

空耀 kūyō

CASE STUDY | Ahnika Pruitt

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INTRODUCTION

The Idea Behind the project



What is Kūyō?

Kūyō is a conceptual Japanese rooftop dining experience designed as both a restaurant brand and a mobile reservation app. It blends modern Japanese cuisine, skyline views, and seamless tech. All wrapped in an elevated brand that feels refined, serene, and unforgettable.

Why a Japanese rooftop restaurant app?

This idea started as a fictional restaurant concept for a UX certification project. I created detailed app wireframes focused on making the reservation experience feel smooth, modern, and luxurious. But I didn't want to stop at UX. I saw the potential to turn this into a full brand. One that could capture everything I loved about the atmosphere of rooftop dining, Japanese food culture, and visual storytelling.



The Spark Behind Kūyō

Once the initial app wireframes were complete, I wanted to take the concept further and flesh it out as a fully branded experience. I conducted user research and testing to validate the app's flow, making sure it felt smooth, intuitive, and user-friendly. Feedback from testers helped me refine the structure and make thoughtful UX decisions.

At the same time, I started visualizing Kūyō as a real place. I imagined a rooftop restaurant in Columbus with moody lighting, cherry blossoms, and elevated Japanese flavors. That vision became the foundation for everything that followed, including the name.



Naming the Brand, Defining the Vibe

When searching for the right name, I wanted something that captured the feeling of dining under a glowing sky. It needed to be atmospheric, a little mysterious, and quietly radiant.

I discovered the kanji combination 空陽, read as Kūyō. The first character, 空 (kū), means sky or emptiness. The second, 陽 (yō), means sunlight or warmth. Together, they suggest a poetic idea of sky radiance. Subtle light drifting through the evening sky.

The name felt like the perfect match for a rooftop dining experience. It evokes the warm glow of city lights, the calm energy of twilight, and the elevated tone of the brand. Kūyō became more than just a name. It defined the feeling I wanted people to have the moment they arrived.





STRATEGY

Building a concept grounded in people, purpose, and experience.



Competitive Analysis

In researching the Columbus restaurant market, I drew inspiration from Mandrake Rooftop, one of the city's most well-known upscale rooftop destinations. While Mandrake is admired for its vibrant atmosphere and panoramic views, I noticed key opportunities for innovation that Kūyō could uniquely fulfill.

Most high-end restaurants in Columbus, including Mandrake, prioritize ambiance and social experience, but few, if any, offer an integrated app that allows customers to reserve a table, pre-order food, and skip the wait entirely.

In fact, most restaurants either don't have a native app at all or rely on third-party services like DoorDash, Uber Eats, or OpenTable, which creates a fragmented and impersonal experience. Kūyō changes that by offering a unified platform that puts control in the guest's hands, from dining preferences to arrival timing.



Target Audience

Kūyō is designed for modern diners who seek more than just a meal. They want an experience. Our core audience values aesthetics, convenience, and cultural richness, and they're drawn to elevated environments where every detail feels intentional.

Primary Demographic

1. Ages 21–40
2. Urban professionals, creatives, and design-conscious diners
3. Tech-savvy and mobile-first
4. Columbus-based or surrounding metro areas
5. Interested in Japanese cuisine, rooftop settings, and curated experiences





BUILDING THE BRAND

Crafting a visual and emotional identity from concept to execution.

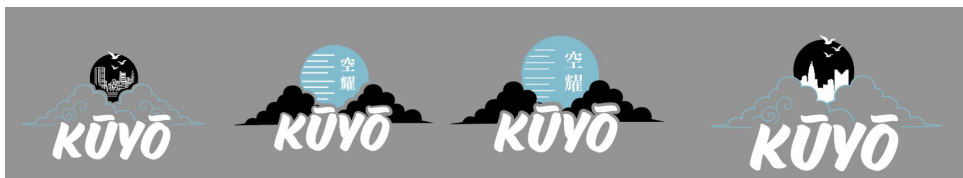


MOOD BOARD



LOGO DEVELOPMENT

Kūyō Kūyō
Kūyō KŪYŌ
 kūyō Kūyō



空耀 KŪYŌ KŪYŌ 空耀
 空耀 KŪYŌ KŪYŌ 空耀



FINAL LOGO



MONTERRAT

abcdefghijklmn
opqrstuvwxyz

MONTERRAT

ABCDEFGHIJKL
MNOPQRSTUV
WXYZ

P22 FLW Exhibition

ABCDEFGH#IJKLMN
OPQRSTUVWXYZ

ヒラギノ明朝 Pro

空
耀

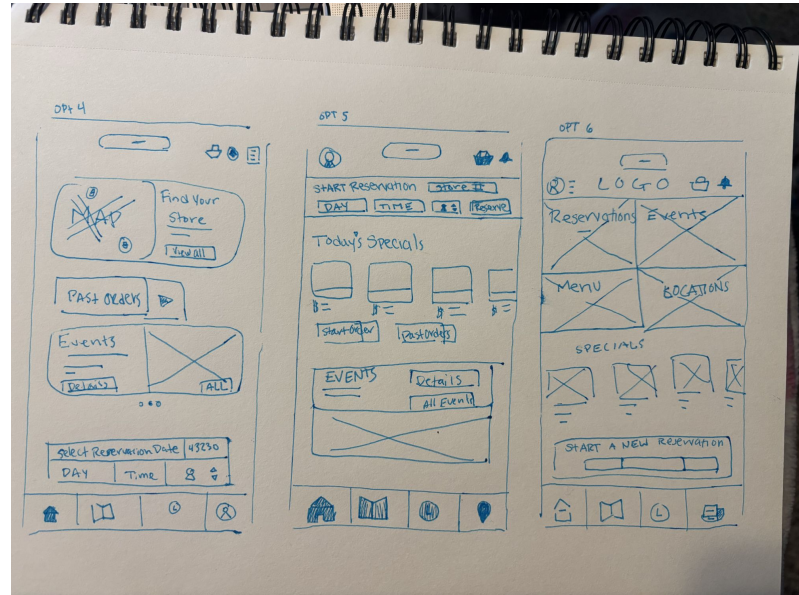
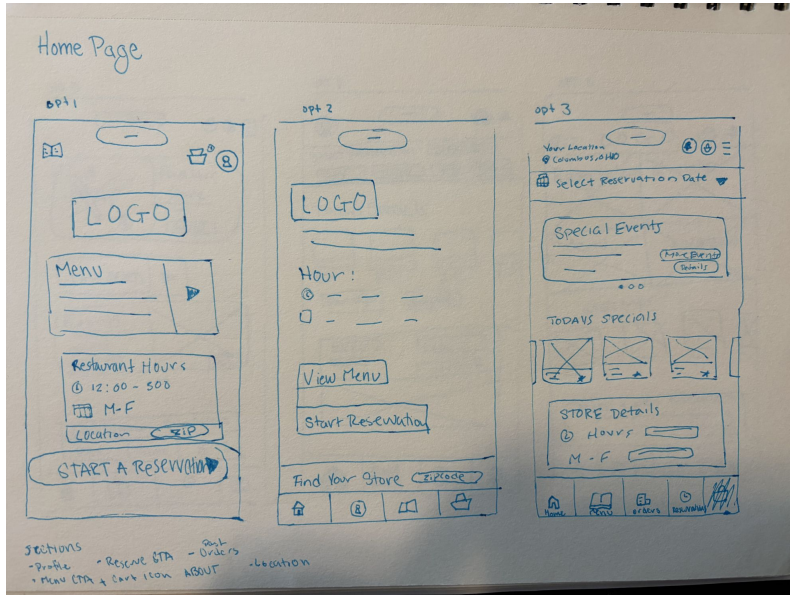


DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

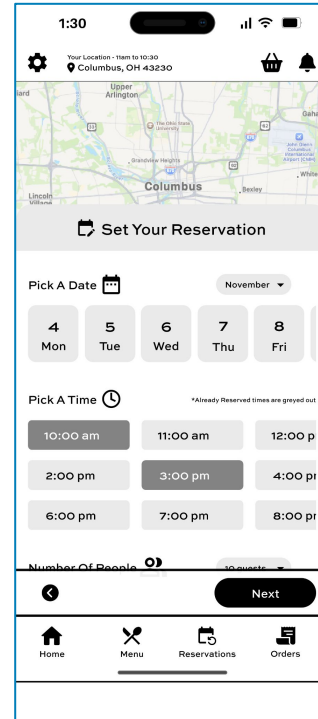
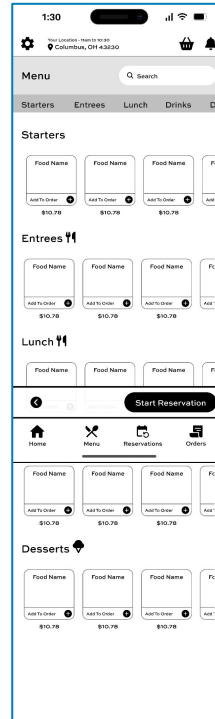
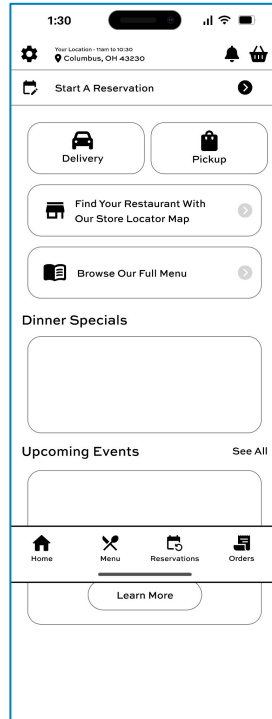
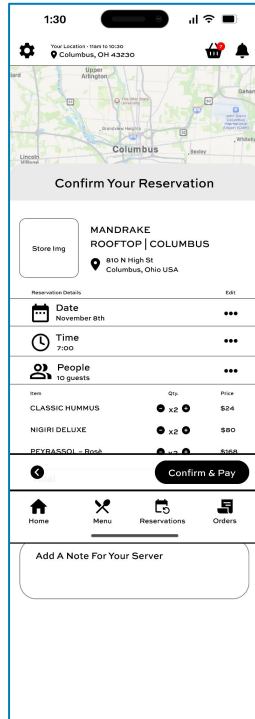
Designing the tools to bring Kūyō to life, online and in hand.



WIREFRAMES



LOW-FIDELITY PROTOTYPE



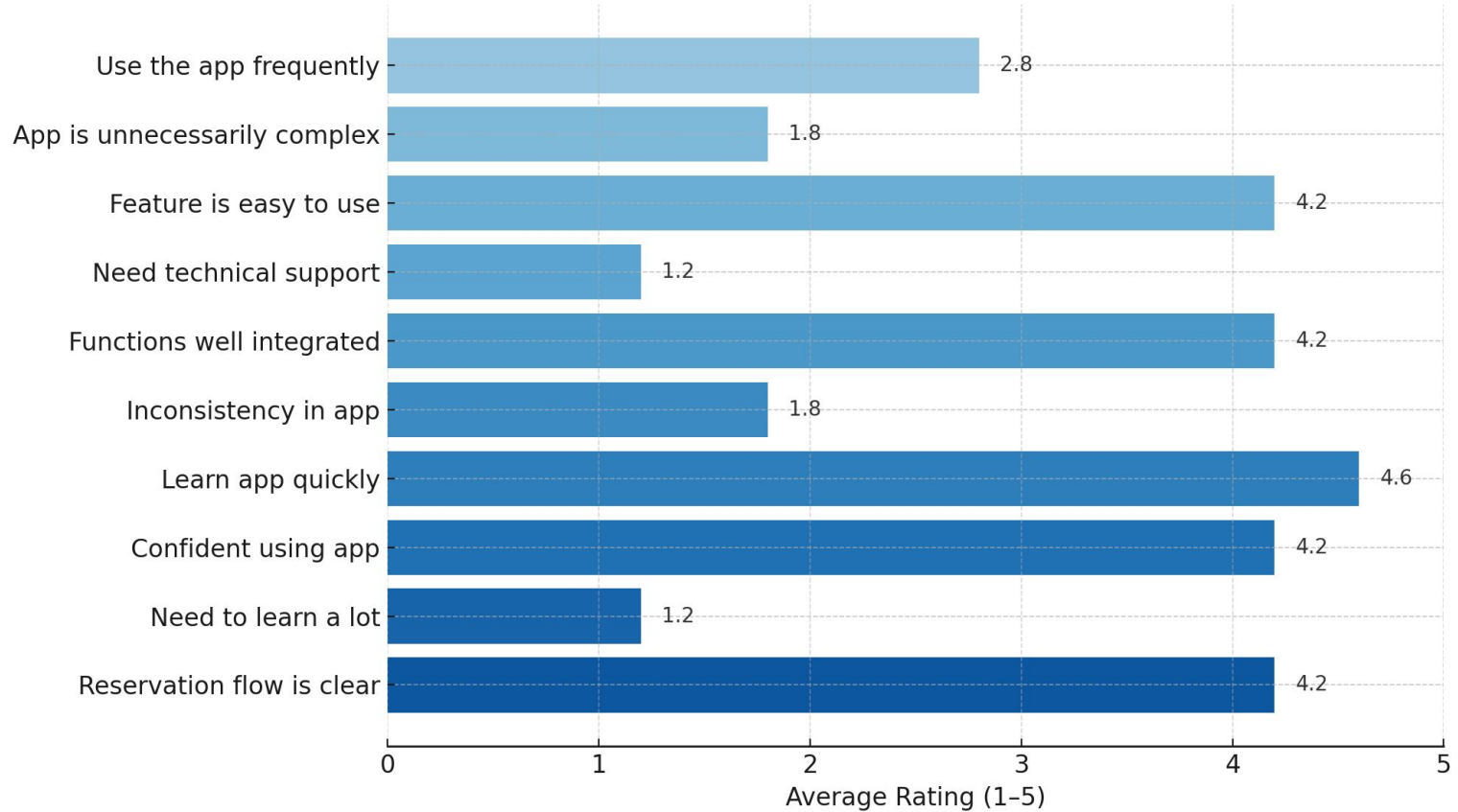


USER TESTING

Testing The User Flow



KŪYŌ App Usability Testing Summary





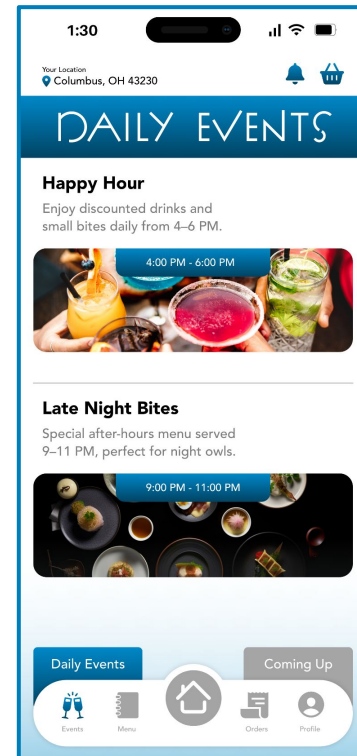
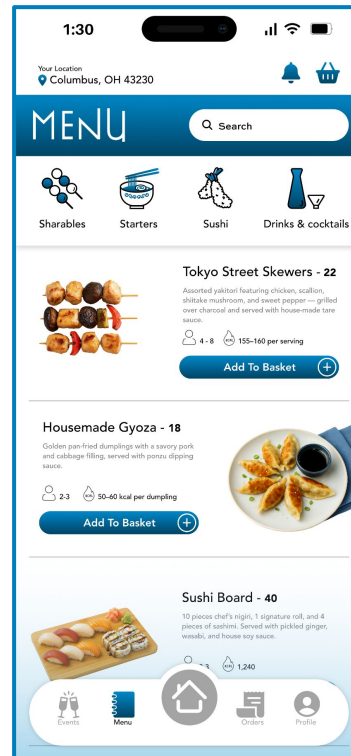
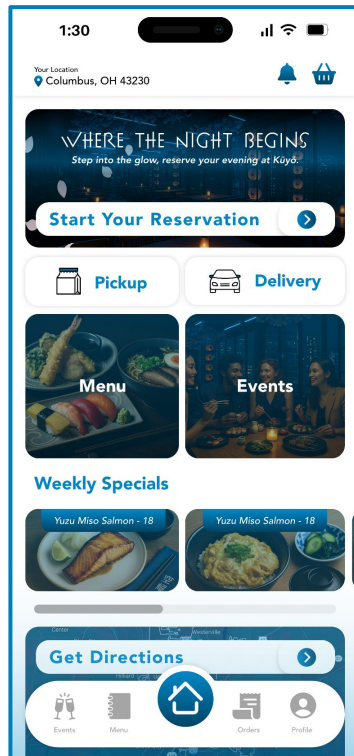
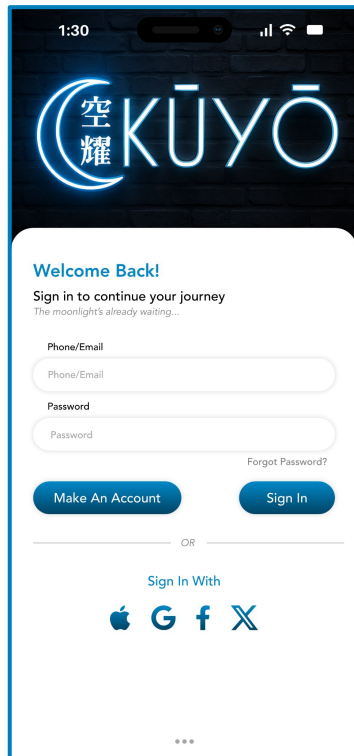
FINAL DESIGN

The App & Landing Page



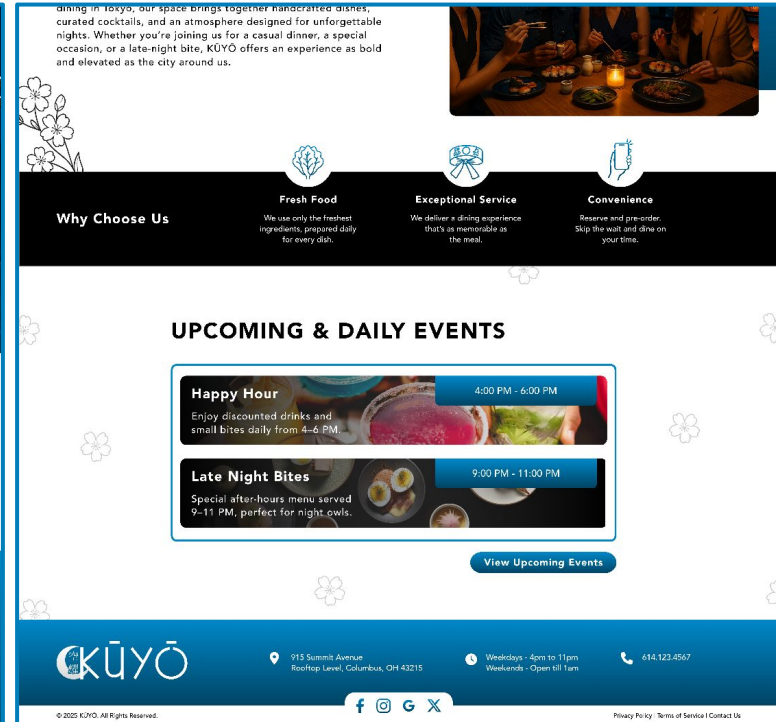
APP PROTOTYPE

[Prototype link](#)



LANDING PAGE

[Prototype link](#)



MOCKUPS



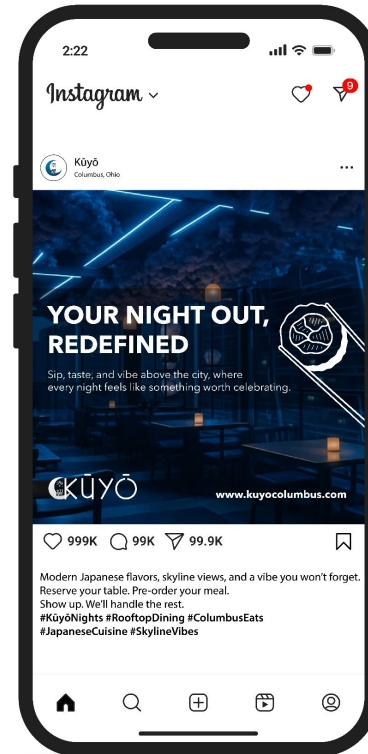


SOCIAL MEDIA

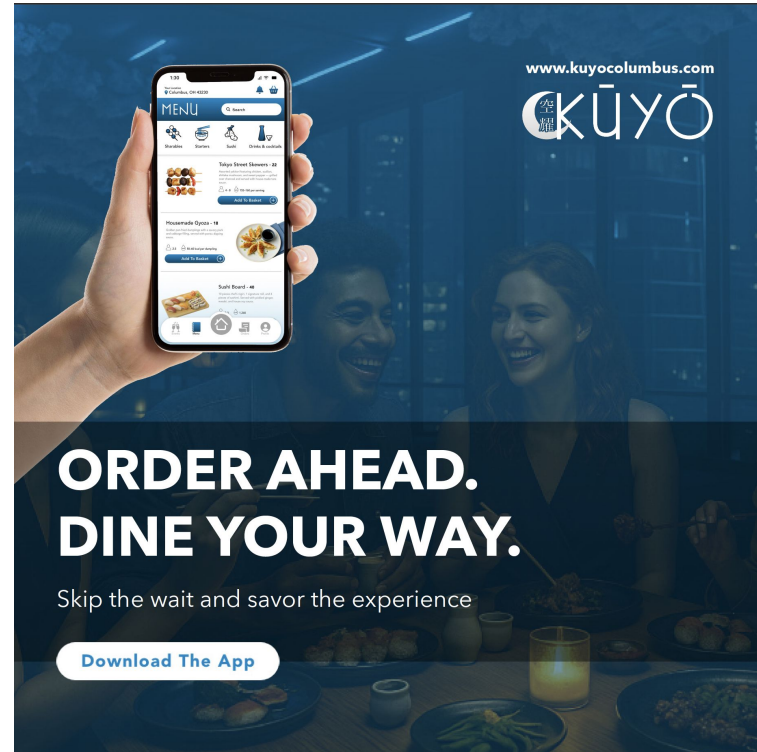
Instagram Posts



INSTAGRAM POSTS



INSTAGRAM POSTS



THANKYOU

