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Tablet Hotels

Search Audit and Competitive Analysis

March 17, 2021

CONTENTS

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Overview

We reviewed the tablethotels.com site with the goal of improving both search experience flow and functionality to match the needs of our target audience and support strategic business goals.

This discovery deck focused on the search experience (search module and search results screens). The observations and gaps we found are documented in this audit, along with recommendations for improvement.

What is Discovery?

Discovery is the first phrase of UX-design process that involves researching and analyzing the magnitude of the problem space, outlining what aspect of the problem(s) to be solved.

The final output from the discovery phase is the usability workshop which will result in a shared vision to set the project off in the right direction. The workshop will focus on the high-priority usability problems first to help inform the next phrase of design ideation and testing.

Methodology
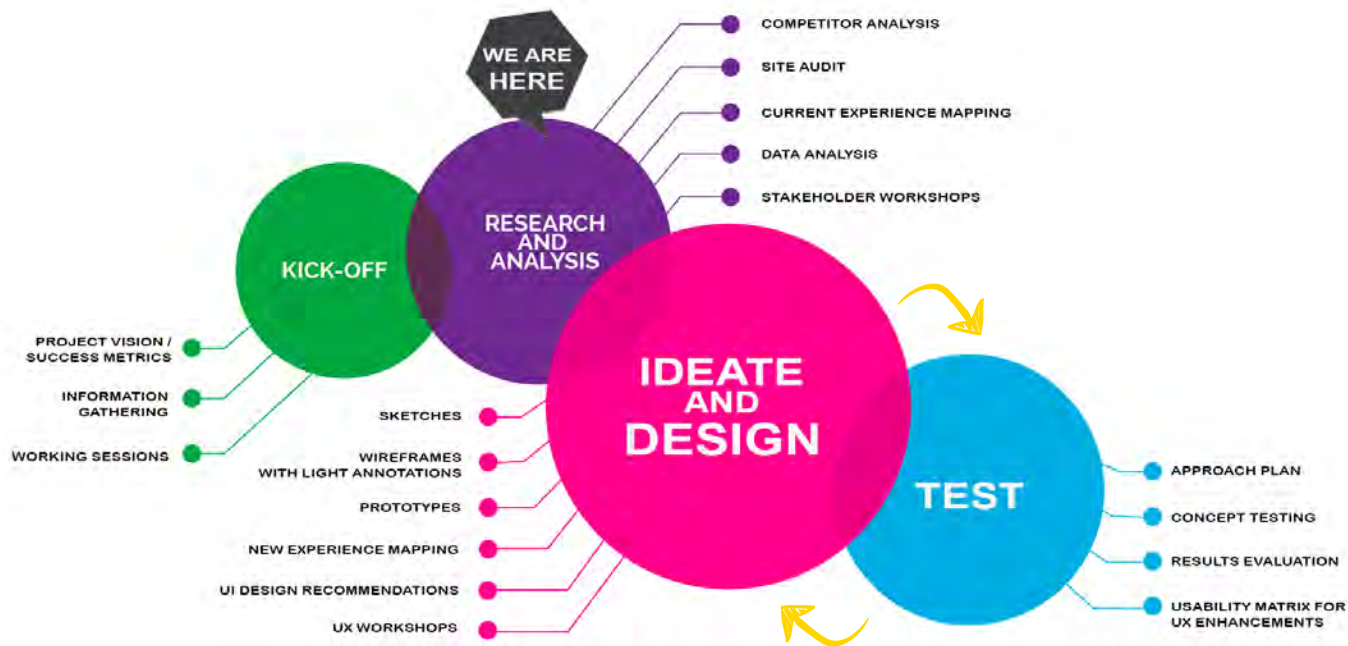
Design Principles

Below are five usability design principles used to analyze our discovery efforts

Visual indicators	Visual cues or compelling indicator that helps user understand the how an item operates and includes both its perceived and actual functions
Data Transparency	Putting user in control and being upfront to help users learn and remember how the site works, instead of using jargons or advertising titles.
Consistency	Don't force people to learn something new every time they get to a new page or other part of the site.
Find-ability	Information needs to be findable and easy to navigate.
Scan-ability	Laying out content so it's easier to scan. Summarizing the most important content and visual design information.

Competitive Landscape

Direct Competitors

👍 OK 👍 Average 👍 Good

	AMERICAN EXPRESS	RELAIS & CHATEAUX	Mr & Mrs Smith	KIWI COLLECTION
Visual indicators	👍	👍	👍	👍
Data Transparency	👍	👍	👍	👍
Consistency	👍	👍	👍	👍
Find-ability	👍	👍	👍	👍
Scan-ability	👍	👍	👍	👍

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American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts

Visual indicators:

[Perks] provides visibility into what experience credits (member benefits) are available with the resulting hotels list. This in turn can be sorted.

1. States what search result is currently presented.

Consistency:

2. **[Filters]** Filters are always in the same format with the same categories and only relevant tags are enabled.

Scan-ability:

3. **[Hotel Data]** Hotel listing briefly states the main feature of the hotel, experience credit, the location, photo slideshow, and member credit that applies.
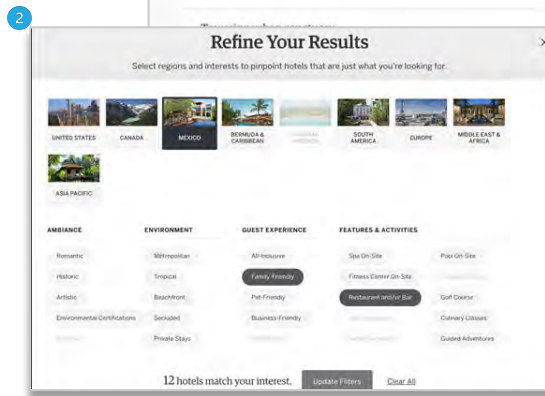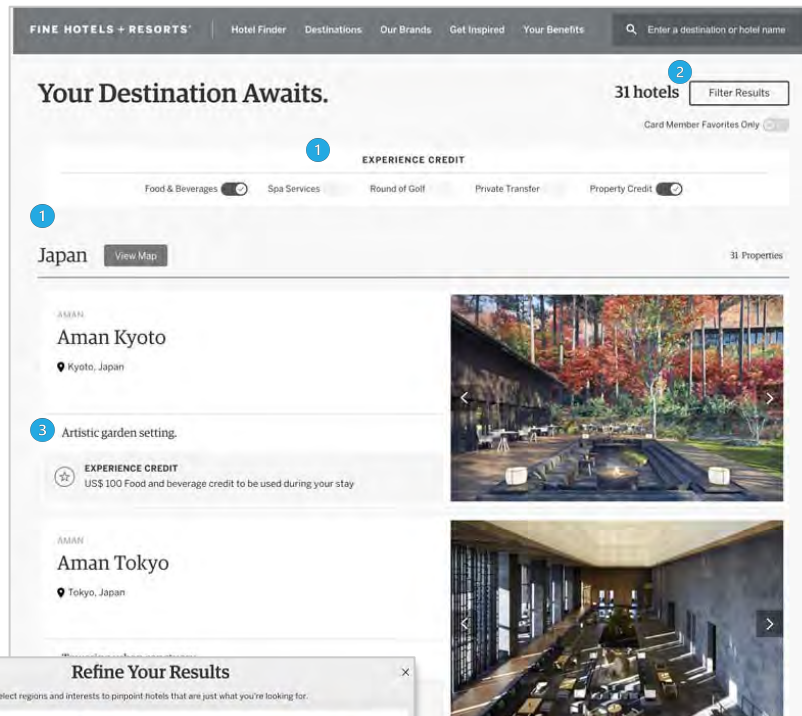
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American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts

Data Transparency:

1. **[Search Criteria]** User's ability to search on the following data-points:

   • Region

   • Ambiance

   • Environment

   • Guest Experience

   • Features & Activities

   • Location (By City, State, Country from search)

2. **[Hotel Data]** Number of hotels that match the search criteria is reflected with each filter selection to show that the filters are affecting search results.

Visual Indicators:

3. **[Filters]** Selected filters cause other filters to become disabled to show that the options are exclusive of one another.
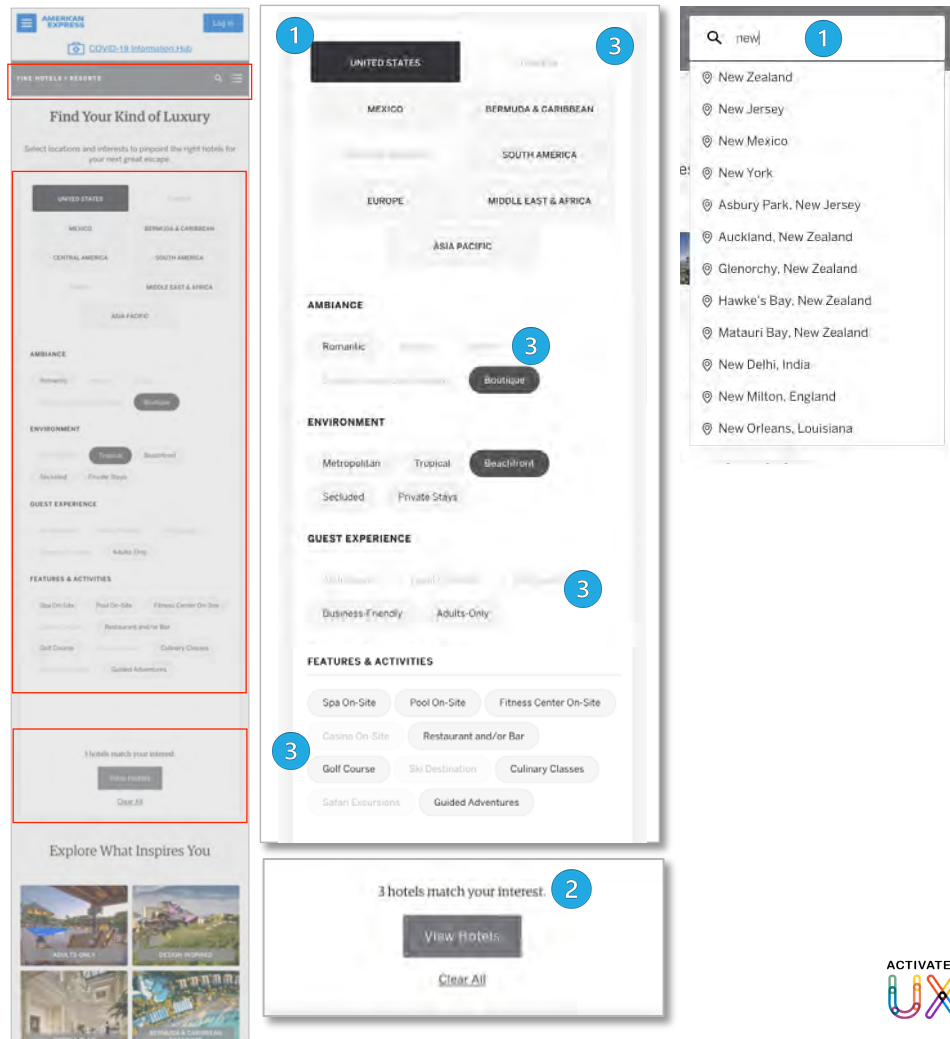
American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts

Consistency:

1. **[Filters]** Filters are consistent with the search filters and user is able to see the number of results updated w/ filters open.

Data Transparency:

[Perks] provides visibility into what experience credits (member benefits) are available with the resulting hotels list.

2. States what search result is currently presented.

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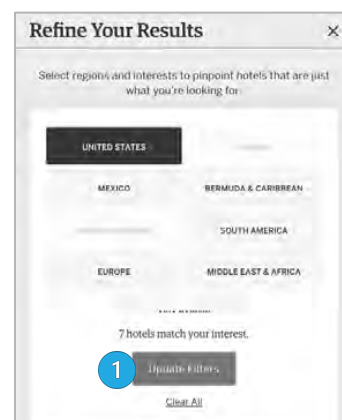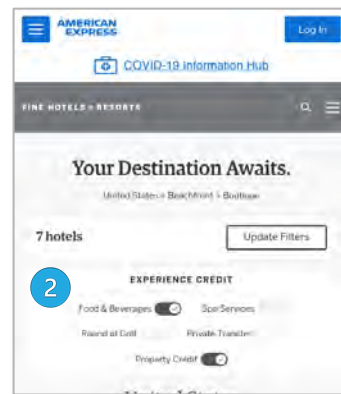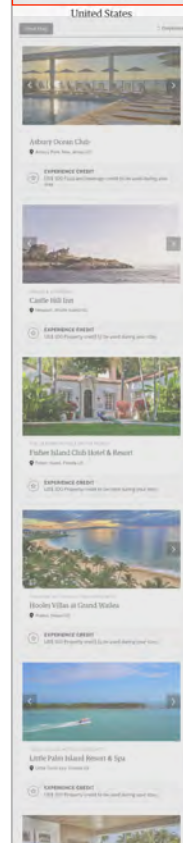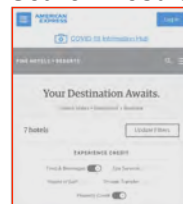
American Express Fine Hotels & Resorts

Data Transparency:

1. **[Perks]** provides visibility into what experience credits (member benefits) are available with the resulting hotels list.

Visual indicators:

2. **[Hotel Data]** Search results also allow for a map view as a way to place each hotel visually.
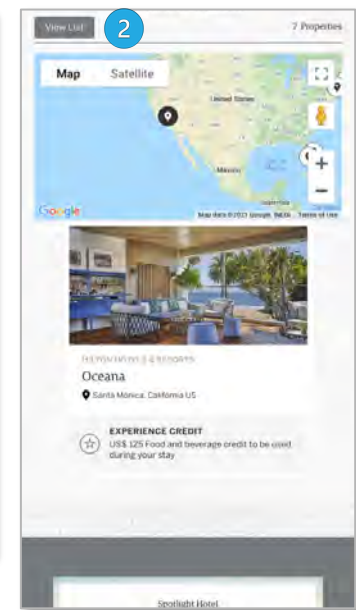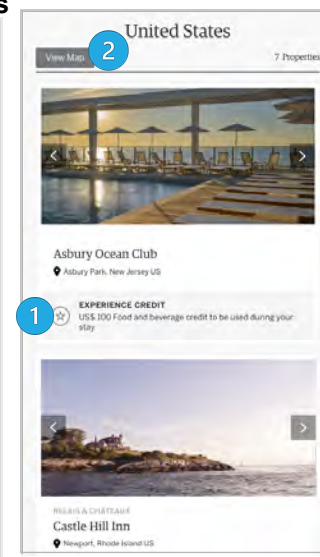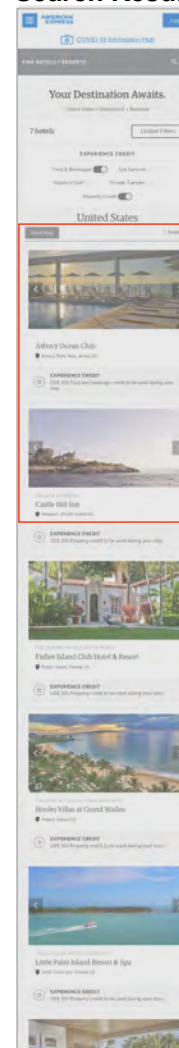
Search Results

Relais & Chateaux

Visual indicators:

1. Search results list next to the map is helpful, offering options to visually map or look at the list.

   - **[Perks]** Everything is labeled so the user is aware of what's being communicated, i.e., icons and "Hotel + Restaurants" labels.

   - **[Hotel Data]** Lists number of rooms at each hotel.

Find-ability:

2. **[Filters]** Search includes selecting type of hotel as part of the focal point when running the search.

   - Type of hotel is filterable on the results page.

   - Other filters are hidden away but accessible when needed.
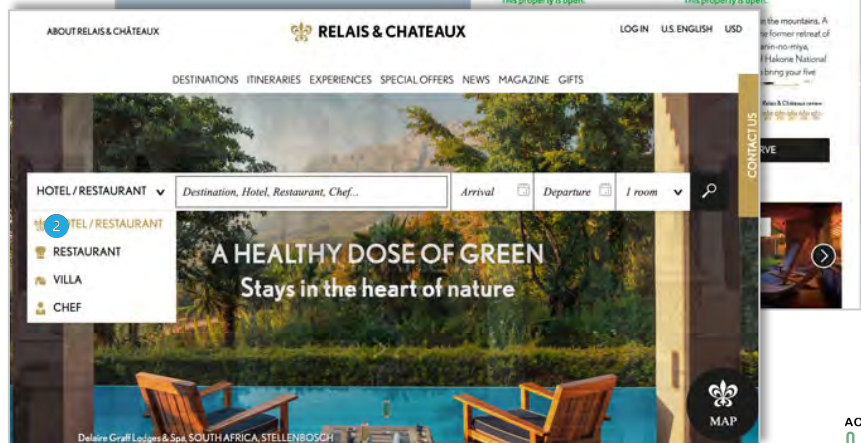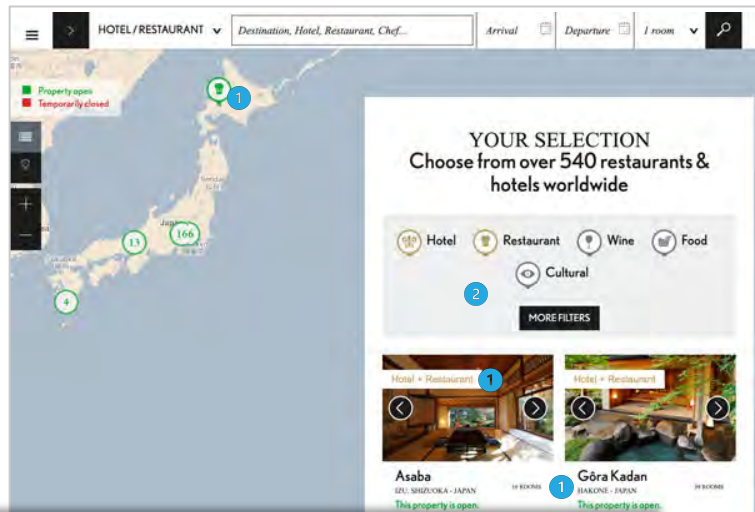
Relais & Chateaux

Data Transparency:

1. **[Search Criteria]** User's ability to search on the following data-points at any time:

   - Region
   - Number of Rooms
   - Dates (Arrival & Departure)

   Selections made affect the various areas:

   - Header & Hero Images (for regions)
   - Display of the number of search results found
   - Criteria selections displayed below hero (for regions, rooms & dates)

2. **[Hotel Data]** Number of hotels are updated as each criteria is selected (from #1). This suggests to the user they don't have to narrow down the search anymore if they don't want to do it. The display of hotels are also interesting b/c it encourages browsing with the large inviting images of each hotel. (NOTE: Starting prices for each hotel are always available)

Search Module
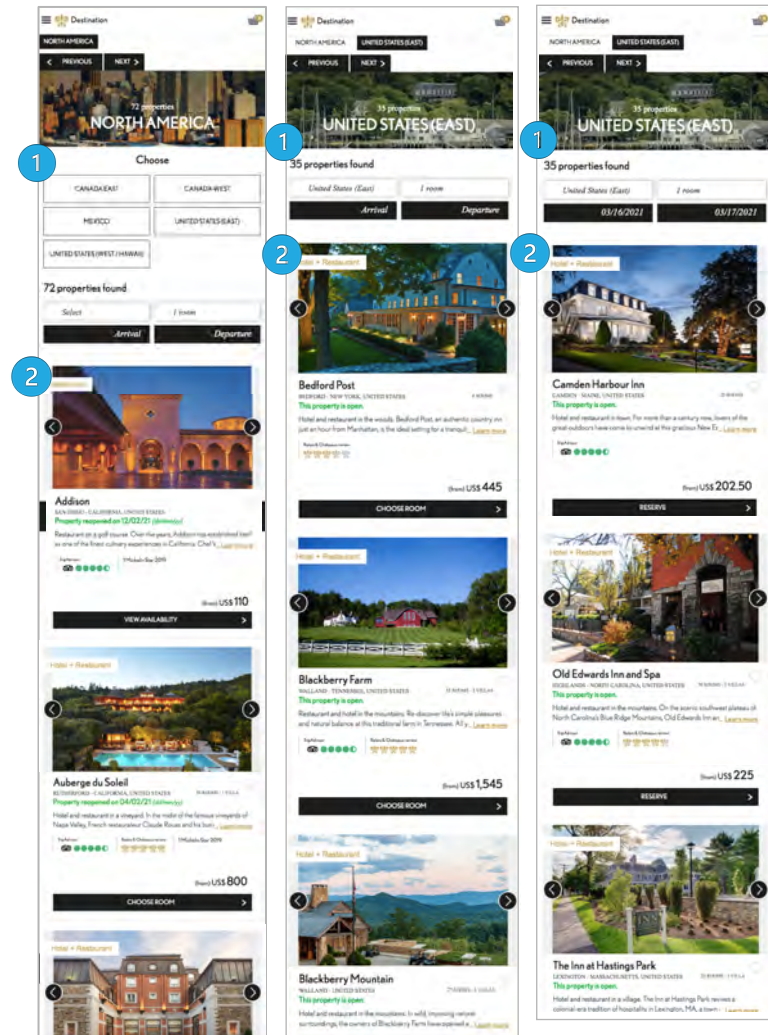
Relais & Chateaux

Data Transparency:

1. **[Hotel Data]** Before selecting a date, the user's able to see what dates are available.

Scan-ability:

2. **[Hotel Data]** Ability to hide the legend on the calendar allows for a better use of space on mobile.
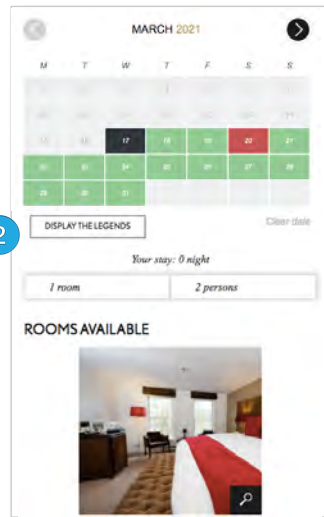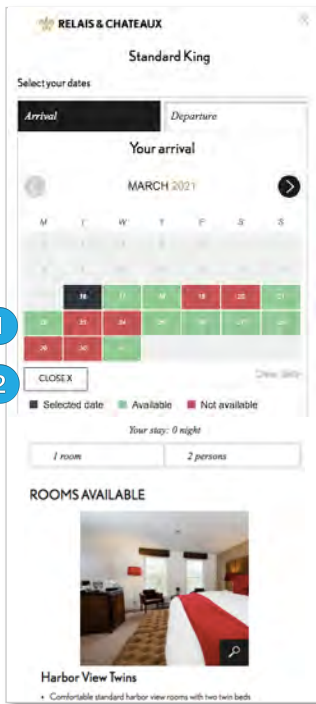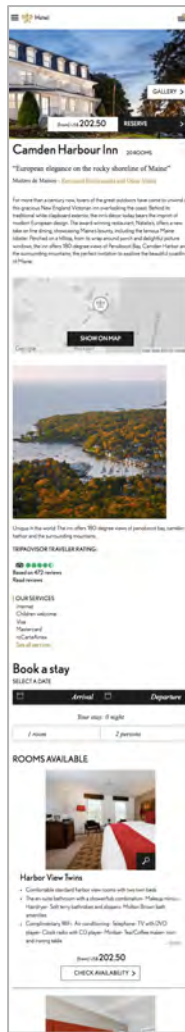
Mr. & Mrs. Smith

Find-ability:

1. **[Filters]** Search results navigation offers flexibility to jump from hotels list to villas or just explore around around the area.

   - Ability to add more criteria in the search bar, which acts like a filter to refine the list.

   - Hidden but available sorting feature in proximity with the map, which is another viewpoint.

Scan-ability:

2. **[Hotel Data]** Clear club offer description.

   - photo slides for preview.

   - Brief hotel description
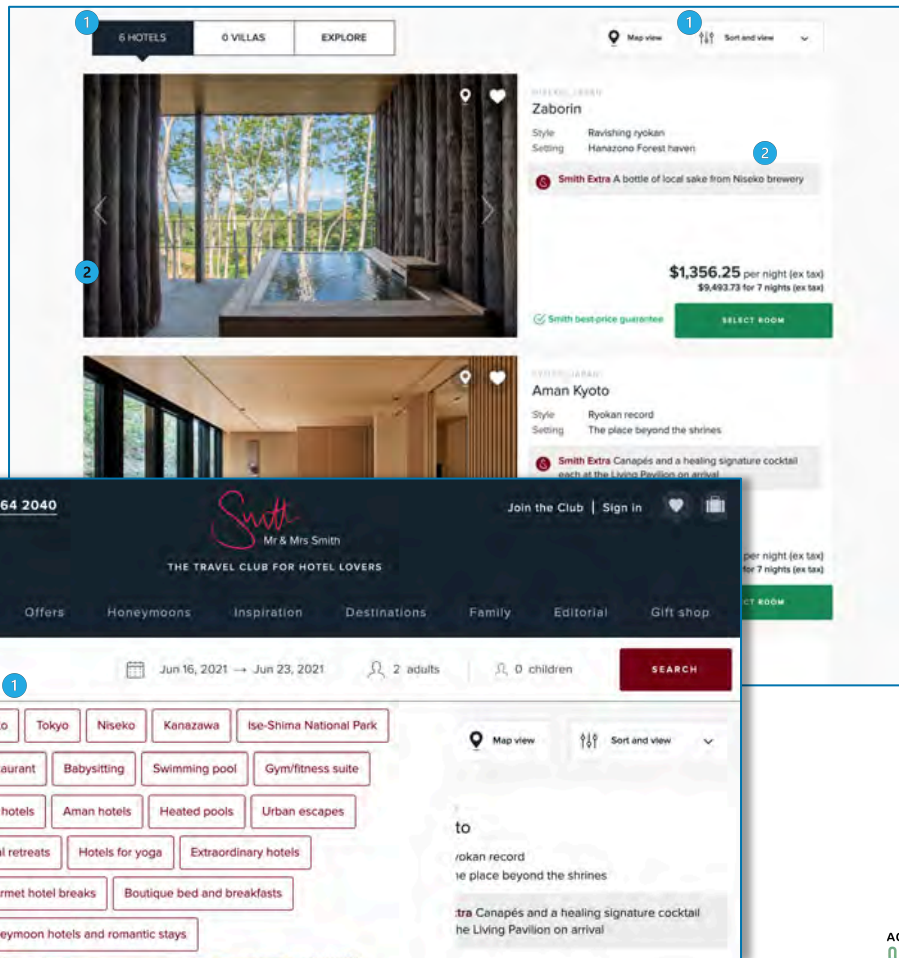
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Mr. & Mrs. Smith

Data Transparency:

1. **[Search Criteria]** Users can initially search by:
   - Destination/Facilities/Hotel collections
   - Date
   - Occupancy

Visual Indicators + Find-ability

2. **[Hotel Data]** Resulting number of hotels and villa from search results are filtered/grouped, enabling navigation between these groups. User can explore within the searched destination under its own tab.
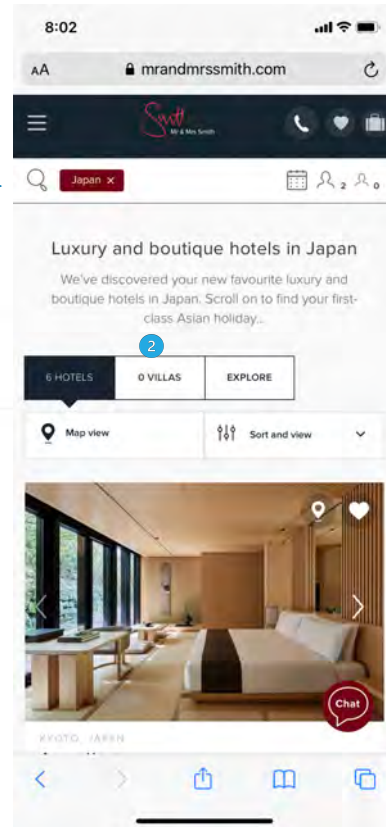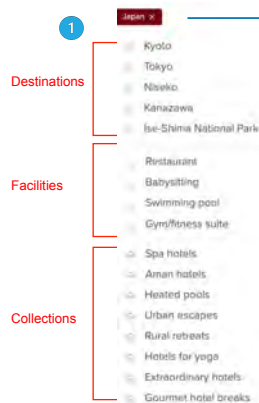
Mr. & Mrs. Smith

Data Transparency:

1. **[Search Criteria]** Users can pick their search criteria from the available site menu list by:

   - Hotels
   - Villas
   - Offers
   - Honeymoons
   - Inspirations
   - Destinations
   - Family
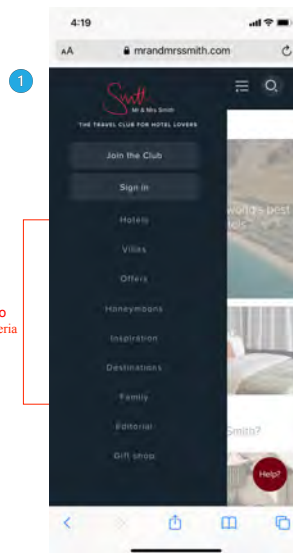
Menu Options to pick search criteria

Destination Pick List
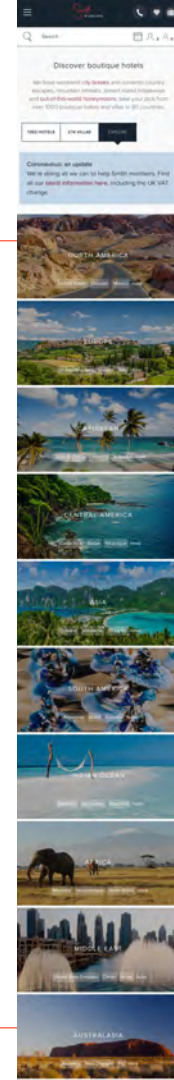
Kiwi Collection

Visual Indicators:

1. **[Perks]** Use of icons are provided with information relating to that specific communication.

Scan-ability:

2. **[Hotel Data]** Provides information about the size of the hotel by number of room, setting, and style.

   - Provides estimated price, so it's expected the price is not final.
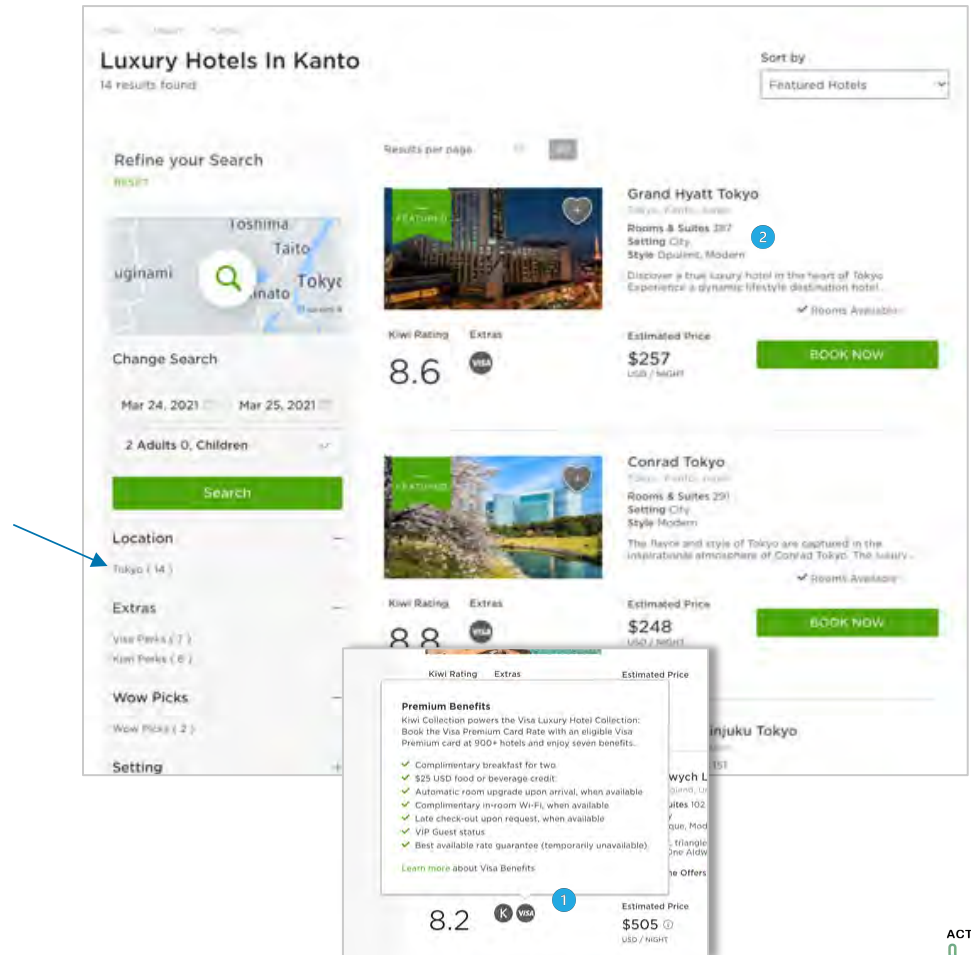
Kiwi Collection

Data Transparency:

1. **[Search Criteria]** Users can initially search by destination or hotel with suggestions panel offering additional related picklist of:
   - City/Area
   - Region/Country
   - Hotel

2. **[Search Criteria]** Users also have the option to choose from the main menu for search categories:
   - Kiwi Collections (hotels)
   - Top Destinations/Regions
   - Experiences
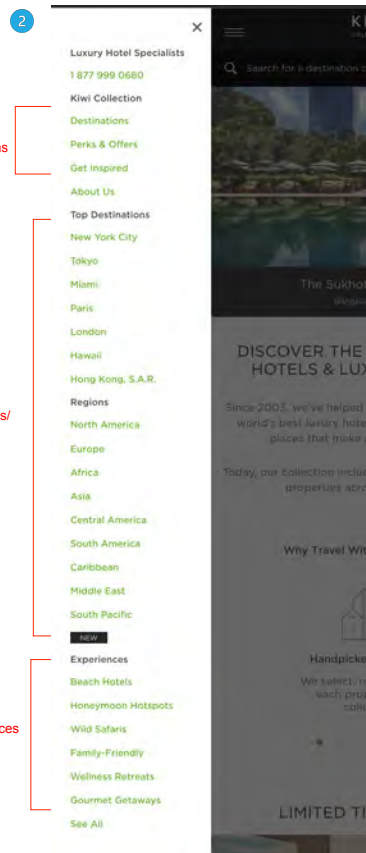
Kiwi Collection

Find-ability:

2. **[Filters]** Users can drill down their search results to target their search list by these criteria:

- • Location
- • Limited Time Offers
- • Kiwi Rating
- • Setting
- • Style
- • Interests
- • Brand
- • Affiliate

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Tablet Hotels – iOS Mobile App Synopsis

Mobile app search engine is **unlike the website.** Perhaps due to the smaller screen size, search bar is condensed to about third of the screen, whereas it takes up the full screen (above the fold) on the desktop.

Scan-ability:

- **[Hotel Data]** The condensed search bar allows room for viewing information about the hotel to be more efficient.

- **[Filters]** Filters are easily accessible via icon in bottom-right.

- **[Filters]** Overall, mobile experience is a bit easier. The features like remembering recent searches and personalization, such as having the freedom to group saved hotels and sharing them with friends is a plus.

Transparency:

- **[Filters]** When users adjust the filters, there's immediate feedback that the results are updated.
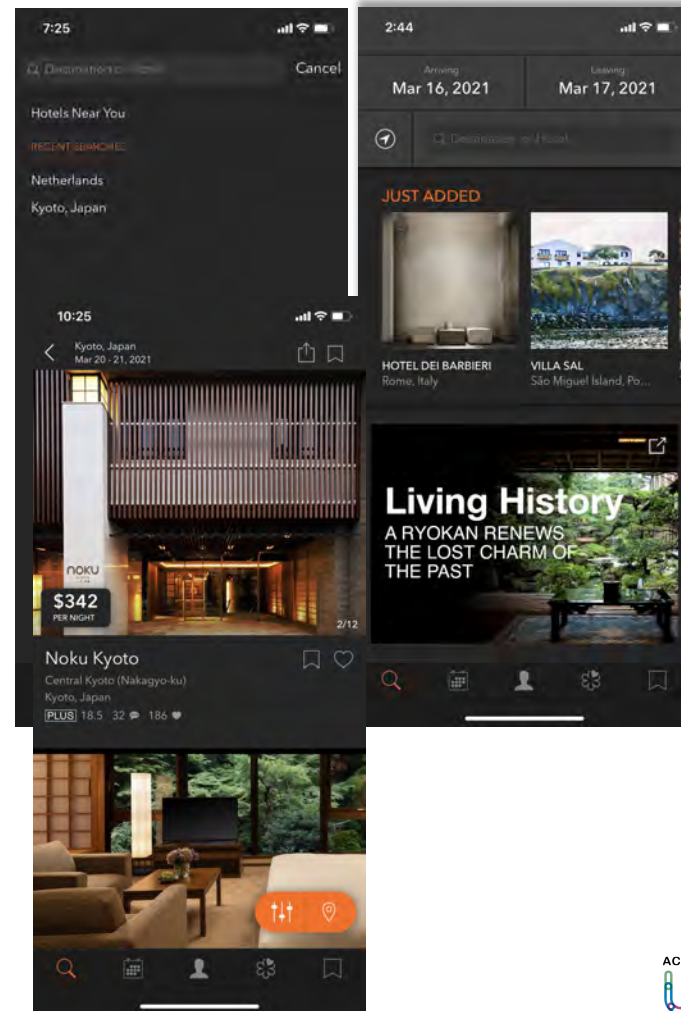
Tablet Hotels
Search Audit

ITEMS WE REVIEWED FOR SEARCH AUDIT

- Homepage with Search Widget
- Search Results
- Take Me Away Page
- Tablet Plus Hotel List Page
- Hotels You Love Page

Search Experience Flow

High-level diagram that maps the current fragmented search experience

2 Separate Search Modules

4 separate Search Listing Pages
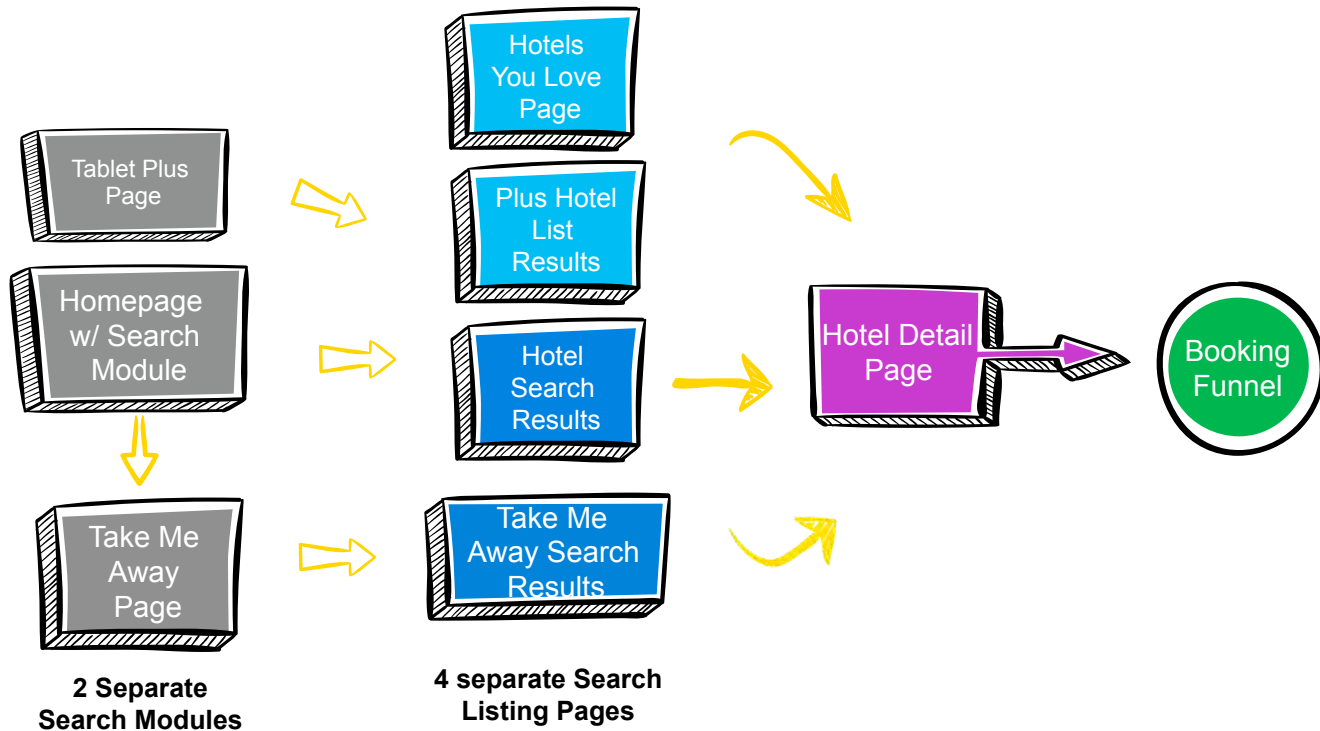
Homepage Search

Search Module on Homepage
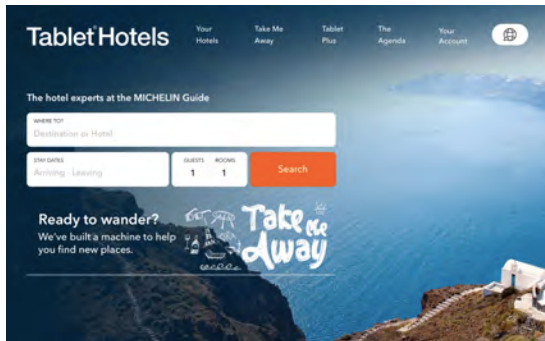
Search Results on Homepage
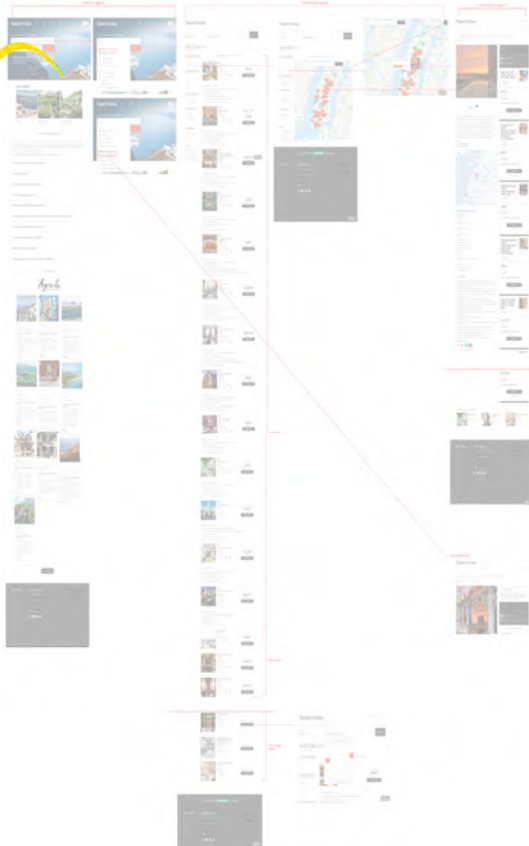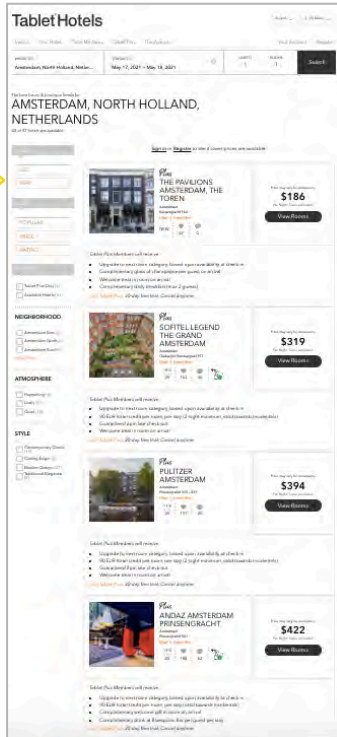
Take Me Away Search

Search Page TMA

Search Results TMA
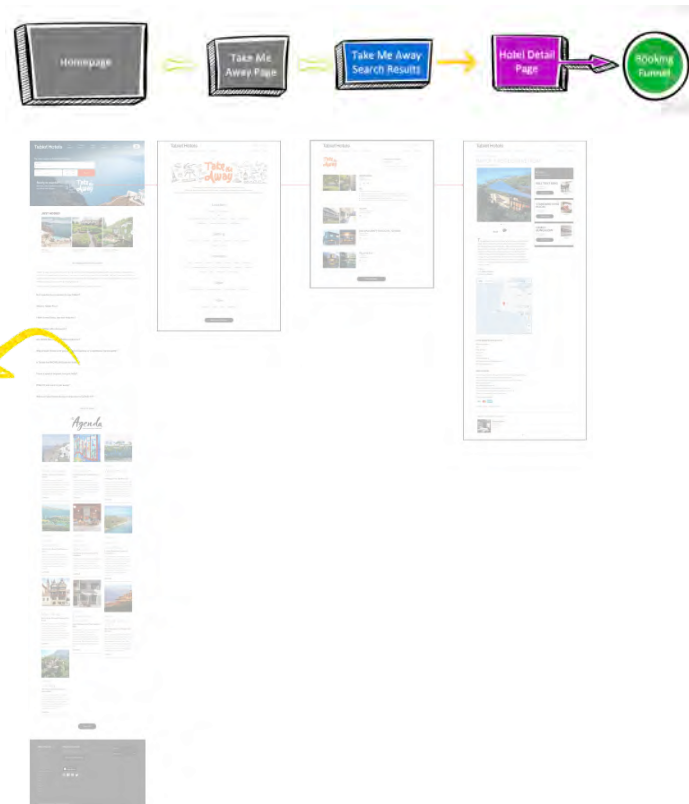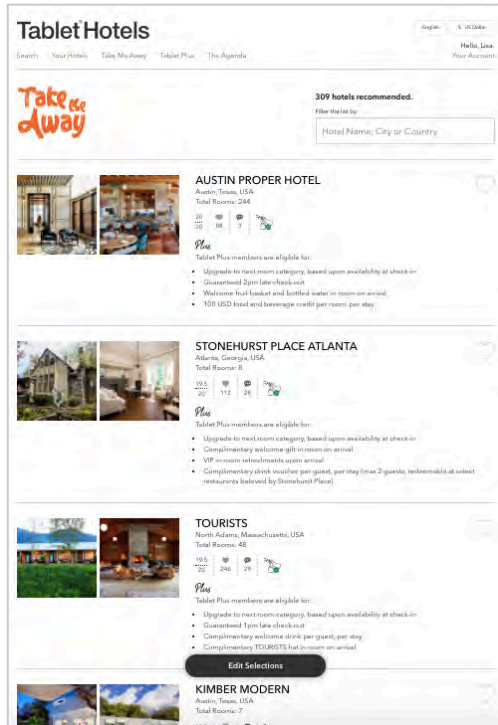
Tablet Plus Search/List

TP Search/List Page

TP Search/List Page - Filtered
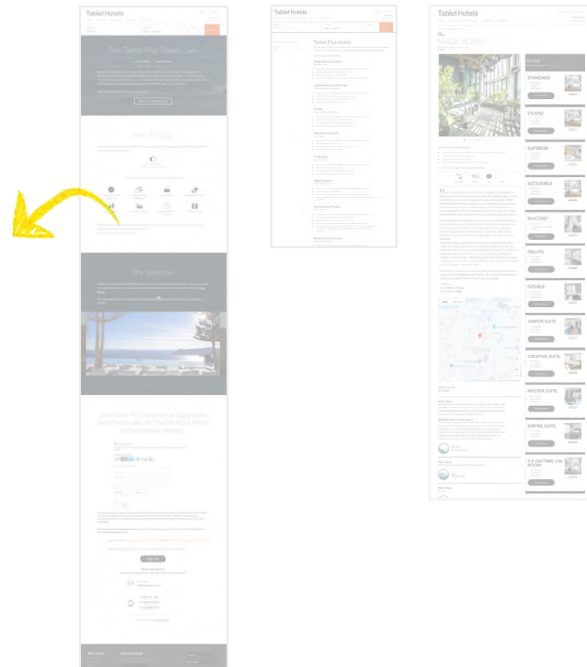
Search

Search Module on Homepage
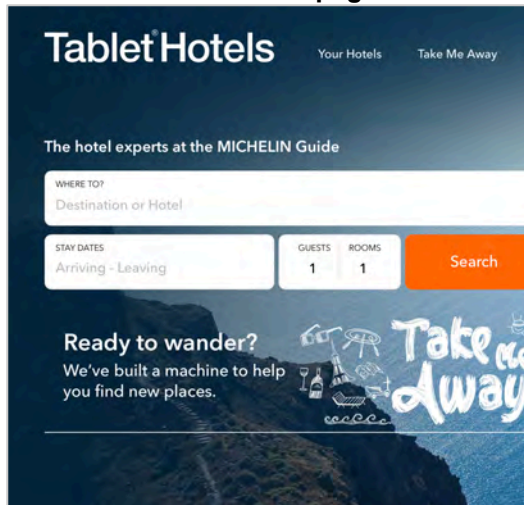
Consistency:

[Hotel Data] Homepage and "Take Me Away" search module are inconsistent.

RECOMMENDATION - There should be one page template to accommodate these different ways of finding hotels. **

Search Results

Transparency:

1. **[Filters]** Show relevant filters user selected as it pertains to the results and avoid 'no results'. For example, user selected "Tablet Plus Only" hotels and two neighborhoods with the expectation that 3 results should show.

   RECOMMENDATION – Fix the filters so they're additive and don't offer options that will produce no results.

Consistency:

2. **[Filters]** Filter, View and Sort options are a bit awkward because there are different conventions to show what's on/off

   RECOMMENDATION – Keep a consistent UI pattern to show on/off for Filter, View and Sort.

Search Results on Homepage

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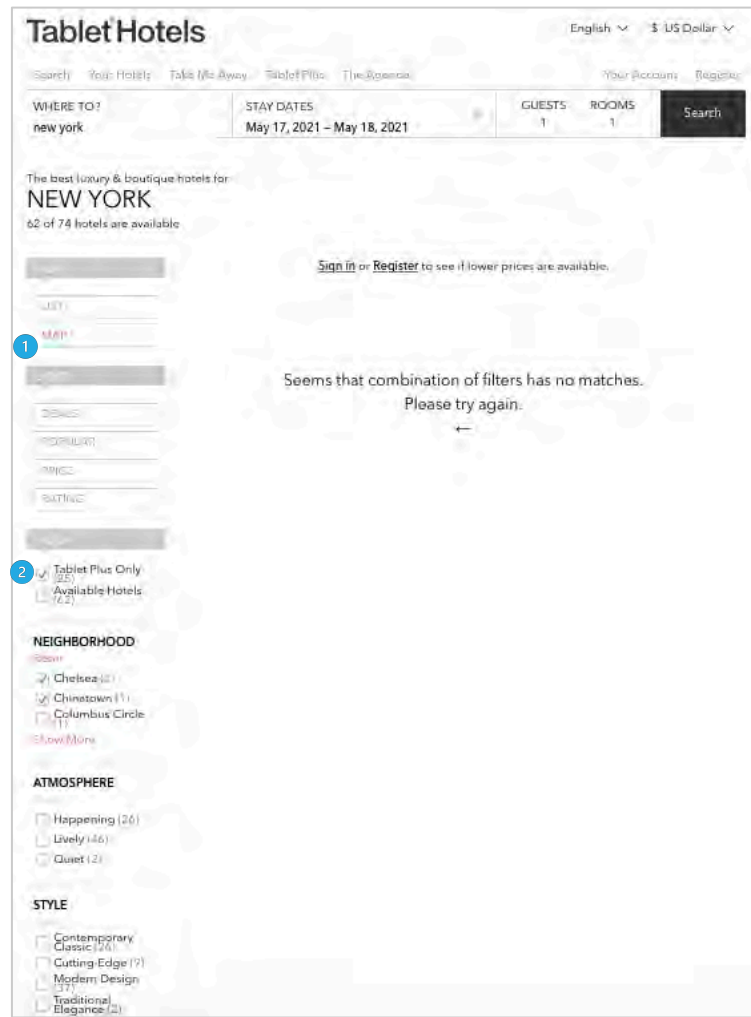
Search Results

Visual indicators:

- **[Hotel Data]** On mobile, when user filters or sorts the list, it should be clear that the system has generated filtered results. Currently, in situations where the list is longer, it's not clear whether the list has been updated after filtering or sorting.

  RECOMMENDATION – Number of results should be visible with the filters so as the user changes it the number updates (similar to Take Me Away).

Scan-ability:

1. **[Hotel Data]** Plus Hotels should be differentiated from the other hotel listings in a clear way. This is even more important on mobile considering the smaller screen size.

   RECOMMENDATION – This could be achieved by removing the benefits text and make it available as a tooltip when user clicks on the Plus logo (similar to Relais & Chateaux).

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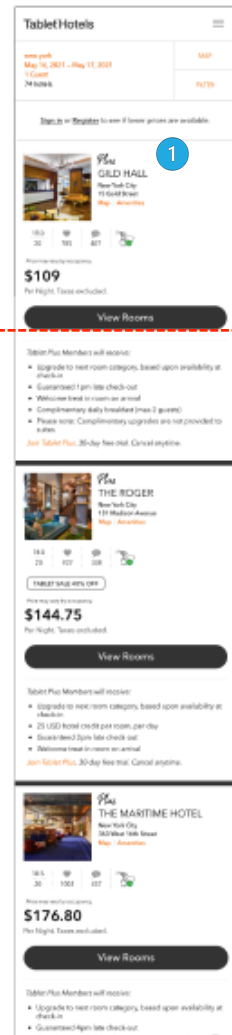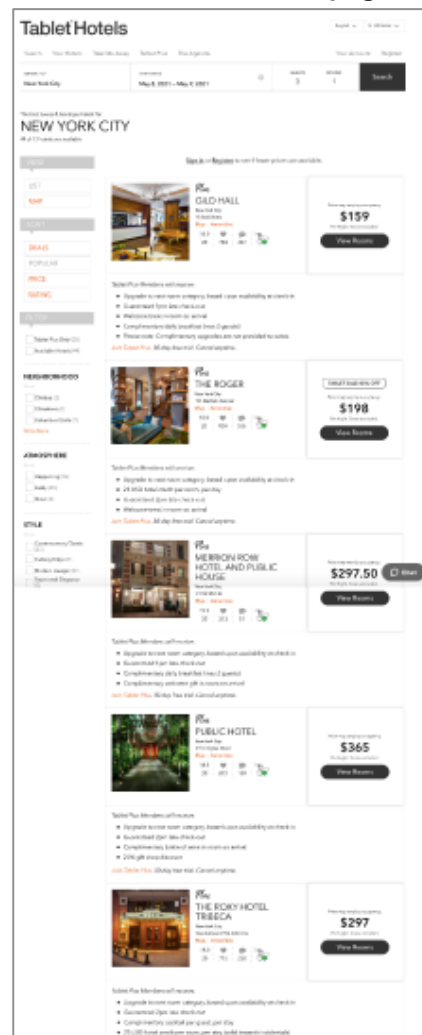
Search Results

Scan-ability:

1. **[Perks]** Tablet Plus Members benefits are in between hotel listings, so it's unclear if the copy is related to a specific hotel or if it's an advertisement. The availability of Tablet Plus benefits should be scan-able.

   RECOMMENDATION – These could be summed up with the use of an icon and simply show the benefits in a tool tip similar to Kiwi.

Data Transparency:

2. **[Hotel Data]** Fractional number and icons are vague.

   RECOMMENDATION – It may be helpful to provide labels or tooltips on this page. Description of how the ratings were arrived would be a helpful information to know.

Search Results on Homepage
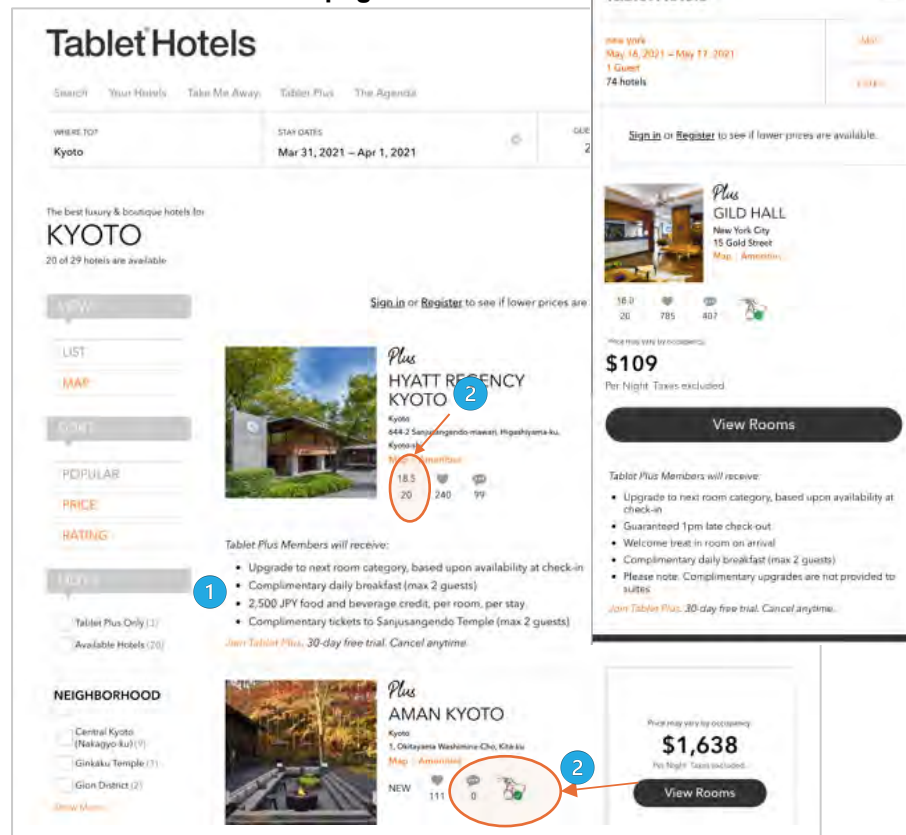
Take Me Away

Visual indicators:

1. **[Filters]** Results list is missing information about what is generated, requiring people to remember what they've just chosen on the previous page.

   RECOMMENDATION – Show the selected filters on this page similar to what all the competitors are doing OR just be consistent and show it in the same manner as the Search Results on Homepage.

Search Page TMA
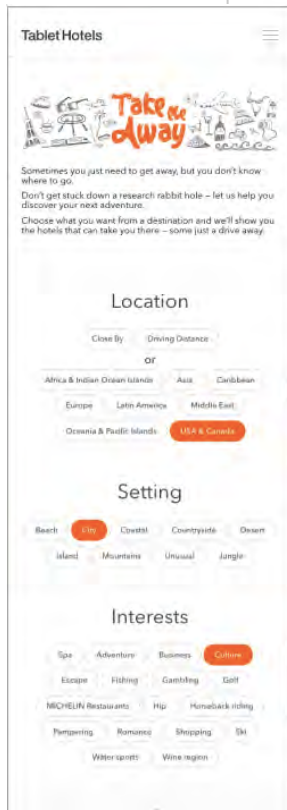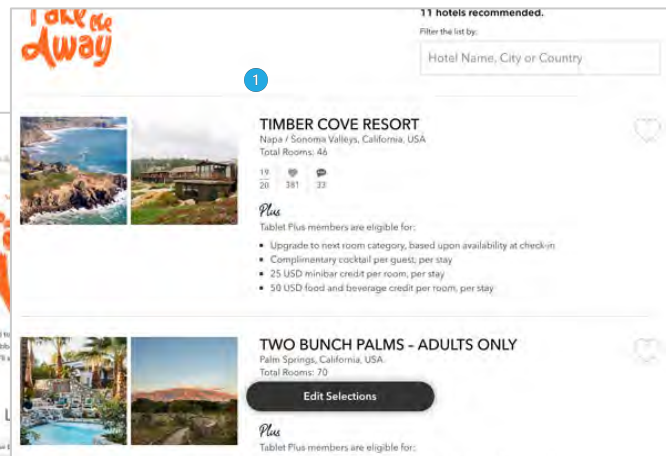
Search Results TMA

Hotel List Pages
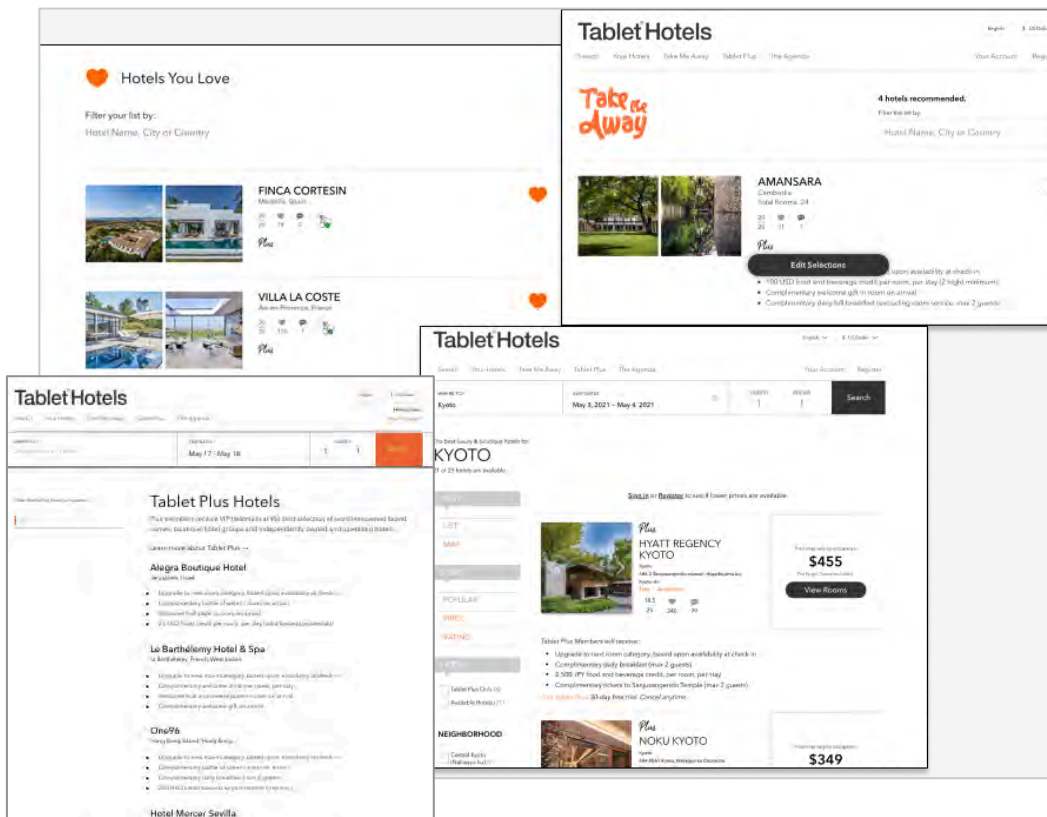
Consistency:

[Hotel Data] Hotel list pages such as "Hotels You Love", "Take Me Away" results, and search results are inconsistent.

RECOMMENDATION - There should be one page template to accommodate these different ways of listing hotels. **

UX Recommendations & Thought Starters

Search Criteria Matrix

Key boxes: **Initial Search Input** | **Filter** | **Both**

(red note, top right) Options in TMA should be the same ones as the filters after search

|	AMERICAN EXPRESS	RELAIS & CHATEAUX	Mr & Mrs Smith	KIWI COLLECTION	Tablet Hotels
BEFORE Search	• Region • [search] Location (by City, State, Country) • Ambiance • Environment • Guest experience (Family friendly) • Features & Activities (Spa on-site) • Hotel Finder • Destinations • Our Brands • Get Inspired • Your Benefits	• Region (Canada, US, etc.) • [Search] Location (City, State, Country) • [Search] Hotel / Restaurant • ~~[Search] Restaurant~~ • [Search] Villa • ~~[Search] Chef~~ • Dates • Number of Rooms • Occupancy • Destinations • Itineraries • Experiences • Special Offers	• [Search] Destination (City, State, Country) • [Search] Facilities (Restaurant, Pool, etc.) • [Search] Collections (Spa hotels, Hotels for Yoga, etc.) • Dates • Number of Rooms • Occupancy • Type (Hotels, Villas) • Guest Experience (Family, Honeymoons) • Inspirations (Castles and Manors, Faraway Stays, Alfresco, Best Hotels for Proposals, Hotels w/ Romantic Restaurants) • Offers	• [Search] Destination (City, State, Country) or Hotel • Dates • Number of Rooms • Occupancy	• [Search] Destination (City, State, Country) or Hotel • Dates • Number of Rooms • Occupancy **Take Me Away** • Location (Close by, Driving Distance) • Destination (City, State, Country) • Setting (Beach, City, Coastal, Countryside, etc.) • Interests (Spa, Adventure, Business, etc.) • Style (Contemporary Classic, Cutting Edge, etc.) • Vibe (Secluded, Quiet, Lively, Happening)
AFTER Search *(Additional Filters)*	• Dates • Number of Rooms • Occupancy **SORT** (N/A) **Experience Credit** • Food & Beverages • Spa Services • Round of Golf • Private Transfer • Property Credit • Card Member Favorite Only	**SORT** (N/A)	• Explore (new search) *(Depending on Results)* • Collections • Facilities • Guest Experience • Destination **SORT** Price (Low, High) • Show (10, 25, 50) • Currency (USD, AUD, etc.) • Tax (Include, Exclude)	• Limited Time Offers • Extras (Visa Perks, Kiwi Perks) • Wow Picks • Setting (City) • Style (Boutique, Classic, etc.) • Interests (Art/Cultural, Bus., Dining, Family, etc.) • Brand (Fairmont, Four Seasons, Park Hyatt, etc.) • Affiliate (Design Hotels, etc.) **SORT** • Featured • Price (Low, High) • Recently Added • Kiwi Rating • Alphabetical	• Tablet Plus Only • Available Hotels • Neighborhoods (Chelsea, Chinatown, etc.) • Atmosphere (Happening, Lively, Quiet) • Style (Contemporary Classic, Cutting Edge,) **SORT** • Deals • Popular • Price • Rating
NOTES	Prices are only displayed after Dates, Number of Rooms and Occupancy are entered.	Prices are always displayed since Dates, Number of Rooms and Occupancy are required	Prices are always displayed since Dates, Number of Rooms and Occupancy are required	Prices are always displayed since Dates, Number of Rooms and Occupancy are required	Prices are only displayed after Dates, Number of Rooms and Occupancy are

UX Recommendations / Search Widget
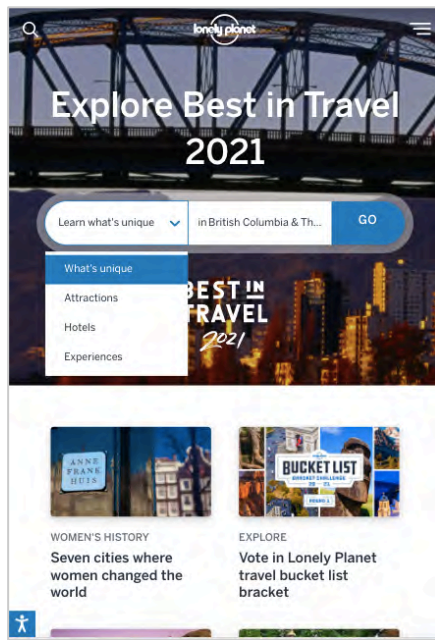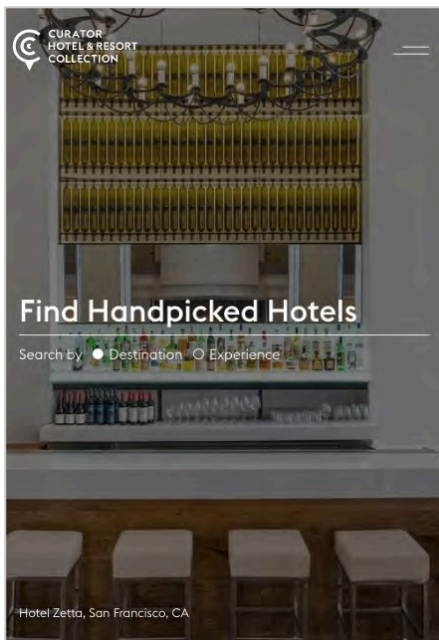
Both of these options would allow for the flexibility of letting the user enter the following:

1. Destination first (Homepage Search)

2. Experience (TMA Search)

UX Recommendations / Search Results

We think this option works well for the following reasons:

- **[Filters]** Format of the filters here allows for consistency with the search filters in terms of volume

- **[Filters]** Number of hotels matching the filters is visible while the user changes the filters

- **[Member Perks]** Provides visibility into what experience credits (member benefits) are available with the resulting hotels list.

- **[Various Features]** View Map, Filters and Experience Credits have different (1) design treatments and (2) placements
NOTE: "Filter Results" could become "Filter" to allow for more room to add "Sort"

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Next Steps

- AUX + Tablet to do Discovery Workshop– by EOD **Thursday 3/18**
  - Usability Enhancement Matrix
  - Prioritize UX Recommendations
- AUX produce Approach Document and Test Plan – **3/19 – 3/23**
- AUX + Tablet Meeting to Review Approach Plan on – **3/24**

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Appendix

- **Search Experience Flow**

- **Other place to find interesting hotels**– high-level findings from reviewing the below sites:
  - The Leading Hotels of the World: https://www.lhw.com/
  - Design Hotels: https://www.designhotels.com/
  - Small Luxury Hotels of the World: https://slh.com/
  - Curator Hotel and Resort Collection: https://www.curatorhotelsandresorts.com/
  - Hip Hotels: https://www.hiphotels.com/
  - Skylark: https://skylark.com/destinations

The Leading Hotels of the World

The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. is a collection of authentic and uncommon luxury hotels. Comprised of more than 400 hotels in over 80 countries, our hotels embody the very essence of their destinations. Offering varied styles of architecture and design, and immersive cultural experiences delivered by passionate people, our collection is curated for the curious traveler in search of their next discovery.

- Homepage: Emotional focused with experience from home section and real traveler stories/trips.

- Offers page: Dedicate page with marketing offer on hotels.

- Too many ways to browse hotels on the navigation: new, by interests, itineraries, etc.)
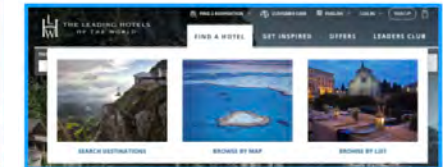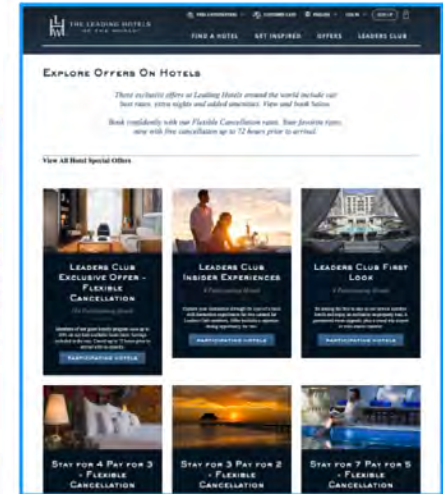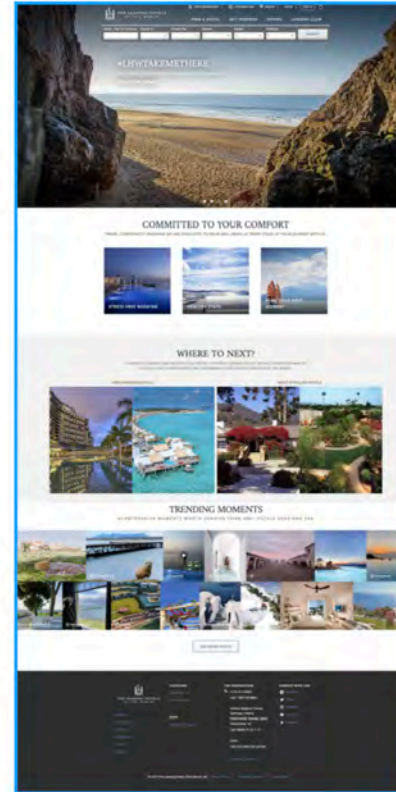
Design Hotels

Design hotels is an unrivalled global community for design, architecture, and original hospitality experience. It has a portfolio of 300+ privately owned and operated hotels that reflect the vision of independent hotelier - or "Originals - with a passion for culturally-rooted hospitality and cutting-edge design and architecture.

- Offers page prompts user to sign up to see exclusive community deals on the hotel search results page.

- Search results page uses a horizontal filtering. Search options are scalable and live within "More Filters" button.

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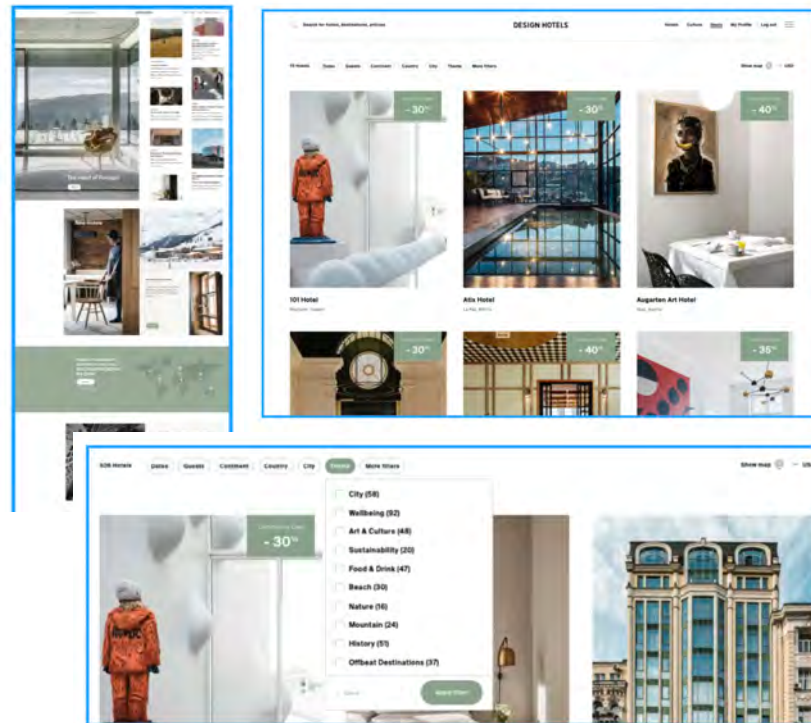
Small Luxury Hotels of the World

Small Luxury Hotels of the World™ (SLH) is the most desirable community of independently minded travelers and independently spirited hotels in the world.
We've personally visited, verified and vetted every single one of our 520 hotels in more than 90 countries – each one is anti-chain and anti-same.

- Personalization on the homepage – Recommendations for you travel "From City to Sun" category module.

- About SLH Storytelling module – Pioneers in Boutique Luxury.

- Exclusive Loyalty club membership benefits is highlight on the bottom of the homepage.

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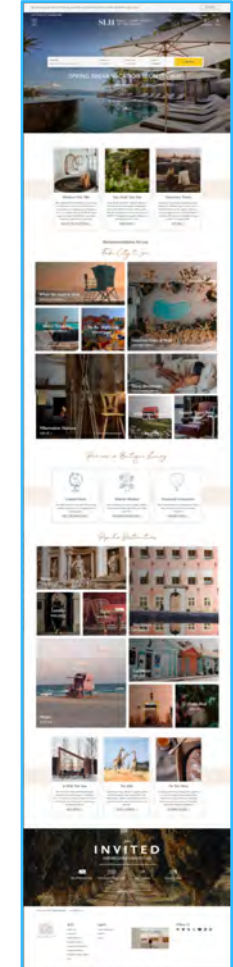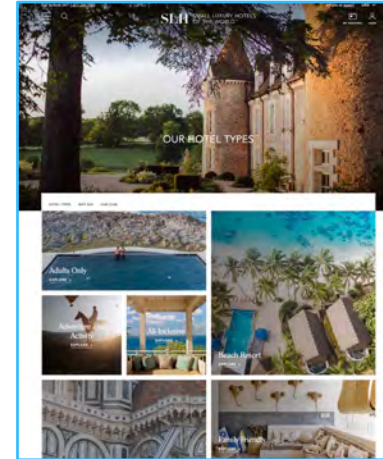
Curator Hotel & Resort Collection

Curator Hotel & Resort Collection is all about the independents. We're here for the kind of guest who loves unique experiences, and the kind of hotel that loves to offer them.

- Persistent browse hotel bar throughout the website. Full screen browse functionality – Search by Destination or Experience.

- Hamburger menu hides the functionality to search hotels by location and hotel names.

- Interesting browsing "hotel types" tags on homepage. A tag links to hotel detail page.
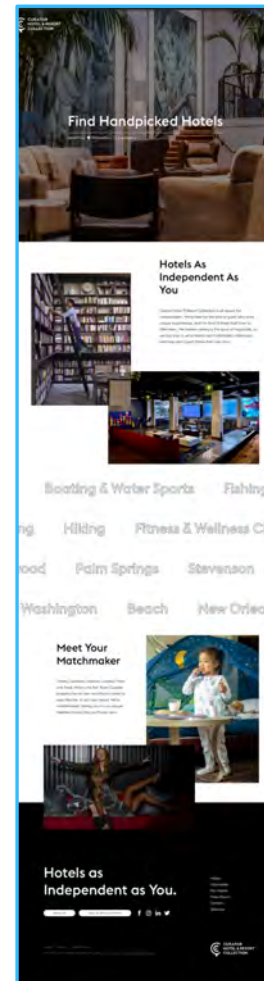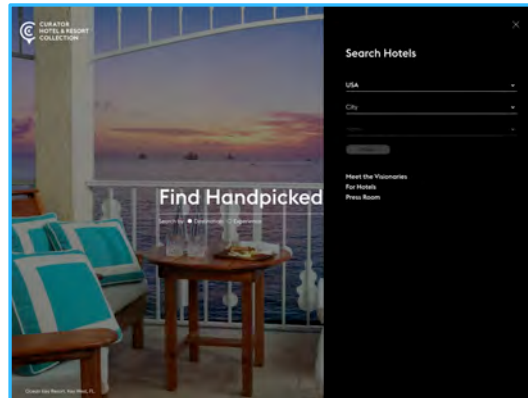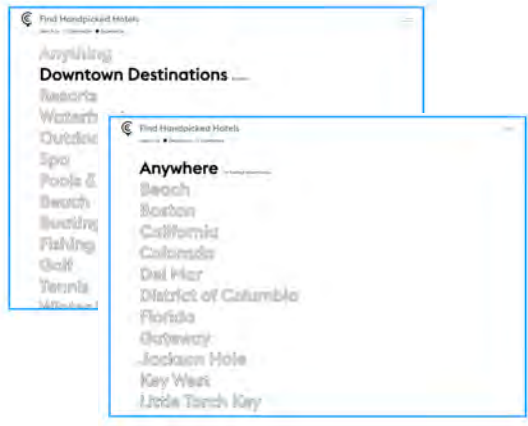
Hip Hotels

A collection of of the most unique hotels around the world. HIP stands for Highly Individual Places.
It offers travelers an opportunity to explore these hidden gems and make travel exciting and rewarding.
Founded in 1990 by an award winning photographer, Herbert Ypma. His travel books sold over 20 million books in over 11 languages.

- Explore Hotel Collection - Find hotel by Inspiration, Country or City/Region

- Hotels Stories - travel tips and recommendations

- Hotel offers and hotel deals page. Deals grouped by locations.

- Search input field autosuggest and displays location, hotel names, articles/blog keywords.