GASTROBAR · KIROVA 10 · YAROSLAVL

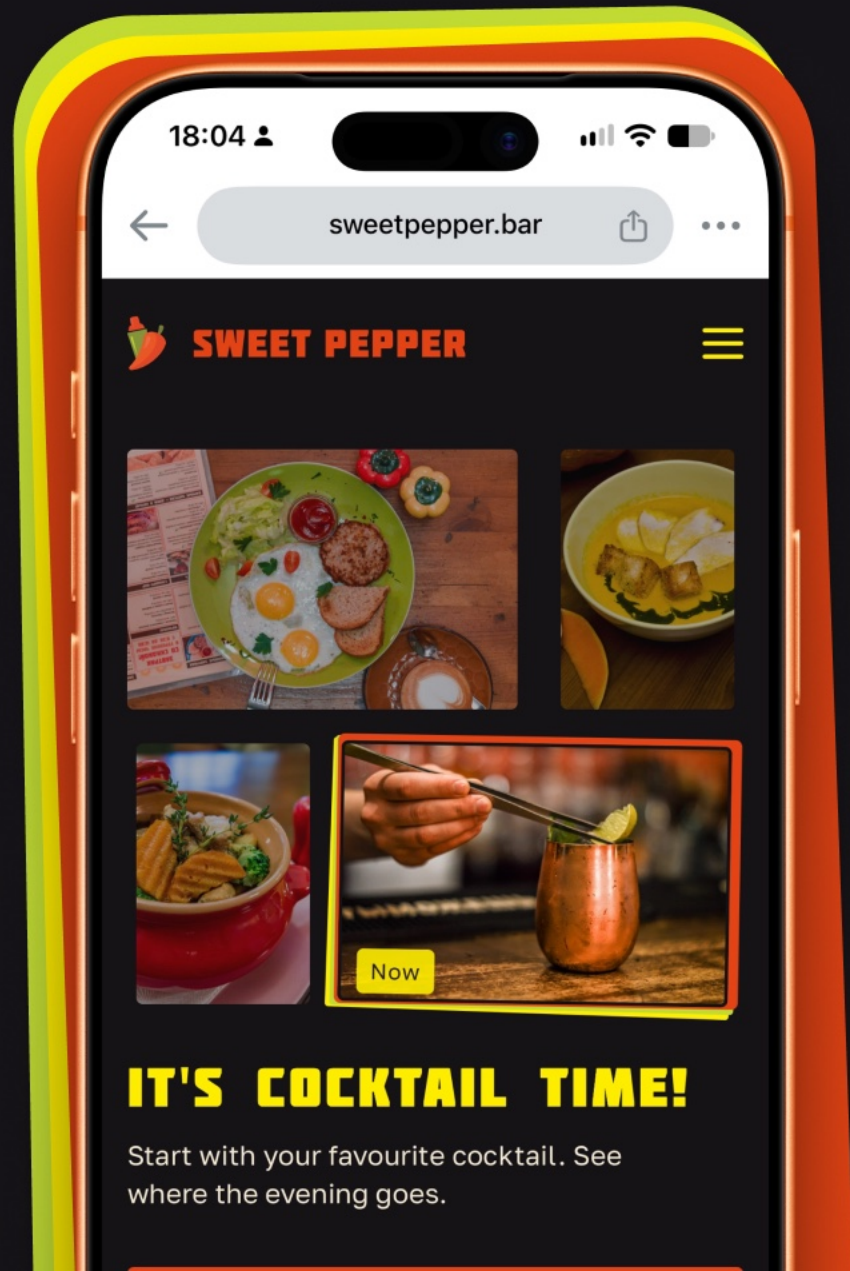
# SWEET PEPPER

## BRAND & UX CASE STUDY

Systemizing a beloved but chaotic gastrobar identity, then designing and building a full website that changes with the time of day.

- ON THE BAR'S DOMAIN · RU + EN

Role: Brand & Web Designer · Timeline: Jun–Oct 2026 · Updated Oct 22



CONTENTS

# SIX CHAPTERS, AS THEY HAPPENED


01 The story — one venue, four identities, a 50/50 split

02 Design system — three hues, two faces, a ledger of rules

03 Strategy — heat = time, two languages, six pages

04 Figma stage — the hero that outlived its widget

05 Building with AI — files steer, the browser is the bench

06 Real use — the law, the loader's voice, what's next





THE STORY




DESIGN SYSTEM




STRATEGY




FIGMA STAGE




BUILDING WITH AI




REAL USE

CHAPTER 1 OF 6

# THE STORY

THE STORY · CONTEXT

# A HYBRID, NOT A TEMPLATE

Sweet Pepper isn't a café that also serves drinks, or a bar that does brunch on weekends. It was built from day one to run breakfast, business lunch, after-work drinks, and late-night cocktails with equal intentionality — a 50/50 kitchen-to-bar revenue split, maintained deliberately for years.

That structural duality — one venue, four distinct daily identities — became the central design problem: how does a single homepage represent a breakfast spot, a lunch destination, an evening bar, and a late-night hang without picking one and alienating the rest?

**4.6/5**
Google rating · 1,300+ reviews

**50/50**
Kitchen-to-bar revenue split

**8:30-LATE**
Daily operating window





THE STORY · THE CHALLENGE

# FOUR PROBLEMS, ONE HOMEPAGE

## 01

### NO SYSTEM, JUST ARTIFACTS

12 years of logos, posters, and menus existed — but no shared color logic, no type hierarchy, no rules for reuse.

## 02

### A PALETTE THAT FIGHTS ITSELF

Chili red, lime, and lemon are loud individually. Left unsystematized, saturated color-on-color fails contrast and fatigues the eye.

## 03

### ONE VENUE, FOUR IDENTITIES

Breakfast, lunch, evening bar, and late-night party each need different tone, imagery, and CTA — inside a single hero.

## 04

### GENERIC TEMPLATE GRAVITY

Early drafts kept defaulting to stock restaurant-site patterns: hero photo + headline + card grid — nothing that felt like this specific bar.

CHAPTER 2 OF 6

# DESIGN SYSTEM

# A LITTLE COSY.
# A LITTLE SPICY.

Warm, soulful, familiar meets loud, playful, a little rough.
Good food & drink since 2014. Shake & Cook.

## 01 / Colour System

### RED · CHILI

| Paprika | Chili | Deep Chili |
|---|---|---|
| #EF6D44 | #E34314 | #9B2705 |

### GREEN · LIME

| Light Lime | Lime | Avocado | Olive | Deep Olive |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| #D4E671 | #C1DB34 | #869438 | #737D3A | #626B31 |

### YELLOW · LEMON

| Lemon | Cream |
|---|---|
| #FFED00 | #FFF689 |

### NEUTRAL GROUNDS

| Peppercorn | Parchment | Paper |
|---|---|---|
| #151317 | #F3E9D2 | #FCF7E8 |

## 02 / Typography

**MOLOT**

The signature heavy, condensed voice. Short all-caps headlines only.

Golos Text

The readable voice for body, menus and UI. Warm, clear, understated.

## 03 / Day & Night Modes

DAY · KITCHEN

**COME HUNGRY**

Your table. Your favourites.

Warm, soft, still bold

NIGHT · BAR

**STAY LATE**

Your next round starts here.

Bold, lively, still welcoming

## 04 / Spacing

Edges, gaps and icon sizes: multiples of 4px.

4 8 12 16 24 32

## 05 / Photography

Photography direction: shoot in the bar. Warm directional light, shallow depth of field.

# KEEP THE MARK, BUILD AROUND IT

Guests had known the chili-and-shaker mark for twelve years, so nothing was redrawn. It was systemized: six lockups, minimum sizes, and one clear-space unit — h, the height of the shaker mark.




Horizontal — ½ h clear space on every side




Stamp — ¼ h, equal radial clearance

# BALANCE EVERYONE CAN SEE

A softer green felt balanced to me, and red beside olive is the brand's look. Measured, both failed someone.

## BEYOND MY OWN EYES




Typical vision




Protanopia, simulated

**2.76 → 5.35**

Day menu prices, contrast ratio

Olive prices failed AA in the audit; the build then drifted to an even lighter green. Now Deep Olive, one step down the same hue line.

**ΔE 78 → 10**

Chili vs Olive, under protanopia

The palette wasn't colour-blind safe, so state never rides on colour alone: the current section is filled, the rest are outlined.

DESIGN SYSTEM · STYLE GUIDE

# THE SYSTEM SHIPS AS A PRODUCT

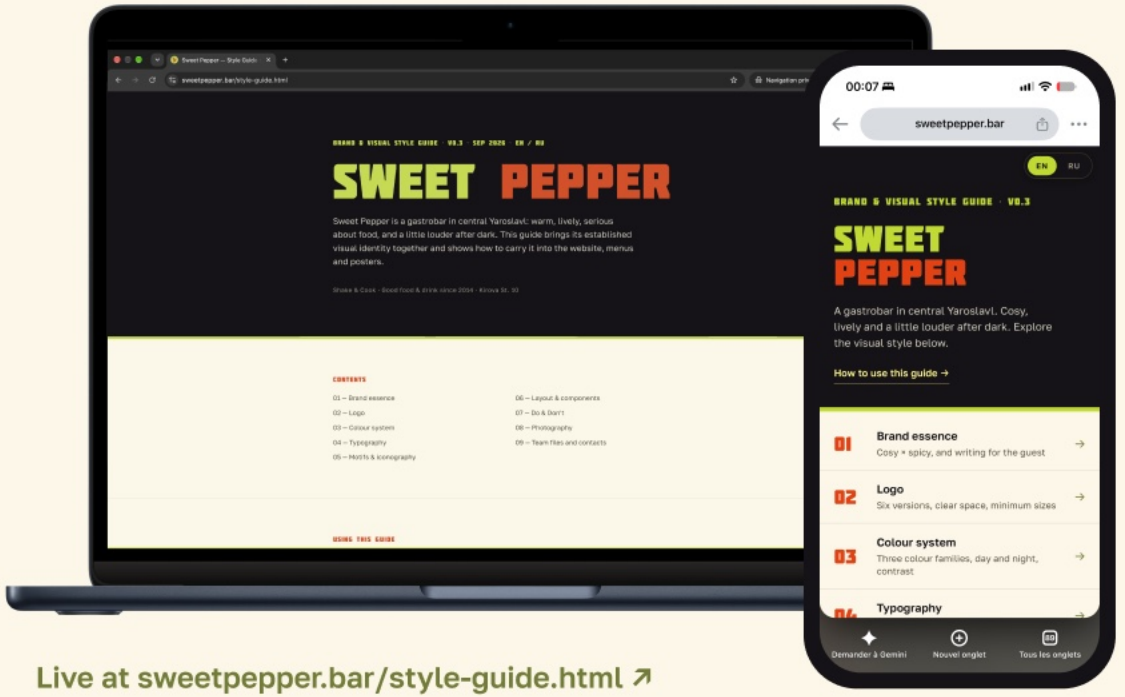
Written for the people who use it: when a teammate missed the clear-space rule in text, it became a drawn figure.

## OPEN TO THE WHOLE TEAM

A link, not a file. Any new designer — or the floor team posting to social media from their phones — opens it at sweetpepper.bar. Under 768px it turns into an app, one section per screen, and saves to the home screen.

## FILES, VALUES, A CONTACT

Every logo copies as SVG straight from the page. The shared folder holds the 2026 logo set with clear-space guides, the icons, the photos and both fonts. Colour values, type sizes and who to ask, all in one place.




Live at sweetpepper.bar/style-guide.html ↗

CHAPTER 3 OF 6

# STRATEGY

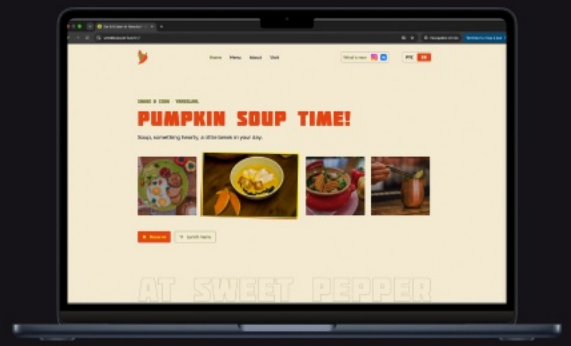
STRATEGY · HEAT = TIME

# HAPPY HOURS DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK

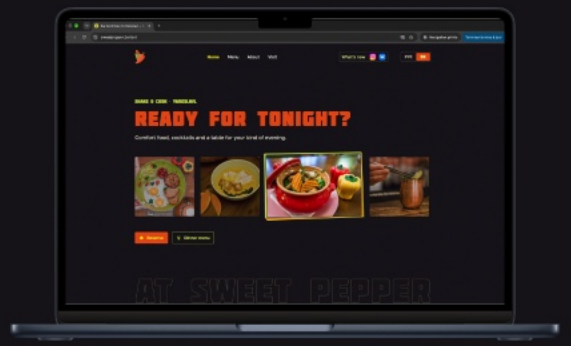
“The happy don’t watch the clock,” goes the Russian saying, and good service works the same way. So the site never shows one: it follows the guest’s own time, and heat stands in for the hours.



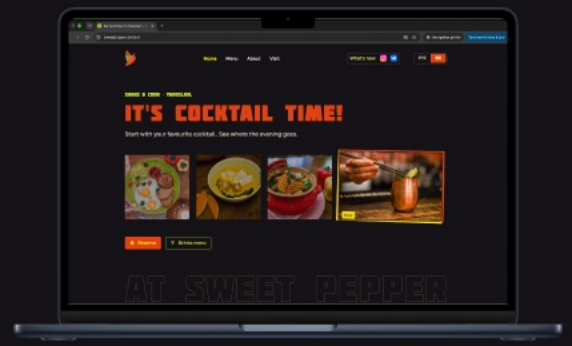

**BREAKFAST** mild




**LUNCH** warm




**DINNER** spicy




**PARTY** on fire


Home
Menu
About
Visit
SHAKE & COOK · YAROSLAVL
READY FOR TONIGHT?
Comfort food, cocktails and a table for your kind of evening.
Reserve
Dinner menu
AT SWEET PEPPER

STRATEGY · TWO LANGUAGES

# SHIPPING IN TWO LANGUAGES

## A VOICE, NOT A TRANSLATION

### The Russian layer is a system

A voice document turns the bar's own social-media voice into rules, with a test for every new line. RU and EN are register twins: the wink carries over, never the words.

### A contradiction, held openly

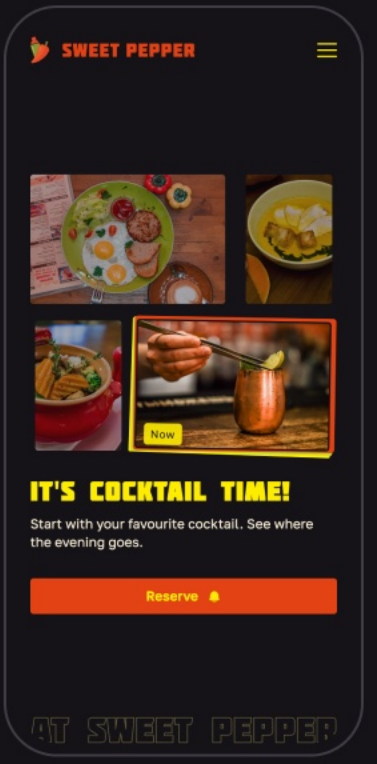
The guest-first rule and the venue's natural «мы» clash harder in Russian. The voice doc keeps that tension in view instead of ruling on it.

### Even the display layer is bilingual

The outlined Molot connectors have Russian lines of their own, and shorter ones for phones.




Russian — «Время коктейлей!»




English — “It’s cocktail time!”

STRATEGY · SITEMAP

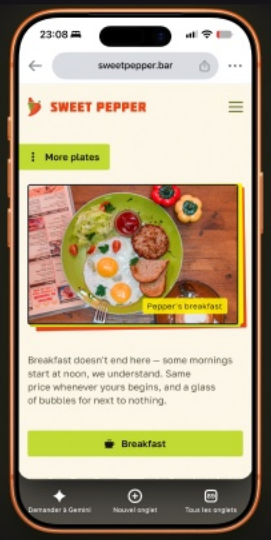
# SIX PAGES, ONE SYSTEM

Each in Russian and English, plus vacancies, legal pages and the 404.



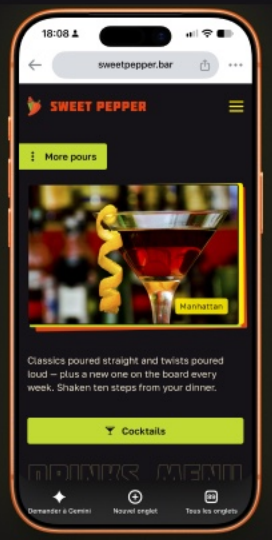

## HOME

Follows the hour




## KITCHEN MENU

Night from 17:00




## BAR MENU

Dark at any hour




## ABOUT

Story, team, guests




## VISIT

Find us, book us




## DOCUMENTS

Privacy, in plain words

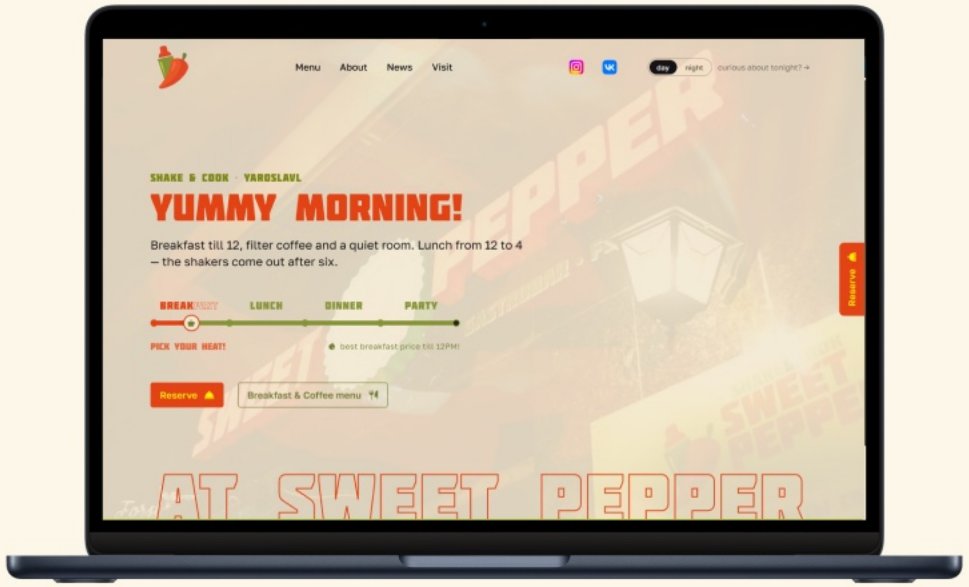
CHAPTER 4 OF 6

# FIGMA STAGE

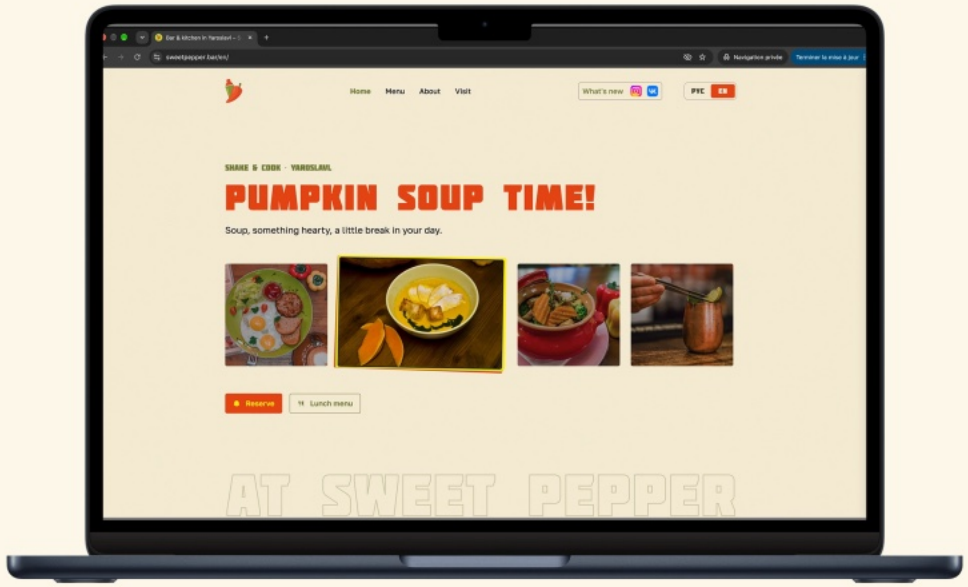
FIGMA STAGE · THE HERO

# THE SLIDER LOST THE TEST

Six pieces of chrome to say one thing: a participant called it “too complicated”. A four-tile photo grid won the A/B, and heat = time survived the swap.




BEFORE — THE HEAT SLIDER, JULY




AFTER — THE TILE GRID, LIVE

FIGMA STAGE · MENU PAGE

# TESTED, NOT GUESSED

## WON — SIDE-NAV POSTER

### All sections visible at once

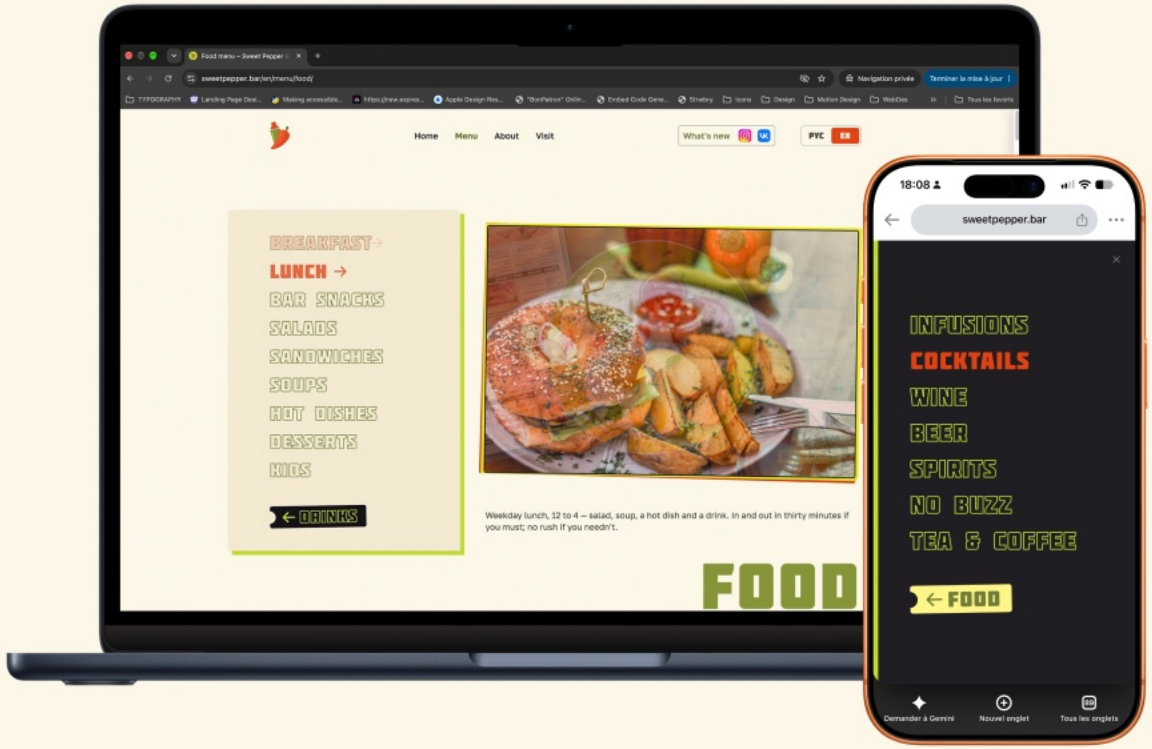
The side-nav poster won the stakeholder A/B and the usability test on the page's KPI: time-to-dish.

### Two independent axes

Food or drinks, day or night — they never lock. Kitchen content at 9 pm is kitchen content in night clothes.

### Soups: a separate section

Guests found soups under Hot dishes but said they don't belong there, so the web menu gives them their own section.



FIGMA STAGE · SIGNATURE COMPONENTS

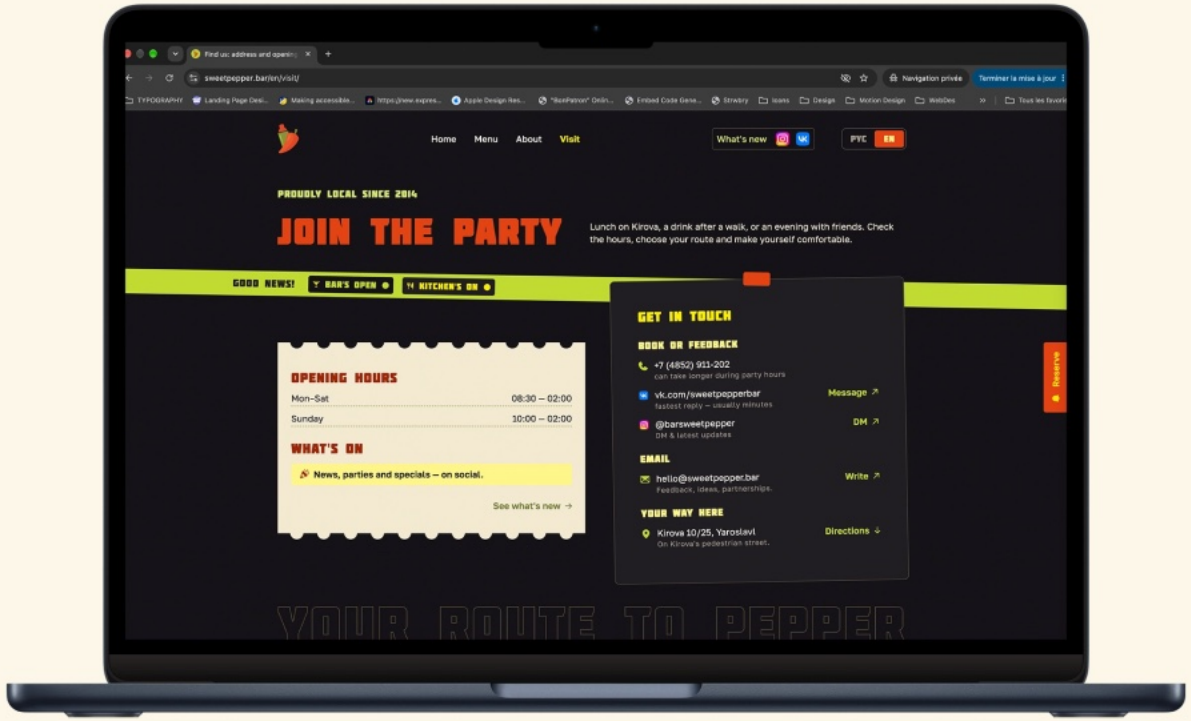
# THE INTERFACE ANSWERS LIKE THE BAR

## THE BARTENDER'S TICKET

An order slip the interface “prints” to answer the guest. Always Paper, day or night, so it is the brightest thing on screen, one per view. The reply is a person speaking, never a template.

## ONE MOTION LANGUAGE

Outline → fill is the one state change everywhere: tiles, nav words, the word cloud. Untouched sections demo themselves, one spring curve moves everything, and reduced motion keeps the states without the theatre.



FIGMA STAGE · COMPONENTS

# EVERY STATE, DRAWN FIRST

Before any code: every button, field and switch as a component, in each state, by day and by night.

## BUTTONS



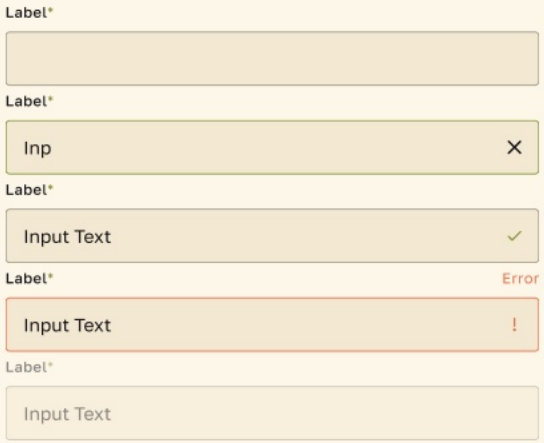

Primary and secondary · rest, hover, pressed

## CHIPS



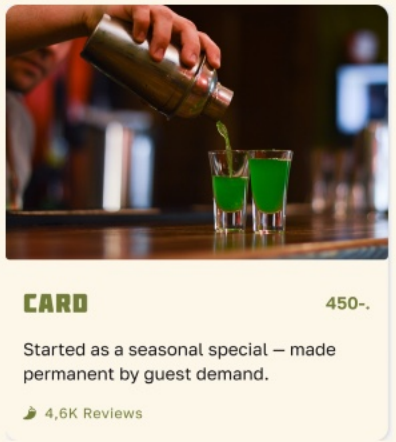

Rest, hover, pressed

## FORM FIELD




Empty, typing, passed, error, disabled

## CARD




One recipe for every card

## ICONS



57 in the set · Phosphor Fill + bespoke

CHAPTER 5 OF 6

# BUILDING WITH AI

BUILDING WITH AI · SOURCE OF TRUTH

# CURATED BY HAND, READ BY MACHINES

design.md grew with every decision, each change dated and reasoned. Every AI session reads it first.

design.md — §2.2 Ramps & tokens · Green line

```
60
61 **Green line**
62
63 | Token | Hex | Role |
64 |---|---|---|
65 | Light Lime | `#D4E671` | lightest green tint |
66 | Lime | `#C1DB34` | signature green (cocktail) |
67 | Avocado | `#869438` | support green |
68 | Olive | `#737D3A` | secondary green (`--accent-2` by day: eyebrows, links, years) |
69 | Deep Olive | `#626B31` | **prices** — light grounds only, day text (Oct 2026) |
70
71 **Deep Olive `#626B31` — added (22 Oct 2026), because a job appeared.** Prices are small
   text (Golos SemiBold 16), and the audit had flagged Olive at 3.68 : 1 on Parchment (`docs-
   audit.md` A4); the build had meanwhile drifted to Avocado — **3.11 : 1 on Paper, 2.76 on
   Parchment, 2.98 on Cream**. Deep Olive is one step down Olive's own hue line (OKLCH h 116.5,
   chroma scaled with lightness, §2.1): **5.35 on Paper, 5.13 on Cream, 4.74 on Lemon, 4.74 on
   Parchment**. Like Deep Chili it is a **light-ground token**: 3.67 on Lime, 2.89 on Soft
   Peppercorn — never there. Night prices stay **Avocado** (4.97 on Soft Peppercorn, 5.54 on
   Peppercorn); the add-on cards, which stay Cream at night, keep Deep Olive at every hour. Not
   the removed Dark Olive below — a different value with a different job.
72
73 **Dark Olive `#242614` — removed (Jul 2026).** Tested as a dark-surface alternative and
   failed …
```

§2.2 after the price fix: the change marked, the reason written.

**42**
commits to one file since September

**10K**
words, up from 4.9k in seven weeks

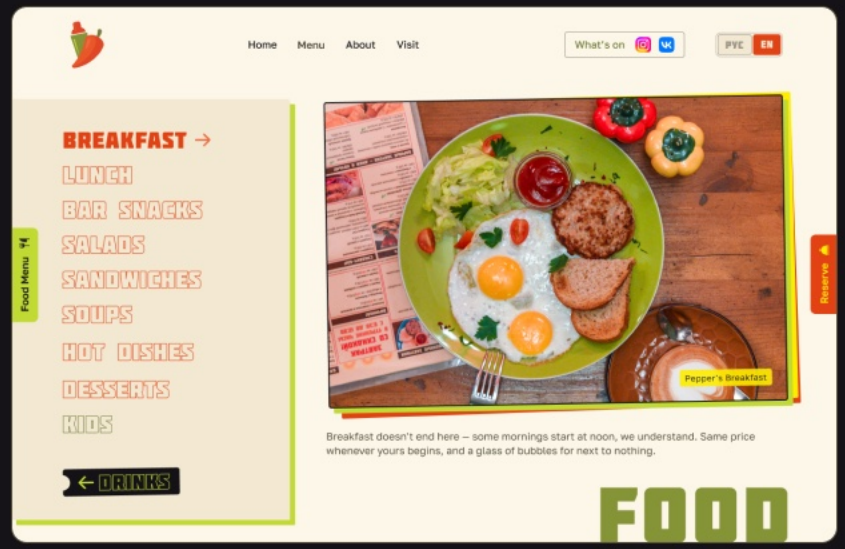
1. Started from the brand system rebuilt in July
2. Every decision, fix and contrast test written back
3. Tokens retire too: Dark Olive out, Deep Olive in
4. Read first by every AI session; mirrored in the style guide and the Figma library

BUILDING WITH AI · DESIGN TO CODE

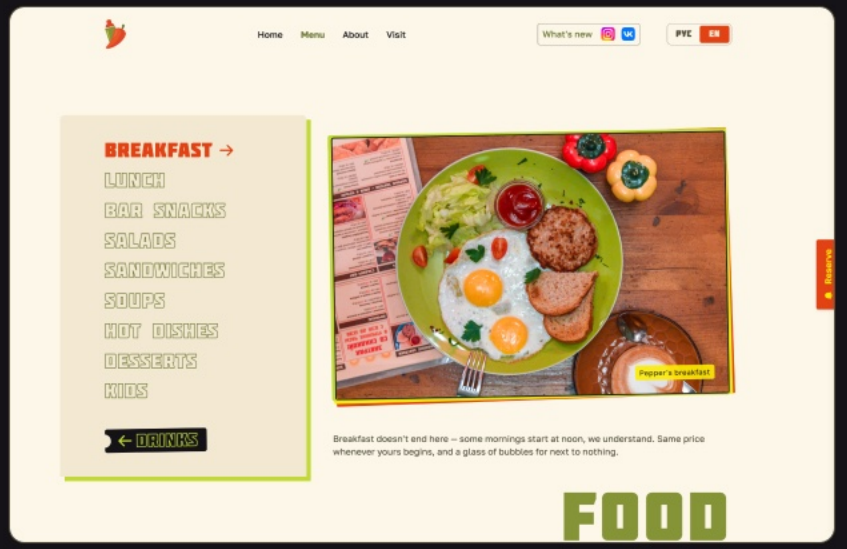
# BUILT AS DESIGNED

The Figma frame beside the live page, twice: the kitchen menu by day and the Visit page on a phone. The theme was built from the design files, one section per chat; what moved afterwards moved in the browser, on record.

## KITCHEN MENU · DAY · 1280




Figma — July 2026

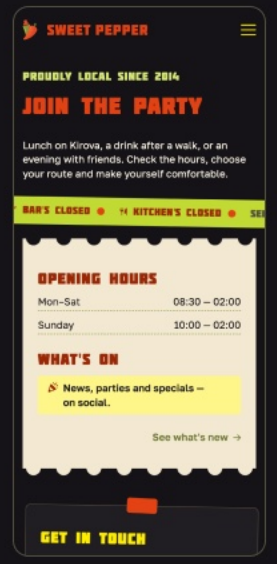



Live — sweetpepper.bar, October 2026

## VISIT · PHONE · 402




Figma




Live

BUILDING WITH AI · IN THE BROWSER

# SHOWN AS BUILT, NOT AS DRAWN

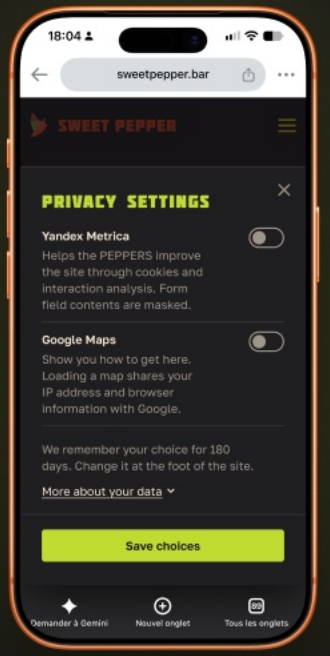
Three screens from the running site, October 2026. Each was worked out in the browser — options on the live page, a URL flag, then a default; the real-device verdicts are still open.




404 — LOST IN THE SAUCE




PHONE MENU — BAR AT THE FOOT




PRIVACY — A SHEET ON PHONES

CHAPTER 6 OF 6

# REAL USE

# THE FINE PRINT, DESIGNED

Like the 404, the legal parts are rarely seen, so they are where care shows. A lawyer set the rules; the voice stayed the bar's.

## A LAWYER'S RULES, THE BAR'S VOICE

### Consent that sounds like the bar

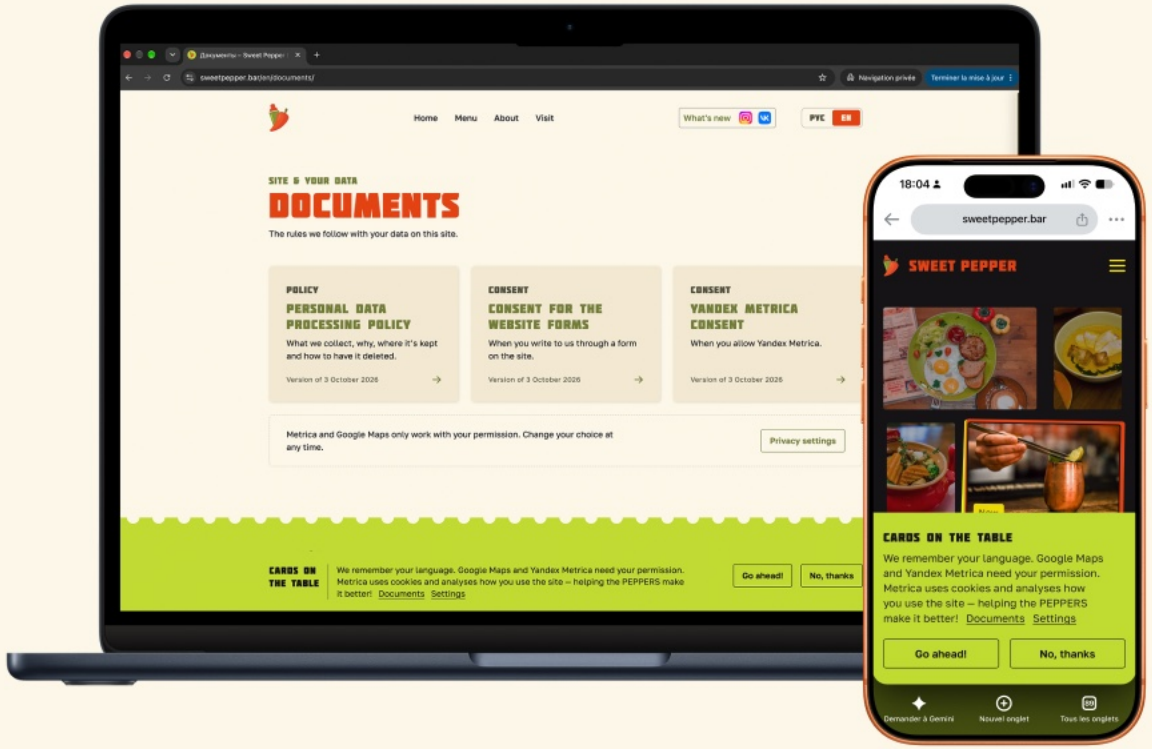
«На здоровье!» or «Нет, спасибо» — two equal buttons, no trick. The notice admits the analytics help «ПЕРЦЫ», the team, make the site better.

### Maps wait for a yes

Until the guest agrees, the map is an address and a short note. The choice lasts 180 days and can be undone from the footer.

### Legalese with a short name

Each legal page opens with a plain name over its full title, and a Documents hub explains all three in a line each.



REAL USE · THE PAGE LOADER

# EVEN THE WAIT HAS A VOICE

A slow page gets the bar’s own patter while the heat rises, and the page arrives with «Подано!» — “Served!”.

## SMALL THINGS, ON PURPOSE

### Lines the team wrote

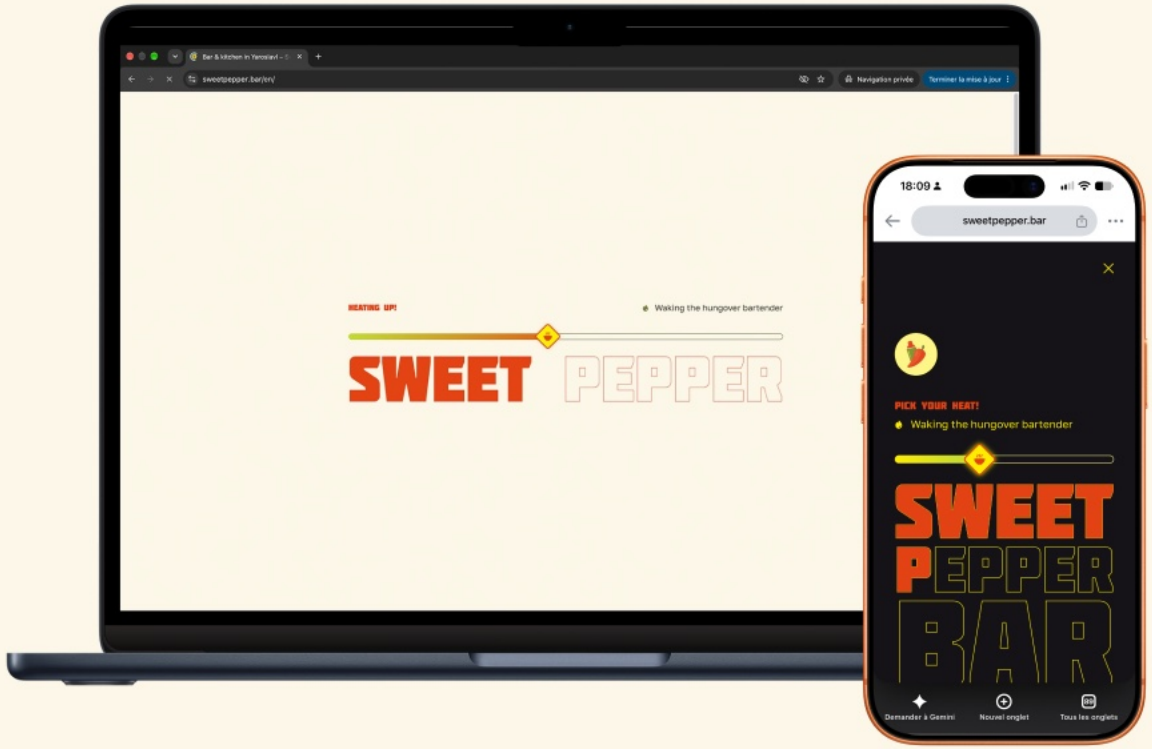
Sixteen lines in both languages — “Waking the hungover bartender”, “Negotiating with the Yaroslavl bear”. The team edits them in admin, in a record called «Пасхалка», the Easter egg.

### What testers taught

One called the footer replay “like an Easter egg” and tried to drag the knob, so it became a toy: drag, shake, start over. Three of three picked the phone version that heats a word at a time.

### Honest about time

It appears only after 700 ms, so a fast page never flashes it, and the knob never claims a finish it can’t know. The replay does know, so it ends at 3.3 s, not 7.



REAL USE · WHERE IT STANDS

# THE SITE IS UP. CHECKS REMAIN.

Live on the bar’s domain since late September, in Russian and English.

**6**
pages, each in Russian and English

**4**
decisions settled by usability tests

**218**
commits since September

**HOURLY**
the VK feed refreshes itself

## NEXT

1. Device verdicts on a real iPhone: the phone menu bar, the 404, the loader
2. The page cache, then open to search engines
3. Analytics, once consent can be recorded
4. The hero photo shoot and the remaining team photos

REAL USE · LESSONS

# WHAT THIS PROJECT TAUGHT ME

## SYSTEM FIRST, ALWAYS

Setting up tokens, typography, and a Figma library before touching page layouts takes discipline up front. Once it's in place, you stop reinventing components, stick to good principles, and move much faster.

## RESPECT WHAT'S EARNED

A 12-year-old brand has earned its recognition. Good rebranding isn't about flexing new skills or following trends—it's knowing what to leave alone and making subtle changes that sharpen what people already love.

## FROM FIGMA TO REAL BROWSER

There is always a gap between a clean prototype and a live site. Real viewports, device habits, and browser quirks introduce constraints you only discover in code—even when you're experienced enough to anticipate most of them.

## LEGAL IS DESIGN TOO

I enjoyed designing the parts that rarely make it into a portfolio: forms, privacy settings, and legal notices. They gave me another way to express the brand while making practical tasks clearer and easier.

## DESIGN WHO EDITS IT

Good UX includes the people updating the site. Choosing what the team could edit, which WordPress fields they needed, and where the layout should stay fixed became part of the design work.

## AI SPEEDS, FUNDAMENTALS STEER

AI helped me build more than I could have managed alone. My design and front-end knowledge helped me judge the output and explain precise fixes. But constant decisions were draining, and my strongest ideas still needed sketching and iteration.



# THANK YOU

Sweet Pepper — Brand & UX Case Study · Etual

etual.conceptly@gmail.com

sweetpepper.bar/en ↗ Style guide ↗