

## Blog

2 October, 2012

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# 17 luxury brands with poor web user experience



By Chris Lake

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**I've always found it ironic that some of the most fancy hotels have some of the worst websites in the world. It's the same with restaurants. Both are long serving fans of Flash and autosound, and the result can be hellish.**

If websites are particularly bad, and if I'm the one tasked with booking or buying something, then I can tell you for a fact that I will look elsewhere. The problem is that there isn't always an 'elsewhere'. Luxury brands pride themselves on their uniqueness, after all. If your better half wants some Jimmy Choo for her birthday then that's what you need to buy.

I've seen signs of improvement, especially in the restaurant sector, but many top class brands still have a lot of work to do.

Here are 17 examples of the kind of user experience issues that drive me mad, and which feel like a punch in the face when the brand in question charges a premium for the quality of its products and services.

## Mystery pricing - Hotel Casa 1800 Sevilla

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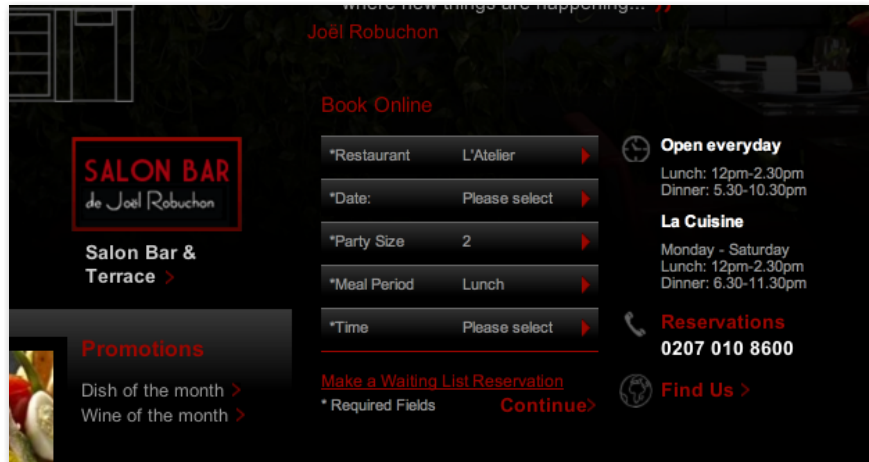
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Lots of hotels don't tell you what the room rates are, and instead try to force you into the booking engine. This is a constant annoyance, whenever I'm trying to book a holiday. I think the word 'book' is more than a labelling issue. It may be meant to be persuasive, but I find that it has the opposite effect on me.

## Contrast fail - L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon



Dark red against a black background? I think this is a bit crazy, for somebody who pays so much attention to the presentation of food. Is the restaurant dark inside too?

## Annoying animation - Sketch London



Sketch recently updated its Flashtastic website but hasn't entirely dispensed with its 'Sketch Egg', an animation that was previously used on the splash page ('click to enter'). The egg now lives at the foot of its homepage, spins about a bit, makes an almighty racket, and I couldn't see an 'off' button to get rid of the vile noise. Awful.

## Hideous autosound - Hix Soho



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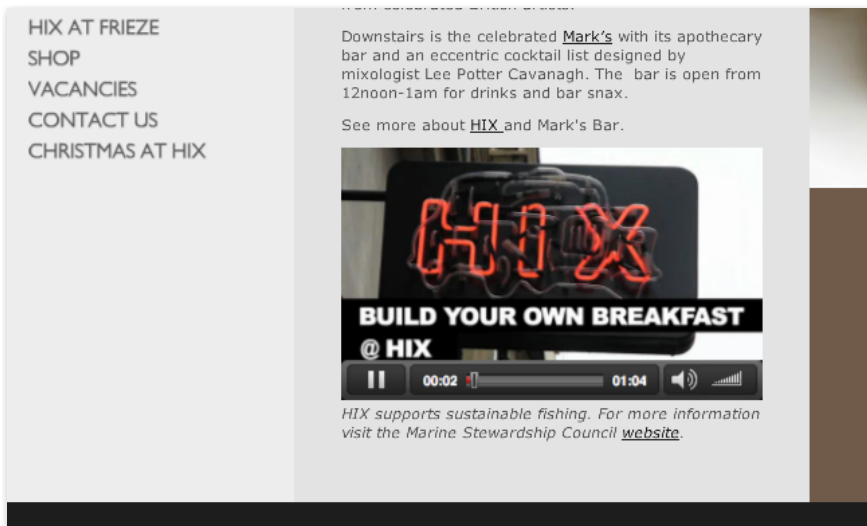


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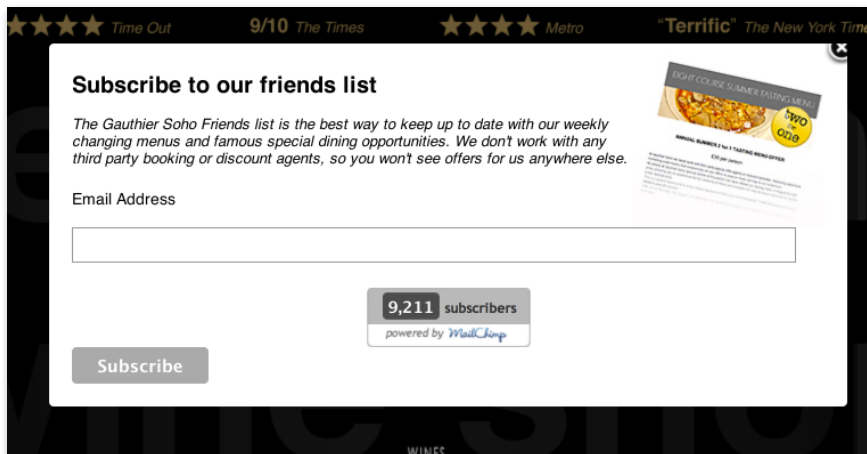
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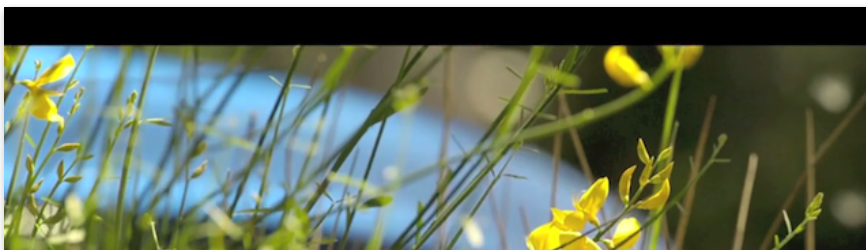
This video that autoplays with sound turned on is like having your ears attacked by Cato.

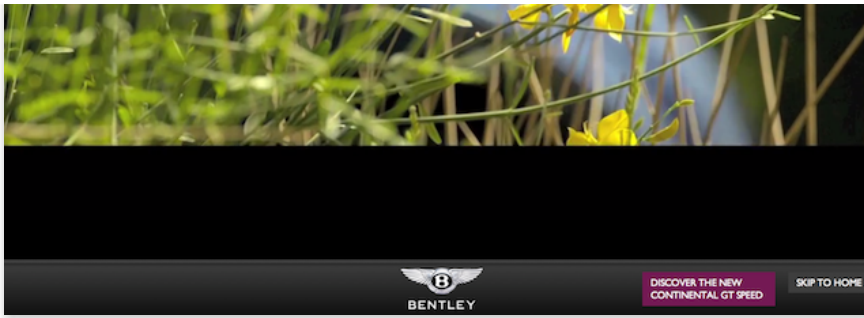
## Begging for 'friends' - Gauthier



Gauthier Soho is a Michelin starred restaurant that is ever so desperate for you to be friends with it. I visited the website and not content with showing me a pointless page before it directed me to the homepage, it pushed a massive overlay in my face, inviting me to sign up to its 'friends list'. Desperate times, and not the place to do it. Like Sketch, and so many others, its menus are PDFs. Which also sucks.

## A flowery opening page - Bentley





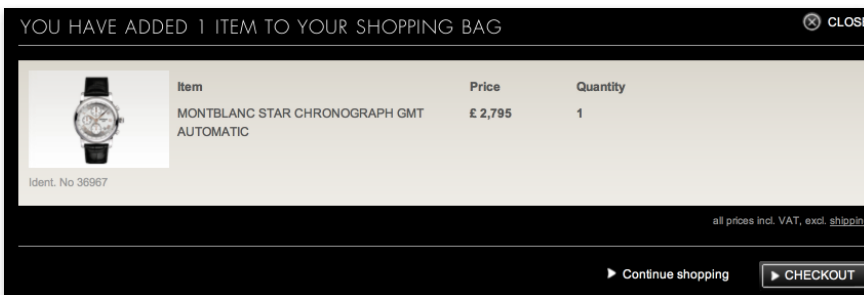
On your first visit Bentley shows you a great big ad of some kind or other, and then leaves you staring at some wild flowers. You must search for the 'skip to home' button, located in the bottom corner, to proceed to its homepage.

## Eat carrots, find the navigation - Givenchy



Givenchy might make more than EU 81m in annual revenue if it allowed users to navigate around its website without the need for night vision cameras. Black text against a dark grey background isn't cool, or classy. It's abhorrent.

## Hiding the key information - Mont Blanc



It is best practice to avoid obfuscation when it comes to shipping and delivery details (and options), especially when you've placed a £2,795 watch in your basket. See that little 'shipping' link, in the bottom corner of this shopping bag overlay? It doesn't do anything.

## Style vs substance - Tom Ford



Maybe it's just me, but the navigation is all over the place. Try to go to the men's sunglasses page in under a minute. The dropdown menus with their tiny fonts have transparent backgrounds, meaning that you can't read them if they appear above other text. Also, there's no fluidity in the pages. Needless Flashy, capital F.

## Movement and noise - Cartier



Wailing autosound, more whizzy animation than Pixar, and *lots* of loading buttons and hanging around.

## The slow madness - Dom Perignon







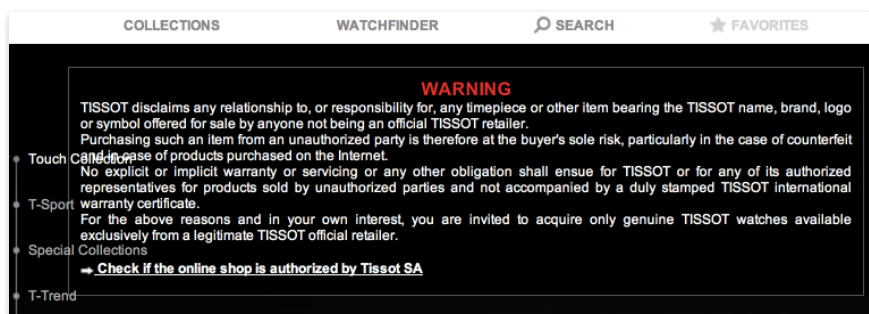
I could have opened a bottle of sparkling wine before this website sprang into life. When it did I couldn't make sense of it. Up, down, left, right... eyes everywhere. It makes the Facebook Timeline seem ever so linear.

## Pre-registration - Hermes

You have an account	You don't have an account
Please enter your e-mail address and password.	Create an account and make an order at the same time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email <input type="text"/></li> <li>Password <input type="password"/></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">forgotten your password?</a></p> <p><a href="#">→ Validate</a></p>	<p>Creating an account allows us to better treat your order and allows you to manage your data and your newsletter subscriptions.</p> <p><a href="#">→ Continue</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required Fields</li> </ul>	

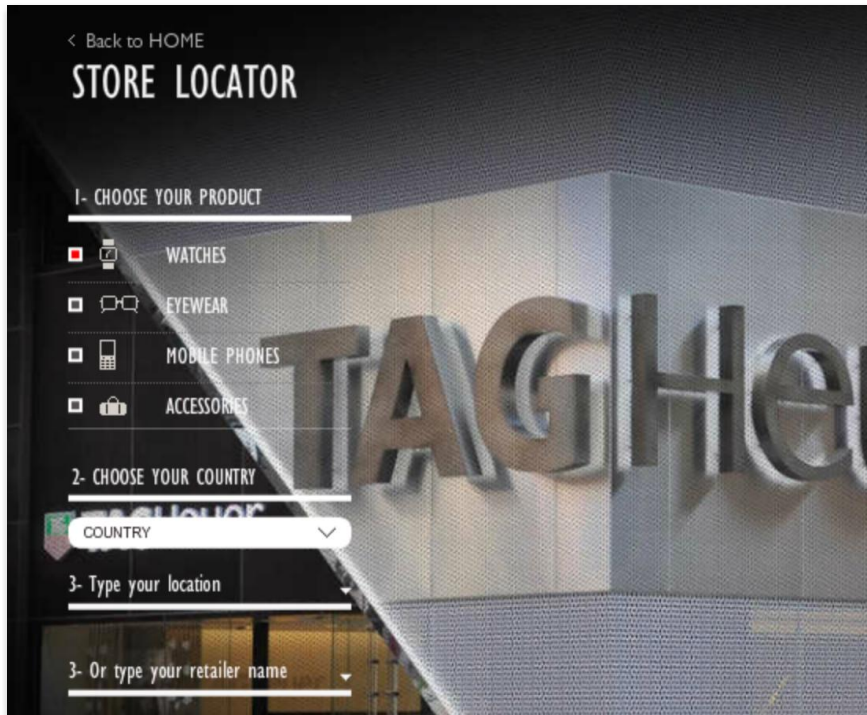
A mortal sin, if you care about your conversion rate. This appears after I click the 'complete your order' button. It feels like an unnecessary barrier, prior to purchase, and it is surely much better to capture this kind of information after taking the payment.

## Scary - Tissot



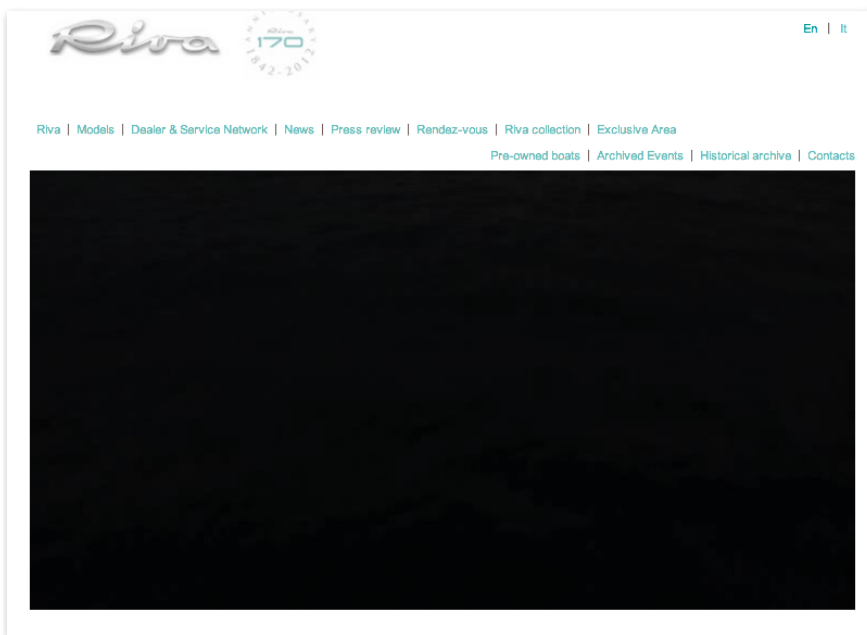
Tissot displays a charming prelude to its watch collection by showing a nasty 'Warning' message, complete with overlapping navigation. After seeing it I am never ever going to buy a fake Tissot watch, for fear of a terrible demise.

## Fiddly - Tag Heuer



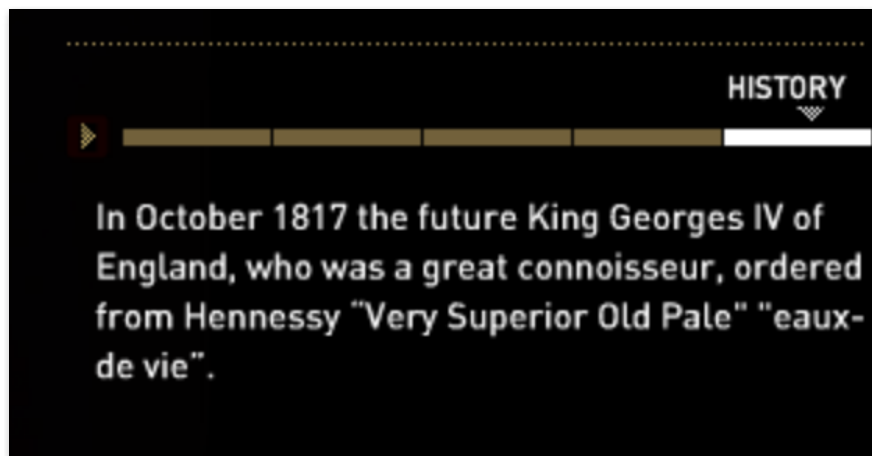
This store finder won't allow me to use the arrow keys in the 'Country' dropdown, and doesn't accept the first part of a postcode in 'Location', so 'W1' returns 'Sorry, no address found'.

## A big black rectangle of doom - Riva



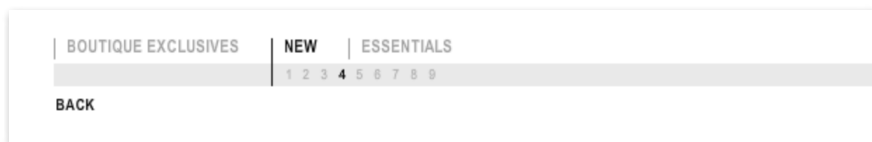
Lovely yachts, but what's with the darkness? Possibly a browser issue, but then again I am using the world's most popular browser.

## Teasing but not pleasing - Hennessy



Once you find your way into the collection (made harder because the product names in the right menu aren't actually links) you're presented with a weird scrolling text box, which gradually reveals information about a particular cognac. Meh.

## The destroyer - Chanel



The first thing that happened for me was that Google Chrome told me that the page was in Ukrainian (it wasn't), and would I like to translate it. Navigation seemingly changes on a page to page basis. Pagination of products is a mess - there is the vaguest sense that you can scroll using your mouse, but no arrow or 'next' buttons, and the font size used is far too small. After a couple of minutes I needed to lie down for a bit.



Published 2 October, 2012 by *Chris Lake*

Chris Lake is CEO at [EmpiricalProof](#), and former Director of Content at Econsultancy. Follow him on [Twitter](#), [Google+](#) or connect via [LinkedIn](#).  
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