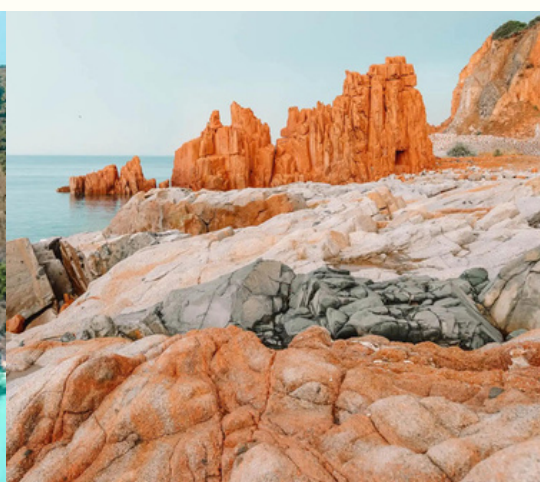
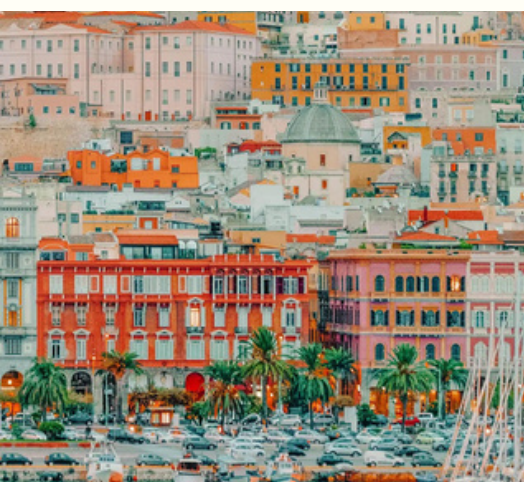


S



welcome to
SARDINIA

Website Design by Jacob Capablanca

Overview

Nestled in the heart of the Mediterranean, Sardinia, an enchanting autonomous Italian island, boasts a vast expanse of unspoiled beauty and a myriad of activities waiting to be explored. It is a secluded paradise where the cerulean waters of the Mediterranean Sea meets unspoiled, pristine beaches, where the whispers of ancient history whispers through medieval towns, and where culinary delights and an art form.

Research Process

To decode the dialogues between explorers and locals immersing themselves in the Sardinian experience, I conducted online ethnography, delving deep into platforms like TripAdvisor, YouTube comments, TripSavvy, and various travel guides.

After gathering a wealth of insights, thematic analysis revealed the following commonalities:

Theme 1: The desire for travellers to venture to Sardinia stems from their innate desire to:

- **Relax** - be able to experience a self-paced holiday for relaxation
- **Explore** - embark on adventures, such as nature & history activities
- **Devour** - be immersed in authentic & traditional Italian cuisine

Theme 2: For some, the challenge lay in consolidating scattered insights from various websites, particularly challenging for those less tech-savvy, thereby limiting their ability to fully immerse themselves in Sardinia's marvels.

In the design of this microsite, a user-centric approach has been adopted, focusing on the core principles of organisation, information architecture, structuring, labelling, and navigation. These principles serve as the guiding pillars, ensuring that the microsite offers a seamless and intuitive experience tailored to the users' needs. Below, the sitemap also acts as a method of data synthesis.



Figure 1 - Sitemap

Site Purpose

The fore-mentioned themes serve as the foundation of *Sardinia.com*, establishing a clear purpose for the website:

To curate information from diverse platforms and connect prospective travellers with Sardinia's finest experiences.

Synthesis

To synthesise the insights gained from the data, I crafted Personas. This method enabled me to effectively **communicate the common patterns** identified and better **visualise the diverse user profiles** for whom I'll be designing the microsite. By understanding their motivations, past challenges, and overarching goals, I could tailor the design to cater specifically to their needs.



Curious Calvin, 45

A middle class male who loves being immersed in traditional experiences when visiting new places. Travelling with his partner and children means that things can get unpredictable at times, so they love moving around at their own pace. They also prefer more private experiences. They've looked everywhere online but are struggling to find experiences that suit them best, and plan the Sardinian holiday of their dreams.



Adventerous Amy, 25

A solo traveller and graduate who loves traditional cultural experiences. She's a "foodie" and wants to experience a hidden Italy to that feels like a Nonna's embrace, without breaking her budget. Amy is a thrill seeker and is looking for the hiking, paddle-boarding on crystal clear-blue waters, motorbiking experiences that Sardinia has to offer. However, similarly to Calvin, she doesn't know where to look to find the best deals that suit her taste, inquisitiveness and budget



Pension Peter, 65

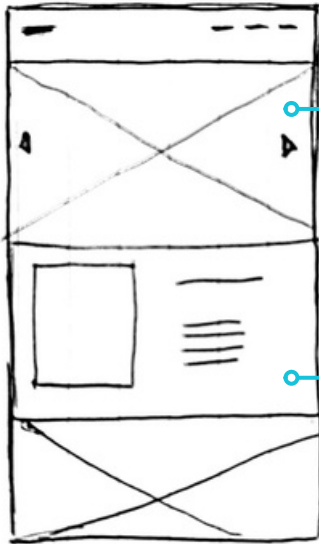
As a former business owner, he is wishing to kick off his retirement in tranquility with his wife. He's quite fit for his age due to his daily morning walks and is obsessed with Ancient Roman Culture. After over-hearing the wonders of Sardinia's offerings from TikTok on his granddaughter's phone, his eyes lit up. Peter is not tech-literate and is struggling with bouncing between multiple internet pages to piece together his dream holiday.

Figure 2 - Personas

Design Iterations

Iteration 1: Low-Fidelity Wireframe Sketches

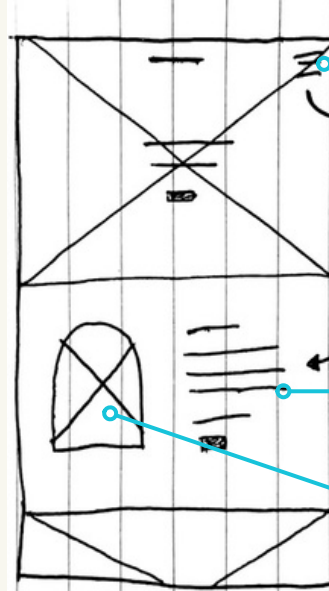
Home Page: desktop



Carousel feature allows users to scroll through summaries of each page with a call to action to view in more detail

Page is evenly divided into each section, alternating between text & imagery to allow breathing space and balance.

Home Page: mobile

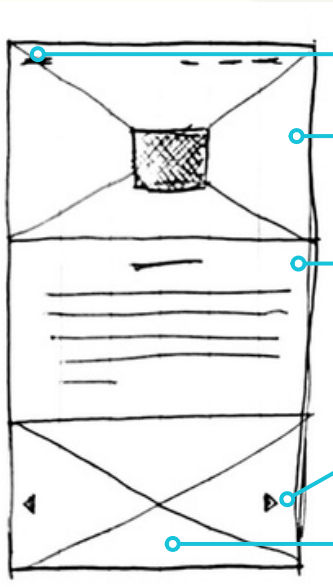


Introduction of compressed navigation using hamburger icon: referencing the **Gestalt principle of Similarity**

Shorter reading path

Arched frames adding to the website's Mediterranean ambience

Relax, Explore & Devour Page: desktop



Logo always present for ease of navigation back to home page

Engaging, high-quality imagery relating to the page topic immediately captures user's attention, inviting them to scroll

Brief page description introduces users to each new page, establishing the purpose & expectation

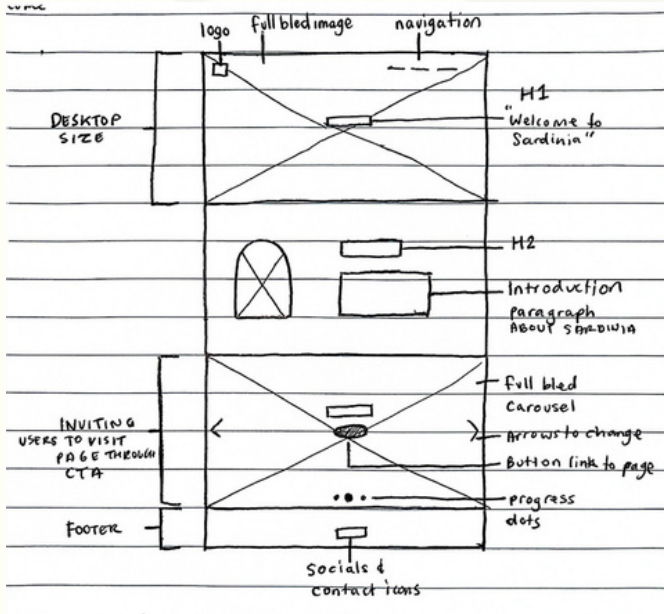
Opaque arrows indicate the website's interactivity to the user, prompting them to swipe or scroll

Carousel allows users to scroll through each experience. Call to action buttons will be included, such as "learn more" and "book now"

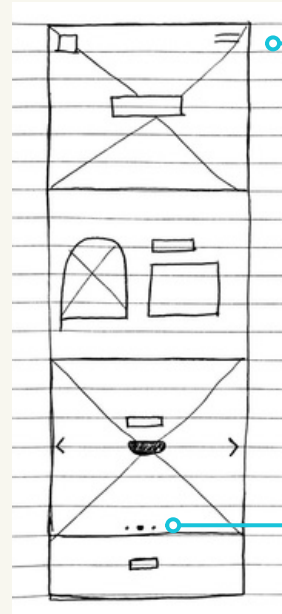
Design Iterations

Iteration 2: Low-Fidelity Wireframe Sketches

Home Page: desktop



Home Page: mobile



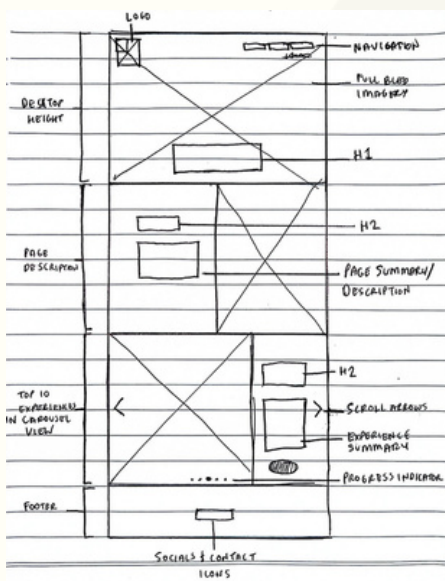
Simplified hamburger icon from 3 lines into 2 lines

Introduction of scroll progress dots, relating to the Gestalt principles **closure** and **continuity**

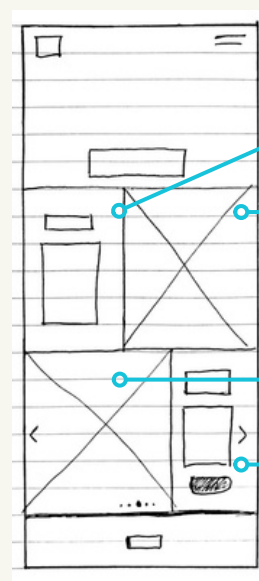
Relax, Explore & Devour Page

This template will be used for each page to create consistency and visual design and a more efficient development process. (see next page for more details)

Desktop



Mobile



Positioning of text alternating left to right creates an intriguing journey for the user to follow

In mobile view, this section will appear to prompt the user to scroll

Engaging imagery relating to experience in view

An introduction of this section in both desktop and mobile mode shows a description of each experience, with a call to action (e.g. "learn more", "book now", etc.)

Design Iterations

Iteration 3: Figma Wireframe

Gestalt principles were integrated in the development of the Relax, Explore, and Devour pages. These principles, rooted in human psychology, emphasise how users perceive and make sense of visual information. By leveraging Gestalt principles, a unique and user-centric digital experience and streamlined backend development has been achieved.

Recognition Consistency

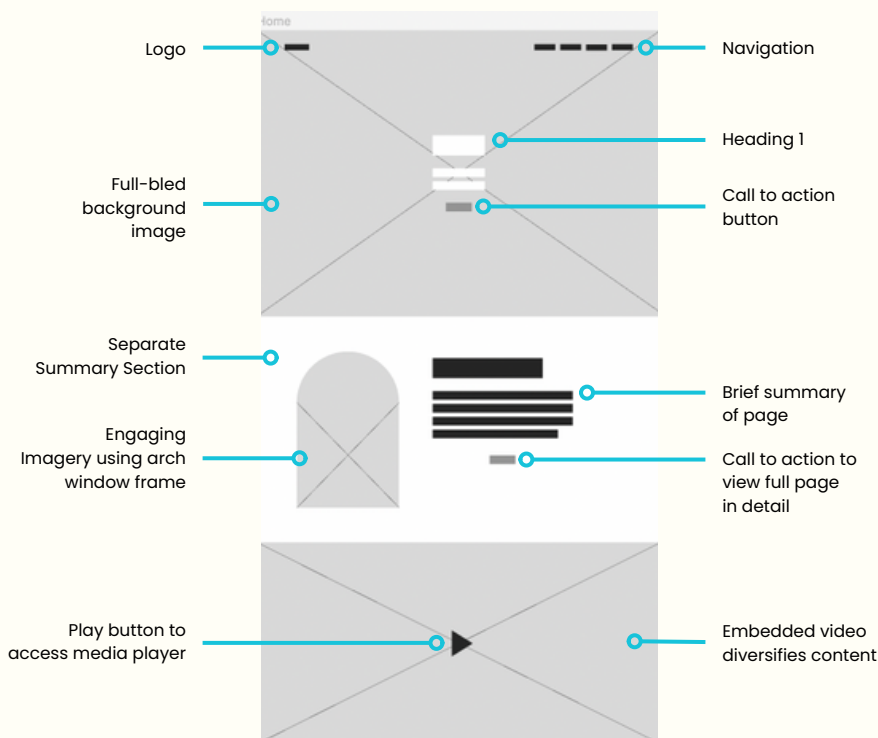
Gestalt principles such as proximity, similarity, and closure have been instrumental in ensuring recognition consistency across the Relax, Explore, and Devour pages. Elements that are visually related are grouped together, facilitating easy recognition. For instance, related content modules, interactive buttons, and navigational cues are placed in close proximity, signalling their connection. Similarity in design elements, like colour schemes and typography, creates a cohesive visual language, guiding users intuitively.

Simplified Backend Development

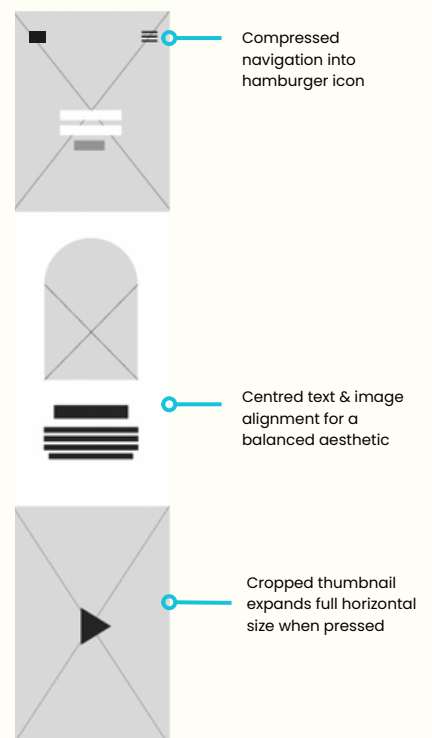
The use of a template for the Relax, Explore and Devour pages create consistency and allows the user to easily navigate through the site with efficiency. This template approach adopted for each page not only serves the user but also significantly simplifies backend development.

By establishing a consistent structure and design framework, developers can efficiently replicate and adapt templates for various sections of the website. This modularity ensures uniformity in user experience while minimising the complexity of coding and backend maintenance. The modular design also aligns with the Gestalt principle of simplicity, where complex structures are simplified into comprehensible and manageable components.

Home Page: desktop



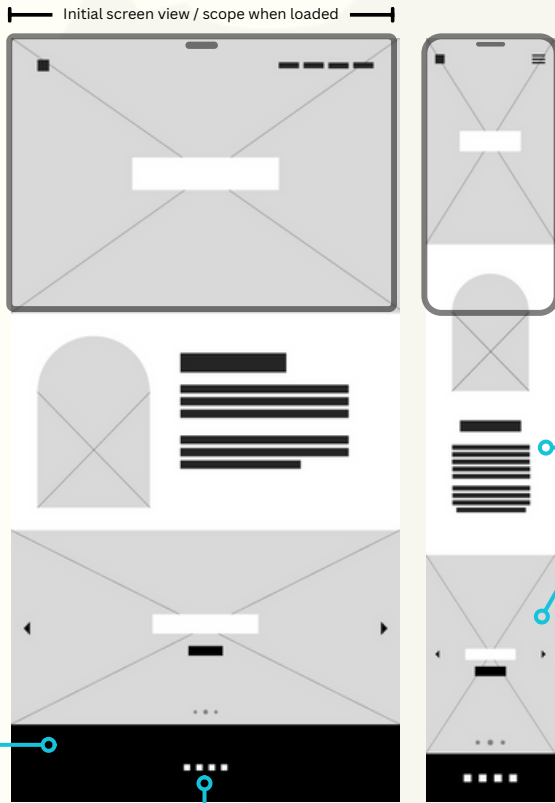
Home Page: mobile



Design Iterations

Iteration 4: Refined Figma Wireframe

Home Page

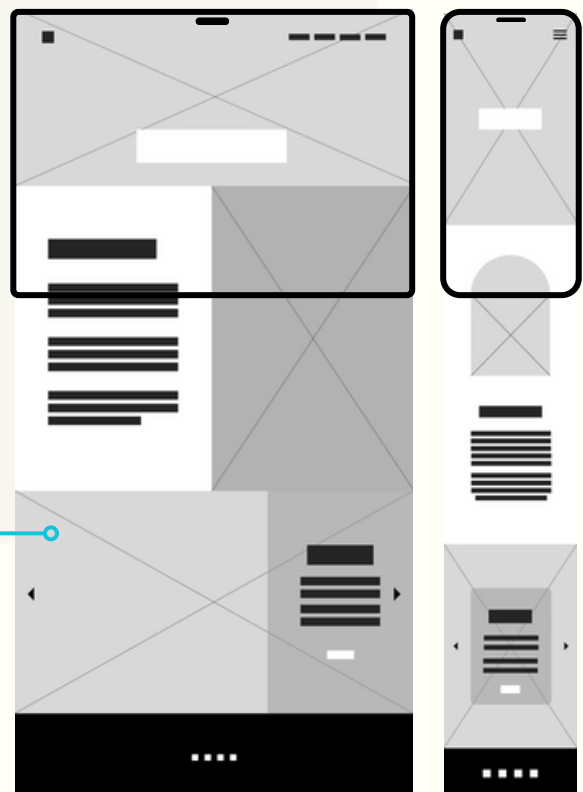


Introduction to footer design

Introduction to contact options and social media links to enhance brand presence

Responsive design techniques (using the @media tag), including the use of CSS media queries to centre text and images, align with the Gestalt principle of symmetry by creating balanced and harmonious layouts that adapt seamlessly to different screen sizes.

Relax, Explore & Devour Page



This section will be used to communicate specific experiences related to the page topic. For instance in the *Devour page*, this may include cooking classes or restaurants.

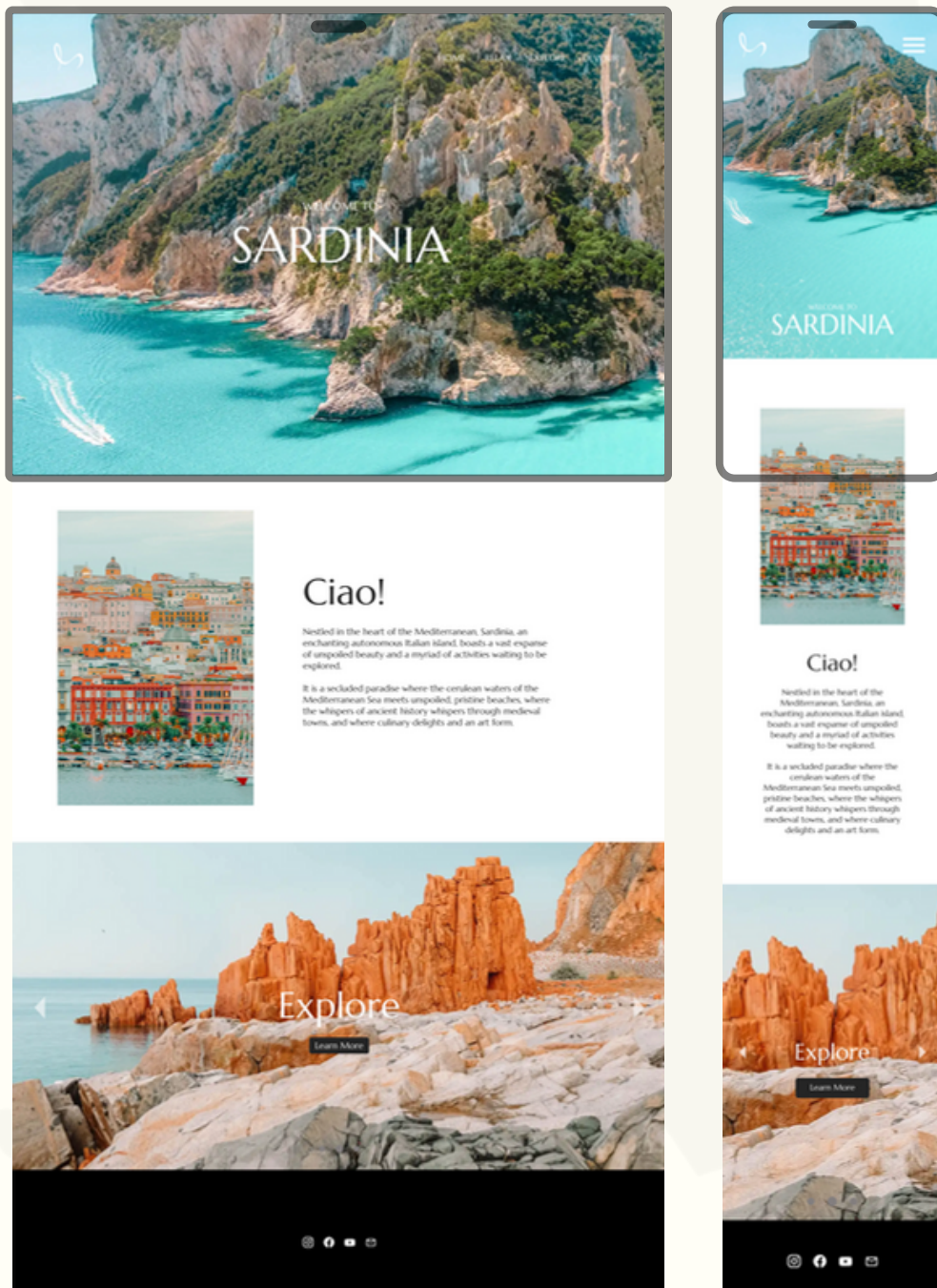
Refined Mock Up – Home



Overall Key Refinements

The inclusion of the logo unifies elements cohesively and reinforcing the brand identity with a powerful visual representation. (See *Brand Identity* page for more details)

The chosen typeface, 'Marcellus' (Figma), reflects the luxurious Sardinian experience due to its elegant elongated, sharp shape.



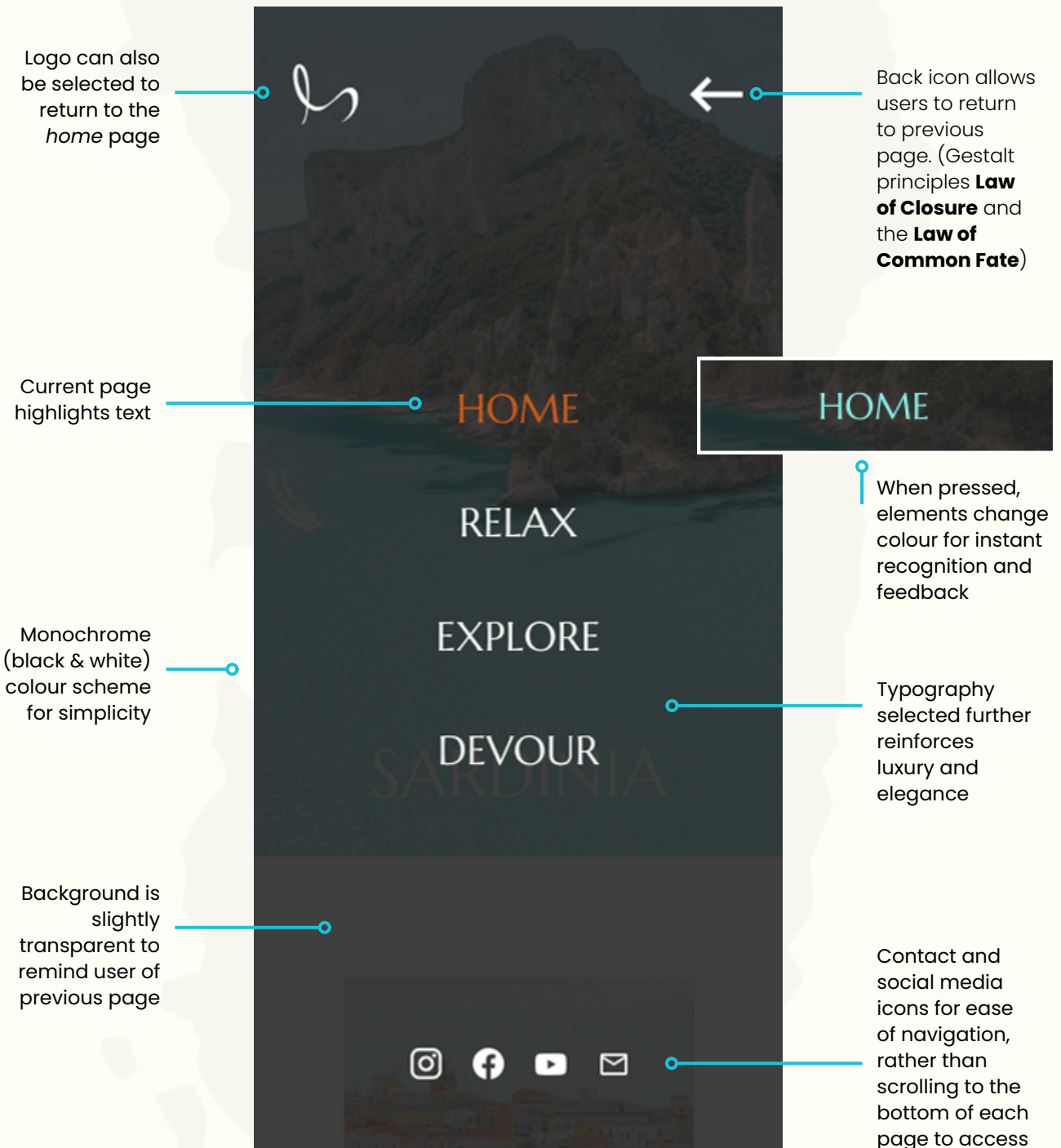
[Click to View Iterations & Mock Up in Figma](#)

Refined Mock Up - Home



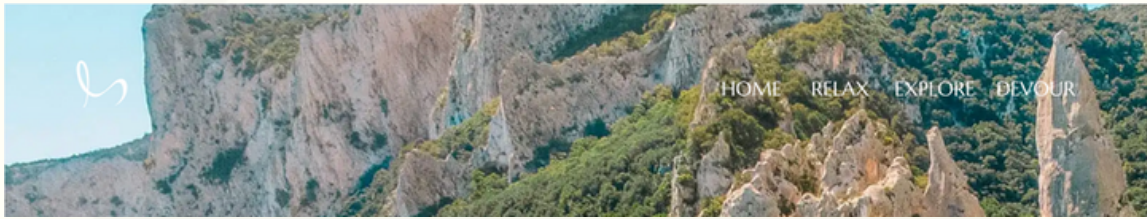
Mobile Navigation Overlay

Shown once the user clicks/presses the hamburger icon



[Click to View Full Mock Up in Figma](#)

Refined Mock Up - Navigation



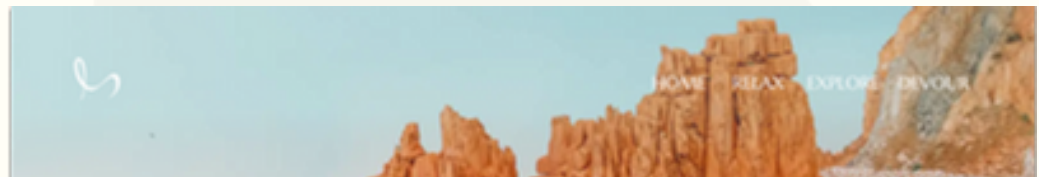
Desktop Header / Navigation Refinements

A gradient overlay (by drawing a rectangle and adjusting its fill) was included in the header & navigation section to enhance the prominence of the text so that it is not lost in the high quality imagery (shown in the above image). In addition to this, the navigation's text size was also increased to enhance readability. These refinements, although slight, provide significant improvement to the user experience.

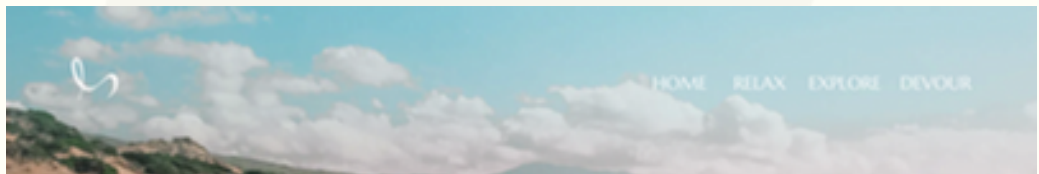
Black overlay



Blue overlay



Blue overlay



Orange overlay



[Click to View Full Mock Up in Figma](#)

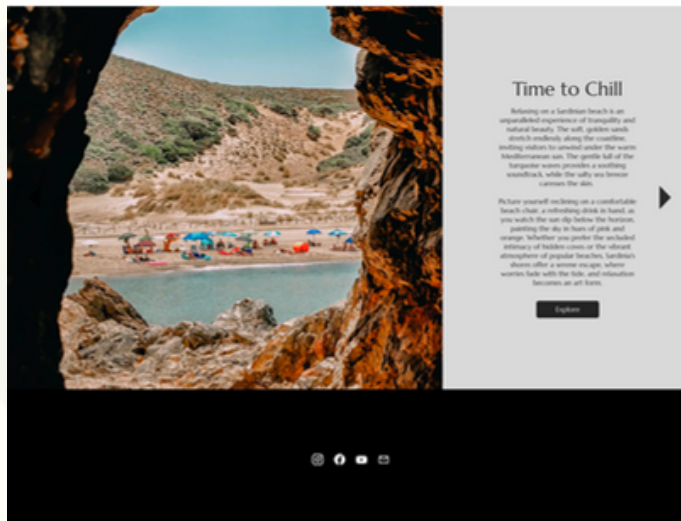
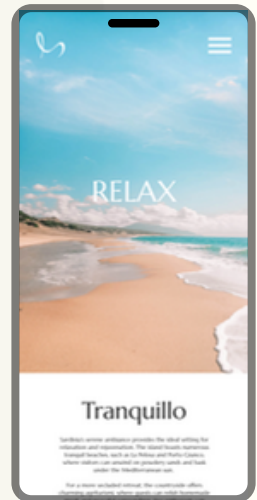
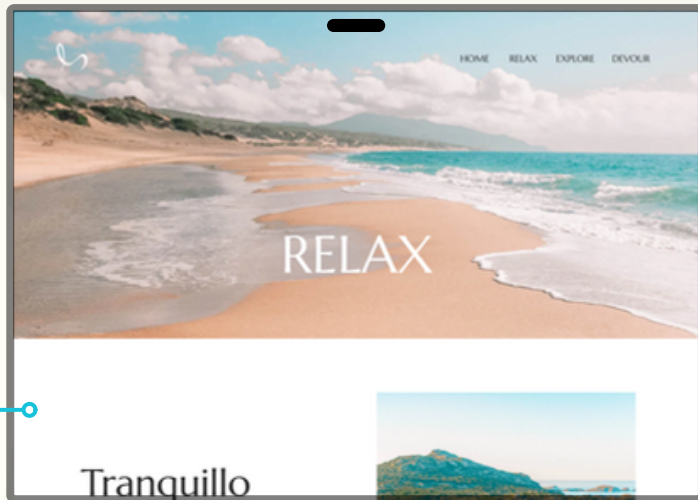
Refined Mock Up – Relax



Overall Key Refinements

The overall aesthetic of the website is enhanced through the use of captivating imagery of Sardinia's natural wonders. Through implementation of a harmonious blend of consistent imagery, organic colour palettes, and high image quality, the site seeks to pay homage to and immerse its users into Sardinia's breathtaking views. The expansive full-bleed images artfully convey the vastness of the Italian gem, inviting users into a realm of freedom and travel-inspired liberation.

Text and imagery slightly revealed creates intrigue and prompts user to scroll



[Click to View Iterations & Mock Ups in Figma](#)

Refined Mock Up – Explore



Overall Key Refinements

Sardinia.com also pays tribute to its rich traditions; as my research revealed, travellers are drawn to Sardinia to immerse themselves in its cultural heritage. To foster a deeper connection with aspiring travelers, each page thoughtfully includes welcoming headings such as "Ciao," "Tranquillo," "Andiamo," and "Mangia." These headings serve as gateways, inviting visitors into the heart of Sardinia's essence.



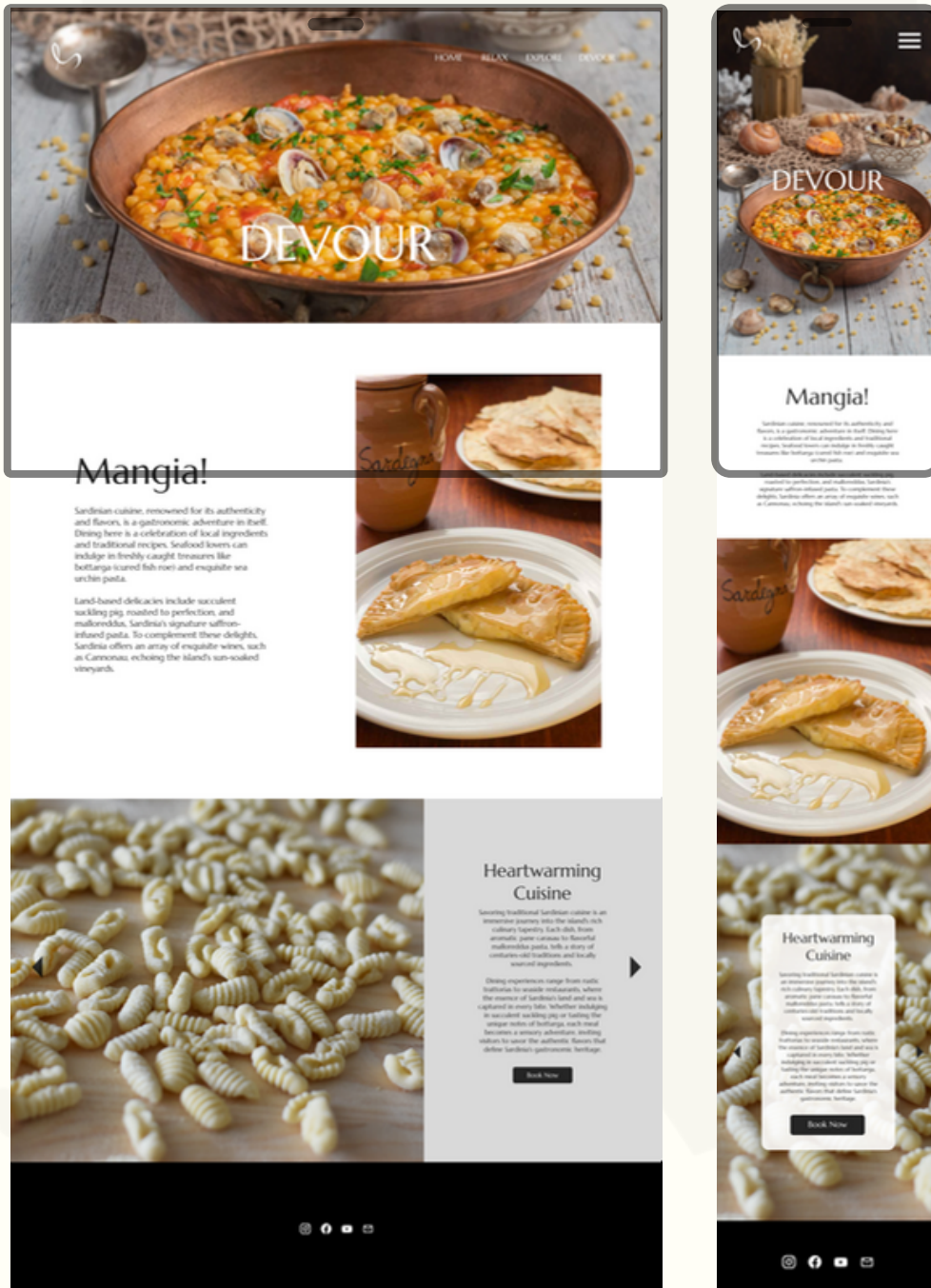
[Click to View Iterations & Mock Ups in Figma](#)

Refined Mock Up - Devour



Overall Key Refinements

The carefully curated images on this website have been chosen to convey the essence of Sardinia's unique culture with precision and grace. Through their simplicity, these visuals create a clear and uncluttered presentation, enabling users to engage effortlessly with the content. The warmth exuded by the images fosters an emotional connection, establishing a sense of comfort and familiarity that resonates with the viewers. Additionally, the adventurous spirit captured in the images ignites curiosity and excitement, inviting users to explore the rich array of Sardinian landscapes, traditions, and experiences. By aligning these images with the principles of simplicity, warmth, and adventure, the website provides an immersive and captivating experience, allowing users to connect deeply with the captivating allure of Sardinia's culture.



[Click to View Iterations & Mock Ups in Figma](#)

Logo



In the final stages of the mock-up development, I curated a logo to embodying both aesthetic and functional significance. This logo not only symbolises the a journey with its curvature, but also represents the abstract form of the letter 'S' for Sardinia.

It's design incorporates elements reminiscent of the island's topography, coastal landscapes, and cultural identity of luxury and elegance.

The logo's simplicity enhances its visual appeal and establishes a strong, lasting brand identity. Its clean design and straightforward approach make it easily recognisable and memorable for the audience. This clarity ensures that the brand leaves a lasting impression, fostering deeper connections and promoting brand loyalty.

[Click to View Iterations & Mock Ups in Figma](#)

Accessibility

Accessibility Considerations for sardinia.com

Colour Contrast Check

- Verify colour combinations in both colour and black & white versions to ensure readability for users with visual impairments.
- Utilise the Contrast Checker tool (<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>) to assess colour contrast ratios for text and background elements.

Visual Impairment Simulation

- Use the Chrome Extension 'Colorblindly', a tool that allows developers to ensure content remains distinguishable.

Accessibility Checker Tools

- Employ the Accessibility Checker WAVE (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool) (<https://wave.webaim.org/>) to identify accessibility issues and provide detailed feedback on problematic areas.
- Assess the microsite against the "POUR" principles (Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust) as outlined in the provided lecture resource (<https://guides.cuny.edu/accessibility/whyitmatters>) to ensure comprehensive compliance.

Voice-Over Check

- Perform a voice-over check to guarantee that all interactive elements, images, and multimedia content are properly labeled and accessible via screen readers.

Accessibility Compliance Level

- Ensure that the microsite adheres to at least 'AA' level of accessibility compliance based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards. This includes aspects like text alternatives, keyboard accessibility, and focus indicators.

Accessibility

Tools for Monitoring Accessibility

Manual Testing

- Conduct manual testing to assess keyboard navigation, focus states, and overall usability for users who rely on keyboard input.

Automated Tools

- Utilise WAVE (<https://wave.webaim.org/>) and similar automated tools to quickly identify and address common accessibility issues. However, remember that automated tools might not catch all issues, so manual testing is crucial.

User Testing

- Engage users with diverse abilities to perform real-world testing, gathering feedback on the site's usability and accessibility from the perspective of the end-users.

Educational Resources

- Continuously educate yourself and your team on the latest accessibility guidelines and best practices to ensure ongoing compliance.

By implementing these considerations and tools, I will enhance the accessibility of the sardina.com, ensuring that it is usable and enjoyable for all visitors, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

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