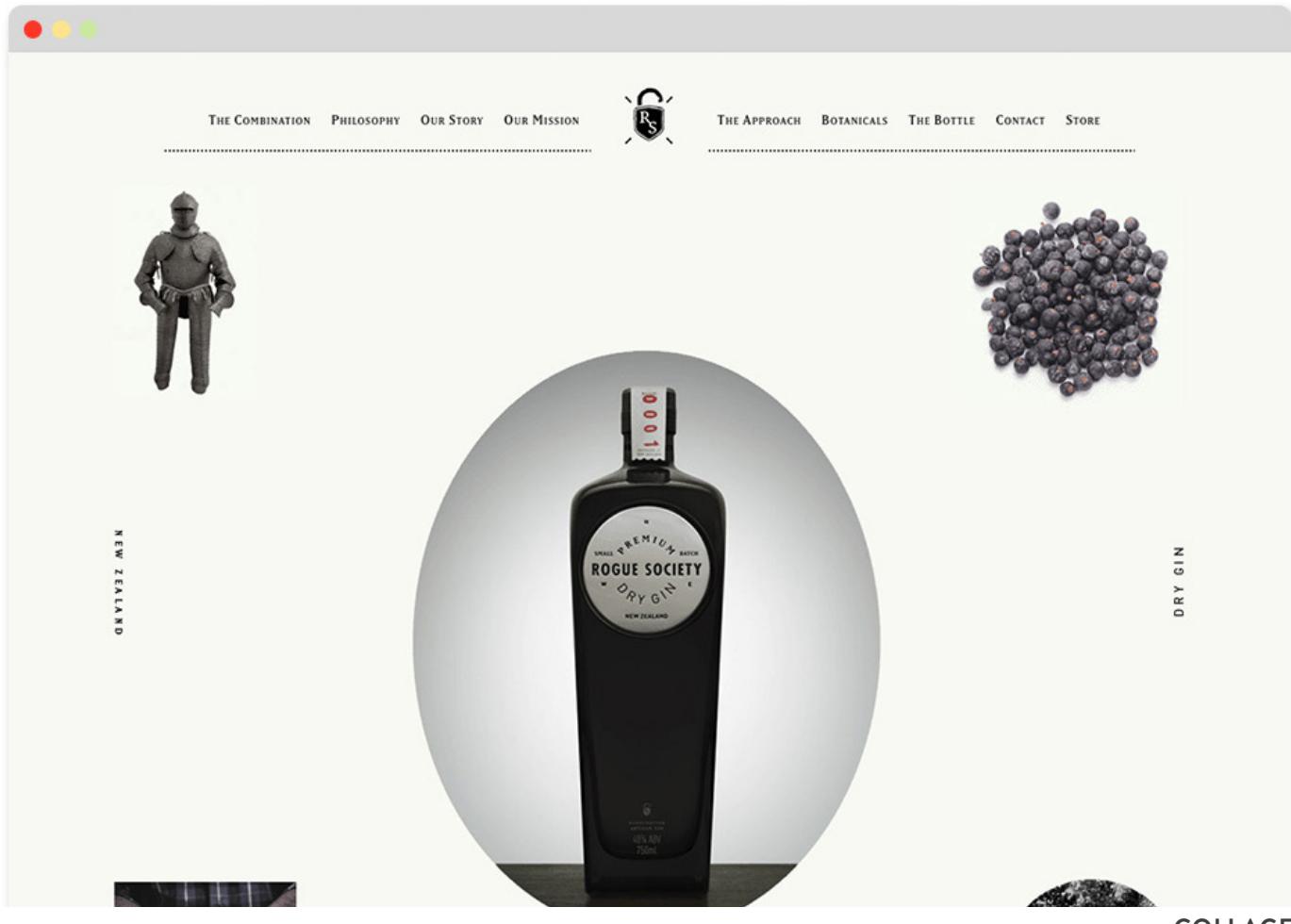
3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for sites with craft related subject, like woodworking).

Designer's Comments:

"This was a new company and the founders were having a hard time cold calling and emailing distributors. No one knew who they were. To combat this, they needed a site that made them look like a serious operation. They didn't have a budget for photography or illustrations so we found old clip art that worked well."

 [Enlarge](#)



The Conference

<https://2016.theconference.se/>

This site mixes illustrations, geometric shapes, and photos. The copy conforms to a grid, but the other elements seem to be strewn about. This helps separate the two layers and makes the site readable among the chaotic elements surrounding it.

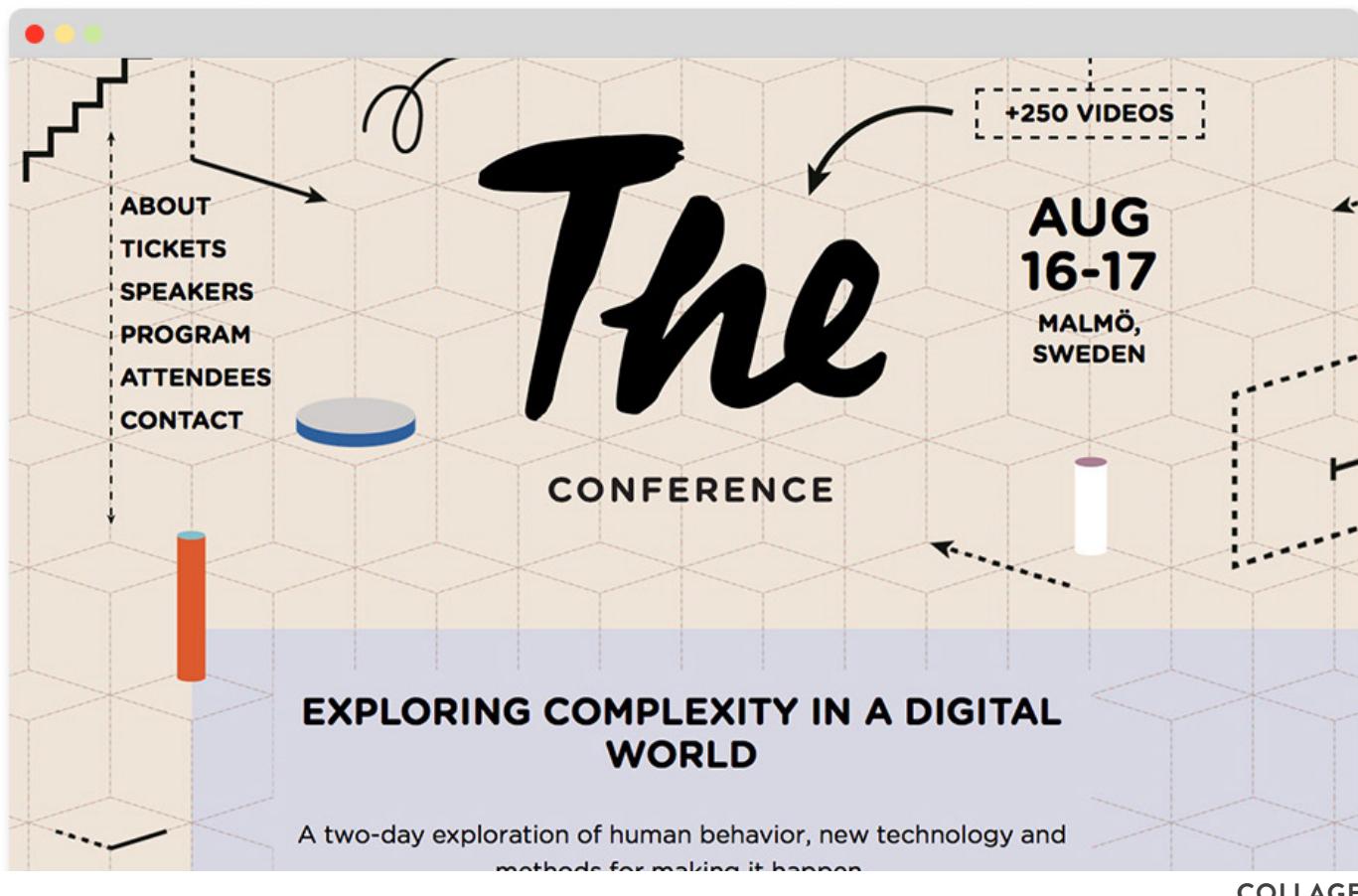
1) What is the essence of the brand?

“The Conference” is a two day event exploring the tech world through multidisciplinary perspectives.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

To promote the event and allow people to register for it.

[Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Most websites for conferences are lousy. So look for all kinds of sites).

Designer's Comments:

“The Conference is about connecting the dots between different fields. So we thought that by putting these doodles all over the page, and using them as gestural elements, would create a mood that matched the content of the event.”

Curious Space

<http://www.curiousspace.com>

The photos here seem to float above everything. And even though it looks like there's no strict grid keeping them in place, it works because the placement of the photos leads your eye down the page.

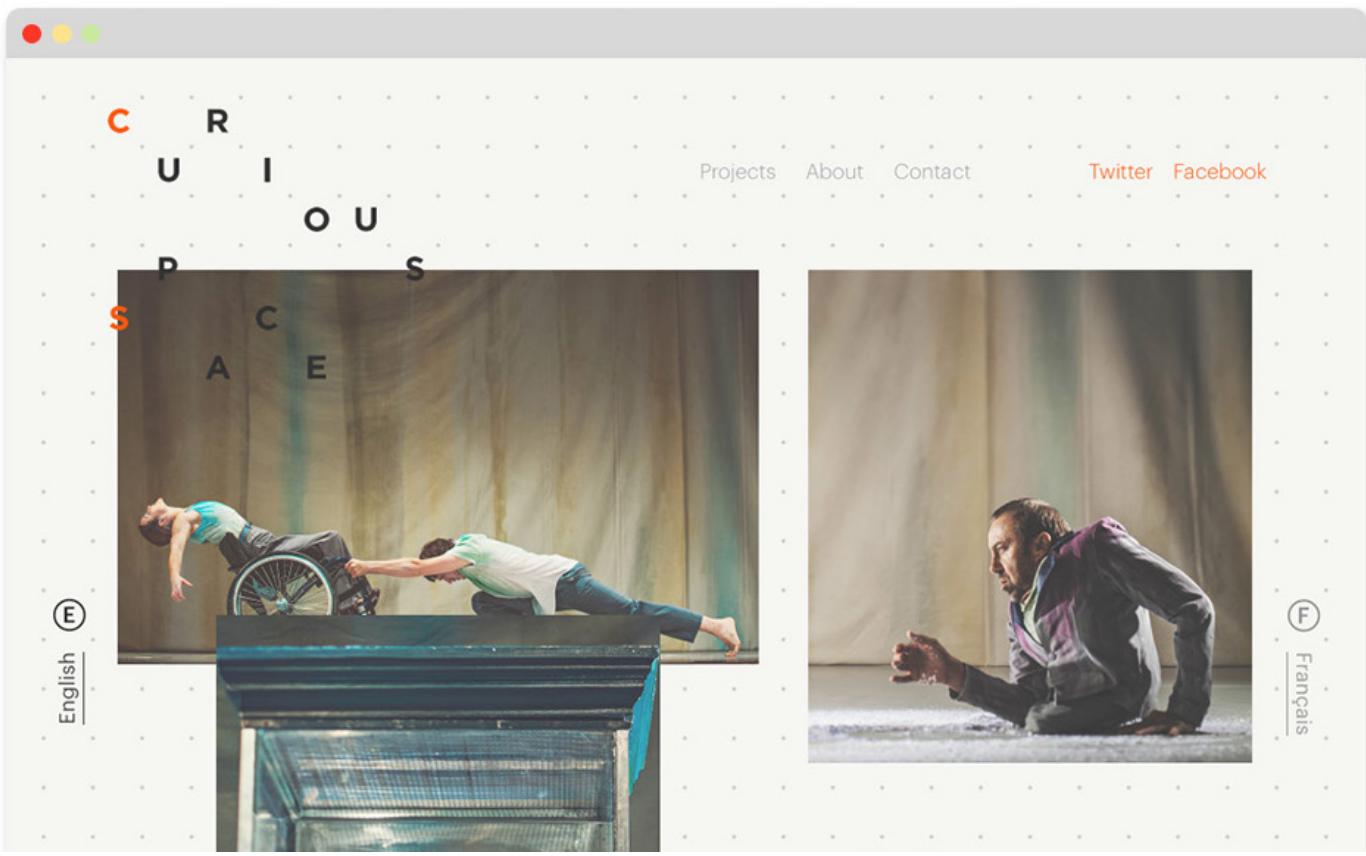
1) What is the essence of the brand?

Curious space works with museums, galleries, and public spaces. They create and design the physical space where those things are held.

2) What's the purpose of the site?

The client had a difficult time describing the various projects they've done, so they wanted a site to show people.

Q [Enlarge](#)



3) What do I like?

(Browse through the inspiration folder for portfolio sites).

Designer's Comments:

"Curious Space does a lot of work with dancers, artists, and other performers. We wanted to reflect the expressiveness of those performers by having a loose and playful layout."



CHAPTER 10

THE D×N PROCESS

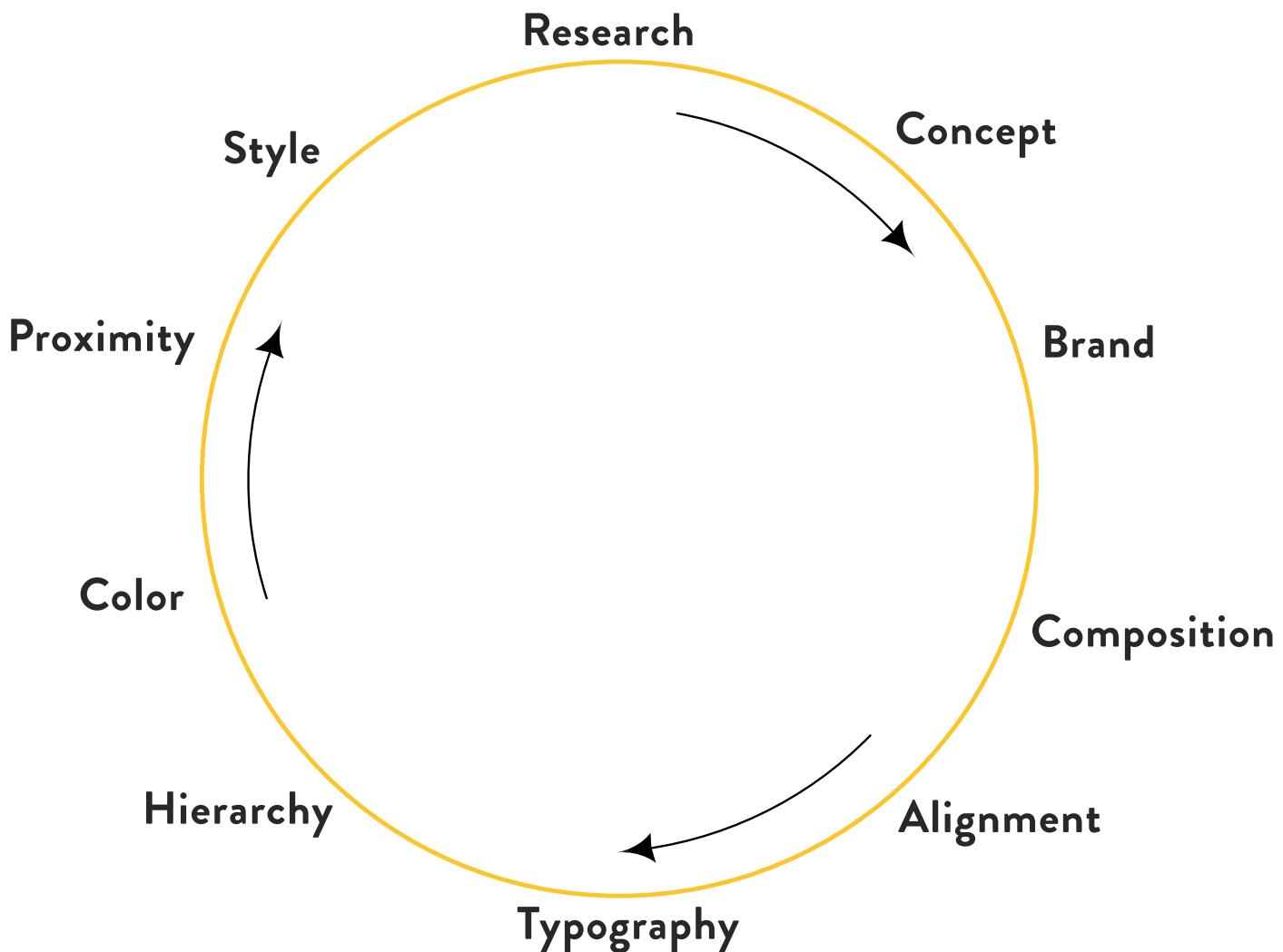
“Rule books tell people what to do. Frameworks guide people how to act. Rule books insist on discipline. Frameworks allow for creativity.”

– Simon Sinek

The Ten Steps

We've gone through ten chapters of design theory. How do we put it to good use so that we remember it while designing? Let's map the steps on a circle. If we went step-by-step clockwise we would go through all the steps. Now this would be good enough if we executed

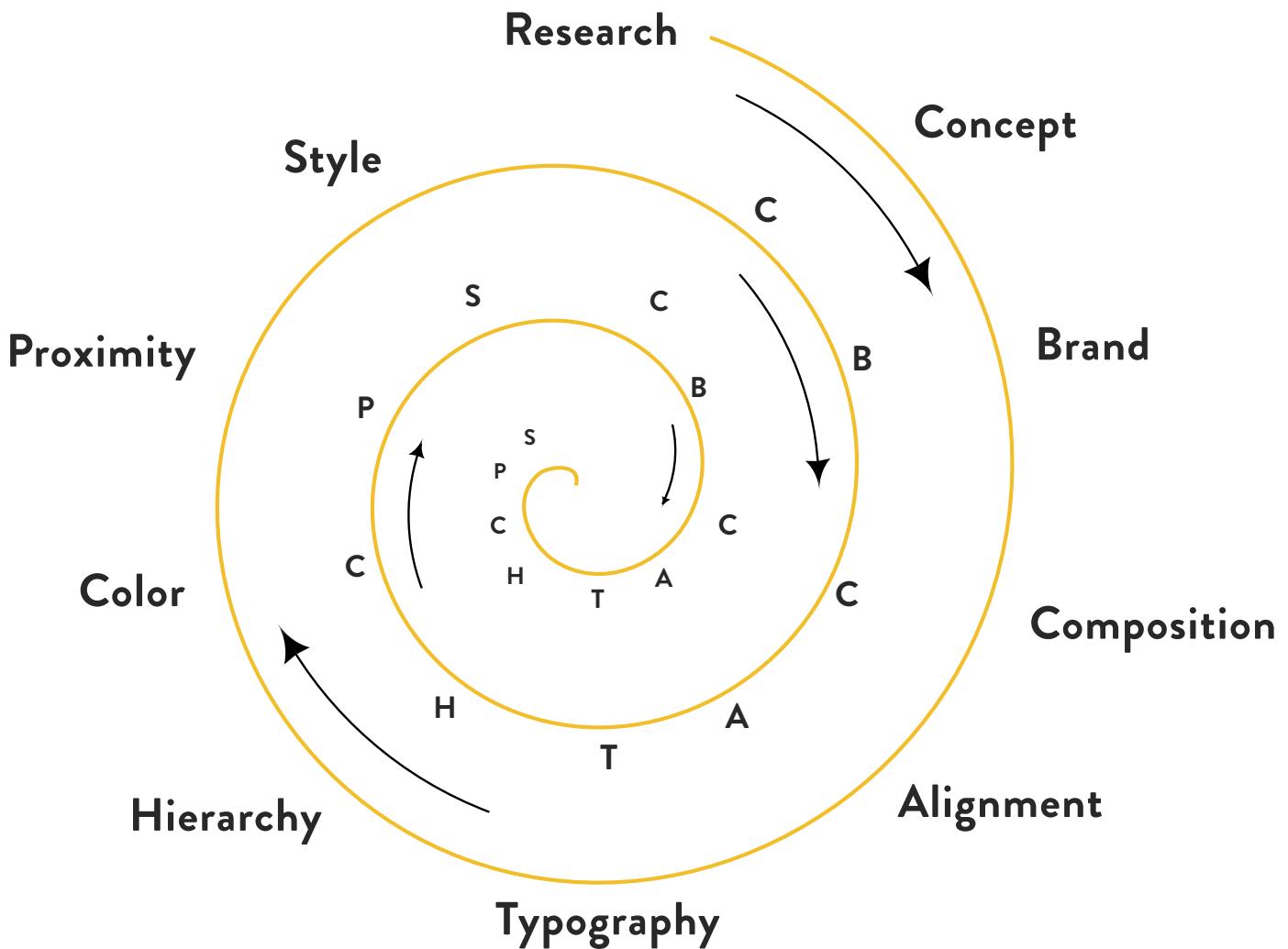
each step perfectly, but you can't. Sometimes you'll pick colors that won't work with the style you want. Or your concept changes and that impacts the color, style, and typography. A more accurate diagram would be what you see on the next page.



The Refinement Spiral

In this diagram you go through the ten steps, pause to evaluate the work, then go through the ten steps once again to refine it. And each time after that, keep refining until you're happy with your design. Some steps will be repeated more than others. Color, typography, hierarchy, and proximity will probably be refined the most, while research you'll do once. Your concept may not change much either. If it does change you might be better off starting over, because the concept

influences so many other (already worked on) sections. Experienced designers have confronted the spiral many times, so they won't go around it as much as a beginner. That's ok! For what it's worth, I probably go around the spiral more times than my peers. I wish I were faster, but I've come to accept it. All of this is fairly abstract, so on the next page let's look at the spiral as if we were doing a project.



Refinement Spiral

1st Pass

As you make your way around the refinement spiral, here's a checklist for you to reference. This is what the 1st pass around the spiral might look like.

Research

- Read the creative brief
- Research what the competition is doing
- What do they have in common?
- What can you do that's different from competitors?
- Is this a mockup or real site?
- Start saving visuals to an inspiration folder

Concept

Concept = brief + brand + inspiration. Write down some possible concepts for your site.

Brand

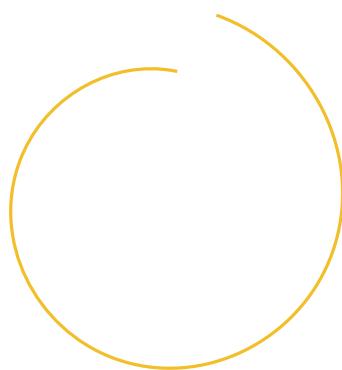
Write down in words and phrases what you think the client's brand is about. If they don't have a well-defined brand, find out what they do well in their business and who their target audience is. Write those things down.

Composition

Make sure you use a grid to give your design structure. Use copy from the current site and lay it out on the screen. Is there a composition from chapter four that might work well for the amount of copy?

Alignment

Decide how you will align your copy. (Flush left, flush right...etc.) Write it down.



First pass

Typography

Pick one font for headlines and one for body copy. Use typekit or fonts from [this list](#) of 30 quality Google fonts.

Hierarchy

(n/a for this first pass)

Color

Think about the concept, brand, and style, then pick one of the five color styles that you think might work with it.

Proximity

(n/a for this first pass)

Style

Style mapping is: The essence of the brand + The purpose of the site + Your personal tastes

Look at the five styles and pick one that you think will work with the above factors

- Full-color photo
- Duotone
- B&W photo
- Illustration
- Collage

Refinement Spiral

2nd Pass

Research

Completed during 1st pass.

Concept

You have three concepts you're considering, but one of them you like more than others. Use that one for now.

Brand

You have some characteristics of the brand written down.

Composition

Use the compositions from chapter 4 as an inspiration and start making making a grid in photoshop with empty rectangles to represent where content might go.

Alignment

Make sure the rectangles from the previous step are aligned.

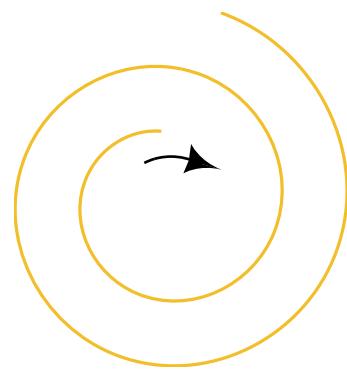
Typography

Take some copy from the client's existing website and paste into your photoshop document. Use the fonts you picked during the first pass.

Hierarchy

Start to look at the rectangles from earlier and consider if some rectangles are more important than others (that's a good thing).

Color



Let's say you picked split-complement as your color style. Start trying out individual colors now. Do you work with the site's concept, brand, and style?

Proximity

(n/a)

Style

Let's say you picked the full-color photo style. Start looking on the web for photos you can use.

Refinement Spiral

3rd Pass

Research

Completed during 1st pass.

Concept

Check to see if your design still supports the concept.

Brand

Check to see if your design still supports the brand.

Composition

Insert all of the website copy into the composition. The more important stuff will get more real estate on the page.

Alignment

Make sure the rectangles from the previous step are still aligned.

Typography

Are your headlines larger than your subheadlines? Good. Is your body copy easy to read? Good.

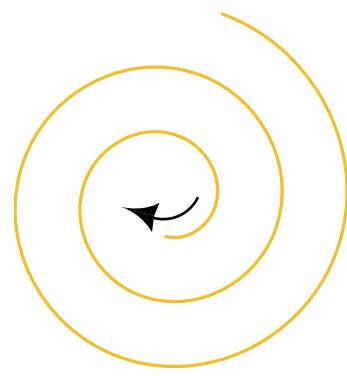
Hierarchy

Some sections should call attention to themselves more than others.

Color

You picked some split-complementary colors you like. It supports the site's concept, brand, and style.

Proximity



Third pass

Are elements that are about the same thing, near one another?

Style

You've picked the full-color photo style, found photos that will work well in your comp, and you've started adding and removing them to see what works well.

Refinement Spiral

4th Pass

Research

Completed during 1st pass.

Concept

Check to see if your design still supports the concept. In particular do the colors and style match?

Brand

Check to see if your design still supports the brand.

Composition

Adjust the composition as needed.

Alignment

Everything is lined up.

Typography

You changed out a font for a new one. You're happy with your font choices now.

Hierarchy

After moving things around a lot, the hierarchy makes sense.

Color

You tweaked the colors a bit. But it still supports the site's concept, brand, and style.

Proximity

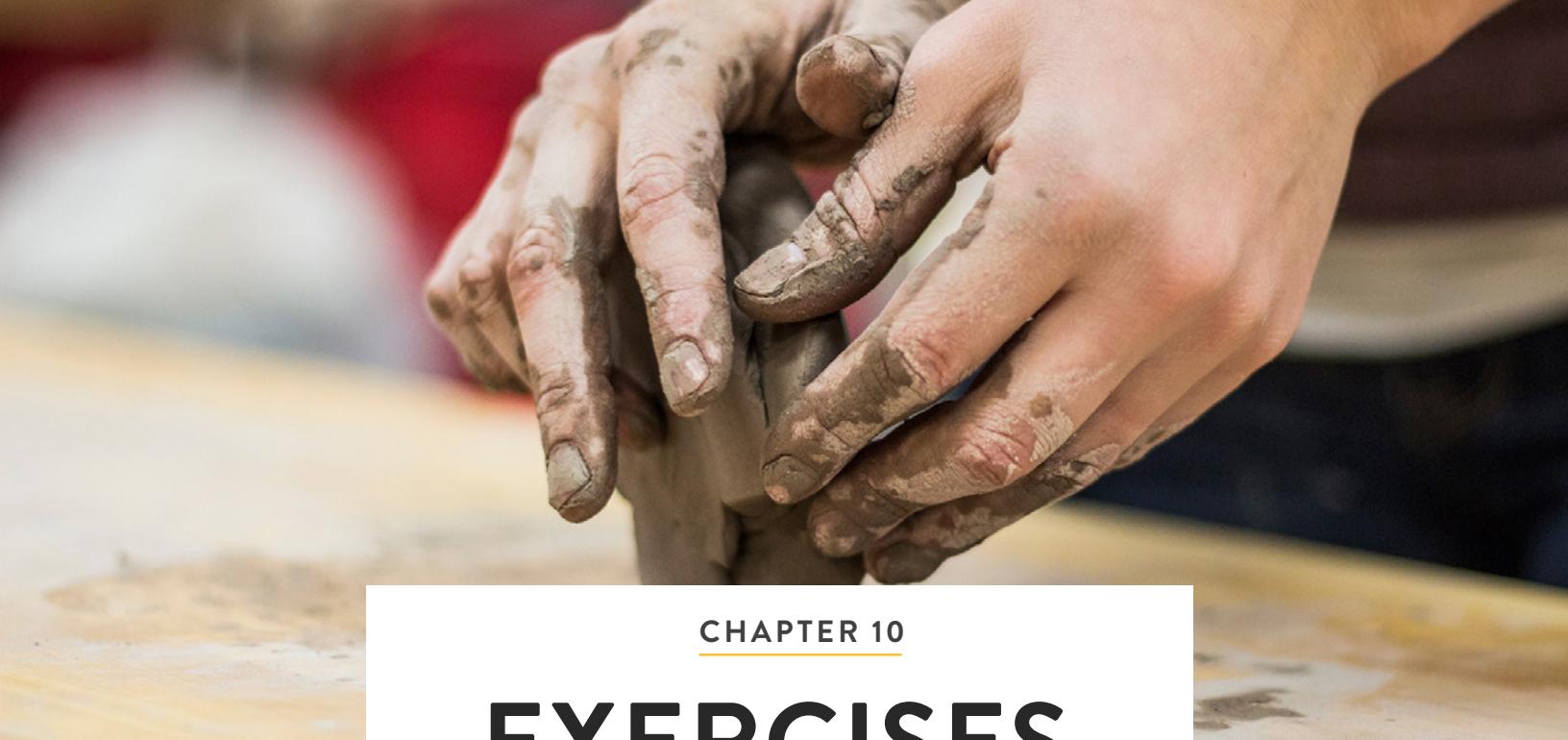
Anything that is related is near each other



Completed design

Style

You found photos that work well together and support everything else on the page.



CHAPTER 10

EXERCISES

“Practice puts brains in your muscles.”

– Sam Snead

How to Approach these Exercises

The examples in the previous ten chapters were limited to a certain scope to protect you from getting off track, like bumpers on a bowling lane. For example, when considering a style for your site, choose one of the five I discussed. At least one of them will certainly work for the following examples. And when thinking about color, pick some that fit within the five theories we covered.

You'll have the opportunity to try other things in the future, but for now stick to what's covered in this guidebook.



Creative Brief One



Client:

Disney

Background:

The Pirates of the Caribbean franchise started in 2003. There have been four films to date and Disney has decided to do a fifth. It will have the same stars as the other films. They often have a site for their movies but they're putting a little more money into this one.

Who are we influencing?

The target demographic is young people ages 10-34.

The Problem:

The client doesn't think they have a problem that needs solving, rather the site is part of a larger budget to promote the movie. We just need to make the site as compelling as possible.

Competitors:

Other films opening the same weekend.

What do customers believe about the films?

Some people think the franchise has run its course and are weary of another one. It might be a challenge to make it seem like this 5th movie is new and different.

Deliverables:

One homepage (for now)

Live site or mockup?

Client wants to see a look and feel execution of the homepage and we'll go from there.

Creative Brief Two



Client: HCB

Background:

The client is an online fashion boutique.

How they describe themselves:

"H.C.B. is for every girl who loves getting dressed in the morning. For the lady who loves to laugh, to smile, and to feel beautiful, both inside and out. It's for the woman who surrounds herself with wonderful friends, family and significant others, and goes through life sharing her experiences with all of them. She's sometimes professional, sometimes casual, sometimes modest, and sometimes likes to look a little sexy and have a great night out. And this is her closet. May she always love every piece and every moment she has in it."

Who are we influencing?

Young women, 15-22.

The Problem:

HCB recently conducted a survey which found that their primary customer base is developing more sophisticated tastes at an

earlier age. Whereas before their customers would start with HCB and then move on to H&M sometime in college, now they are shifting toward those "cooler" stores much earlier. The brand voice is weak and the homepage is doesn't feel cohesive.

Competitors:

Charlotte Rouse, Forever 21, H&M, Asos.

What do customers believe about HCB?

Older girls think HCB is for young girls and tweens. They don't like it the way they did when they were younger.

What would we like them to believe?

That HCB can go toe-to-toe with the Forever 21 and H&M. However they don't want be so hip that it makes parents uncomfortable. It can't be too edgy because their clothes aren't.

Deliverables:

One homepage. It is not a responsive site. The client wants three design options to choose from, and this will be one of them.

Live site or mockup?

The client eventually wants a real site, but this phase is to determine look and feel. That is, they want us to pitch them what the final site might look like, including photography style, links, content, and anything else we think is necessary.

Creative Brief Three



Competitors:

Patagonia, Eddie Bauer, LL Bean

What do customers believe about REI?

Older people like them, younger people are indifferent or don't like them.

Deliverables:

A homepage concept reflecting the new brand direction.

Live site or mockup?

Mockup.

Client:

REI

Background:

REI, is a privately held American retail store organized as a consumers' cooperative, selling outdoor recreation gear, sporting goods, and clothing via some 143 retail stores in 36 states, catalogs, and the Internet.

Who are we influencing?

Millennials. But not at the expense of loyal baby boomers.

The Problem:

REI is doing fine with Baby Boomers. They've grown up with REI and trust them. However surveys conducted with millennials have indicated that REI isn't for them - it's a store that their dad likes. The task is to modernize the brand without alienating the Baby Boomers. The client believes Patagonia straddles this line very well.

Creative Brief Four



Deliverables:

One desktop product page.

Live site or mockup?

Live site. Use real product shots, even though they will be replaced later with images on their server.

Client:

Ping

Background:

PING is an American manufacturer of golf equipment, based in Phoenix, Arizona. Ping was founded by Karsten Solheim, following a career as engineer at the General Electric company.

Who are we influencing?

Golfers of all ages.

The Problem:

Ping has respectable clubs but they don't have the brand sophistication of competitors like Taylor Made or Titleist. They're updating their brand and a new website is part of that update.

Competitors:

TaylorMade, Titleist, Callaway

What do customers believe about Ping?

They like their clubs and customer service. Customers don't report a problem per-se but when surveys are taken, Ping is not seen as a sophisticated brand.

Creative Brief Five



Deliverables:

One desktop and mobile product page. Site will be responsive.

Live site or mockup?

Mockup.

Client:

Bellwether Mortage

Background:

Bellwether Mortgage is the opposite of the big faceless lender. Most of their lenders have lived in the areas they service for decades. A large portion their revenue helps housing initiatives for low and moderate income families in diverse, thriving communities.

Who are we influencing?

New home buyers.

The Problem:

The advantage Bellwether has over everyone else is their handholding and customer service. It's what they're known for. However none of this is reflected in their marketing material or on their site.

Competitors:

Stearns Lending, Caliber Home Loans, LoanDepot.

What do clients believe about Bellwether?

Few buyers know anything about them when looking for a home.