

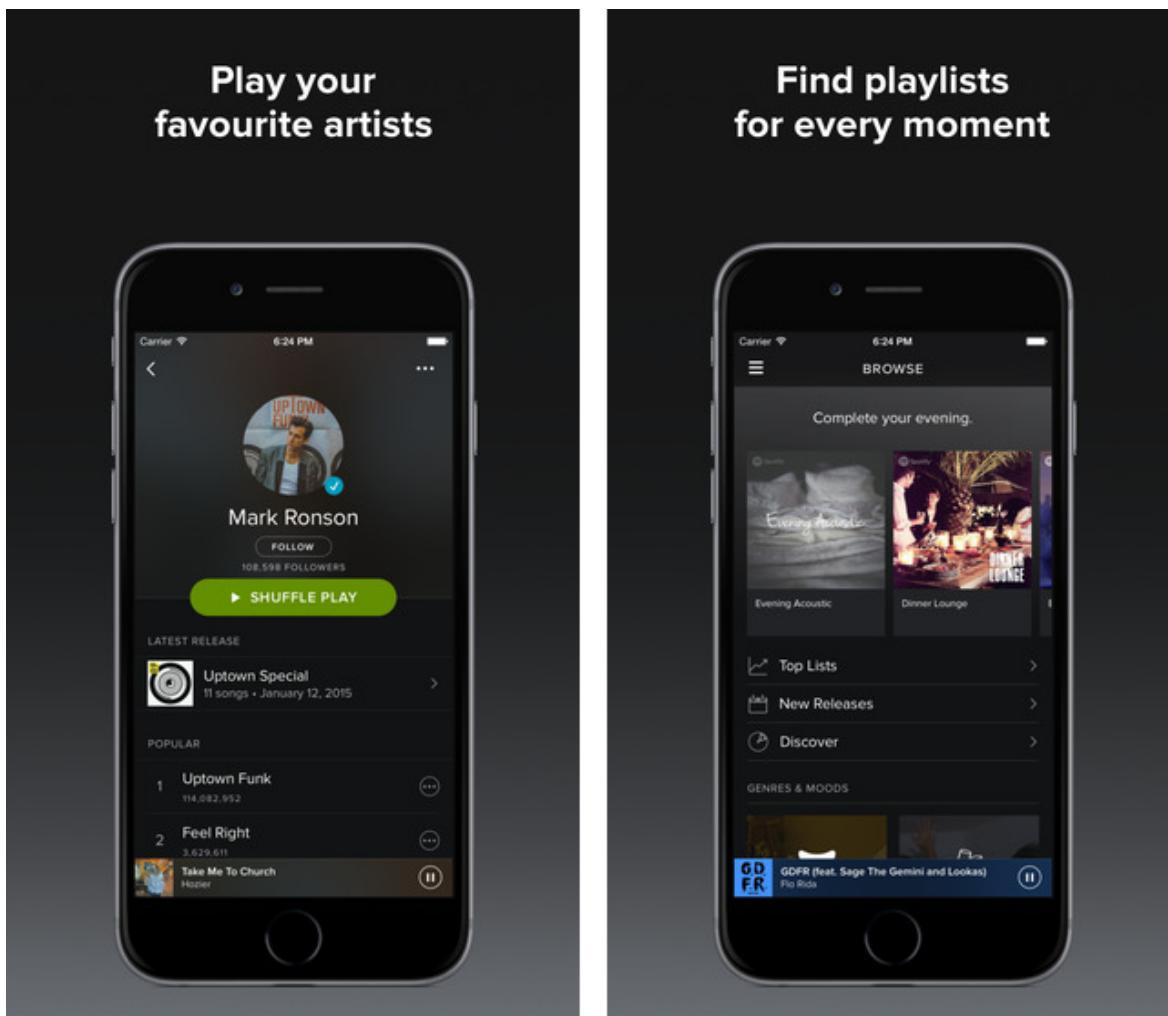
# A Different Twist on Spotify's New UI Design



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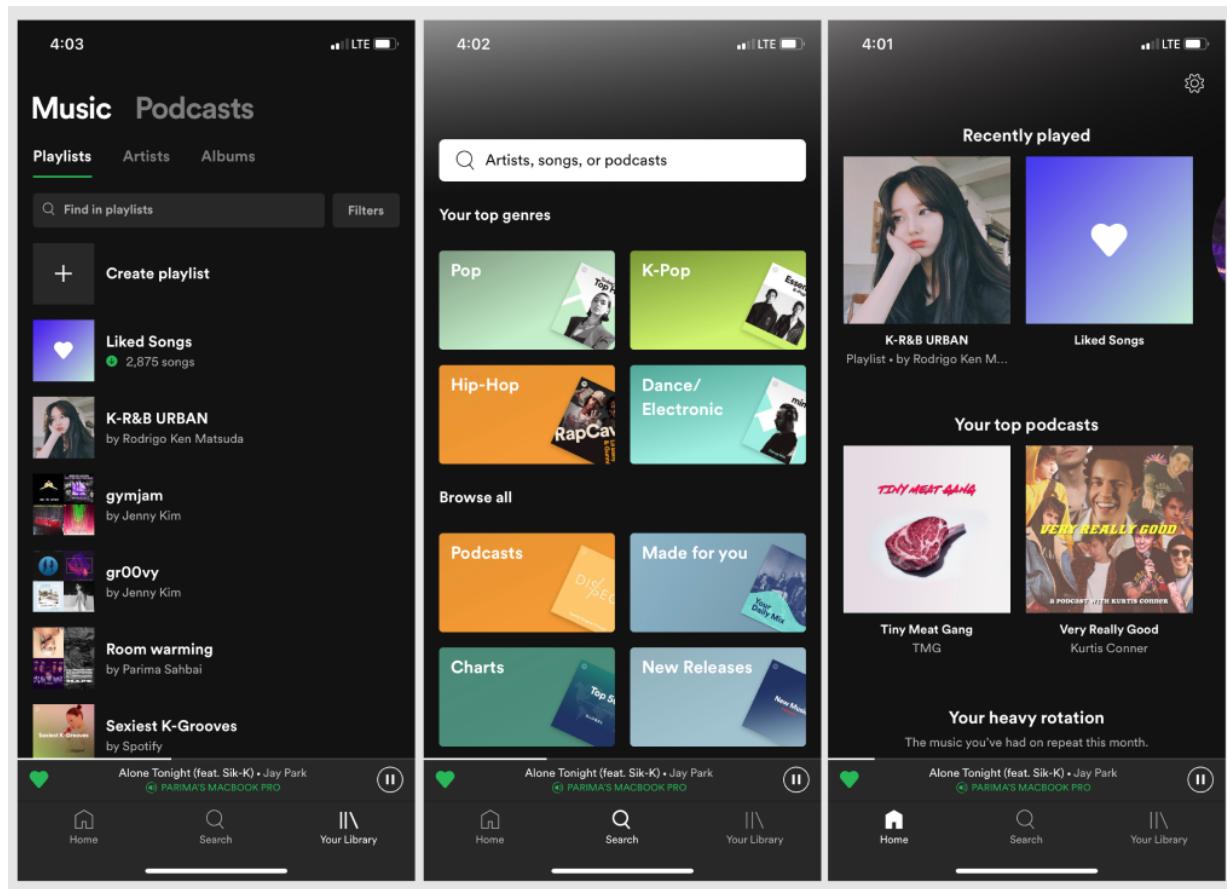
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My first encounter with Spotify was in 2014, during my first year at the University of Virginia when I had finally managed to convince my parents that splurging on an iPhone was worth the investment. I remember the moment I decided to sign up with my student trial, sitting in the cold study rooms of Tuttle-Dunnington (A first year dorm that nobody can really pronounce). Music on demand? I was hooked, and soon walking without headphones jammed into my ear was an abnormality. It's pretty needless to say that me and Spotify have come a long way since then. I've seen the service grow, and change with every update, and phone upgrade and it's become a company that I quite admire.



## Spotify UI circa 2015ish

However, no design or company is without flaw. Even to this day I find myself struggling to find new music and throughout the years, I've felt that Spotify has been quite weak in providing users with ways to explore new music aside from trying to desperately searching for names, and decoding playlist names that seem just about your taste. I'll give Spotify credit where it's due, they do release a "catered" weekly playlist but I would estimate that I usually end up liking about 10% of what is suggested to me. Even the Radio feature seems lacking as it more than not, plays a few new songs and resorts to songs already in your "liked songs" playlists. I know friends who have found their ways around finding their new bops: some use suggested artists on their favorite artists page, some are happy with the world chart, and some browse random playlists or share theirs with friends, and some, like me, combine these strategies but wonder why Spotify won't personalize exploration and focus on more advanced algorithms to figure out your taste when appropriate.



Spotify iOS UI 2019 Update

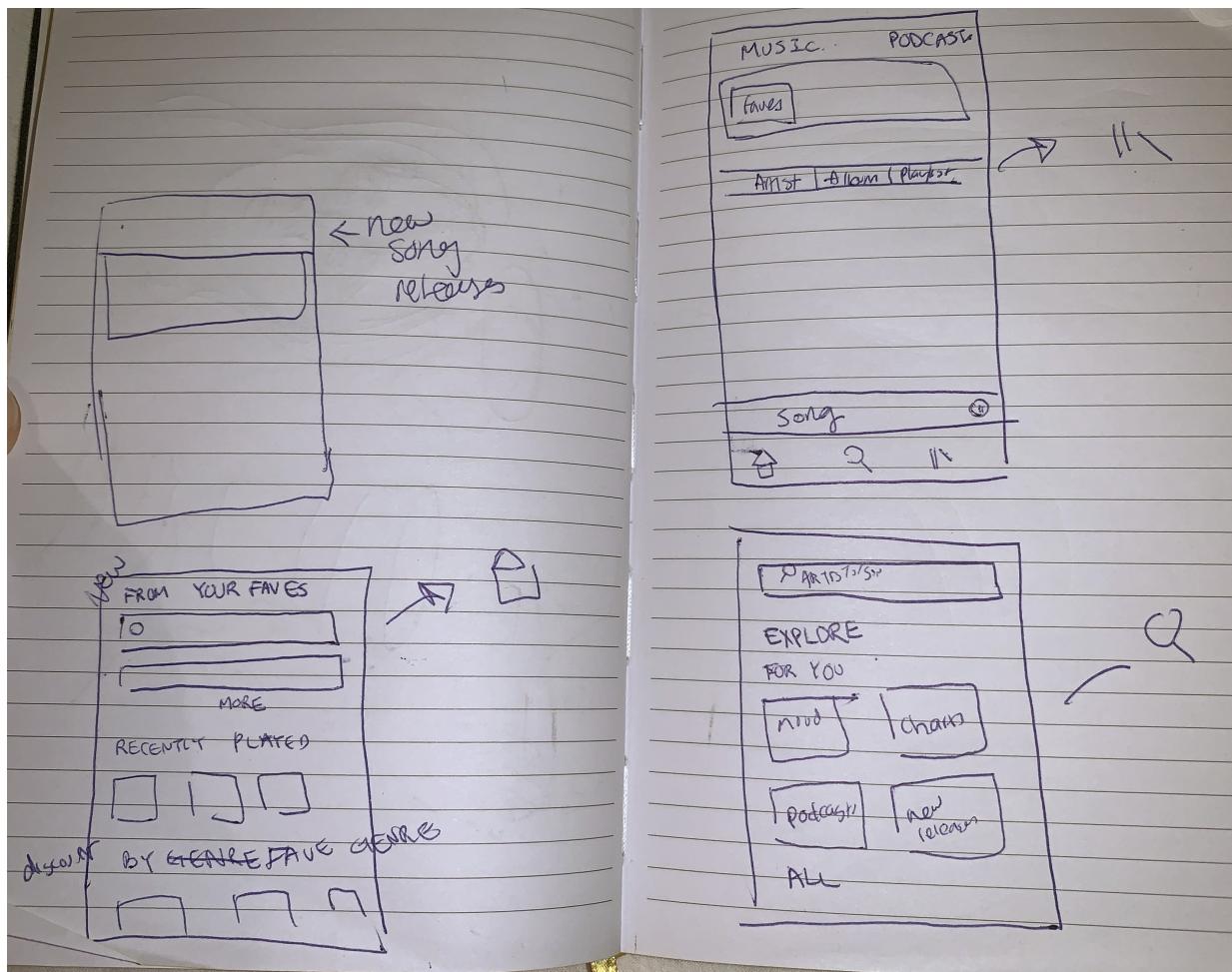
Recently Spotify steered even further away from personalization in its mobile application by bringing in unnecessarily big blobs and squares, and placing added focus

on podcasts (do that many people really listen to podcasts??). While functionality hasn't changed much, I feel as if there is no optimization of space. There's no reason for the cover pictures of two playlists and two podcasts to take up my entire home screen. It just doesn't make any sense to me. So, how about a redesign?

## The problem

How might we design a UI that optimizes screen interface, while maintaining a clean and sleek look. In addition to making ample use of our UI, how might we design it with a deeper focus on features encouraging users to explore music more easily? There is so much UI disparity between the mobile, and the desktop version of Spotify, I wanted my design to bridge this gap a bit. After questioning a few friends about Spotify use, I could also agree that the "liked songs" tab, as denoted by Spotify's newest UI update as a playlist is a pretty handy and commonly used feature that needs to be set apart from other playlists.

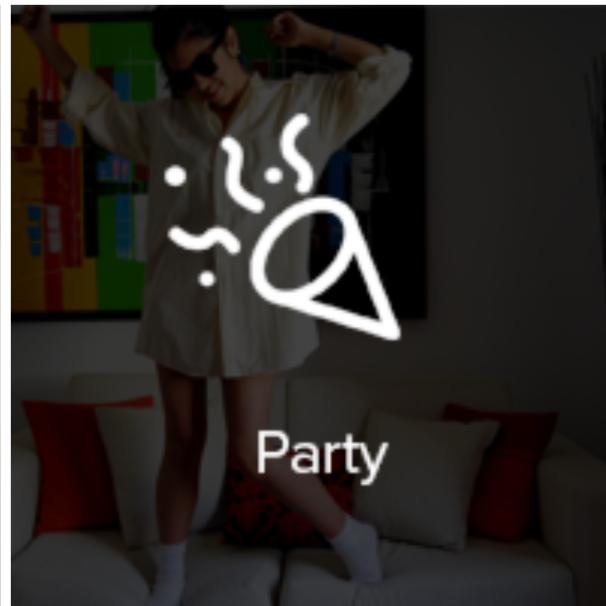
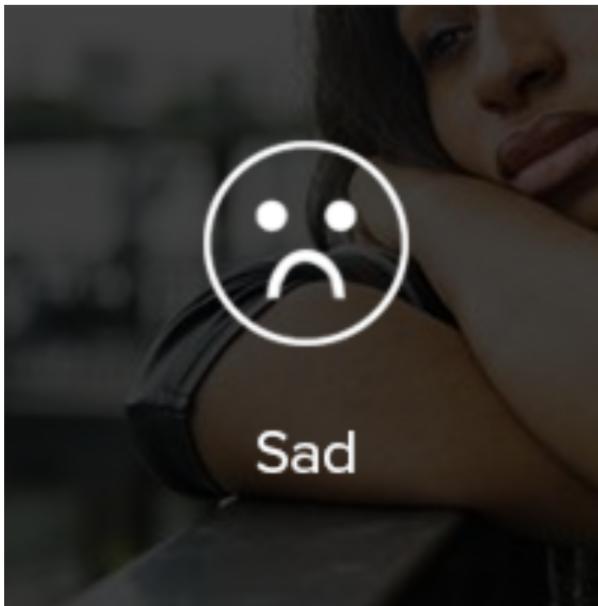
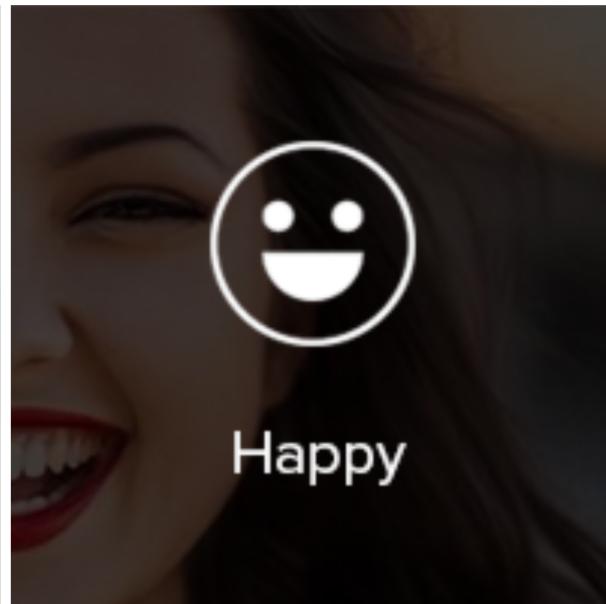
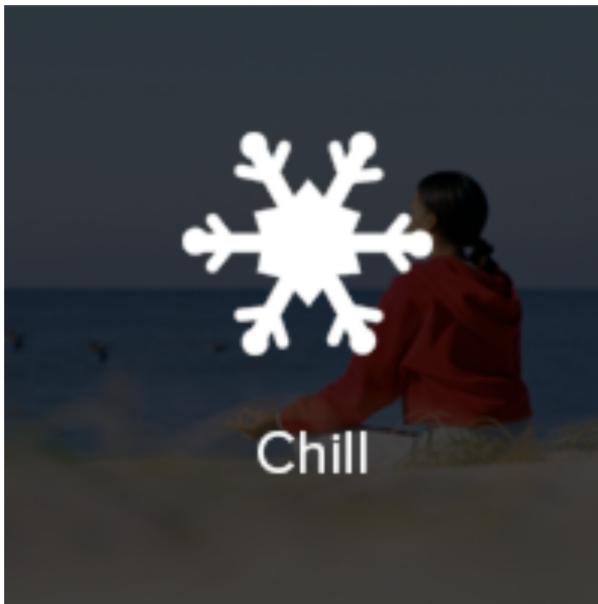
## The process



Initial Sketches

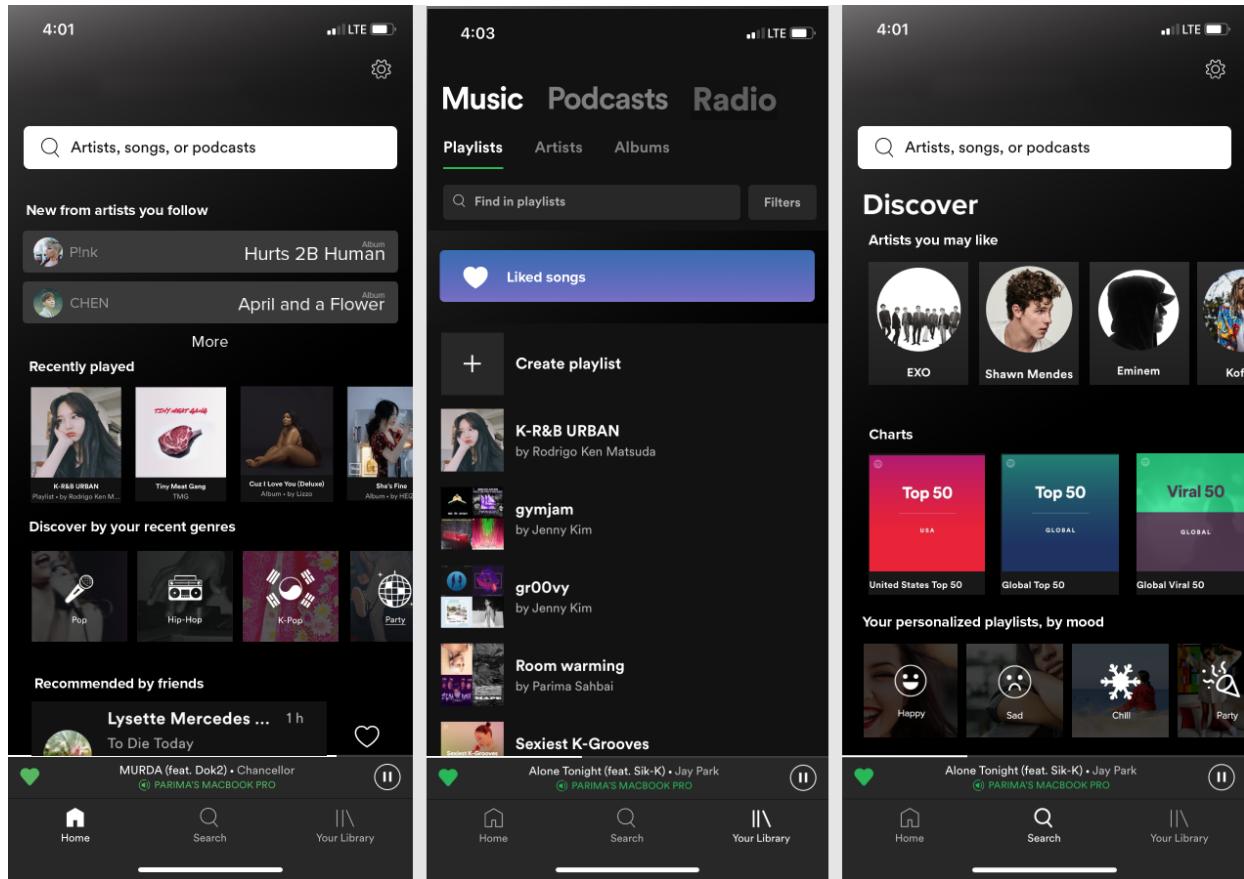
First, I started looking at my requirements: optimizing the UI while maintaining a Spotify clean look, and focusing on bringing a stronger focus on exploring and bringing users new music. I also felt that Spotify had a strong background for developing itself into a tool that can integrate social media and sharing so I decided to keep that in mind as well.

After analyzing the current UI, I wireframed rough sketches of what I would like to see in a sketchbook. Next, I used photoshop to dissect and import elements from the existing UI, and manipulated and removed a few elements. For example, I remade the background as the base of the app. I also created extra buttons, while trying to keep in line the current style of the UI. I also did research on the font and size that Spotify uses and played around with the placements of the three main screens in Figma until I felt that they were just right.



Mood Music: Example of some of the buttons I created

## The conclusion



New, redesigned page

**Home:** My goal was to stray away from looking too different from the current design as it is quite unique and representative of Spotify, and I think I was quite successful. I redesigned the homepage to function as a personalized medium (hah) for users get access to quick-hand, shortcut functionalities. Recently played may include podcasts, or music and users are able to access “discover by genre” quickly through the homepage. Although, ideally discover by genre would change to different discover options to keep the homepage fresh. I added a social aspect on the bottom where, similar to the desktop version, you can see what friends are listening to with a twist: friends can push their favorite, recommended songs as a sort of status update allowing for both personal control over what you share and a venue to find new music. *By far the biggest change is the artist update which would expand down upon hitting more. I always found the “Follow” tab on artists pages really useless as Spotify never seems to notify me of new releases in-app unless it’s a paid promotion of sorts. I think it should be easy to keep*

*track of music from artists you follow without having to go to their page, or without having to be signed up for Spotify emails which are also quite unreliable.*

**Your Library:** I actually quite like the new look of the library, so I decided to keep a lot of it the same sans a few minor details. There is now a distinct “Liked Songs” button that won’t get buried within other playlists, and I’ve moved the “radio” function (which is often forgotten) to the top next to music and podcasts.

**Search:** Search was another major redesign, the current UI is flawed and ugly (excuse me, I just really hate the big boxes) with big boxes populating the whole screen. When a user is looking to search for music they are often looking up a song they do not have, or trying to explore and looking for new options which is why I created a “Discover” section which suggests users artists, songs, charts, and my personal favorite: personalized playlists generated from your music listening history, but separated by mood. Ideally, these playlists would allow you to choose to play from both songs you have liked, and new songs that you may like, giving a much more personalized space in contrast to the current “discover weekly”. Ideally I would have Spotify generate daily playlists made when you scroll down as well.

Overall, I’m pretty happy with the designs that I came up with. There’s a lot of room for improvement but not bad for my first redesign. Everyone’s experience on the app is so different and this is catered to what me, and what I see around me, let me know what you think! \*

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