



INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE PROPOSAL

OVERVIEW

1. Project Background

1.1: venue pp. 3

1.2: current site pp. 4

2. Site Critique

2.1: Global Navigation

item a: global navigation overview pp. 5-6

item b: global navigation critique pp. 7

item c: global navigation proposed changes pp. 8

2.2: Contextual Navigation

item a: contextual navigation overview pp. 9

item b: contextual navigation critique pp. 10

item c: contextual navigation proposed changes pp. 11

2.3: Search Systems

item a: Internal and External pp. 12

item b: SEO and Metadata pp. 13

3. Audience Analysis

3.1: audience definition pp. 14

3.2: Ideal user scenario

-persona one pp. 15-16

-persona two pp. 17-18

4. Site Map

4.1: current site map pp. 19

4.2: proposed site map pp. 20

5. Proposed Site Wireframe

5.1: Homepage pp. 21

5.2: Upcoming Events Page pp. 22

5.3: Regular Events Page pp. 23

5.4: Venue Information Page pp. 24

5.5: Contact Page pp. 25

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1: VENUE

The Cobalt

The Cobalt has been a fixture in the Vancouver nightlife scene for for decades. Originally established in 1911 beneath the historic Cobalt Motor Hotel, the venue has undergone a vast array of transformations and has catered to numerous demographics over the years. Its present iteration arose after the decline of the bar's physical state due to lack of maintenance and general upkeep.

In 2009, business partners Ezra Kish and Patryk Drozd rented the space with proposed plans to renovate and convert the bar into a mixed-use venue, hosting a large portion of the city's alternative music and arts performances. Since their initial venture, Kish & Drozd have opened two sister venues. The Boxcar, located directly adjacent to The Cobalt, and The American which is located across the street from both venues.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.2: CURRENT SITE - PURPOSE

thecobalt.ca

The Cobalt's current site serves to host information about all three venues, with The Cobalt and its basic information occupying the homepage.

As a fixture in Vancouver's local art and culture scene, the site's purpose is to firstly give an overall sense of the bar's aesthetic and feel. Secondly, as a mixed-use venue with a great deal of live performances and special shows, the site must be concisely organized and structured to give the user ease when seeking information regarding a particular event occurring at one of the bars.

Thirdly, as the site hosts information regarding the three venues' very different menus (cocktail, beer & food), the site must also showcase these in a way that is both enticing and gives each an individual sense of identity while staying on-brand under the The Cobalt umbrella.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

2.1: GLOBAL NAVIGATION

thecobalt.ca

Item A: Global Navigation Overview

The company's opens with an aesthetically-pleasing photo of The Cobalt itself along with a fixed-position global navigation menu that remains in place as the user scrolls down the page. The Cobalt's logo is located at the top left of the global navigation menu, informing the user exactly where they are upon arrival. The first button on the menu is 'Upcoming Shows' that takes the user to an image gallery containing poster designs for the various events and weekly/monthly events that occur at the venue.

However, upon further inspection into these events, it becomes clear that the many events listed on the page occur at the company's various other venues, not simply at The Cobalt alone. The events are listed in a chronological order and this is helpful to the user who may be looking for a specific event in particular, but becomes quite confusing as each event is not labeled or organized into categories corresponding to each specific venue.

The owners of The Cobalt and its sister venues very much insist on having one main site with all of their venues' respective information contained therein, yet there is much room for organizational improvement in the current site's navigation in order to make this site conducive towards that aim.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

6

2.1: GLOBAL NAVIGATION

thecobalt.ca

Item A: Global Navigation Overview Cont.'d

The second button in the global navigation menu is labeled 'Regular Events' and takes the user to three weekly events that occur at The Cobalt itself (there are actually more than these three listed but these events have not been updated on the company's site). Each event has its own poster design thumbnail and a brief accompanying description of the weekly event

The third global navigation button is labeled 'Venue Information' and directs the user to a page containing another beautifully shot photo of the venue and a short bio of the history of the space. Fourth in the global navigation menu is labeled 'Contact' and directs the user immediately to a form wherein the user's own contact information can be filled, along side the addresses and phone numbers of each venues' points of contact.

Finally, the fifth button in the menu is labeled 'Partner Venues' in keeping with the site's goal of providing information regarding all of their venues together under one umbrella site. However, this button engages a dropdown menu with two further button labeled with the names of their other two bars 'The Boxcar' and 'The American'. Each button takes the user to an individual page dedicated to providing information regarding these two respective venues.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

7

2.1: GLOBAL NAVIGATION

thecobalt.ca

Item B: Global Navigation Critique

The aim of the company of having one website that serves to inform users of information regarding all three sister venues is one that can be accomplished but will only be successful through the use of clearly defined labels, search systems and navigation in order to delineate which piece of information pertains to which specific venue. As it currently stands, attempting to find a specific piece of information such as a specific event, cocktail or food menu, or even just general information about each particular bar is akin to jumping down a rabbit's hole with no flashlight.

The current global navigation is situated well at the top of the page and scrolls in a fixed position over the page so it is easily identifiable. However, the typestyle is a little faint and the buttons are placed quite close together, effectively creating a bit of a jumble of text that does not appeal to the end user's eye. At first glance, the only thing that really indicates that these are navigation buttons is the successful placement of this menu at the top of the page.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

8

2.1: GLOBAL NAVIGATION

thecobalt.ca

Item C: Global Navigation Proposed Changes

In order to make this site more functional in its purpose, an overhaul of its organizational systems is in order. A very large part of this change is in the way in which the global navigation is structured. A very effective way to do this will be to follow suit and add a similar dropdown menu to the other buttons like the 'Partner Venues' button contains. This will allow the user to be directed to specific pages of information that correspond to each venue. This would eliminate the need for a 'Partner Venues' button in the global navigation and clear up a bit of the clutter in the global navigation menu.

Each button would then take the user to pages that contain the specific food and drink menus, upcoming shows, weekly/monthly events, as well as venue information that is specific to each outlet. This change will drastically improve the end user's experience in attempting to find information and not be misled about which piece of information corresponds to which venue.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

9

2.2: CONTEXTUAL NAVIGATION – LABELS, LINKS & HEADINGS

thecobalt.ca

Item A: Contextual Navigation Overview

Thecobalt.ca's homepage contains a minimal amount of contextual navigation and serves as a minimalist aesthetic. Below the main photo on the page there is a heading labeled 'Upcoming Shows' with three events and their corresponding poster design thumbnails. However, upon further examination of these events, it becomes clear that one of these events is actually a monthly event and two of these are events that will take place at the company's sister venues. Upon clicking on one of the event thumbnails, the user is redirected away from the site to the event's facebook page that has been constructed by an outside promoter.

At the footer of the homepage reside the logos for all three venues 'The Cobalt', 'The American' and 'The Boxcar', each taking the user to the respective bars' main page with a scarcity of information. Each page contains social media links such as facebook and Instagram for each venue, encouraging the user to engage with the company's many social media accounts. Within each bar's respective page there are headings such as 'Cocktail Menu', 'Events', 'Private Parties' and 'Food', yet these are not clickable links that will take the user to any further information pertaining to the heading's topic.

2.2: CONTEXTUAL NAVIGATION – LABELS, LINKS & HEADINGS

thecobalt.ca

Item B: Contextual Navigation Critique

The lack of hypertextual linking and media rich content within thecobalt.ca's contextual navigation is a major missed opportunity for ease of navigation as well as for promoting the various features of the three venues. There currently exist headings such as 'cocktail menu' that do not link to any further information regarding menu items, as well as various other headings and chunks of information that would be beneficial for further navigation as well as search engine optimization.

The owners, promoters, and regular patrons of The Cobalt's various bars are an incredible tech-savvy demographic with so much exposure of the bars featured on social media, it therefore furthers the desire to see more contextual linking and navigation throughout the site that would feature the venues' events and products through video links and more extensive image galleries. However, the each page of the site in its current state comes off as somewhat stale and also confounding as to how to navigate between each venue. More extensive contextual navigation through clickable headings images with clearly-defined labeling would demistify and add a level of clarity to the user's experience.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

11

2.2: CONTEXTUAL NAVIGATION – LABELS, LINKS & HEADINGS

thecobalt.ca

Item C: Contextual Navigation Propose Changes

After the proposed changes to the site's global navigation have been implemented such as concise labeling and dropdown menus that link the user to each venue's page, the contextual navigation changes can begin to take shape. The 'Upcoming Shows' button will dropdown to all the user to select which venue they would link to explore and be taken to their respective pages wherein there will be clickable headings such as 'Upcoming Shows Calendar' for one-off events, 'Weekly Events' and 'Monthly Events'. This will alleviate any confusion as to which venue each event will be taking place at and when it will occur, effectively eliminating any need for both a 'Upcoming Events' and a 'Regular Events' button within the global navigation.

There will exist clearly labeled and defined headings such as 'Cocktail Menus', 'Food Menus', and 'Private Party Bookings' that will each contain updated information about each area. In addition, each time the phrase "contact us about..." appears it will link to the contact page for greater ease.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

12

2.3: SEARCH SYSTEMS

thecobalt.ca

Item A: Internal and External

Search systems within The Cobalt's site is mostly non-existent. A site that serves as a platform for so much content for essentially three separate businesses would benefit greatly from an internal infrastructure of searchability. A search tab at the top right corner of the global navigation menu linking to a site index would allow users to find the item they are looking for without having to get lost in the site's already cluttered organizational structure.

The ability for the user to simply type a band name, cocktail item, food menu, or simply hours of operation would not only allow for greater ease of navigation, but would very likely facilitate a stream of returning visitors to the site with the knowledge that the information that they are searching for pertaining to a specific topic is at their fingertips.

2. SITE CRITIQUE

13

2.3: SEARCH SYSTEMS

thecobalt.ca

Item B: SEO and Metadata

The overall lack of contextual navigation and clearly defined labels and headings restricts the site's ability to retain high SEO. In fact, google searching with keywords such as 'Live music, Vancouver, nightlife, bars' ranks The Cobalt in the 34th position out of listed options. While The Cobalt and its sister venues do rely heavily on repeat business from locals in the area who are familiar with these bars, this lack of SEO and total lack of metadata do little for the masses of tourists unfamiliar with the city that would potentially fill these venues on a daily basis.

An overall increase of microcontent in the form of hypertextual headings, clearly defined labeling systems and media-rich content would improve the company's ranking in this area and would invariably increase business from those unfamiliar with these establishments.

3. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

14

3.1: AUDIENCE DEFINITION

thecobalt.ca

As a mixed use venue that caters to a wide-range of demographics, The Cobalt has become home to a diverse mix of people from many different backgrounds. The company's motto "all are welcome" lends itself to its sister venues The Boxcar as well as The American and this is visibly received by its patrons as they venture back and forth between each venue on a nightly basis. Although any age range is welcome (The American allows children until 10pm with accompanying adult supervision), the primary age range is from 19-50 years.

The bulk of the bars' patrons are urban-centered, unmarried, artistically-driven, young people hailing largely from East Vancouver. Many reject the downtown nightlife mentality and go out in search of a niche nightlife that this area has to offer. There is a community in the Main St. area that these venues, in particular, cater to and carry a kind of cultural currency that is mirrored in the style of its patrons. However, all brand loyalty aside, these patrons are not unlike any other demographic in the need to find information with ease (especially when it pertains to social events and their logistical information).

3. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

15

3.2: IDEAL USER SCENARIOS

Persona 1



Billy Anderson

Age: 32

Occupation: Graphic Designer

Location: Vancouver, BC (Mount Pleasant area)

Relationship Status: Single

Education & Experience: Junior Creative Director – Herchel Supply Co.

BFA (Design) – Emily Carr University

Hobbies & Interests: Skateboarding, hiking, playing guitar, surfing

Internet Access/Proficiency: Billy is at a computer for most of the day. Although he is at age that may be considered a ‘digital immigrant’, he is very tech-savvy due to his education and line of work. He has access to his office desktop computer as well as his smartphone and laptop, which he has with him most of the time.

3. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

16

3.2: IDEAL USER SCENARIOS

Persona 1 Cont.'d



What is Billy Looking for?

In order to stay current with emerging trends that relate to his work, Billy tries to keep his finger on the tabs of the latest music events, art shows, and other local cultural events that will feed into his work. He is a social butterfly and vastly organized by his nature and nurture of his industry. Although he does set a lot of his own hours in the daytime, his workload is extremely hectic. He doesn't have the time to be sitting and googling event information all day across several different sites. A site that can offer him the exact information he needs such as event location, time, date and any other pertinent details surrounding cultural events would be ideal.

3. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

17

3.2: IDEAL USER SCENARIOS

Persona 2



Emily Mila

Age: 30

Occupation: Singer

Location: Portland, OR

Relationship Status: Single

Education & Experience: 4 years classical music training – Juilliard, NYC

Hobbies & Interests: Music, painting, travel, reading

Internet Access/Proficiency: Somewhat technologically adept, especially on social media platforms. However, doesn't enjoy being online very much and prefers more tangible interactions.

3. AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

18

3.2: IDEAL USER SCENARIOS

Persona 2 Cont.'d



What is Emily Looking for?

Emily loves to travel. Therefore, finding online information easily regarding people and places is paramount to her, especially in an IOS platform. She needs to be able to find event details quickly on the go and, as time is so valuable when travelling, not be directed to the wrong venue at the wrong time (as many of her trips are based around attending

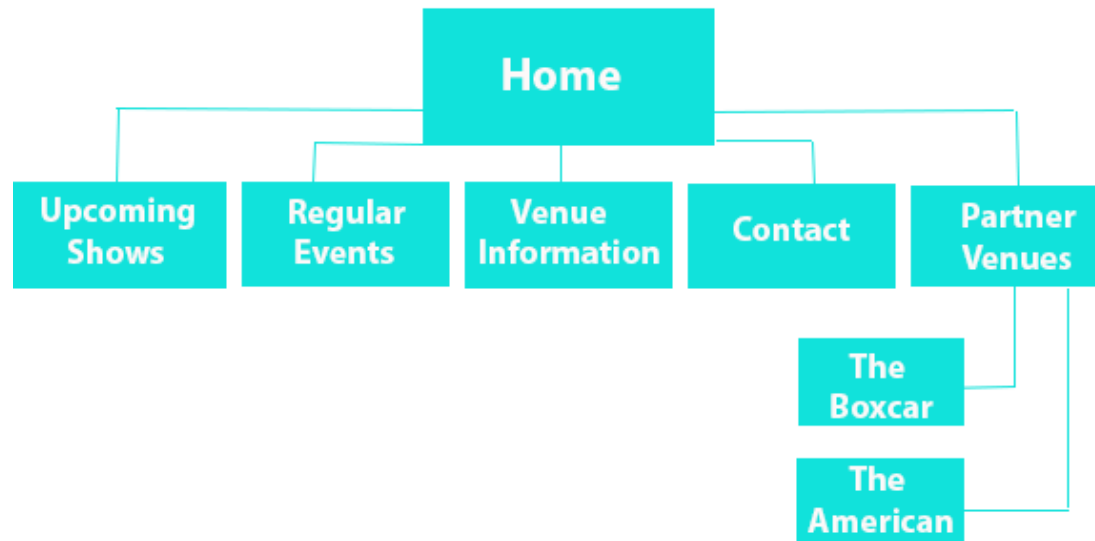
these events).

Were Emily to miss an event due to misinformation provided by a particular site, she would likely not return to that site again.

4. SITE MAP

4.1: CURRENT SITE MAP

thecobalt.ca

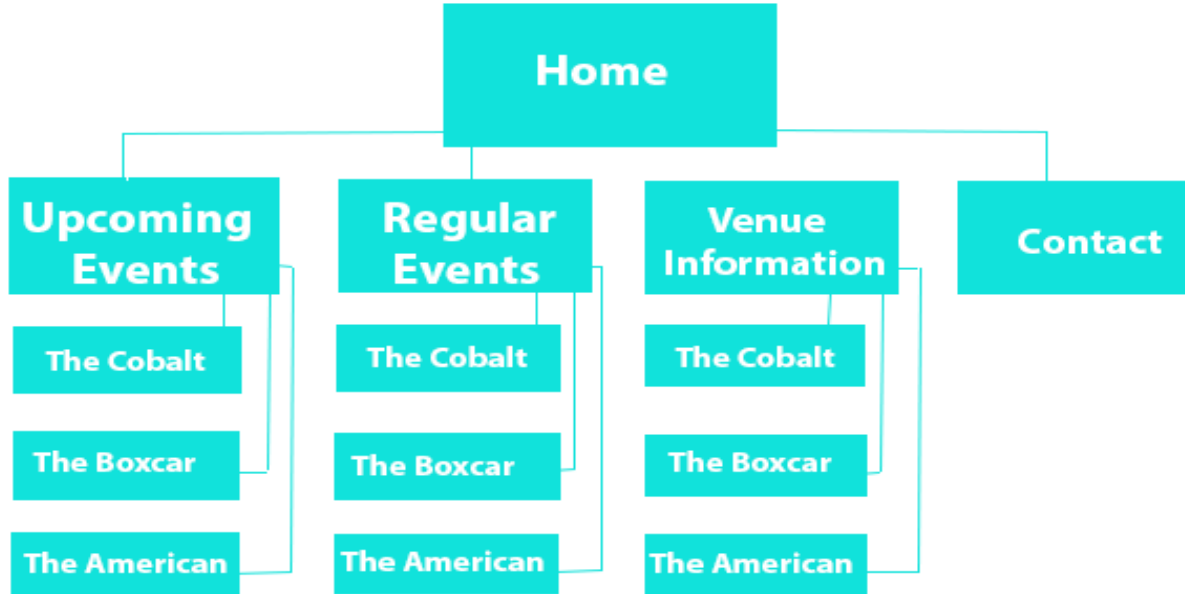


Footer Navigation:



4. SITE MAP

4.2: PROPOSED SITE MAP

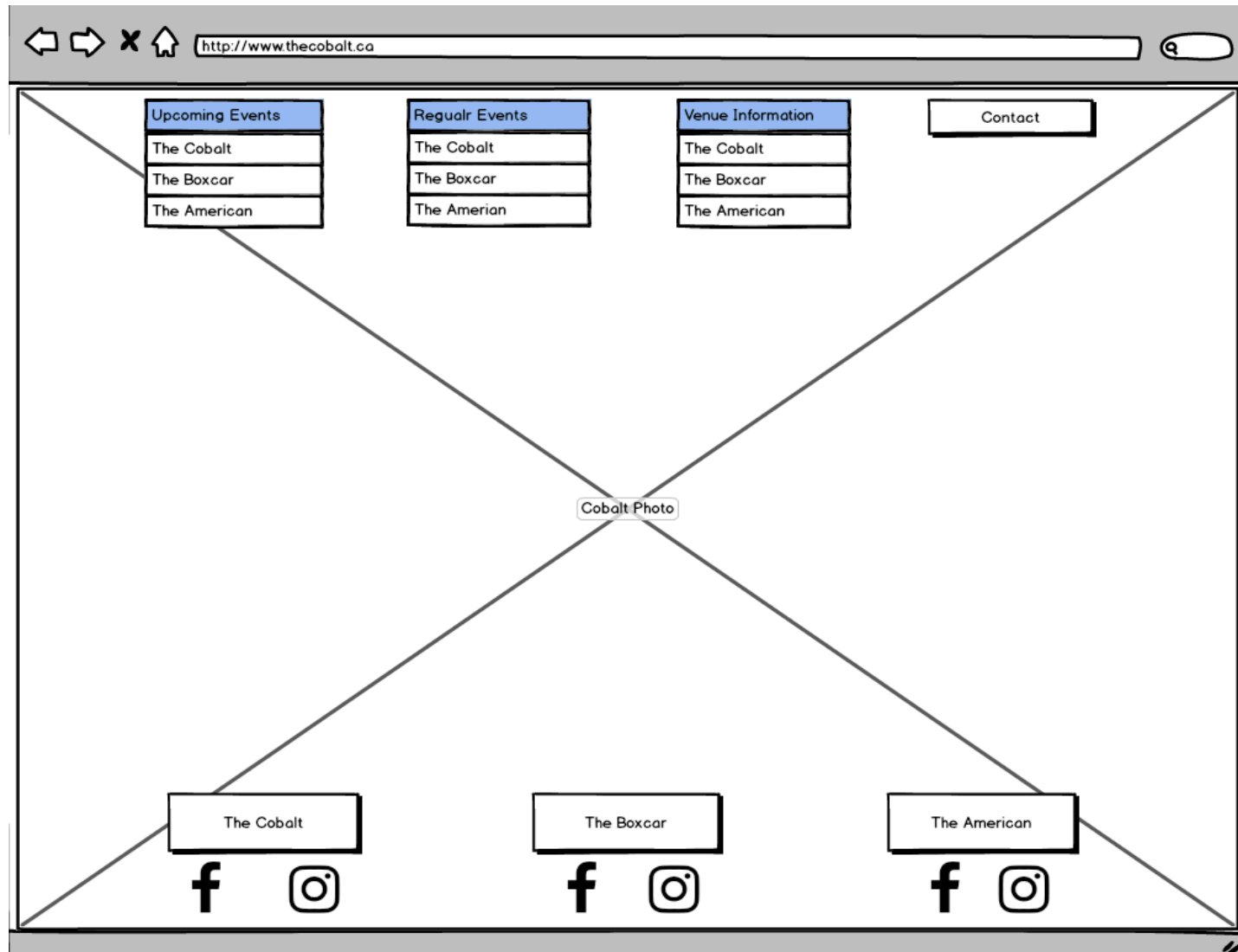


Footer Navigation:



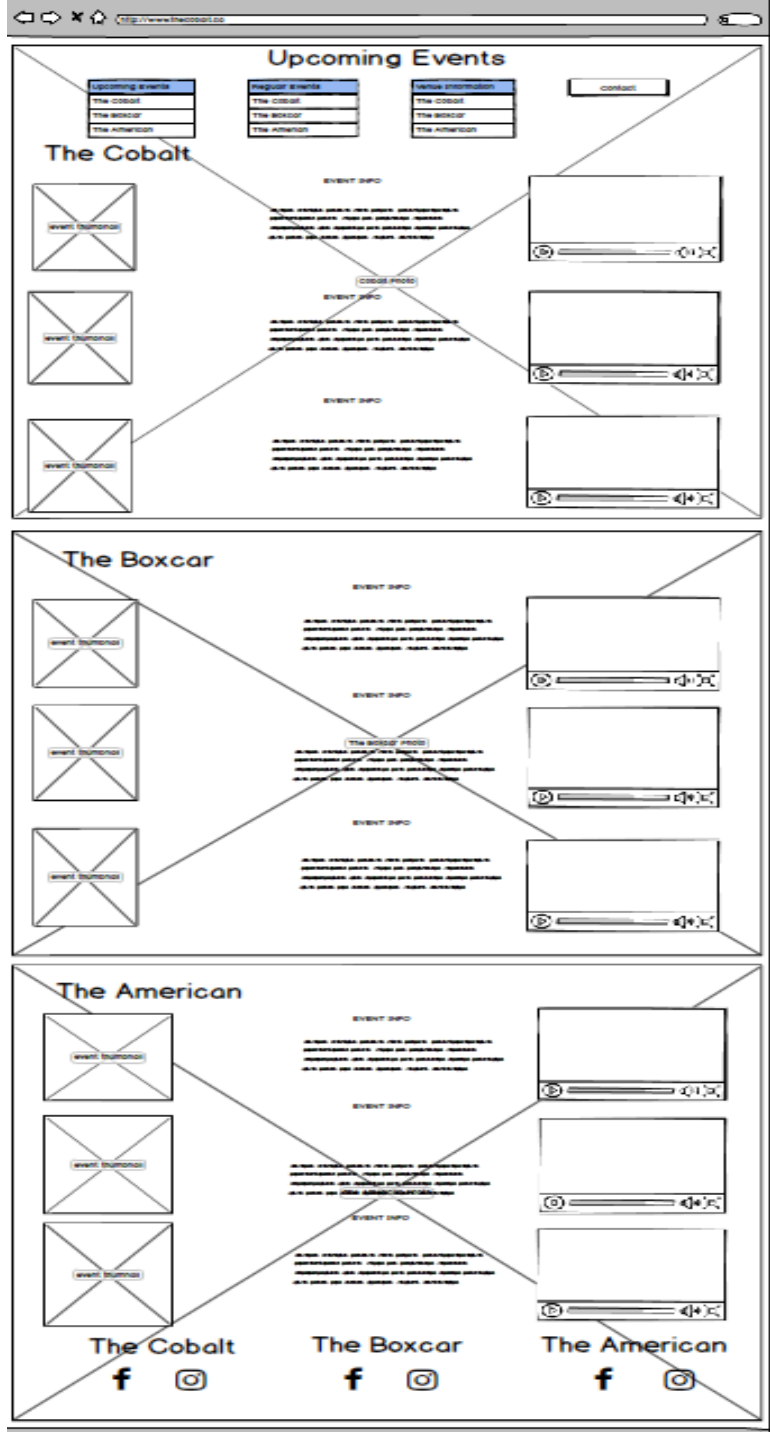
5. PROPOSED SITE WIREFRAME 21

5.1: HOMEPAGE



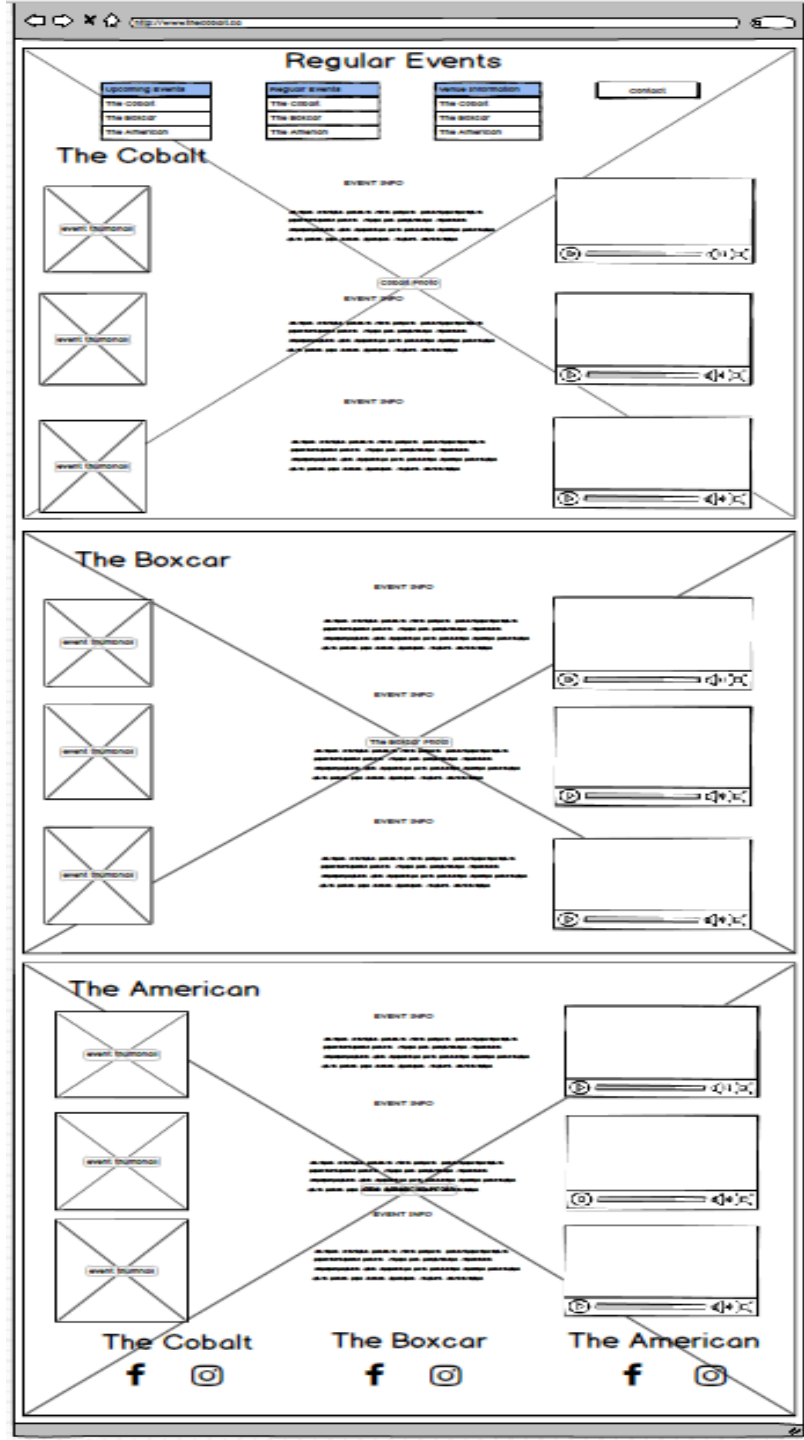
5. PROPOSED SITE WIREFRAME

5.2: UPCOMING EVENTS PAGE



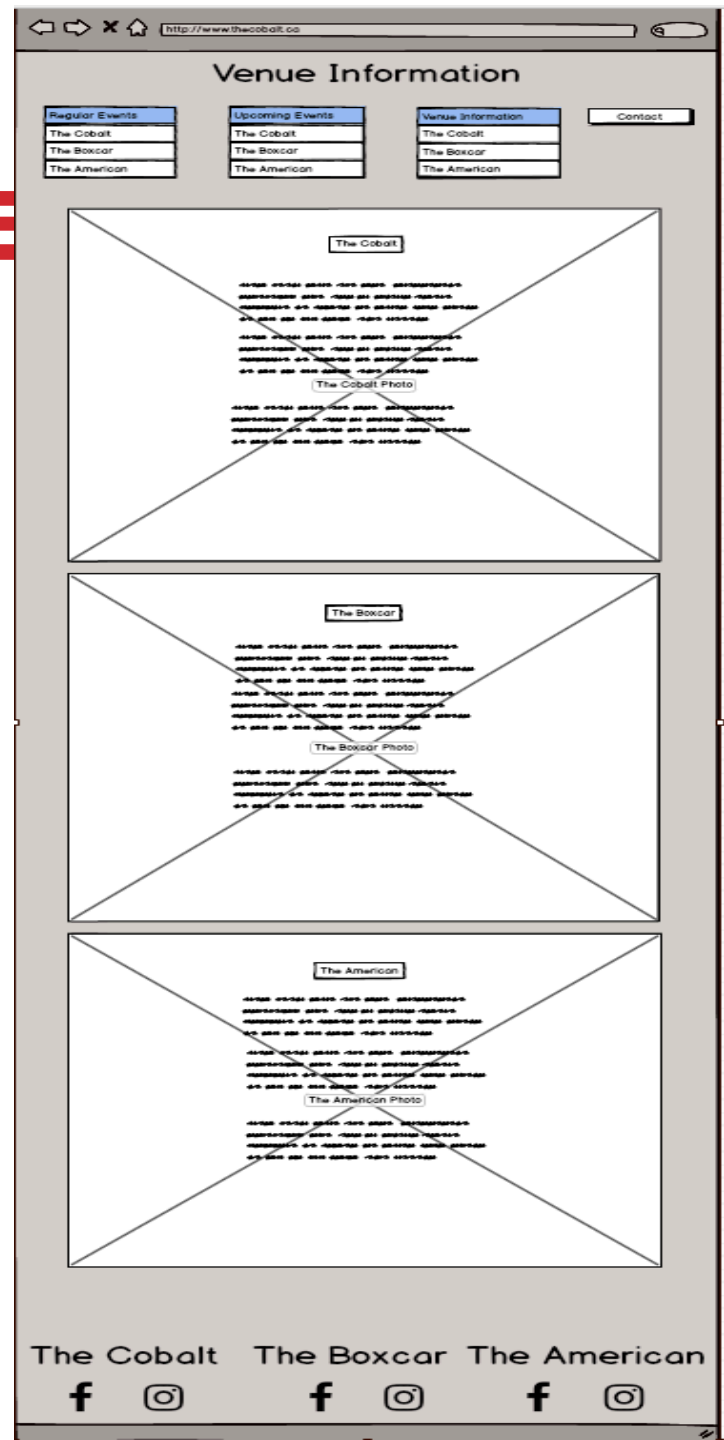
5. PROPOSED SITE WIREFRAME

5.3: REGULAR EVENTS PAGE



5. PROPOSED SITE WIREFRAME

5.4: VENUE INFORMATION



5. PROPOSED SITE WIREFRAME

5.5: CONTACT PAGE

