



affordable guided tours to Japan



PacSet Tours Website Redesign

by Emily Wing for MCAD Web Design Principles, due 2016/12/16





reinvigorating the Purpose of the Site

My friend owns a small business running guided group tours to Japan, and I'd like to use this opportunity to try to help redesign the website. The revised site needs to have a streamlined user experience while promoting the unique tours through both their constantly-updated social media and new tour plans. This is the current site:

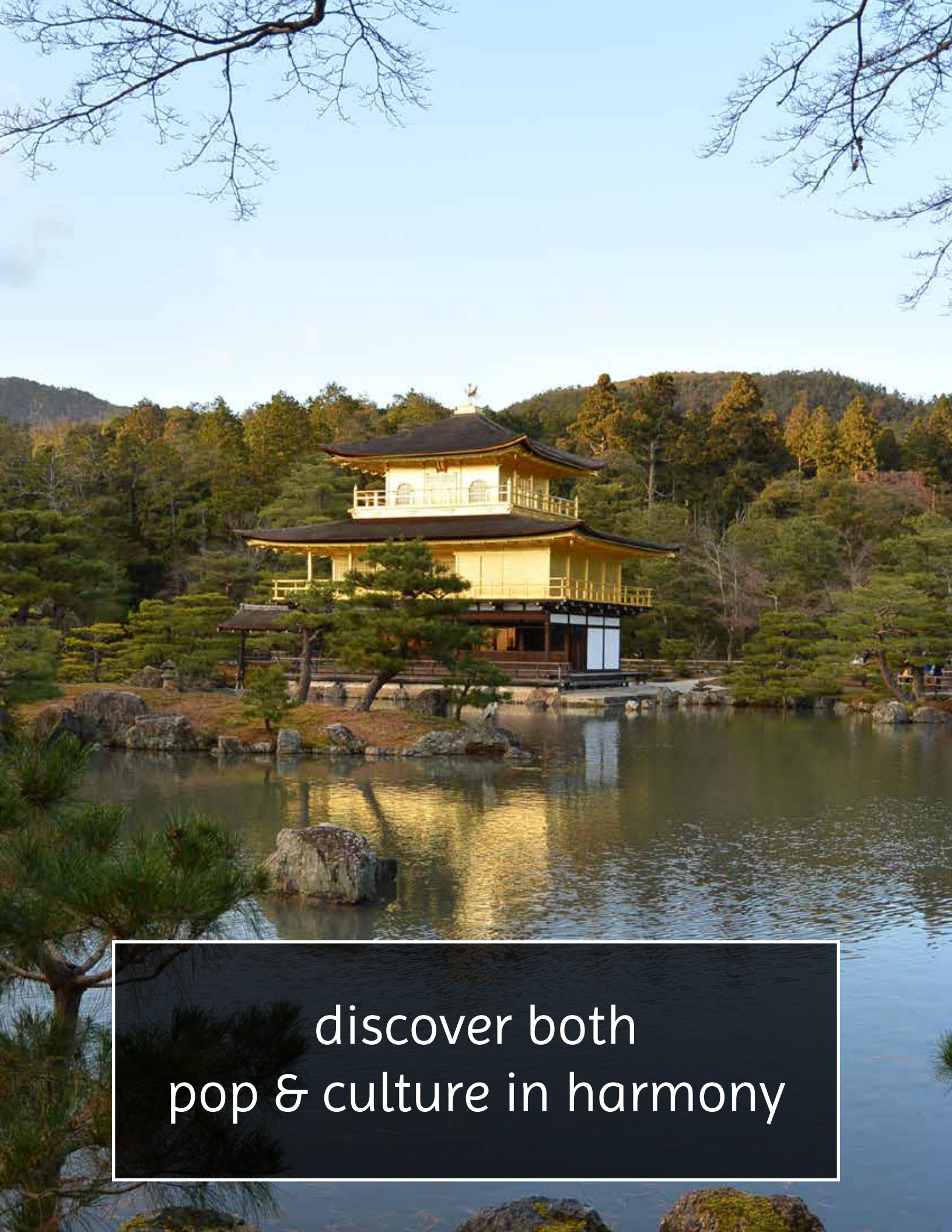
<https://pacsettours.com>.

Affordable and memorable guided tours to both Japan's most iconic destinations and hidden gems.

There are a number of pages with important information for users to have easy access to, and in the current site, some of the pages could be better combined or revised to be more intuitive:

- **Homepage & First Time Here**
- **Upcoming Tours** - the list of tours that are open for sign up
 - **Tour Info** - sub-page with bullet points highlighting tour package
 - **Tour Itinerary** - sub-page with breakdown of the tour schedule
 - **Payment Plan Schedule** - sub-page specific to each tour
- **Previous Tours** - tours and itineraries that are closed or past
- **Payment Plan** - PacSet offers unique payment plans that make the trip affordable
- **FAQ/Policy** - very important information for participants to know
- **About, Reviews, & Contact** - important to let users know with whom they are traveling
- **Photos, Videos, & Blog** - these link out to external social media
- **Forum** - this is a great page that allows tour groups to "meet each other" beforehand
- **Shop** - a little gift shop to buy the mascot as a souvenir

The current site design is a little inconsistent between major pages, which can be confusing for first time visitors. For a successful end user experience, consistency between pages will be a priority, followed by a revised visual hierarchy of information. The hope is that the entire site will maintain its branding and unique appeal through fun graphics and photos from past tours. The underlining structure and function of the site will be prioritized and supported by the form.



Targeting the 25-40 age group whose interests are primarily focused on Japanese Pop Culture.



Being a travel agency, it'll be important for the site to be found by and appeal to budget conscious travelers. The target niche is primarily for fans of Japanese pop culture, but the site and the tours can be marketed to anyone desiring a guided tour to any of Japan's fantastic destinations.

Sites with reference information



www.pacsettours.com - the current site
www.jnto.org - Japan National Tourism Organization
www.jnto.go.jp/eng/ - from the same organization as above, but a general guide
www.livejapan.com - informational site that focuses on standard touring topics
www.japan-guide.com - travel information

PacSet is a one-stop shop for a pre-packaged tour experience. Unlike the sites listed above, the work has been done to create a comprehensive and unique tour in Japan. Promotion of individual destinations or locations isn't the focus, but the general information is still used in tour summaries.

discover both
pop & culture in harmony



communication is key in
a foreign country

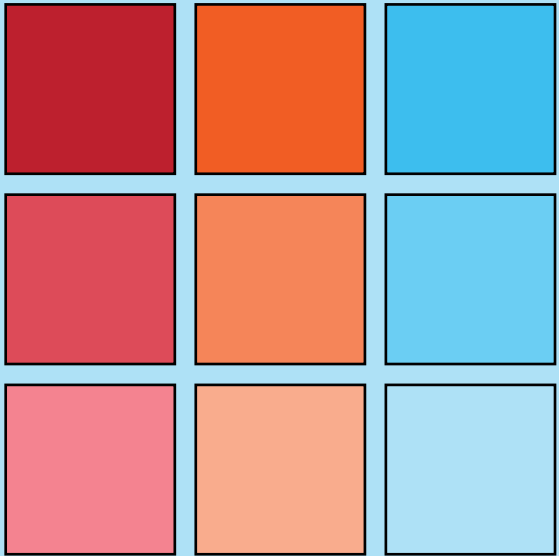
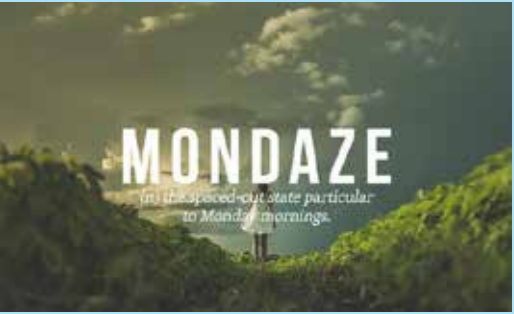
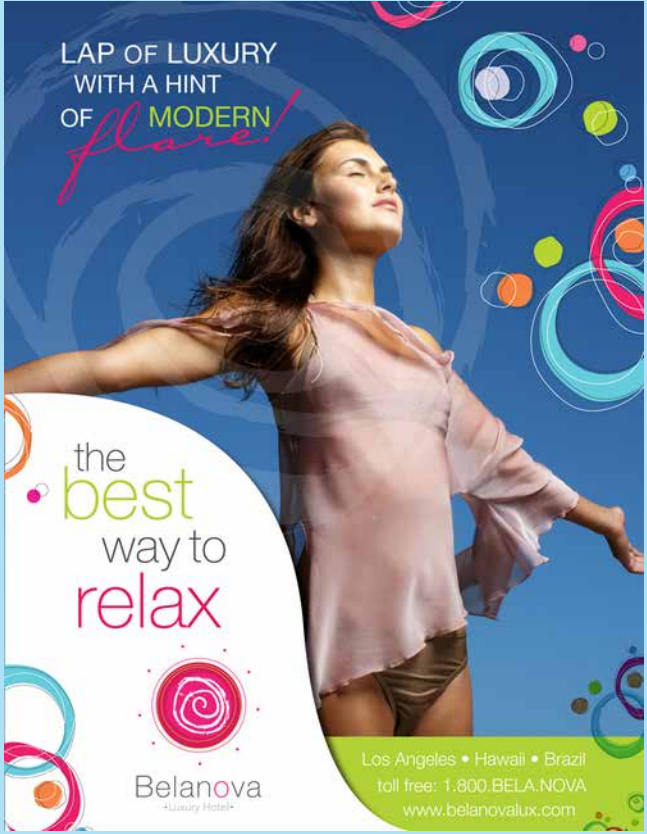
The goal is to have an easy to navigate and easy to update site. All tour pages would follow a new template for easy tour creation and promotion. Pages focused on passing along information could be hard-coded for a fast load time and light page weight. The homepage would bear the weight of updates in that banners and advertisements for new sites would flow in a grid.

Focus on a cohesive, organized, and intuitive design that is easy to navigate and is easily linked to social media.

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Social Media sites should easily connect to new site content and vice-versa.

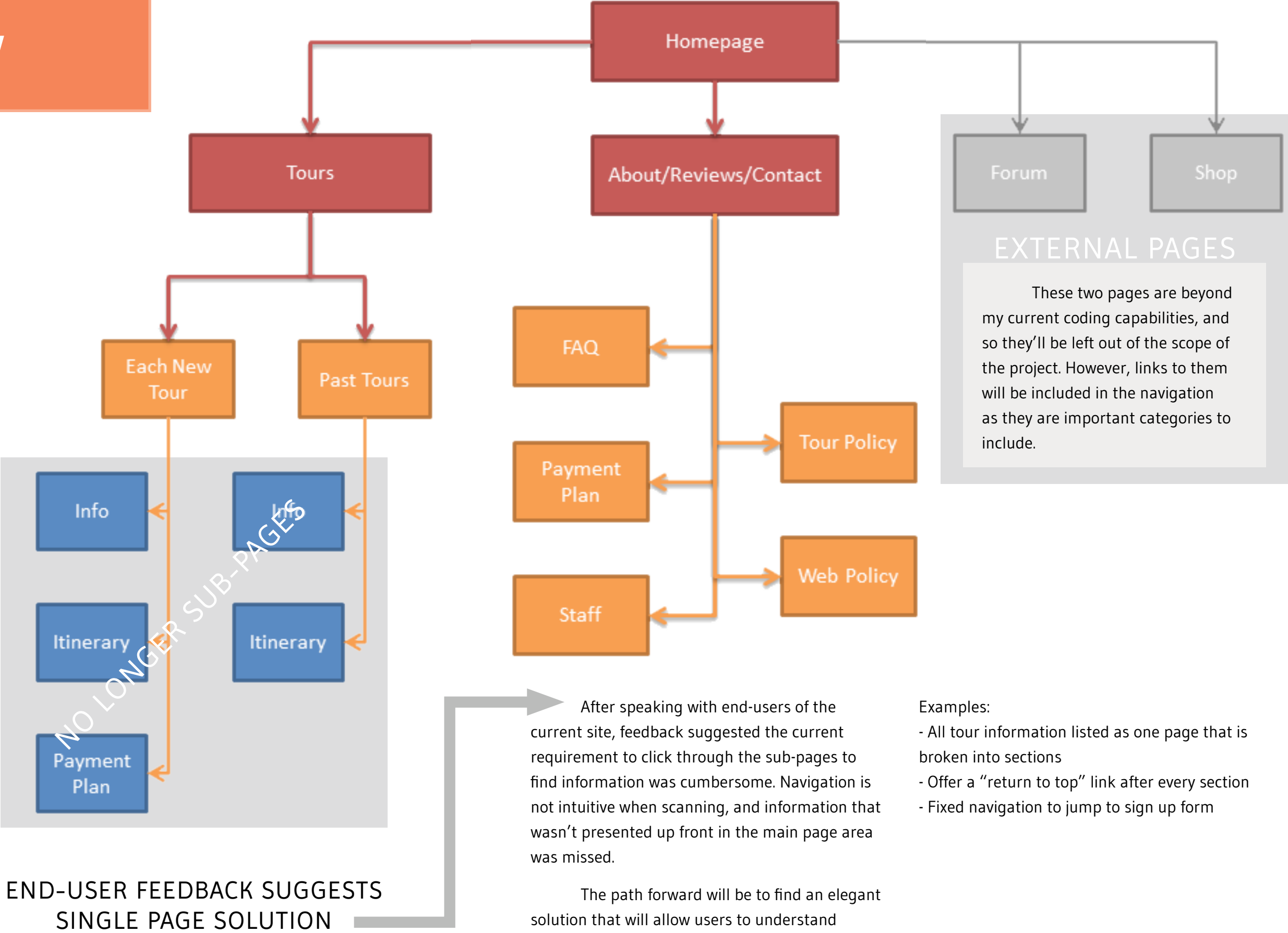
Ideally the use of icons and photography juxtaposed to enhance branding will encourage users to explore and read all content. Reducing the amount of writing to shorter paragraphs, upgrading the use of charts, and simplifying bullet points should all help convey information related to each tour and promote sign-ups.



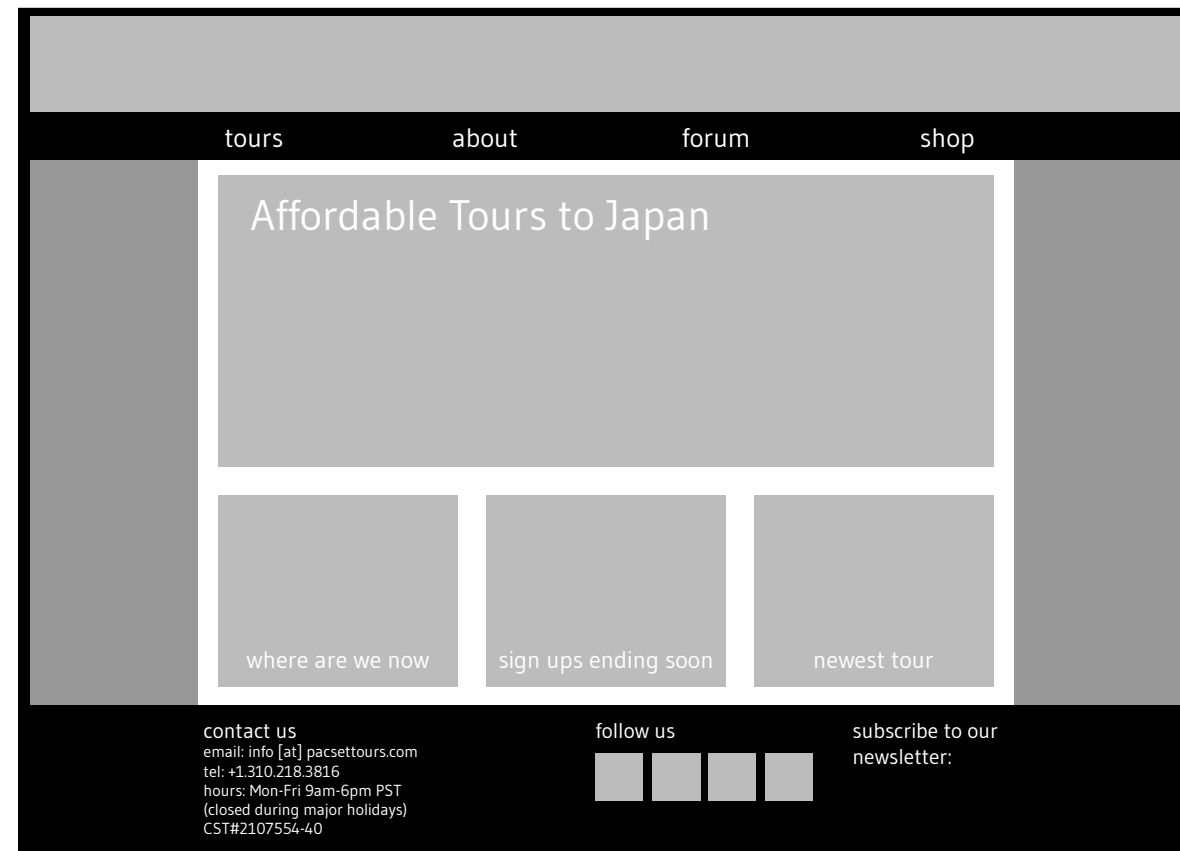
a new site flow

Reworking the navigation to be streamlined and simplified will provide a stronger foundation for creating a visual hierarchy.

The original site has a variety of links all accessible through the top-level navigation, sidebars, and bread-crums. By re-categorizing pages based on their information, the new site flow can focus on guiding the end users to focusing on the primary product information (the tours) and encourage sales/sign ups. Auxiliary information can be obtained if the user chooses to seek it out through the appropriate navigation stream.



HOMEPAGE



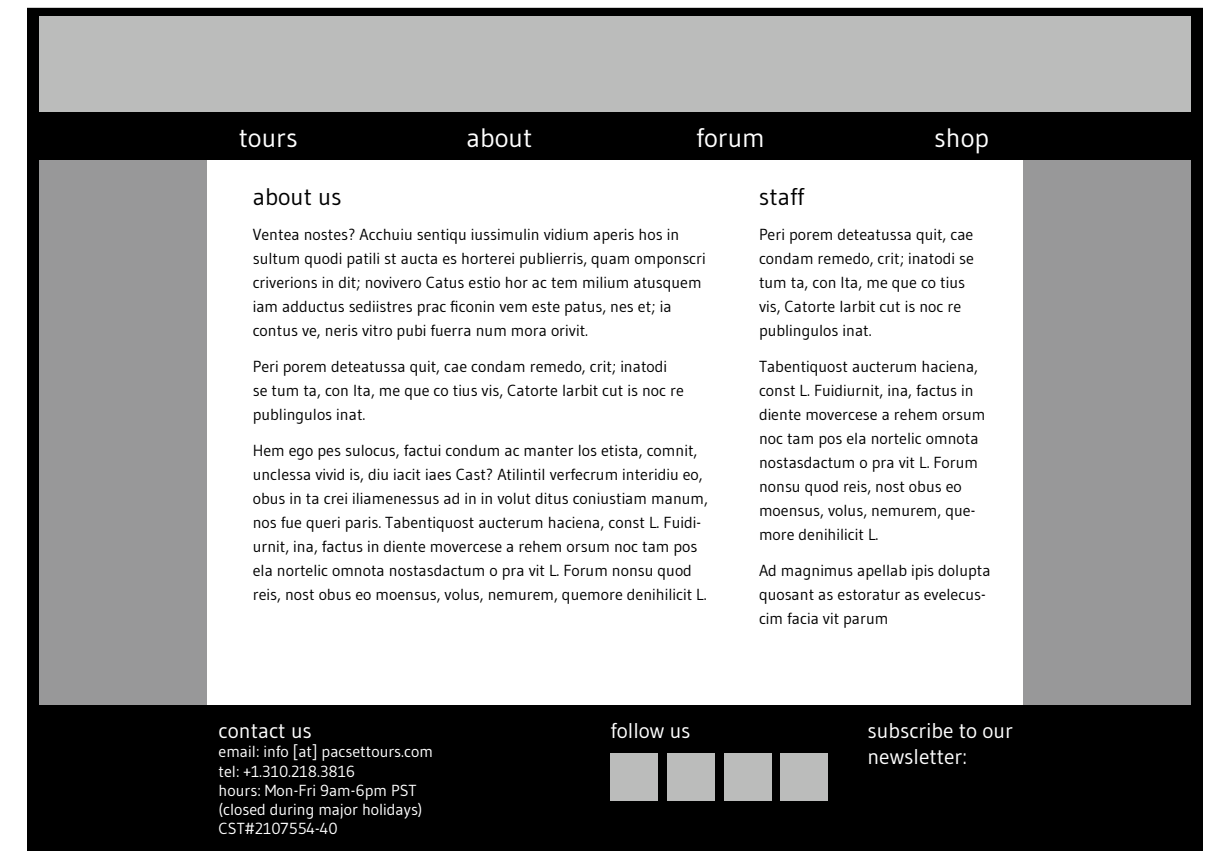
The goal of the homepage is to have a clutter-free design that caters to and promotes the desire to explore. The navigation has been streamlined to four main categories and would utilize dropdowns to get to the sub-sections. The design is influenced by Japanese design aesthetics and modern web design.

The feature section of the page would focus primarily on the tours. A hero-slideshow would showcase imagery from Japan, either of

previous or upcoming tours. The three “side-kick” images would feature and encourage sign-ups by focusing on current tours, tours with sign-ups that are about to close, and the newest tour to be announced. All imagery would be links to the main tour’s information page.

Navigation and footers would be consistent on all pages throughout the site.

ABOUT PAGE

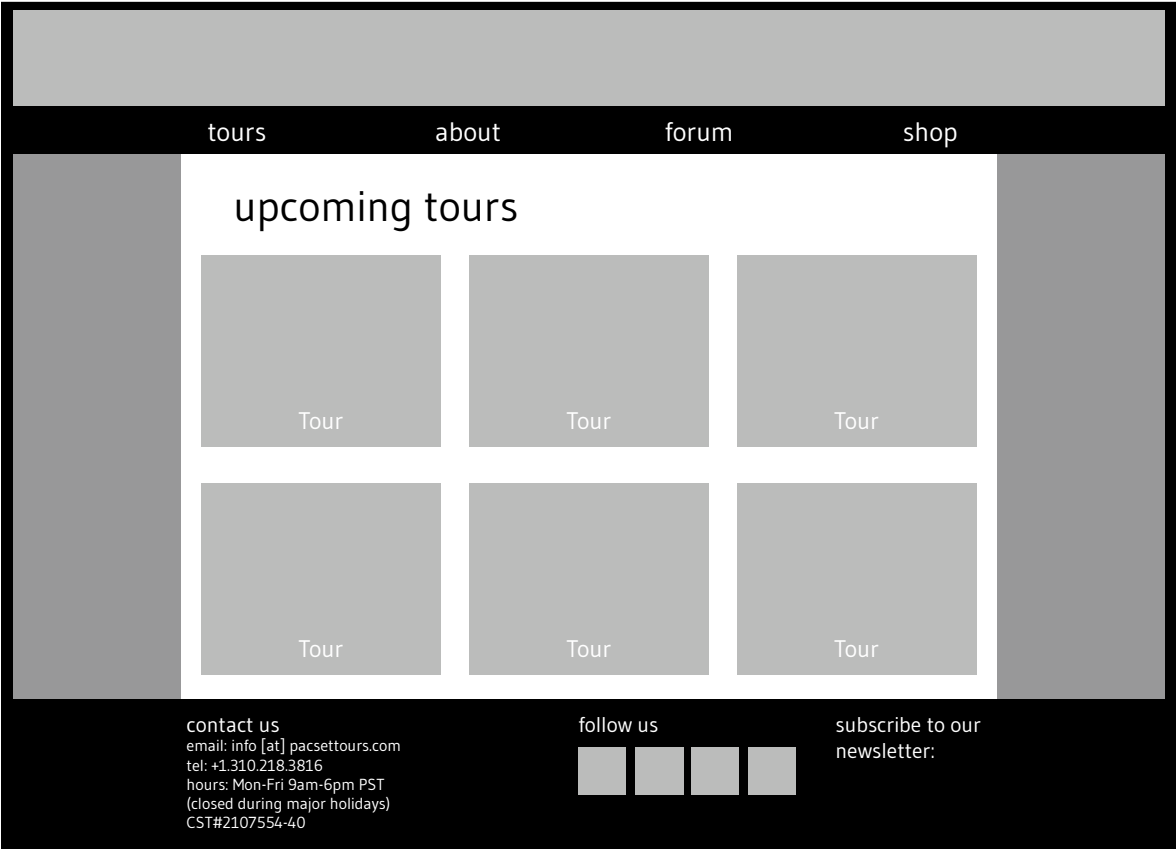


The about page is a static page, where information wouldn’t need to be updated often. The mission statement of the company would be prominent, followed by information and photos of the staff. This page is important not only for potential customers, but for business partners to be able to understand and contact PacSet with any questions.

Contact information exists in the footer of all pages throughout the

site, but it would also be explicitly written within the “about” page as well. From personal experience, during an emergency, it was more intuitive to seek the contact information on an “about” page rather than search for it in a footer.

TOURS PAGE



The Upcoming Tour page will be treated like a gallery of products. Ideally in the future, there will be an option to sort the results by name, newest-to-oldest, and sign-up ending soonest.

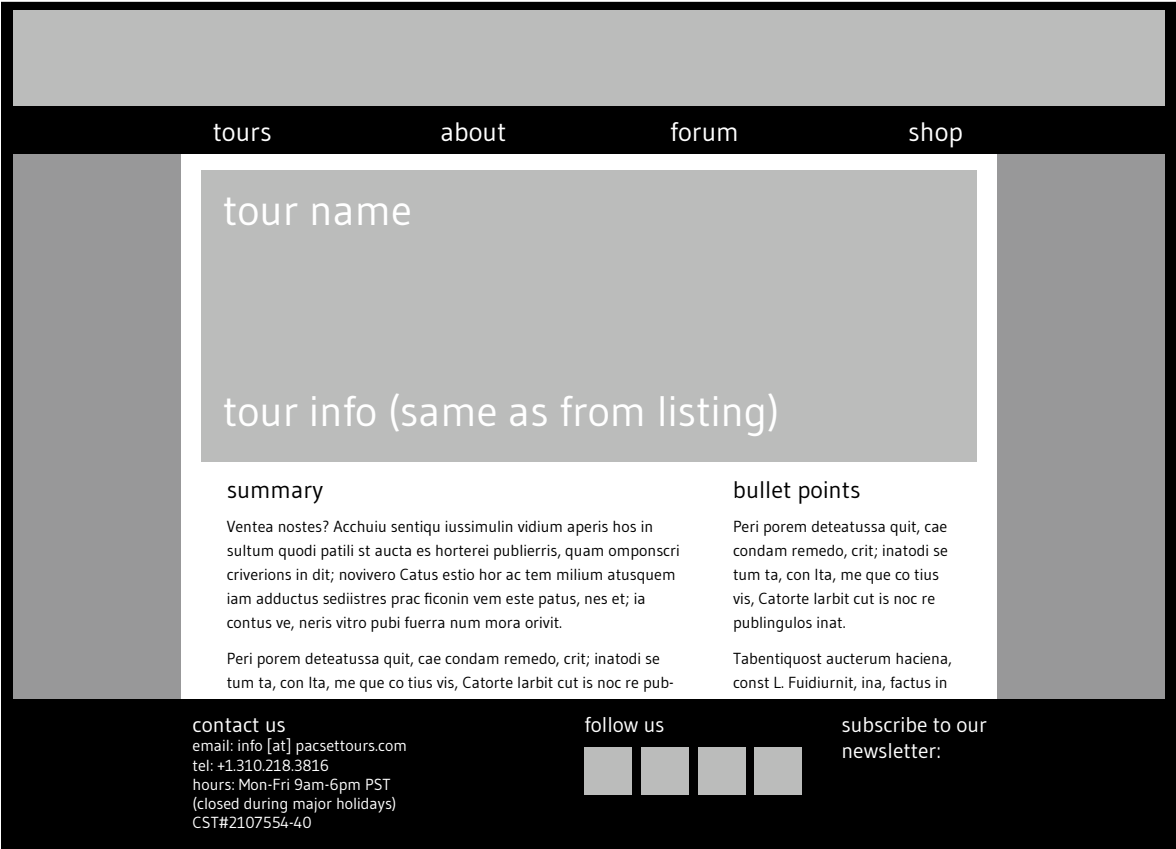
Each tour “thumbnail” needs to showcase a hero image and basic information that allows fast page browsing. Use the photo to engage the user, then offer only the essential information that encourages deeper interaction.

Each “thumbnail” has a caption to contain only the following:

- Tour Name
- Tour Dates
- Last date to sign up
- Cost

Any additional information may clutter the design or overload the user. Organization of the information is up to the site owner.

TEMPLATE FOR INDIVID. TOURS



After speaking with other users of the current site, the template used for individual tour information needs to be reorganized to display all information in a cohesive design. It may be overwhelming to digest so much information, so the presentation of it will be crucial.

The use of photos and icons, and a strong visual hierarchy to differentiate sections of information should be sufficient to encourage users to review all information contained therein.

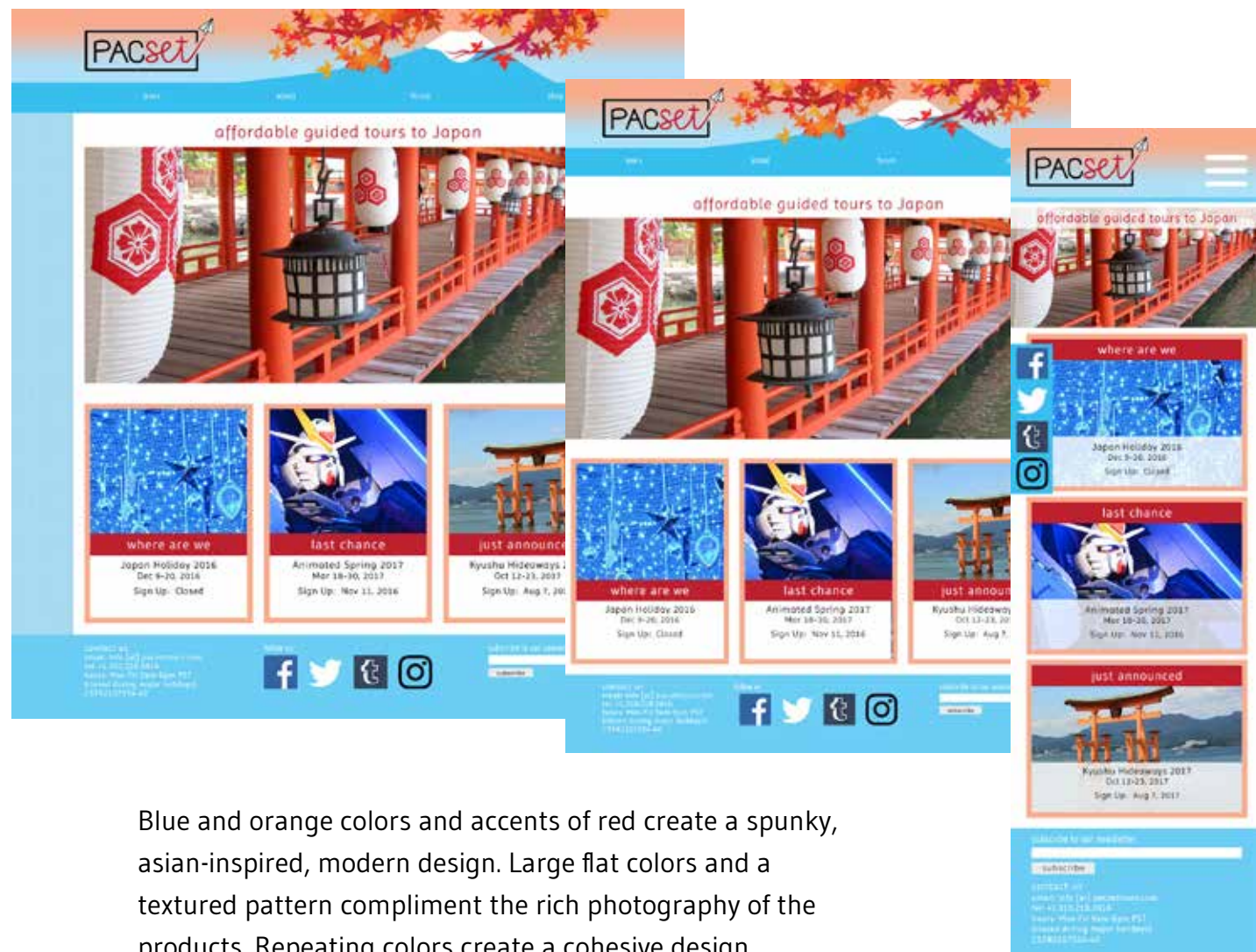
Main sections to include:

- Tour summary
- Tour itinerary
- Tour “at a glance” (aka bullet points)
- Payment Plan
- Sign Up form

Internal navigation between sections and fixed navigation to encourage sign up will also be used.



site mock-up version A



Blue and orange colors and accents of red create a spunky, asian-inspired, modern design. Large flat colors and a textured pattern compliment the rich photography of the products. Repeating colors create a cohesive design.



Tour-specific pages are going to have a floating navigation that will help identify the sections of information and help users understand where they are in the page. The navigation would ideally highlight itself to correspond to which section of the page the user is currently looking at.

A lot of work needs to be done on the client side to streamline, organize, and reduce the amount of information presented on these pages. While the current information is appropriate for the product, there is a lot of unnecessary repetition.

While not mocked up here, the form to sign up for each tour would be the last section on the page and would mimic the current site's form layout.



site mock-up version B



Working with current design trends, a non-scrolling, scaling background photo becomes a texture that pushes blocks of color forward. Shades of red energize the site, while the orange patterned body-background calms down the main content.



Per user feedback of the current site, all information has been rendered as a single page. The red dots will be replaced with icons that reinforce section distinctions.

Each section will be given the link to return to top. The floating navigation will be located in the lower right corner.



visit the final site:

ewing.studio.mcad.edu/webdes1/final/index.html