Trader Joe’s Website Redesign

Trader Joe’s is a small specialty grocery store that sells high quality gourmet, international and health foods, as well as wine and beer, all at affordable prices. Their brand is quirky, kitschy and tiki-themed, targeting the “average foodie-Joe” specifically “the over-educated and underpaid.”

The current Trader Joe’s website is newly redesigned, but still leaves several **unsolved problems:**

* The color scheme and textures of the site are too understated and don’t effectively capture the Trader Joe’s brand.
* The navigation items are excessive and lack visual hierarchy.
* The user experience is rather boring, and gives off a blog-template feel.

**My Goals** when redesigning the site were to:

* Effectively capture the Trader Joe’s brand, while still keeping the site clean and organized.
* Create a better organizational structure for the content to make for a smoother user experience.
* Add variety to the subpages of the site by using a system (not templates) for the site.

My process for the design involved responsive sketching and wireframes, style tiles, type specimens, Adobe Photoshop comps, and five web pages using HTML, Sass and jQuery.

In the sketching/wireframe phase I focused solely on structure and layout of the content. I sketched several concepts and came to two main structure options: a vertical or horizontal layout. I converted the top sketches into wireframes using Adobe Photoshop, and ultimately chose a horizontal, row-based version, with the concept of overlapping headlines, which I felt contributed to the kitschy, beach-stand side of their brand.

In the styling phase, I started by gathering photos of Trader Joe’s products, each full with color, textures, and personality. Sifting through these products, I considered colors with high contrast, and textures that were subtle but telling: key ideas in web design. I created three style tiles based off of these products, and chose the concept I felt worked best.

Next, typography was a big hurdle for the site, as type would convey the brand more than any other element. I considered a range of playful fonts from Adobe Typekit for the headline font: because of their large size, these could be silly without hindering readability. For the body font I considered slab-serifs and san-serifs, as I felt serifs were too professional for the Trader Joe’s brand. I ultimately chose and san-serif headline and a slab-serif for the body. With type and style in place, I created a full mockup of the homepage using Adobe Photoshop. This helped me decide how the style and layout would come together, and a great starting point as I began coding.

On the homepage I focused on color, textures and photos to showcase the brand from immediately. I made significant changes to the navigation bar, reflecting the structural change of the site. The large photo invites the user in and can be easily updated to fit company needs. Finally, the footer provides detailed navigation in a convenient but unobtrusive spot on every page.

With “Our Story,” I played with visual hierarchy in type to emphasize interesting points and keep the reader interested. The timeline at the bottom was created using jQuerym and features a side navigation to allow the reader to easily jump from decade to decade without overwhelming them with the whole history at once.

The “Our Culture” page uses a large chalkboard image: an effort to bring in brand personality to the site. Below are subject-boxes that pertain to culture, but presented in a slightly different way than the homepage to add variety.

The “Our Food” page showcase new products (which are released weekly), then provides information about Trader Joe’s private label, which encompasses 80% of the their store. Again, below are subject boxes that pertain to Trader Joe’s food.

Lastly we have the Recipe page, which focuses heavily on photos to add visual appeal (who makes a recipe without a photo?), and a grid to clearly divide and emphasize content.

By adding brighter colors, stronger textures and much more variety to the pages, this redesign of Trader Joe’s effectively captures the brand while maintaining an easy, fun user experience.