

CHAPTER 8

COLOR



“Color does not add a pleasant quality to design – it reinforces it.”

– Pierre Bonnard



Introduction

Color is an underrated design tool. When used correctly, it can make a website sing. When I was a beginner designer, I often used too many colors in my designs. This section will help you avoid that mistake. It will also help you approach your color choices methodically. You'll have tangible reasons for why you picked that dark purple or that candy apple green. Most importantly, all your colors will work with your website's concept, brand, and style to tell a cohesive story.

In this chapter we'll discuss:

- **What influences your color choices**
- **B&W + One Color**
- **Analogous**
- **Complementary**
- **Split Complementary**
- **Triad**

What influences your color choices

When thinking about colors, you should keep in mind the following three things:

Concept (Chapter Two):

If your concept is water-related, using lots of red probably won't work well. Water & the color red live in different worlds. Your colors should support your concept. Or at the very least, not conflict.

Brand (Chapter Three):

Say you're doing a site for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. That's a very serious subject. The tone of any war memorial is respectful and serious. So your color choices should reflect that. Bright happy colors would feel out of place, in the same way that someone selling balloons near the memorial would feel tacky.

Also, respect the client's brand guidelines. If you're doing a microsite for Ikea, it's likely you'll have to use their signature blue and yellow.

There are some instances when the site experience is so far removed from the brand that you can use other colors. But before doing this, make sure you clear it with your creative director or the client.

Style (Chapter Ten):

Here's where your personal tastes can have a voice. What style(s) are you considering from the style section? Your color choices should support that style. Design trends can be considered too. As you explore the color options on the following pages, imagine what colors might work well with the design style you're considering.

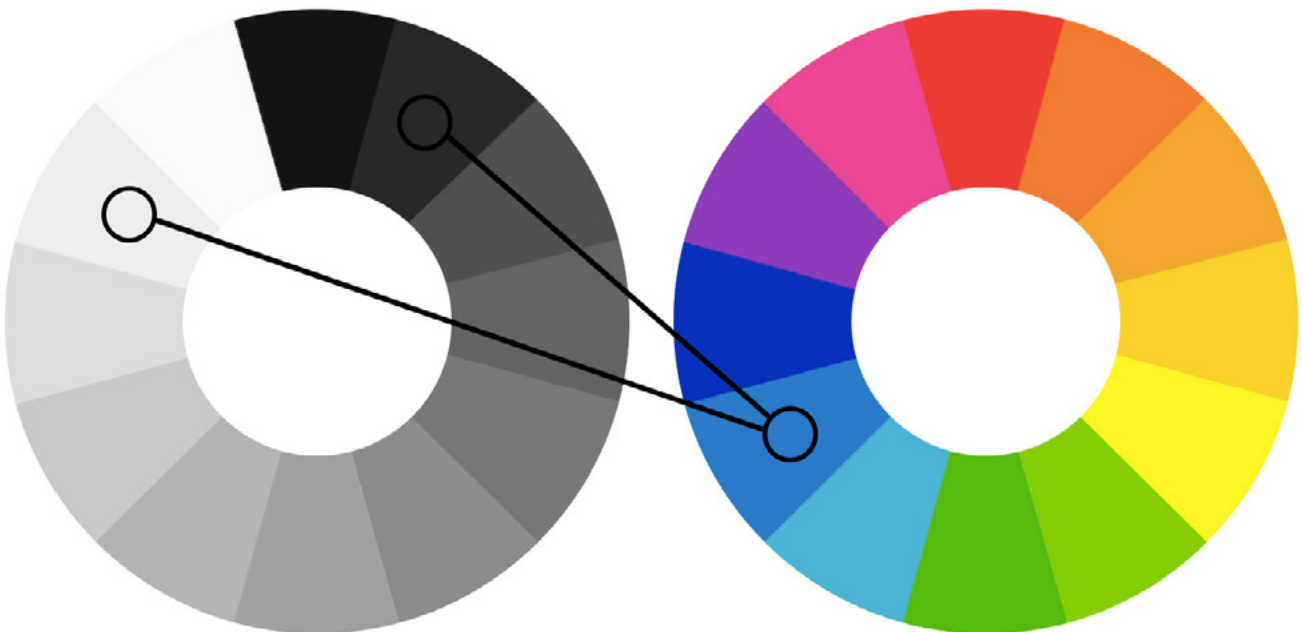
COLOR STYLE ONE

B & W Plus One Color

This first style isn't a part of color theory like the rest of the chapter but it is a simple and effective approach that can work well.

POSSIBLE USES:

- To make dissimilar images cohesive
- To bring attention to conceptually important colors



Necon

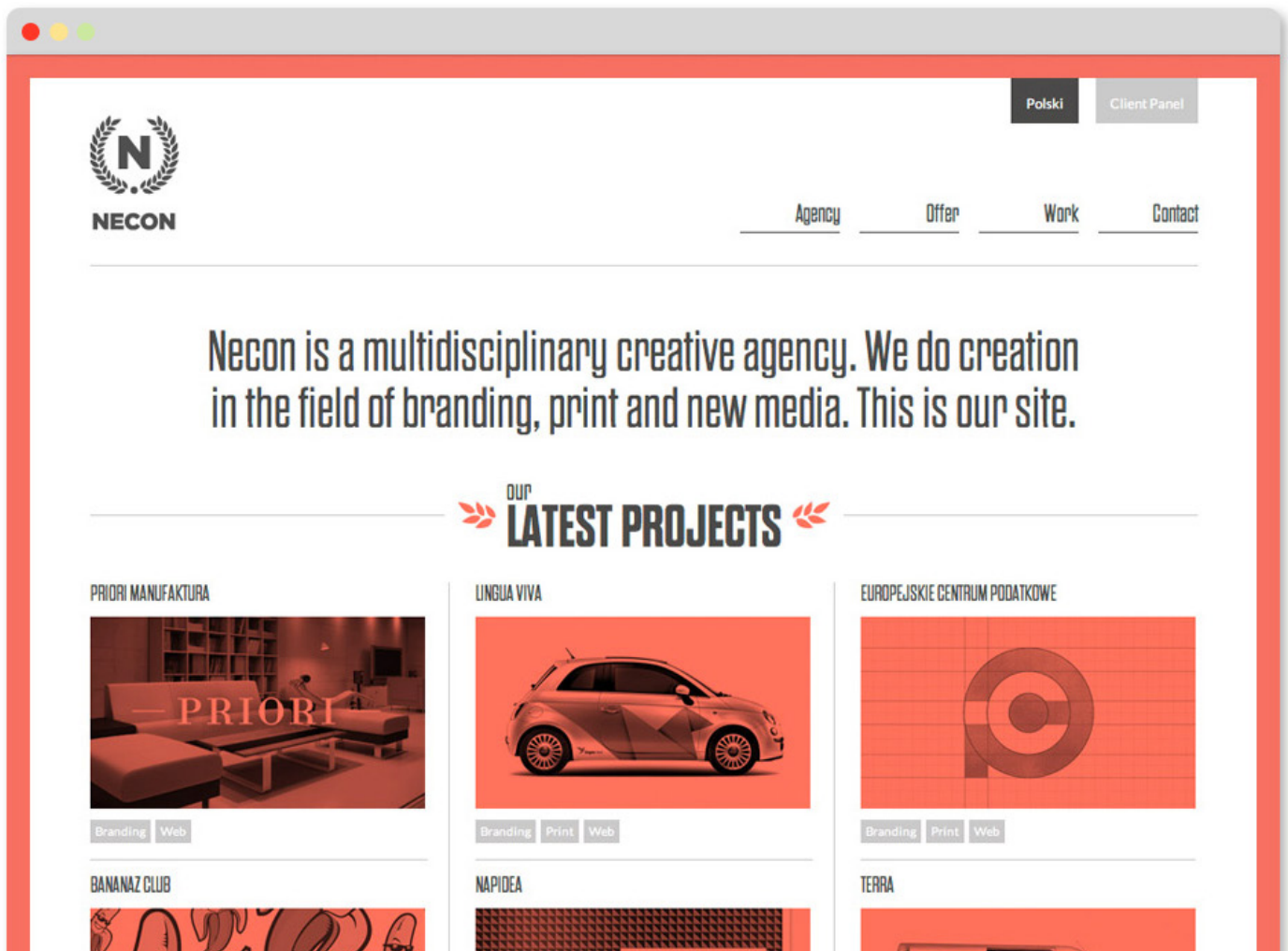
<http://www.necon.pl/en/>

This is a portfolio site for an ad agency. Necon has executed dozens of projects for clients with various photography and art direction styles in them. This is problematic because showing multiple projects in full color on their site could make it feel disjointed. They solved this by using a coral color as an overlay on top of all the images. It makes the page cohesive. When every image has coral in it, they have a common denominator that anchors them. You can still hover over an image to reveal

a full-color screenshot of a project or click through to view the individual project page. I think the color coral was a stylistic choice rather than a conceptual one, although it's hard to say without knowing the background of the project.



Q Enlarge

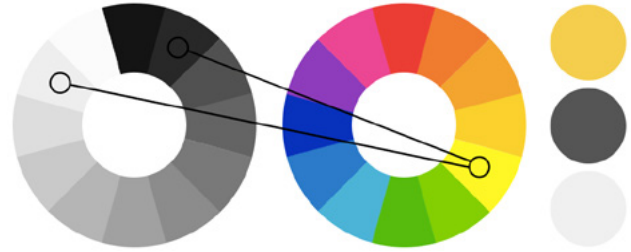


BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

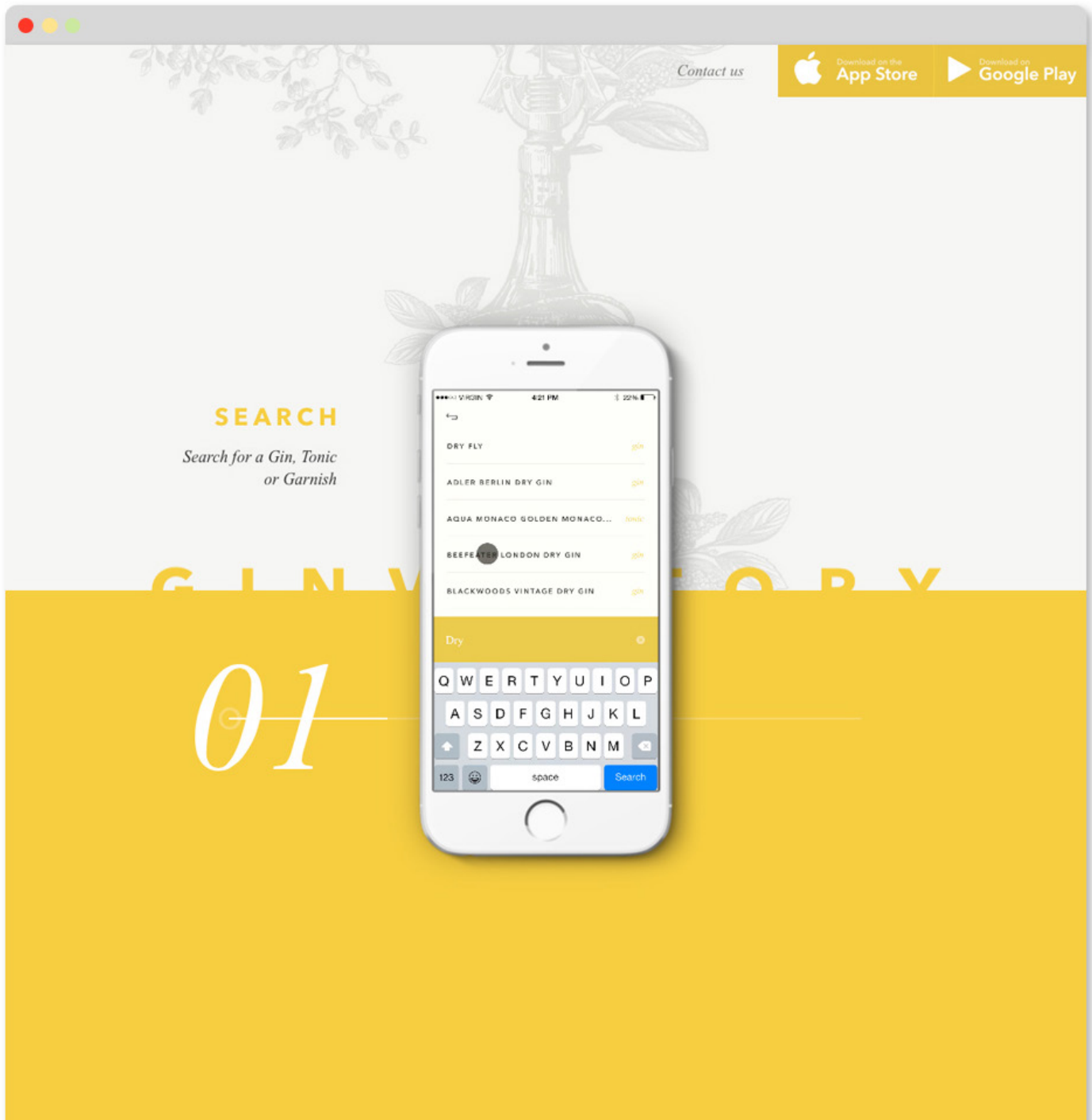
Ginventory

<http://www.ginventory.co>

This is a promotional page for a gin recipe app. The yellow color comes from the concept. Gin is a pale straw color, so it's a nod to that.



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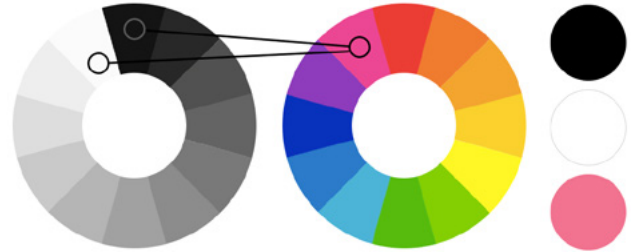


BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

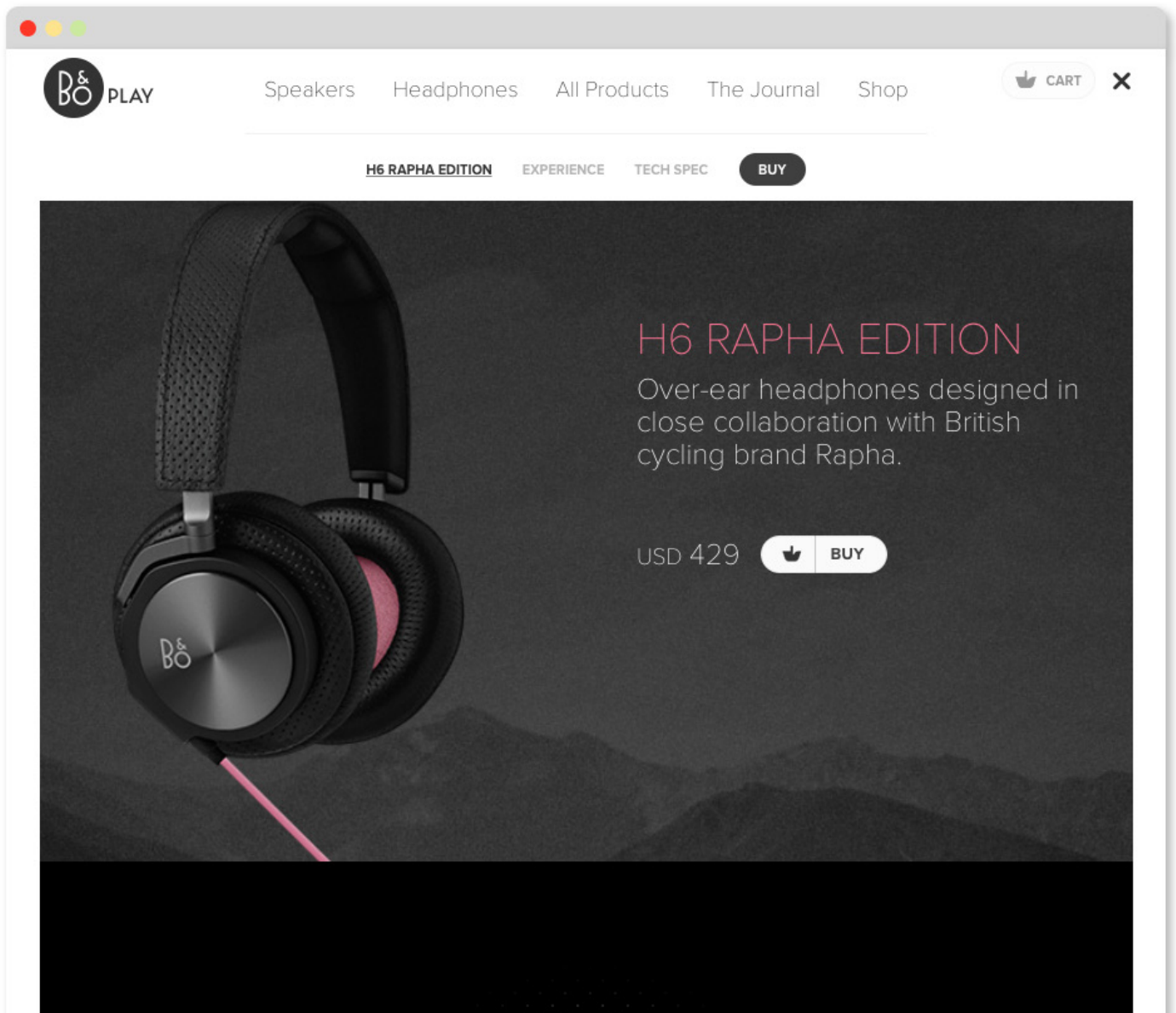
Beoplay/Rapha Headphones

<http://bit.ly/1QwCemQ>

This is a cross-promotional product page that Beoplay made for their 'Rapha'-style headphones. Rapha is a company that makes cycling clothing and accessories. Pink is their signature color, so Beoplay wanted to highlight *it*, rather than use their own colors and photography style.



Q Enlarge



BLACK AND WHITE + ONE HIGHLIGHT COLOR

COLOR STYLE TWO

Analogous

Analogous colors are near each other on the color wheel. This style works best when three or four colors are used. Often there will be one dominant color which the other colors defer to.

POSSIBLE USES:

- To convey a harmonious mood
- When the content of the site is friendly



Mambo Mambo

<http://mambomambo.ca>

This is a portfolio site for a creative agency in Québec, Canada. I think the tropical aesthetic here is done ironically because Québec is awfully cold! The green and yellow creates a happy and friendly feeling.



Q Enlarge



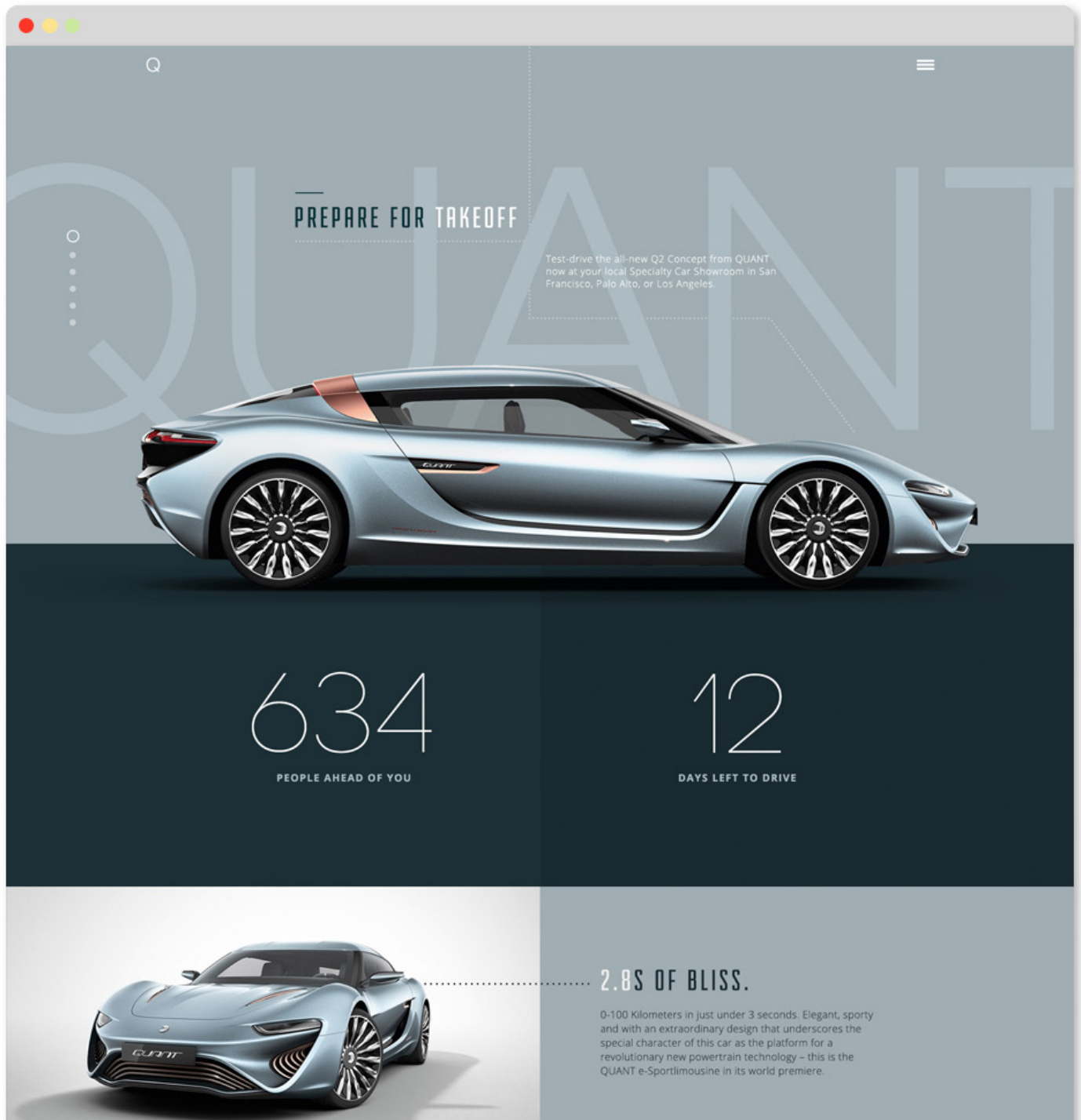
Concept Car Site

<http://bit.ly/1OwCkuO>

A homepage mockup designed by Vivek Venkatraman. The blues and blue grays here create a pleasant and consistent mood.



Q Enlarge



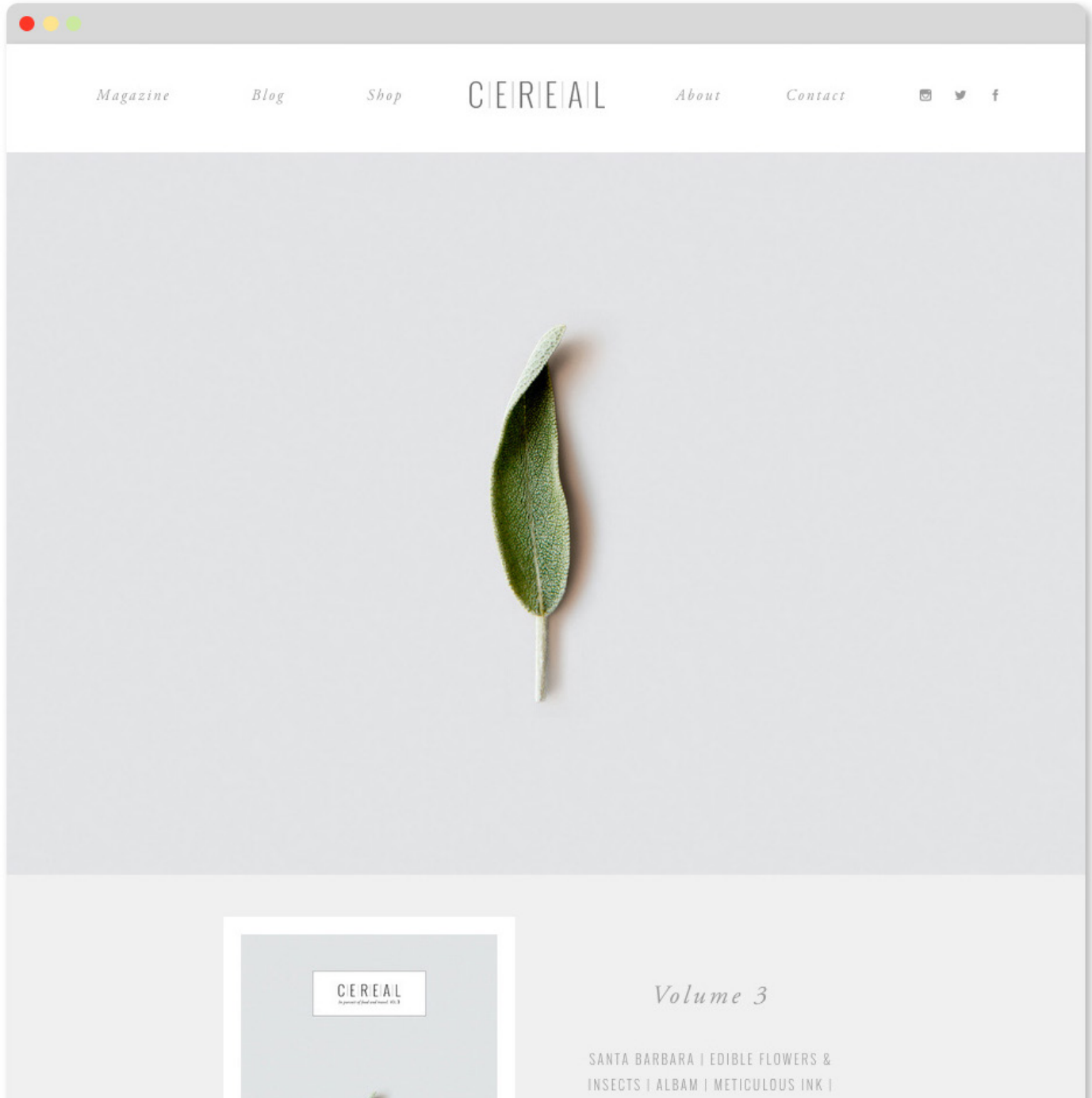
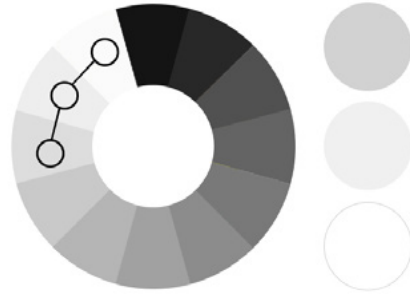
ANALOGOUS

Cereal Magazine

<http://readcereal.com>

This site uses a lot of grays throughout. Because these grays are neutral, it allows you to put just about any style or color of photo you want over it.

Q Enlarge



ANALOGOUS

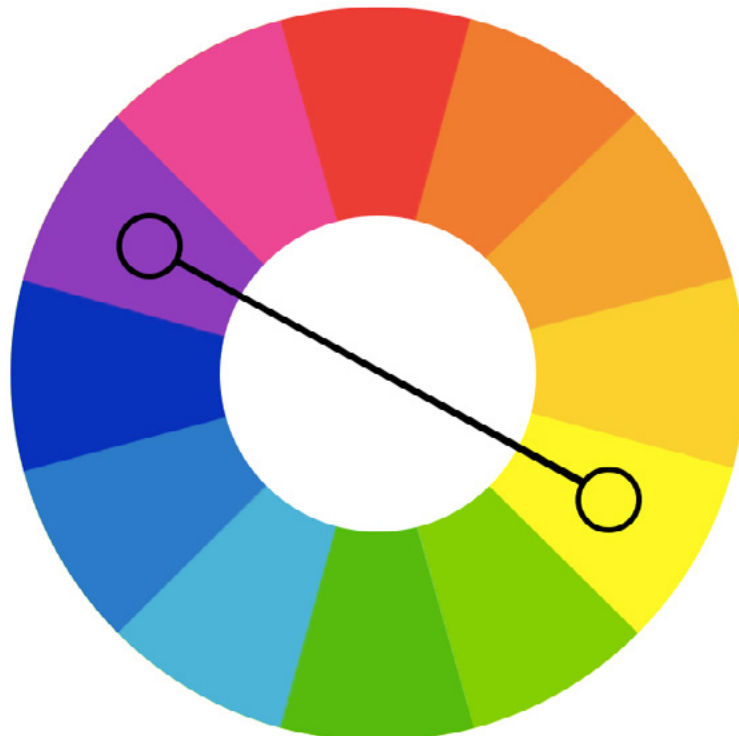
COLOR STYLE THREE

Complementary

Complementary colors are on the opposite sides on the color wheel. Complementary colors should be approached with caution on the web because they create a lot of tension. If you have large areas of the page with these colors, it can hinder communication. The examples below are a few examples that work ok.

POSSIBLE USES:

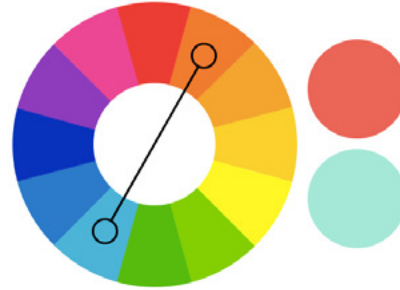
- When you want the page to pop
- To create excitement if the content of the site is dull



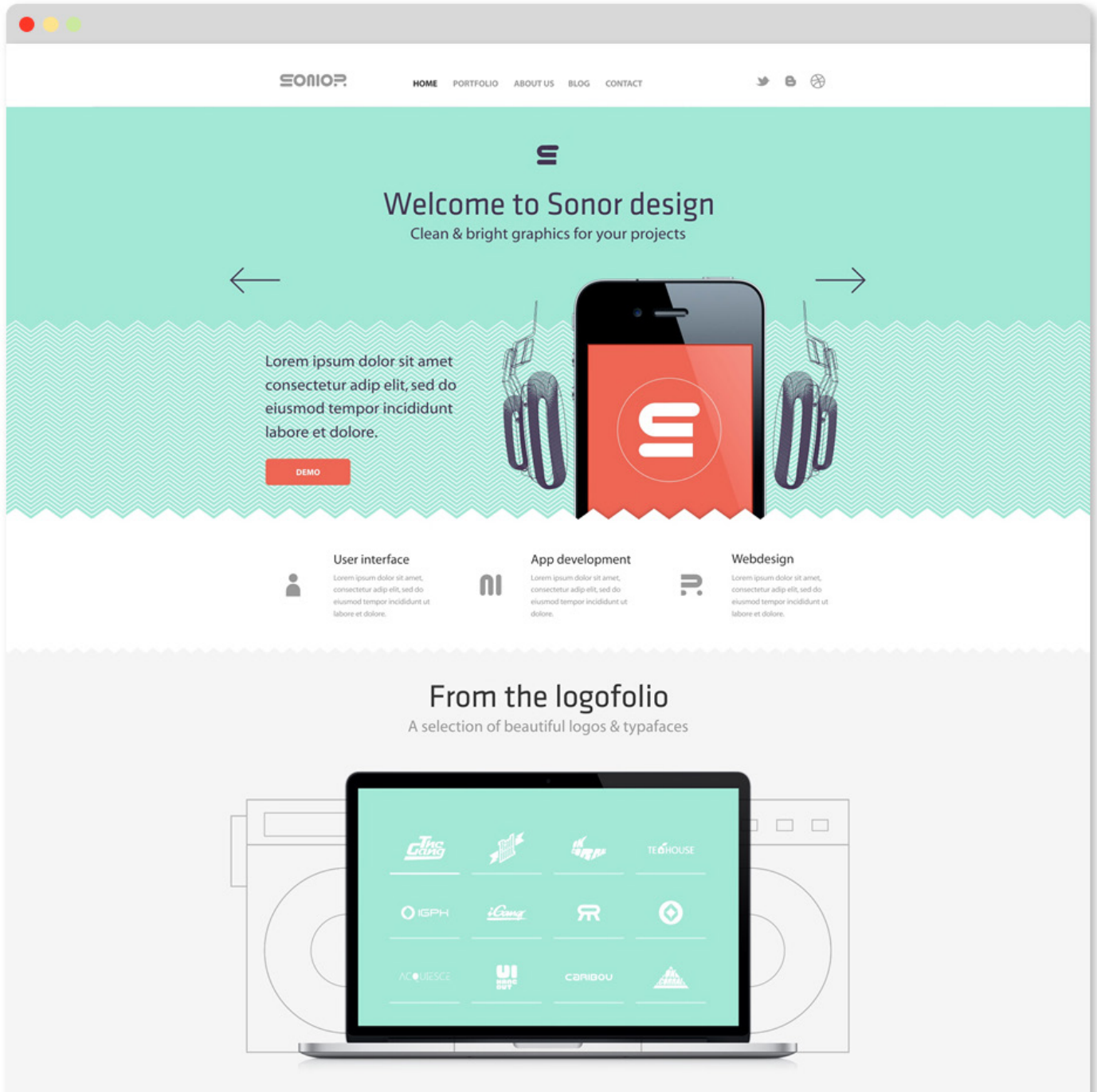
Sonor Design

http://radium.ro/?page_id=530

Here he uses a muted red/orange and a light blue/green. In fact, there's just a hint of blue in there. The design works because the colors aren't too intense.



Q Enlarge

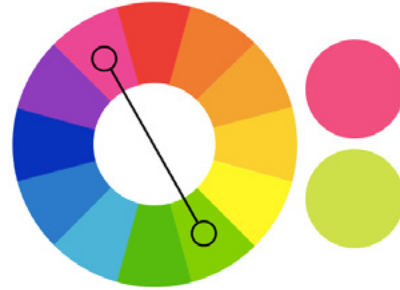


COMPLEMENTARY

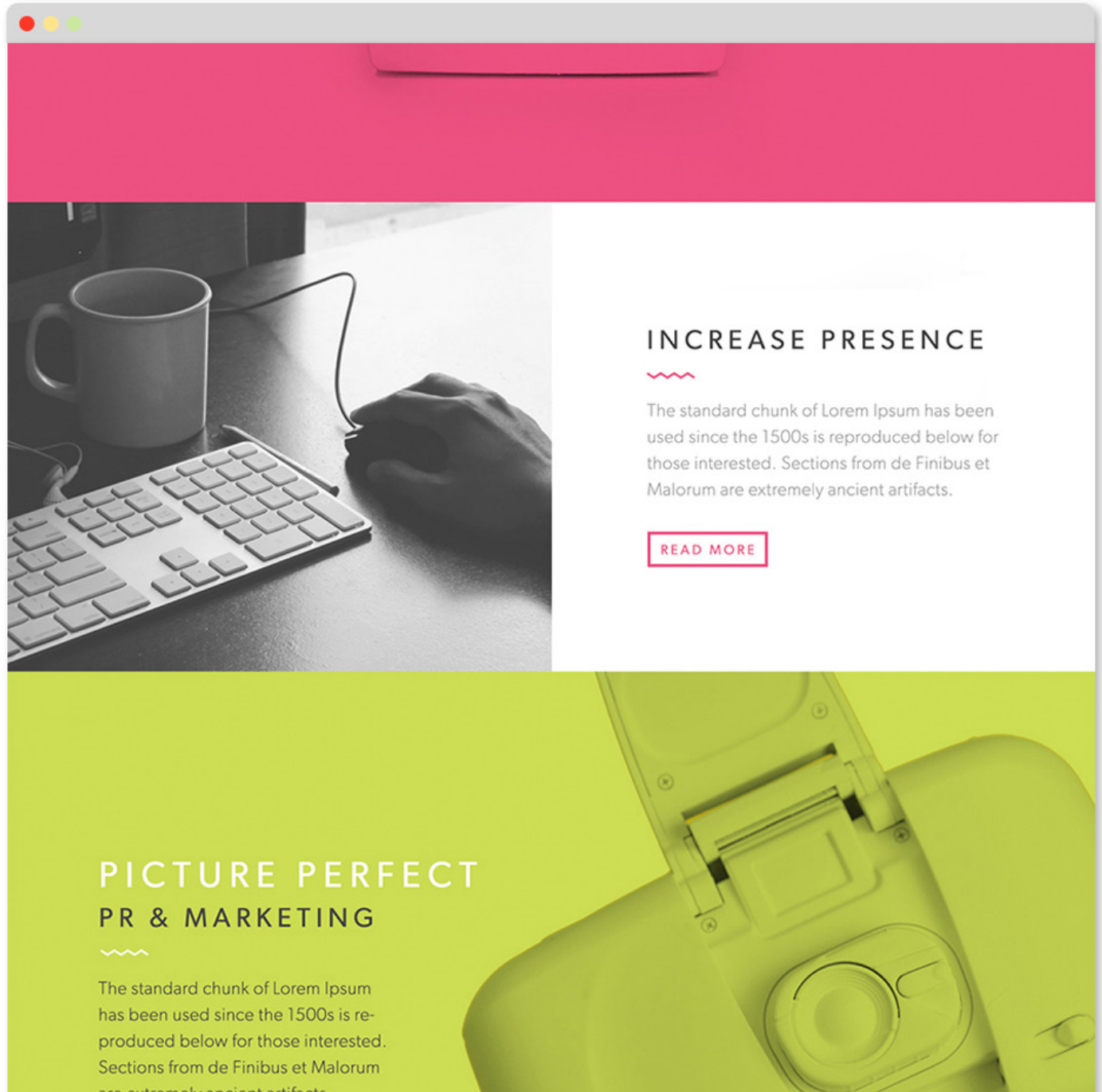
Orange PR & Marketing

<http://bit.ly/22o2V4S>

The use of color is leaned upon heavily in this design, more than any other example shown. It works well here because the colors aren't fighting other elements for attention.



Q Enlarge

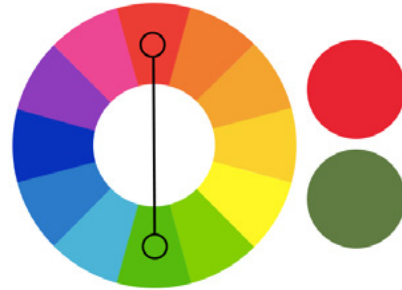


COMPLEMENTARY

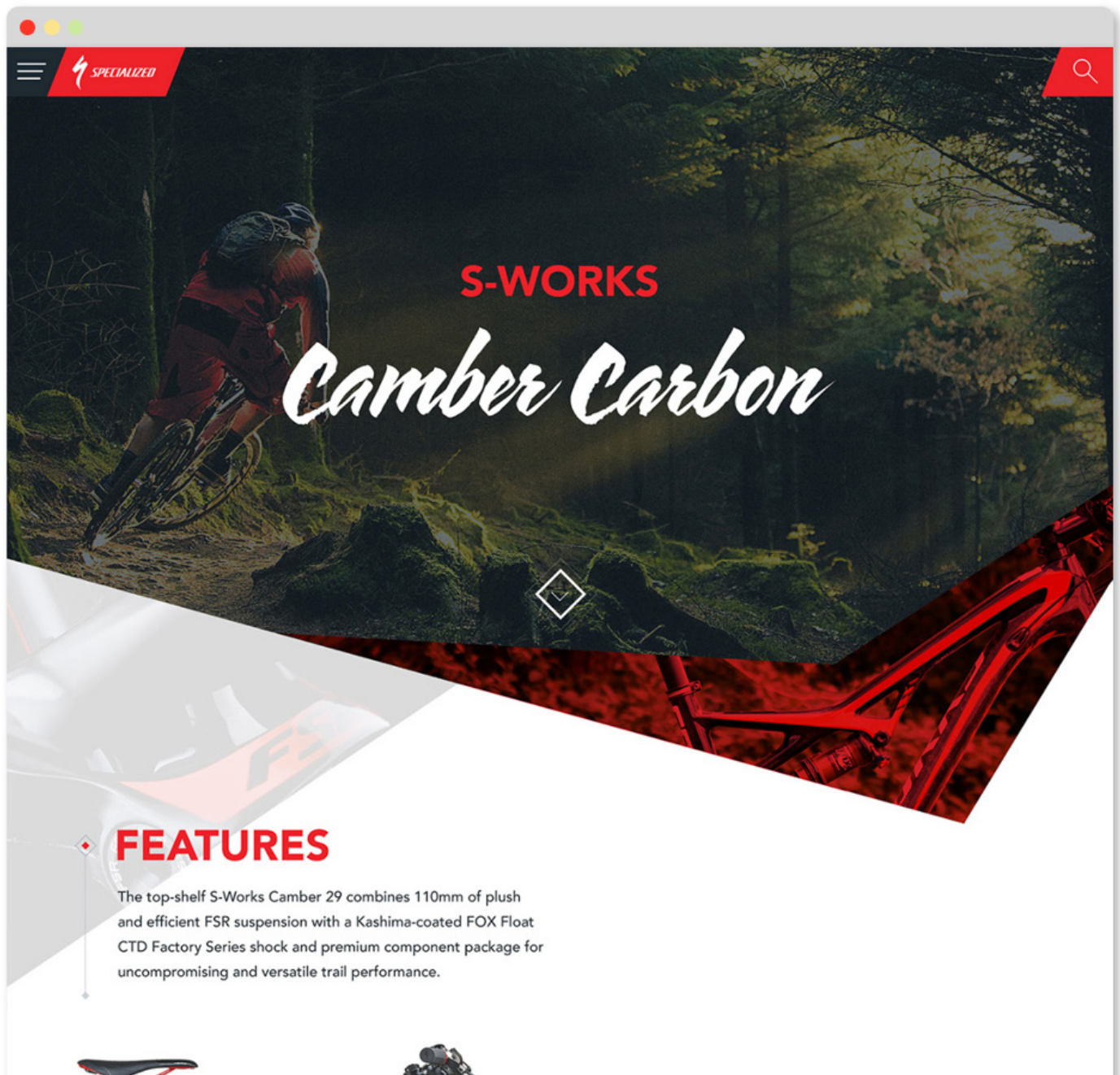
Specialized

<http://bit.ly/1OUUqo9>

From the designer: “The design itself was largely inspiring by the angular shape of the frame which is translated through the cutaways and diamond shapes throughout the design.”



Q Enlarge

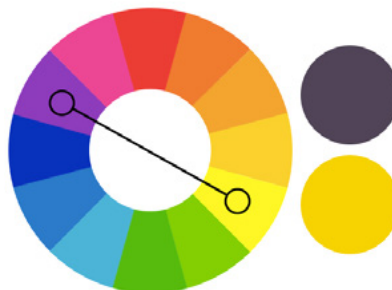


COMPLEMENTARY

Financial Claims Made Easy

<https://financialclaimsmadesimple.co.uk>

Notice how they use the purple sparingly. It allows the lightness of the yellow to come through.



Q Enlarge

Financial Claims Made Simple

Find your PPI PPI Claim Calculator Track your claim

About us FAQs Testimonials Our fees Contact us

Claiming back mis-sold PPI never felt so simple

No forms to fill in

Let's get started!

Full Name

Email

Phone number

Call me back

Why choose us?

Because we've made financial claims so simple!
We simply make your life easier by doing all the work for you.

Not sure if you had PPI?

You're not alone. We take calls every day from people who suspect they were mis-sold PPI, but aren't sure. We are able to track down your PPI even if you don't have your old paperwork or account details.

[Find your PPI Now](#)

Track your claim anytime online

Our online claim tracker allows you to check on the progress of your claim at any time (even when offices are closed) from almost anywhere.

[Track your claim online](#)

No need to complete any forms

You probably want to appoint a claims management company because you simply don't have the time or the patience to deal with the banks in reclaiming your PPI (and we don't blame you). We will complete every form, send every letter, make every call and check every possible detail to ensure that you get the compensation you deserve.

COMPLEMENTARY

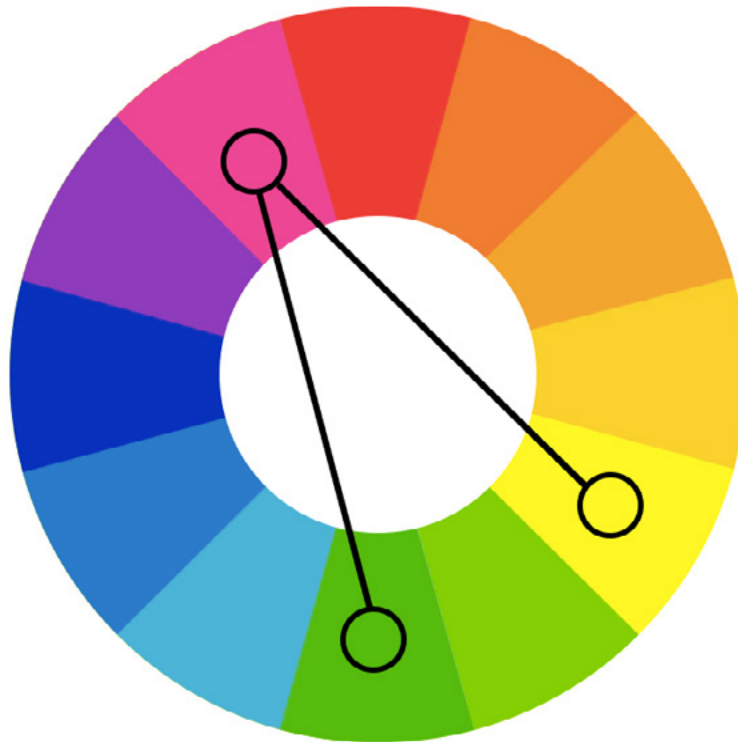
COLOR STYLE FOUR

Split Complementary

Split complementary colors are nice because they combine the pleasantness of analogous colors with a bit of spunkiness that complementary colors have.

POSSIBLE USES:

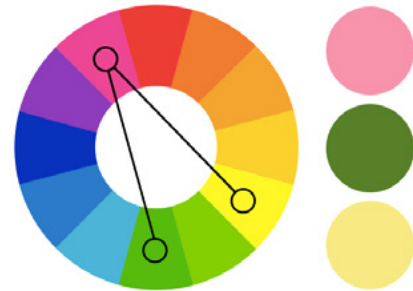
- Almost anywhere



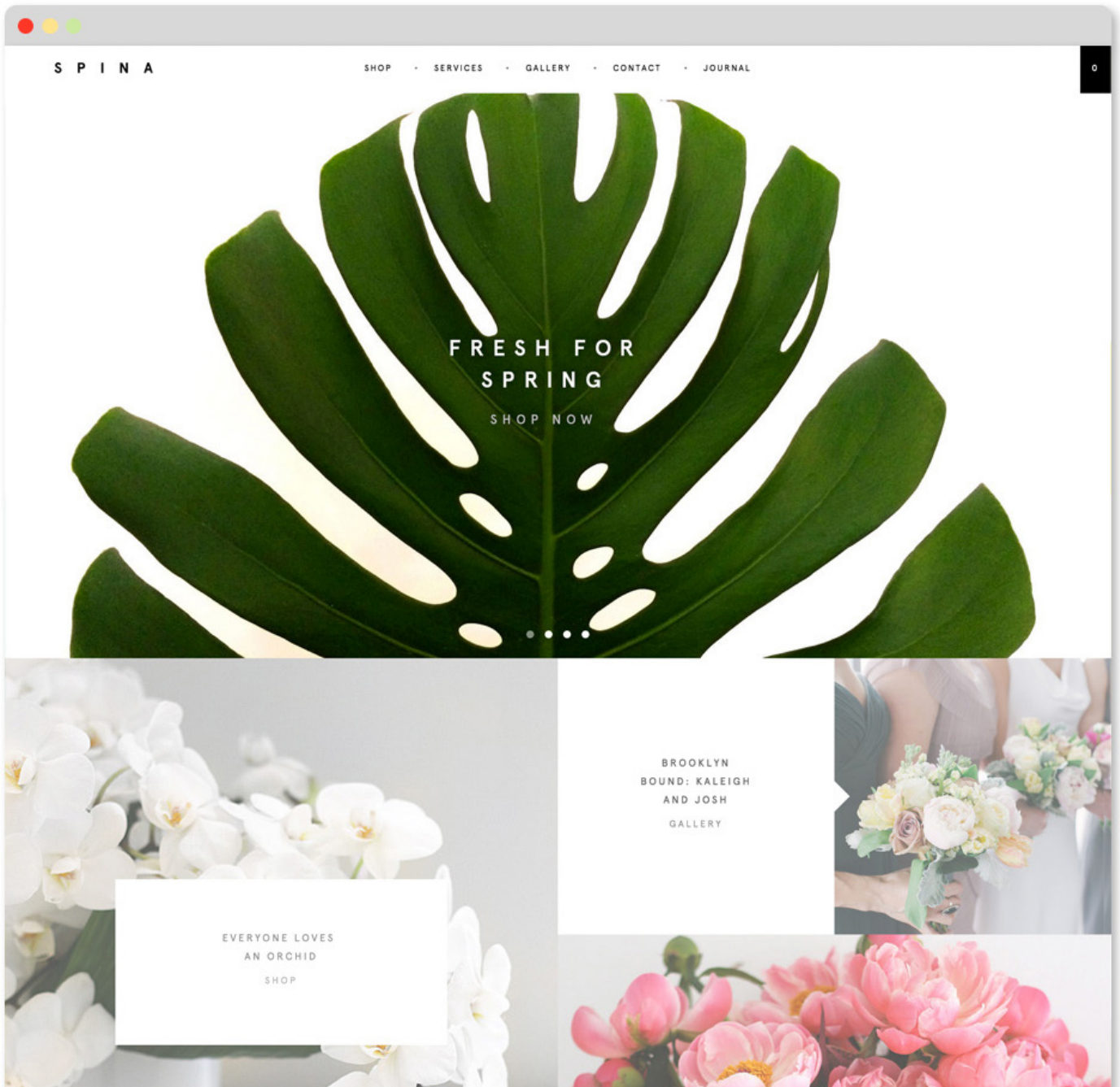
Spina

<https://spinanyc.com>

Spina is a flower shop in NYC. You could almost say this color scheme is complementary because the greens and pinks are so dominant, but I think there's enough yellow sprinkled throughout for it to be split complementary.



Q Enlarge

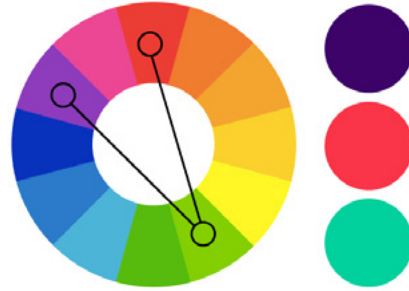


SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

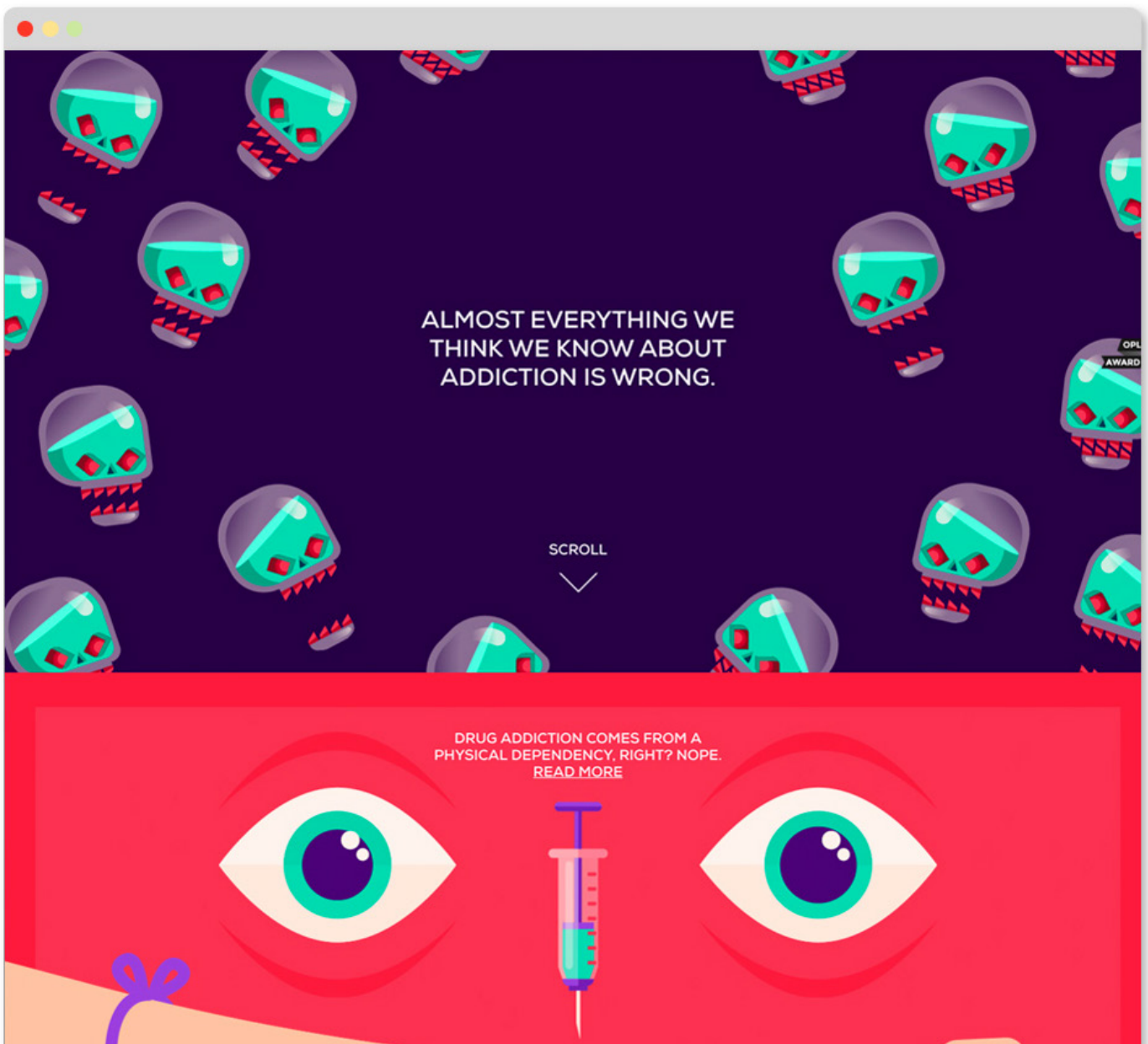
Drug Addiction PSA

<http://www.addiction.mobydigg.de>

This site explores what causes drug addiction. The purple and red are very bold and impossible to ignore. Notice that the green has a little blue in it, that's ok! I bet they started with a more normal looking green but then tweaked it to feel more dangerous and drug-like.



Q Enlarge

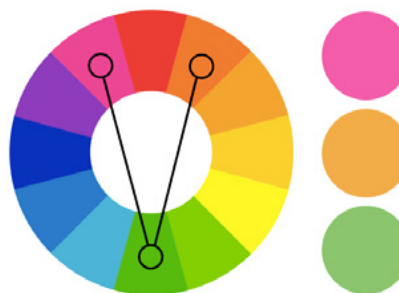


SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

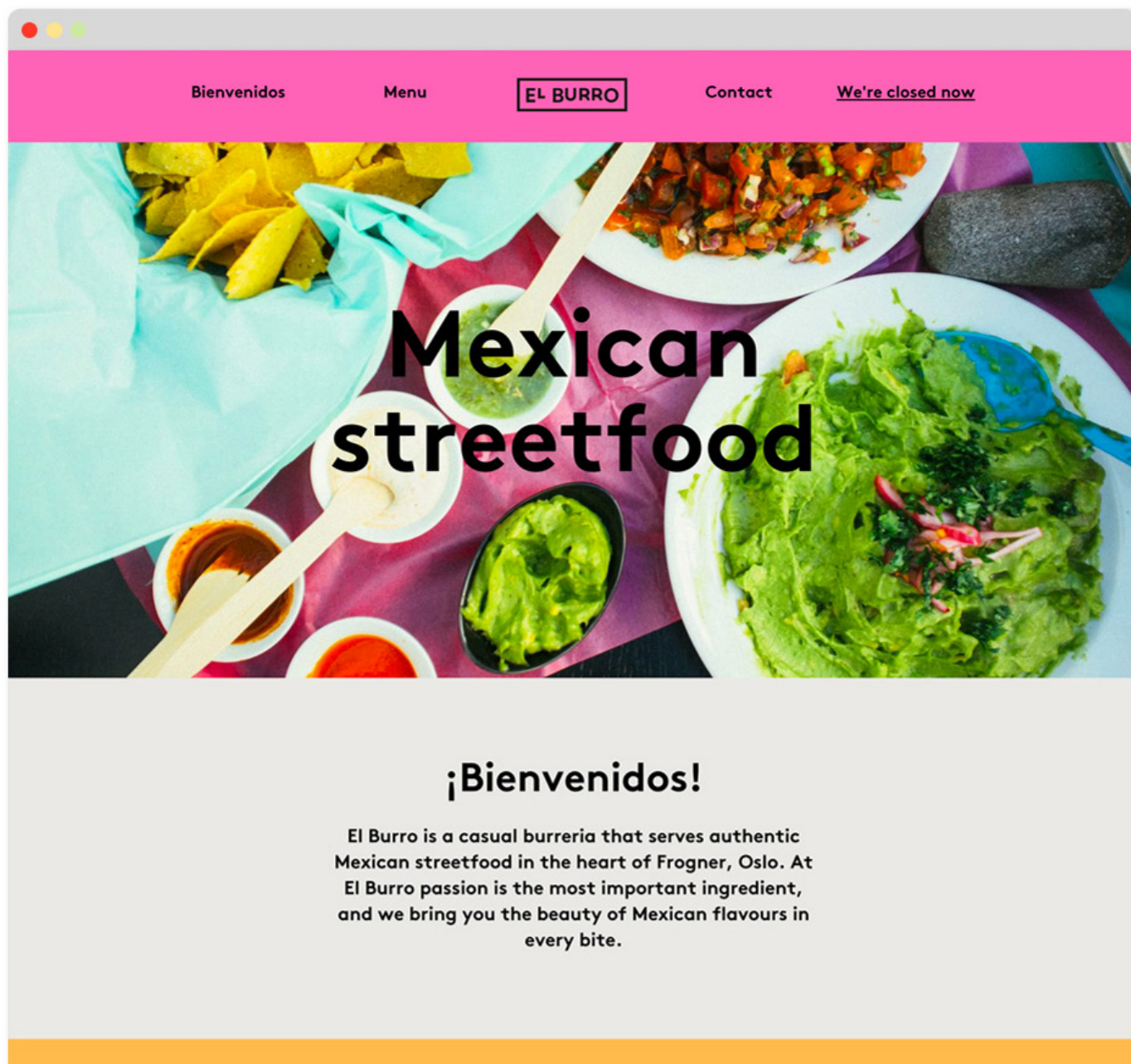
El Burro Mexican

<http://elburro.no>

This site is for a Mexican restaurant in Norway. Notice how the colors also appear in photos of the food. That helps hold the composition together. And it was possibly the inspiration for the pink, orange, and green color scheme.



Q Enlarge

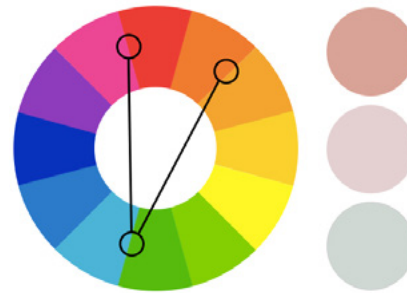


SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

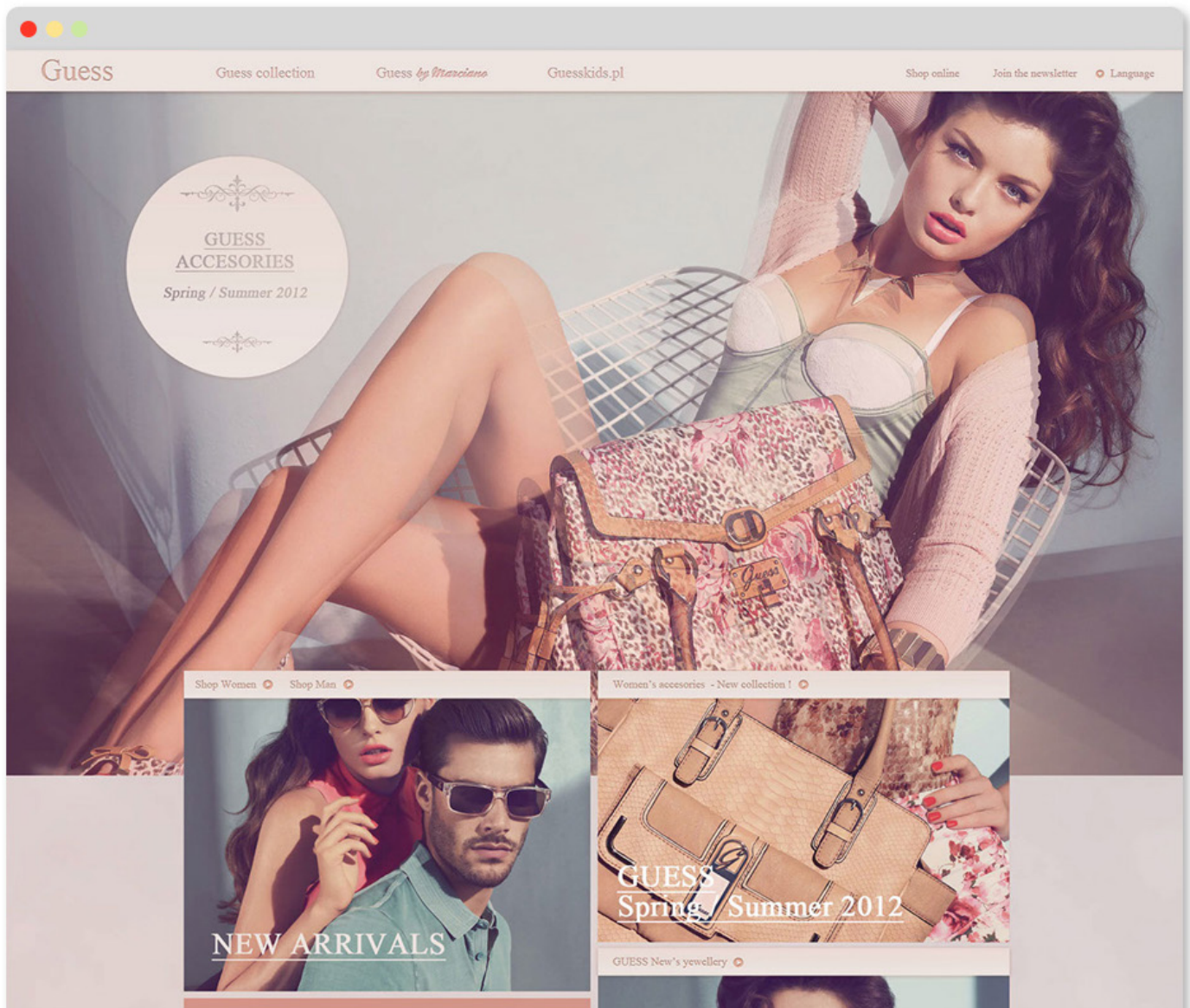
Guess

<http://bit.ly/1p3Drf1>

Here the designer wanted people to focus their attention on the spring / summer line, so she used colors from the actual products and photo shoots. Notice how muted the colors are - it makes the contrast between the colors less intense, thus allowing MORE color to be used. If the colors were not muted, the page would likely be too intense.



Q Enlarge



SPLIT-COMPLEMENTARY

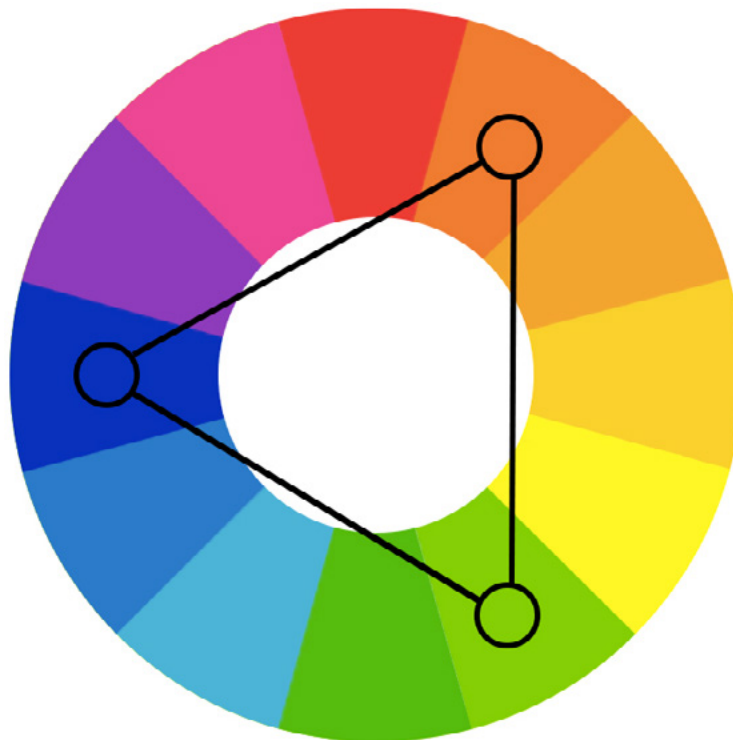
COLOR STYLE FIVE

Triad

Triads use three colors, all equidistant from one another. Triads create a more mature kind of variety of color, as opposed to energetic split-complementary colors. If split-complementaries are the lively 1963 'She Loves You' Beatles, Triads are the more mature 1970 - "Let it Be" - Beatles.

POSSIBLE USES:

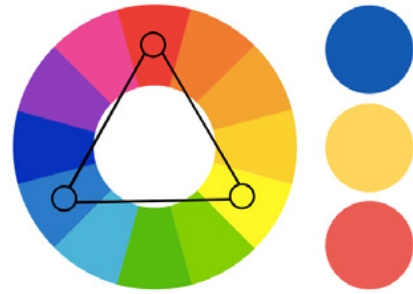
- To create variety without much drama
- To convey a sense of strength



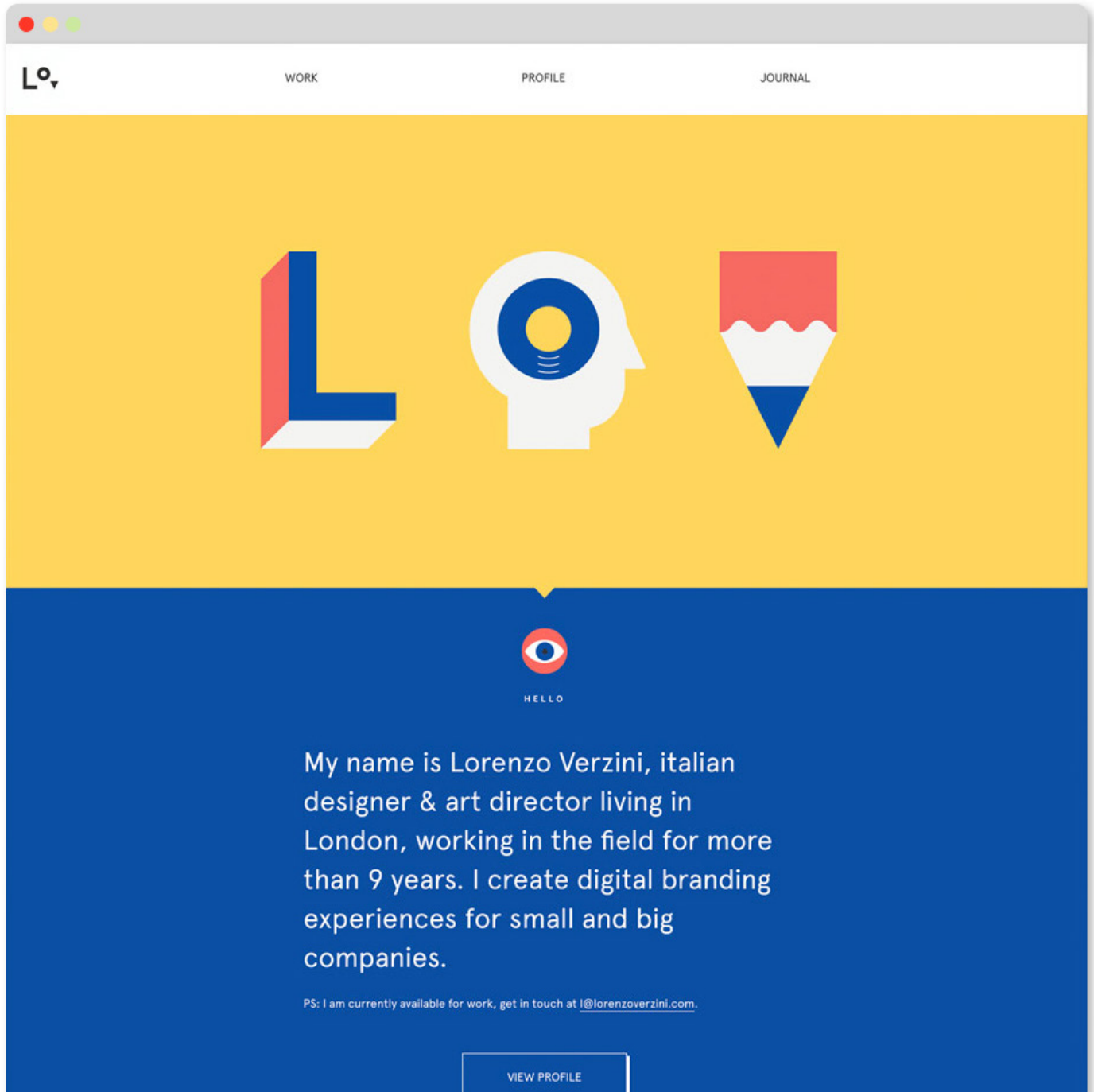
Lorenzo Verzini

<http://lorenzoverzini.com>

This is the online portfolio of an art director / designer. Online portfolios can use just about any color scheme, so perhaps he just liked how these colors looked.



Q Enlarge

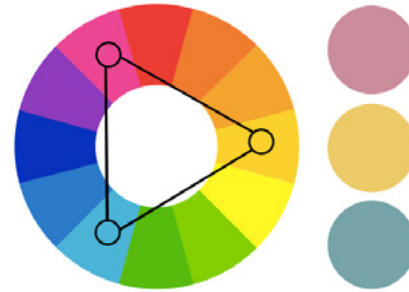


TRIAD

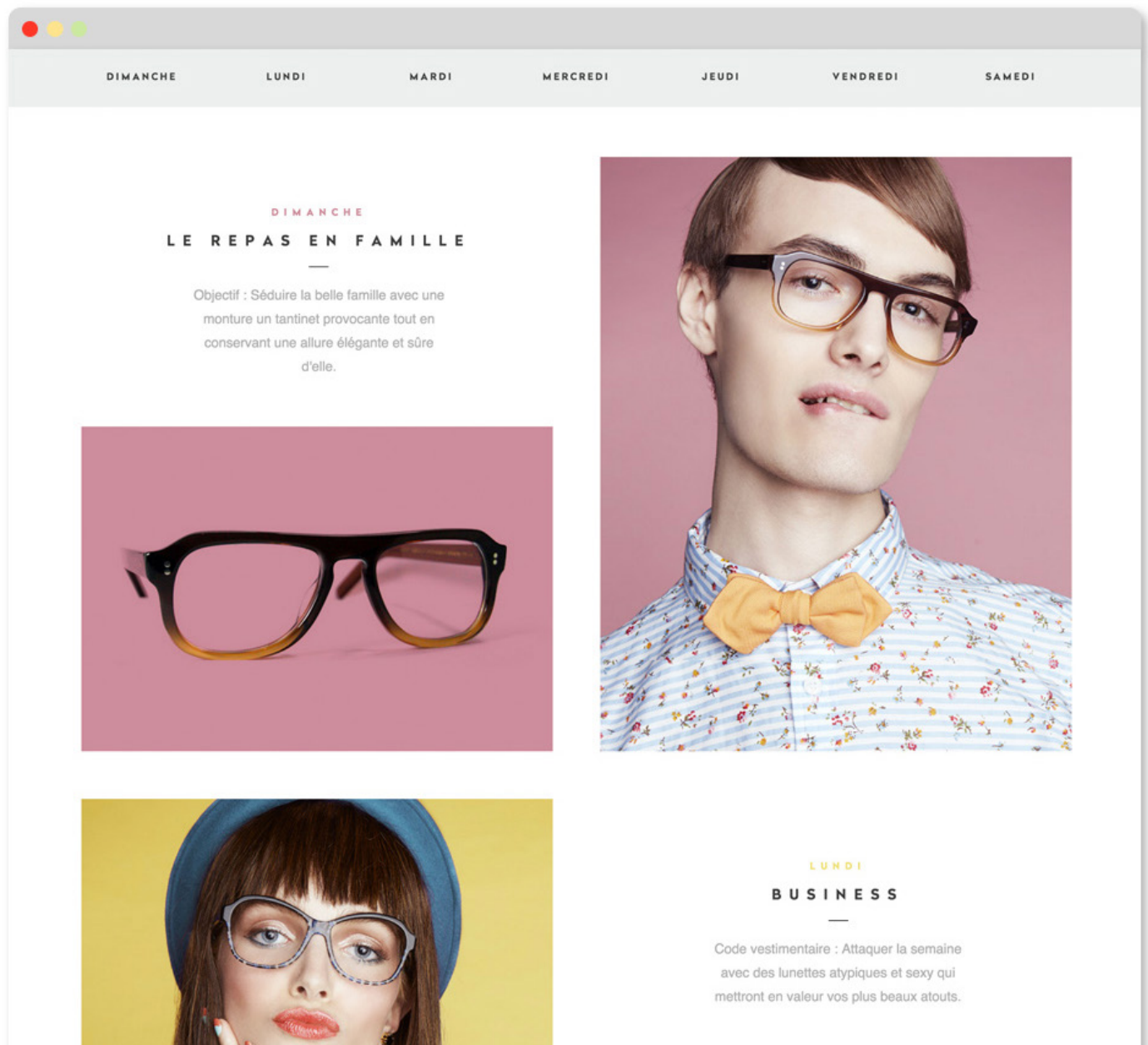
Antoine Laoun

<http://antoineloun.com>

Antoine Laoun makes stylish glasses. Personally, I have mixed feelings about this design. I like the colors and the layout, but it's unclear why each pair of glasses was designated that particular color (besides the blue pair). So in this example, the colors and concept aren't quite working together.



Q Enlarge

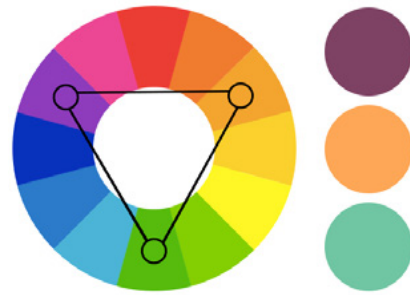


TRIAD

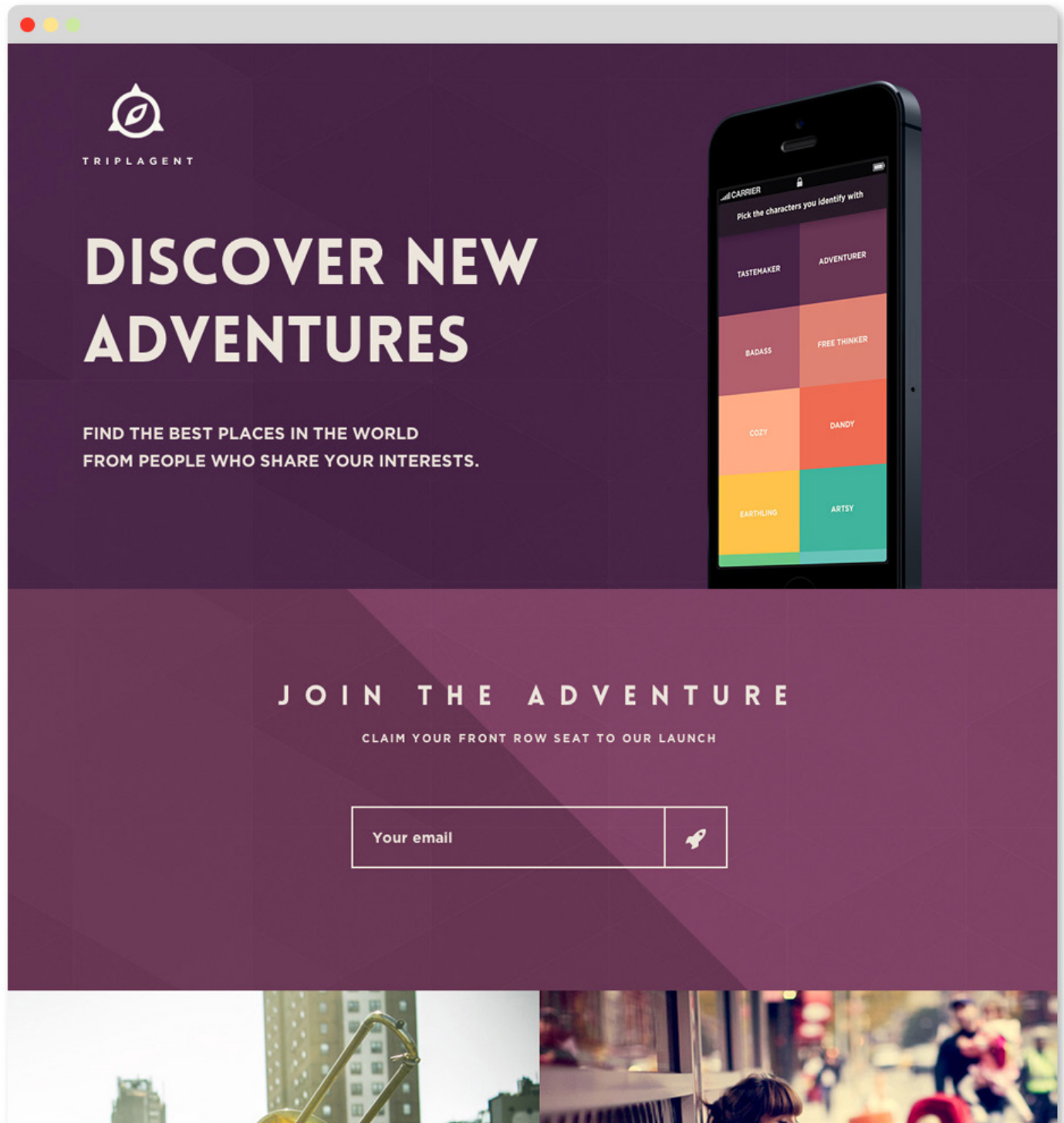
Triplagent

<http://www.triplagent.com>

Triplagent is a website and travel app. The rich colors on the page pull you in.



Q Enlarge



TRIAD