

Generic Motors Suite of Games

Geordie Marsh // 1464208

GDES30003: Graphic Design Studio 3

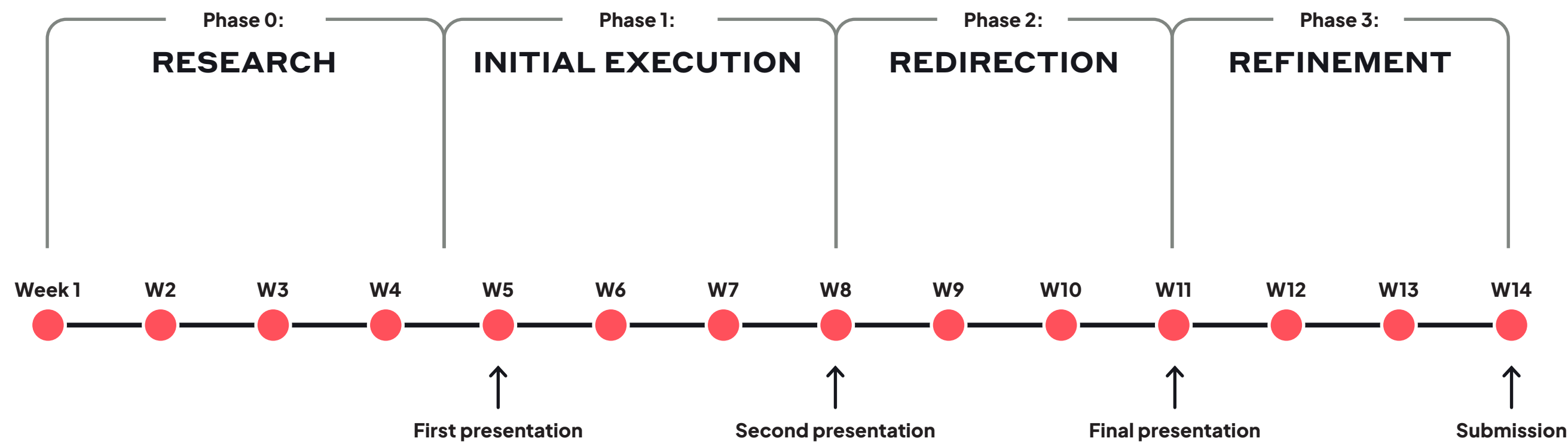
Brief 2: A Copy of a Copy — Independent Graphic Design Project

	PROJECT OVERVIEW			
		My project for Brief 2, <i>A Copy of a Copy</i>, finds its origins in a remark my father made while we were walking through a car park a few weeks before the semester started: “Is it just me, or does every car here just look exactly the same?” And I agreed. When the topic of this brief was announced, I instantly thought of this conversation and wondered how I could apply this concept to a graphic design project. The idea seemed to fit with the brief’s focusing on ‘the Copy’, where these cars all seem to be copies of one another. This project has gone through several iterations throughout the course of the semester, notably changing after each presentation checkpoint. The core idea and goal, however, have remained the same: to convey to people the homogenisation and loss of individuality in the modern-day automotive industry. Going through such a long process of iteration and evolution has turned out to be invaluable, despite how hard it was at times. The final outcome I have produced is far more effective than my initial idea. I have learned a lot from this process and am ultimately really proud of what I have produced.		
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2			i

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can a satirical and ironic interactive experience reveal the absurd visual homogeneity of modern-day car design?

PROJECT TIMELINE



PHASE 0:

RESEARCH

0.1:

CORROBORATING THE IDEA

ARTICLES

THE AGE OF AVERAGE, ALEX MURRELL

To confirm my initial theory, the first place I looked to was articles and blogs on the Internet that expressed similar themes. Although these are not necessarily credible or academic sources, they still corroborate the general notion of automotive homogeneity as a phenomenon and not just an isolated experience.

This article was one of the first I found, and it expresses exactly the view I was looking for. In fact, the author, Murrell, actually details this phenomenon through a very similar interaction he had with a friend as I had with my father. Murrell’s friend states,

“Maybe it’s a BMW. It kinda looks like one.” It wasn’t. It was a Hyundai Santa Fe, which kinda resembles the Acura RDX, which kinda resembles the Volvo XC60, which kinda resembles the BMW X3. (...) These four models are all 75 inches wide, 66 inches high (save for the Volvo, which is 65), and they only differ in length by a maximum of three inches. They all have rear quarter windows smaller than a porthole on a submarine. They all have chrome accents to increase the glam factor by, like, five percent. And they all abhor right angles, (...). They’re spiritual clones, and they’re not exceptions in being so.”

This source not only confirmed the visual homogeneity (especially with this image, which is comprised of models all from different brands) but also gave me ground for the cars being similar on a physical level, like with their features or design. With this, I had more confidence pursuing more academic research.



Murrell, Alex. "The Age of Average." Alex Murrell website. November, 2022. <https://www.alexmurrell.co.uk/articles/the-age-of-averagemat=2500w>

25 cars, all from different brands. https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5e-13762b05aeab4478a071d5/9afc9fcc-13dc-4522-8efc-8755bb4cca7f/The+Age+of+Aver-age_0008_Cars+-+Form.jpg?for

	ARTICLES		
	WHY DOES EVERY NEW CAR LOOK LIKE EVERY OTHER CAR?, DREW MAGARY Like the previous article, this interview piece details how, and importantly why, car designs have become so homogenised. One of the main points was that automotive makers are more inclined nowadays to design a car with mass appeal and for a broad audience, rather than adding specific features that might appeal to only a handful of people. This ties in with economies of scale, which dictate that something will be cheaper to produce in higher volumes. Some of the other main reasons for these cars’ similar designs are mass production with prefabricated parts, to minimise drag, strict industry constraints, aesthetic trends, etc. There are clearly several factors at play, but ultimately the end result is that most cars nowadays really do look like every other car. This and the previous article set the base for my project and its presentation of automotive homogeneity. Magary, Drew. “Why Does Every new Car Look Like Every Other Car?” Road Track. 15 June, 2021. https://www.roadandtrack.com/car-culture/a36715409/why-does-every-new-car-look-like-every-other-new-car/		
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2		PHASE 0 // CORROBORATING THE IDEA // 4

ARTICLES

THIS GRAPH SHOWS HOW CAR PAINT COLORS HAVE GOTTEN MORE BORING OVER THE YEARS, HAZEL SOUTHWELL

This invaluable graph I came across in my research represents a different side of the story, one that is firmly in the hands of the consumer.

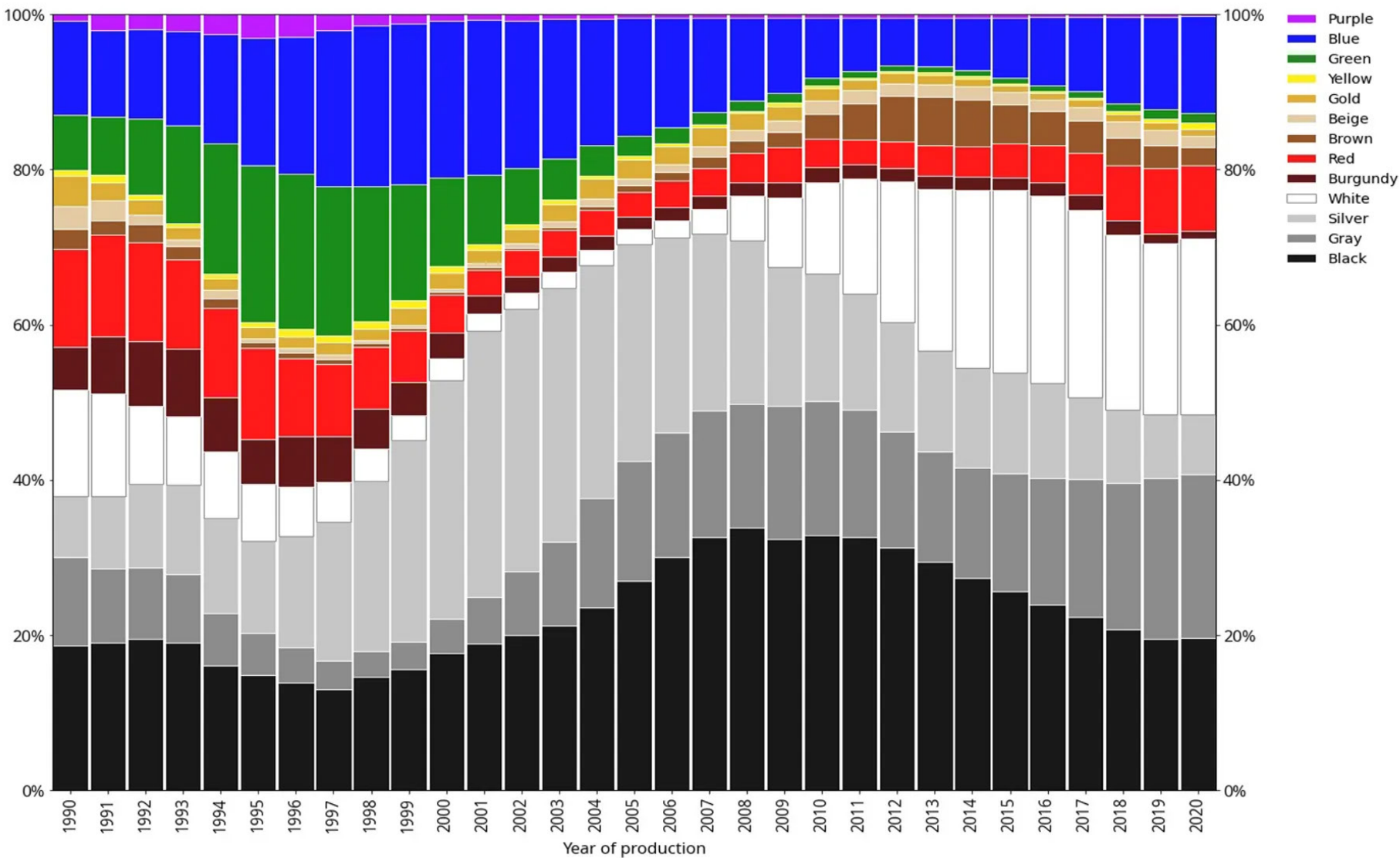
The graph shows how car colour choice has steadily become more ‘grey’ over the years. Where just about 60% of all cars sold in 1996 were some colour, in 2020, 75% of cars were either black, grey, silver or white. What’s more, is that the colours that are sold are also less diverse, with almost all coloured cars being blue or red.

Colour choice when buying a car is largely in the hands of the buyer. Admittedly, car colours do often cost a premium, which is likely an incentive for more people to buy uncoloured cars, but it’s unclear whether that is a recent phenomenon or whether that was also the case in the 1990s. Either way, people have the choice to choose more interesting car colours but typically don’t, further adding to the homogenisation of cars we see on the road.

In my project, this graph inspired me to think a bit more outside the box about how cars are homogeneous—not just their designs, but also their features and what people actually know about these cars.

Southwell, Hazel. "This Graph Shows How Car Paint Colors Have Gotten More Boring Over the Years." The Drive. 10 October, 2020. <https://www.thedrive.com/news/37001/this-graph-shows-how-car-paint-colors-have-gotten-more-boring-over-the-years?xid=fbshare>

CAR COLORS BY YEAR



Graph displaying car colour distribution in the models sold each year. <https://www.thedrive.com/wp-content/uploads/images-by-url-td/content/2020/10/car-color-graph.jpg?quality=85&w=1920>

0.2:

DIRECT RESEARCH

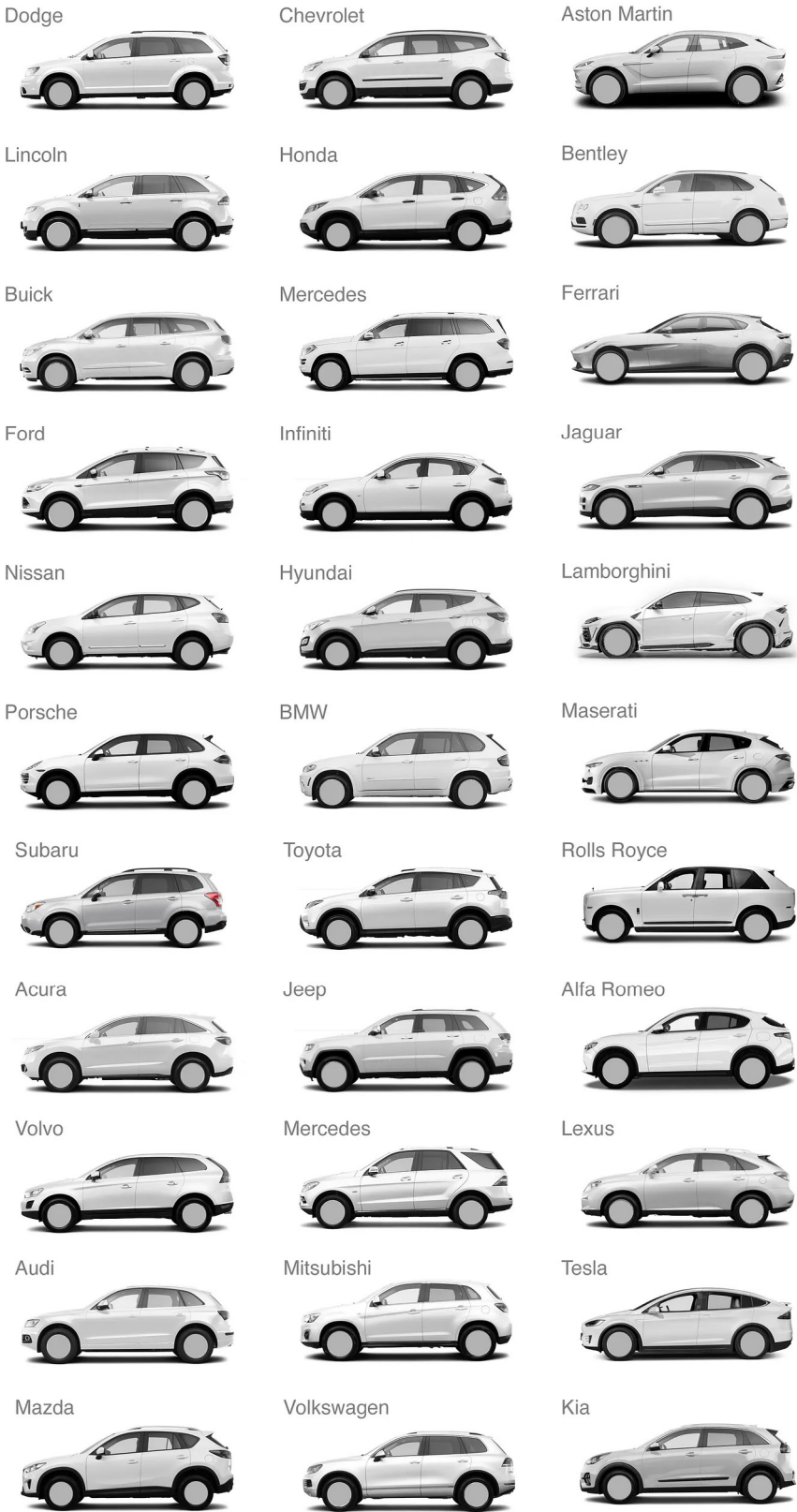
ON AUTOMOTIVE HOMOGENEITY

DRIVING CONFORMITY (USER ZERO, CH. 13), ADRIAN HANFT

This book chapter largely corroborates with the previous articles, but attacks the problem from a more academic standpoint. The book as a whole is about how individual people can make huge changes, which I found quite poignant with the project. Is this car homogeneity at the hands of the companies who sell the cars or the people who buy them?

I found Hanft's discussion of just how deep-rooted this issue is and how it is reflective of homogeneity in other fields. I especially liked his critique of Porsche in particular, whose brand has historically revolved around identity and distinctiveness (e.g., everybody knows what a Porsche 911 looks like, and there's no other car that looks quite like it). But Porsche's latest models, like the Cayenne (shown middle-left here) or Macan, look virtually indistinguishable from other cars in the same categories, completely rejecting the brand's sports-car heritage and prestige. Here, these cars are really just relying on the branding itself to warrant their much higher pricetags, despite not really offering any unique features. Hanft also brings up the Tesla Cybertruck, a notable example of a car trying to break from the pattern, but how in many ways this model goes too far the other way and fails in factors like wind resistance and mass production.

Hanft, Adrian. "Driving Conformity." In *User Zero: Inside the Tool that is Reshaping Dystopia*. Adrian Hanft, 2020.



33 different car models each from different companies, labelled. https://miro.medium.com/v2/resize:fit:1400/format:webp/1*sAzZ1D9NYAjmD_kuPkvVZQ.jpeg

ON AUTOMOTIVE HOMOGENEITY

(CONT.)

Hanft raises a similar point about the diversity of products within individual companies, too. In his writing, he uses BMW as an example. The company's main slogan is, "We only make one thing, the ultimate driving machine." This is great branding—it solidifies a single positive message in the mind of the customer, making it easier to reconcile a brand identity. But this message is undermined by the 71 models BMW offers, many of which have such little distinction from each other that it can end up confusing customers.

Ultimately, Hanft's chapter provided me with a lot of ground for raising and presenting these issues more legitimately. He also included discussions about issues like economics versus artistic expression, commoditisation, taste and function over form.



The full list of models sold by BMW. https://miro.medium.com/v2/format:webp/1*ml-q1wZpsX3M0bOHp4vle1Q.jpeg

	ON THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CAR				
	THREE AGES OF THE AUTOMOBILE, DAVID GARTMAN In this article, Gartman discusses how consumer values like individuality, status and identity shape vehicle design, and how this has shifted over time. In the early days of cars, Gartman’s so-called “First age of the automobile”, cars were artistically designed and personalised according to the consumer themselves. Many cars featured what were considered at the time outlandish designs, often pushing boundaries and experimenting with new design styles. This approach to design is completely opposite to current practices, or Gartman's “Second age”. Today, cars are sold as already-designed products that appeal to the masses instead of individuals. Where car companies used to communicate their branding through the design of the car itself, nowadays the badge is often considered enough to justify a drastic increase in price. Status, especially brand status, though, is still a huge factor in deciding what car to buy, even if a \$100,000 Porsche SUV is nearly identical in features and design to a mid-range Kia. Many people still consider individuality in their purchases to be important, too, especially in the age of social media, but this is contradicted by the fact that modern day cars are inherently anti-individual. With this research informing my project, I wanted to highlight how these cars share so many similarities but still differ so much in price and value. NB: One point Gartman raises is that his so-called “Third age of the automobile”—the age of the electric vehicle—actually does exhibit a notable straying from the typical look of cars we expect nowadays. Many electric cars use the change in technology to push the boundaries of design. For this reason, I only focused on traditional petrol cars, which still dominate the automotive landscape in Australia. Gartman, David. “Three Ages of the Automobile: The Cultural Logistics of the Car.” <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 21, 4/5 (2004): 169–95.	FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THIS: Karjalainen, Toni-Matti. “It looks like a Toyota: Educational approaches to designing for brand recognition.” <i>International Journal of design</i> 1, no. 1 (2007). → Discusses how brand recognition is visually encoded. Historically, this has been more apparent, as cars of different brands had very defining features; this visual encoding has been somewhat lost over time. Helper, Susan, and John Paul MacDuffie. “E-volving the auto industry: E-commerce effects on consumer and supplier relationships.” <i>Proceedings The E-Business Transformation: Sector Developments and Policy Implications</i>, Case-Western Reserve University, Washington DC (2000). → Discusses how e-commerce and changes in consumer shopping habits/patterns has changed how companies set up supply chains. Camuffo, Arnaldo, and Giuseppe Volpato. “Dynamic capabilities and manufacturing automation: organizational learning in the Italian automobile industry.” <i>Industrial and Corporate Change</i> 5, no. 3 (1996): 813–838. → Introduces the idea of “technological lust”, i.e., the natural inclination for people to favour and seek out new technology. This links to materialism and mass consumerism, and potentially incentivises companies to focus more on the technologies and features in the cars rather than the designs of the cars themselves.			
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2			PHASE 0 // DIRECT RESEARCH // 9	

	ON HOW CARS HAVE <i>BECOME</i> HOMOGENISED					
	ROLLING OUT A WORLD CAR, ARNALDO CAMUFFO This article explores the homogeneity of cars from an industrial, organisational and globalisational point of view. Camuffo details how supply chains and economies of scale naturally lead to a design convergence, where the resultant product is based off a cheaper, more well-established design that likely fares better under more circumstances. These benefits, however, come with some trade-offs. Principally, supply chains make it difficult for companies to inject unique features or personality into their products, leading to a more homogenised look. Also. the pre-fabricated parts that are often used nowadays are more internally complex and interact with more parts of the car, meaning changing one thing often has several knock-on effects. All this to say, there are several arguments for <i>why</i> cars have become more homogenised from a company’s perspective, but this doesn’t necessarily explain why people have become so complacent with it. In my project, I want to target exactly this. That many people are likely oblivious to just how visually bland the modern-day automotive industry is, but if they were enlightened, they might recognise the issue.	DESIGN TRENDS IN VISUAL IDENTITY OF CAR BRANDS, FERNANDO CARCAVILLA In this article, Carcavilla details the decline of strong brand-specific features in recent decades. In line with Gartman, Carcavilla explains how modern day cars are far less distinct from one another than their counterparts from several decades ago would have been. Where these brands used to have unique identities, features and aesthetics, nowadays they all largely compete for the same market and appeal to the same aesthetic. Car brands have, therefore, mostly lost their defining features and as a result rely solely on their historical legacies for status and value. The only real defining features most modern cars bear, Carcavilla explains, are the grille shapes, lights, logos and wheels; the BMW and Lexus grilles, for example, are iconic and instantly-recognisable. But these features don’t have any true effect on the cars themselves—the car will drive just as well with a smaller, less uniquely-shaped grille—so these purely aesthetic alterations display just how little differentiation there is between the actual cars being sold. This directly informed my project, with comparison between cars being a key point. By removing/redacting some of these aesthetic alterations (notably, the hubcaps), the cars become near-indistinguishable.				
	Camuffo, Arnaldo. “Rolling out a world car: Globalization, outsourcing and modularity.” (2002).		Carcavilla, Fernando. “Design trends in visual identity of car brands: between the nostalgia for the past and the challenge of the electric future.” Redmarka: Revista de Mareting Aplica-do 25, 2 (2021): 1-23. https://doi.org/10.17979/redma.2021.25.2.8666			
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2				PHASE 0 // DIRECT RESEARCH // 10	

MORE DETAIL ON CAR COLOUR CHOICES

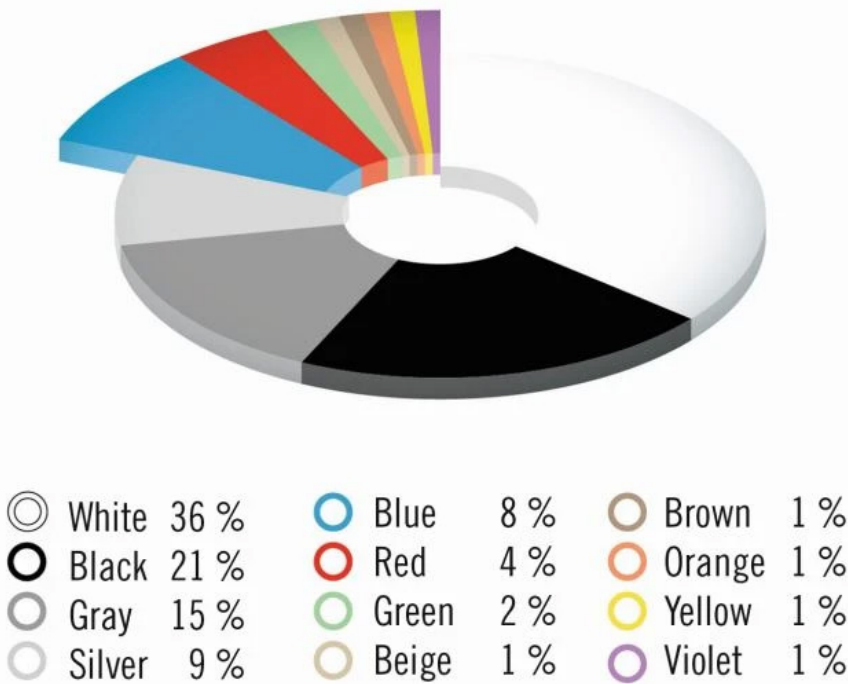
COLOR REPORT: CHANGE IN ACHROMATIC COLORS, BASF COATINGS

Not wanting to take the car colours graph I found online as gospel, I did further research into car colour choices. This report, which comes from an actual car painting company, is a few years newer than the aforementioned graph and contains some interesting insights.

Chiefly, the report corroborates the notion that the majority of cars sold nowadays are ‘achromatic’ (i.e., white, silver, grey or black) and that the colours that are sold are typically only blue or red. The report actually goes further than the graph, stating that in 2023, only 19% of cars were chromatic. It also details that darker shades, notably black, are starting to outsell white and silver in certain regions. The market share of achromatic colours is also increasing, meaning the trend is still gaining traction.

BASF Coatings GmbH. "Color Report: Change in Achromatic Colors." *Int Surf Technol* 17, 8–9 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s35724-024-1582-6>

GLOBAL OVERVIEW



https://media.springernature.com/lw685/springer-static/image/art%3A10.1007%2Fs35724-024-1582-6/MediaObjects/35724_2024_1582_Fig2_HTML.jpg?as=webp

FURTHER RESEARCH INTO THIS:

Axalta Coating Systems Germany GmbH & Co. "The Most Popular Car Colors in the World." *Int Surf Technol* 14, 16–17 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s35724-021-0472-4>

Lai, Peihua, Boshua Guo, and Stephen Westland. *Why do people choose their car colours?* 2022.

Mandić, Lidija, and Maja Strgar Kurečić. "The role and significance of color when choosing cars." *Journal of the International Colour Association* 28 (2022).

0.3: **CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH**

FUTURAMA

FUTURAMA, DESIGNED BY NORMAN BEL GEDDES, SPONSORED BY GENERAL MOTORS

One of the main points of my research that conceptually underpins this project is the vision proposed by General Motors’ 1939 New York World’s Fair exhibition, *Futurama*, and the subsequent fulfilment of this vision in the years that followed.

Designed by Norman Bel Geddes, this exhibit took viewers on a seated track ride that let them view a hypothetical vision of the future, one where automobiles (still a relatively new phenomenon for most people at the time) would be the defining invention that would enable a more interconnected, developed society. The exhibit was the first time the general public had been introduced to the idea of an “expressway” (what we now call motorways) and laid the groundwork for the extensive motorways and increased car ownership that would follow, especially in the United States. The exhibit also introduced several ideas we take for granted nowadays, like segregated directions of travel, speed limits and the use of motorways to separate suburbs and population centres.

General Motors (GM), one of the leading automotive manufacturers of the time, was the sponsor of this exhibit. The idea of the motorway was a neat and technologically achievable solution to the widespread traffic that plagued the nation. Although it’s unknowable if the aftermath was foreseen by GM itself, the adoption of these motorways invariably created more demand for cars, creating an endless feedback loop of more car consumption and more highway construction. So, even though the vision that *Futurama* presented was undoubtedly and obviously a tool for the marketing and promotion of GM’s products, the optimism it inspired in the public was, in the end, a colossal win for the company and the automotive industry at large.



Various shots of the exhibition and the people in the ride, looking down at it. Notable points are the expressways that run through skyscraper-filled cities, both used to connect and logically divide regions.

<https://preview.redd.it/general-motors-futurama-by-norman-bel-geddes-the-1939-v0-qi6blxh4rxeal.jpg?auto=webp&s=f225d2ac77b7390610ea44c41602825b1579087b>

<https://i0.wp.com/www.sensesatlas.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ba57647cd02b-c7edeb935ca671f2dd6a.jpg?fit=2392%2C1912&ssl=1>

[https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/\\$s_la6lu!f_auto.q_auto:good.fl_progressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F753f6e66-4852-4e16-bf6f-025e6288de9b_767x1024.jpeg](https://substackcdn.com/image/fetch/$s_la6lu!f_auto.q_auto:good.fl_progressive:steep/https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F753f6e66-4852-4e16-bf6f-025e6288de9b_767x1024.jpeg)



FUTURAMA

CONT.

Futurama and its aftermath reveals how my project’s critique of the visual homogeneity of modern day cars actually relates to a deep-rooted, systemic issue in automotive mass consumption. The building of more and more motorways has historically encouraged more people to buy cars; the idea of well-connected, uncongested roads appeals to many people and promises new opportunities. The problem is, though, that economies of scale dictate that 100 mass-produced cars are more efficient and cost-effective to make than 100 individualised cars. So, if far more people are now driving on the same roads for the same purposes, and if the cars they drive are more efficiently produced with less variation, it is easy to see how the automotive industry might trend towards a more homogeneous state. The mass consumption of cars that resulted from the motorways that *Futurama* incited is likely a huge reason behind the visual homogeneity we now see in the automotive industry.

To pay homage to this conceptual underpinning, the brand I devised for my project is named *Generic Motors*, a play on words of *Futurama*’s sponsor.



<https://neverwasmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/1939-New-York-Worlds-Fair-Futurama-3.jpg>
<https://api.architectuul.org/media/594666bd-da3c-4ab3-bc3b-4e976d7b5e1b/1312x.jpg>
https://blog.mcny.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/66cm_x2010_7_1_18077.jpg



Futurama. Exhibition by General Motors, designed by Norman Bel Geddes. New York World's Fair, New York, 1939–1940.

	CRITICAL THEORY				
	THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION, WALTER BENJAMIN The critical theory Benjamin presents directly relates to and inspires much of the concept behind my project. Chiefly, is Benjamin’s discussion of artistic “aura” and how this has been lost through modern-day duplication practices. An “aura”, as Benjamin defines, refers to originality and authenticity. A Monet painting, for example, has a different aura to a Van Gogh, not just because of different aesthetics or styles, but because they were born from different struggles, causes, situations and events. Relating this to my project, cars used to have distinct characters that were innately tied to their purposes (sports cars, road cars, etc.), brand/maker and even the owners themselves. In the modern day, however, these auras have been stripped away as a result of mass production, global platforms, economies of scale and efficiency demands, in turn creating standardised and mass-reproducible designs. Herein lies the connection to the brief itself: modern-day cars are not originals like they used to be; they are <i>copies</i> of a single design, ultra-optimised for scalability and cost over uniqueness. Benjamin also discusses how art has gradually become detached from its origin. Just like shoes, clothes, musical instruments, etc., cars are no longer made by craftsmen or local factories, but are now globally engineered, assembled and distributed through standardised processes. The car has shifted from a crafted object of prestige, design and identity to a mass-produced consumer product. In this way, mechanical reproduction begets mass manufacturing and the identity of the car is lost. Benjamin, Walter. “The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction.” In <i>A museum studies approach to heritage</i>, 226–43. Routledge, 2018.				
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2			PHASE 0 // CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH // 15	

	CRITICAL THEORY				
	IN DEFENSE OF THE POOR IMAGE, HITO STEYERL Steyerl’s description of the “poor image” raises an important point about my project that should not be overlooked: although these cars <i>are</i> by all accounts duplicates and unoriginal, this mass production has made the automotive industry more accessible and global than ever before. In the context of my project, Steyerl’s “poor image” becomes the “poor car”. This describes a low-quality, endlessly distributed copy of an original design. These copies are degraded, but are also more accessible; stripped of their distinctiveness and souls, these “poor cars” favour standardisation and efficiency. This, in turn, opens the market up to far more people, both in terms of appeal and affordability. But it is undeniable that something is lost along the way—identity. Identity, especially in the automotive industry, is a highly valued commodity. Even today, cars with more identity—that is, unique characteristic, special features, interesting designs, etc.—are the ones that are paraded, shown and sold for more. A Ferrari built for racing, with its ultra-aerodynamic design and superior engine, will attract more attention than an SUV ever will, and for good reason. These specialised cars still exist and are still being made, and I don’t want my project to try to deny that. But the point I want to make is that the automotive industry as a <i>whole</i>, especially with the cars that most people interact with, has shifted away from this more specialised approach and openly rejected identity in favour of “circulation”. I want to confront people with this loss of identity and allow them to reckon with it themselves, but my goal is not to make people think <i>all</i> cars are boring and homogeneous. For this reason, I		stuck to only one car segment: medium SUVs. This segment is uniquely modern and I think best epitomises the issue of homogeneity. I explicitly have not included any other segments, including different sizes of SUVs, as I didn’t want to cloud my vision.		
	Steyerl, Hito. “In defense of the poor image.” <i>e-flux journal</i> 10, no. 11 (2009): 1–9.				
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2				PHASE 0 // CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH // 16

0.4:

VISUAL RESEARCH

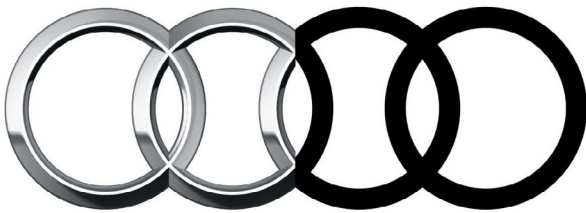
BLANDING

In line with the visual homogenisation of the cars themselves, the automotive industry is also plagued with the modern-day phenomenon of ‘blanding’. Like several other industries, automotive companies have been conforming to the modern trend of simplifying their brand to ultra-minimalist logos and design languages. This involves removing gradients, colours, unnecessary shapes and sometimes text, in the end creating a geometric symbol that is instantly recognisable but somewhat devoid of personality.

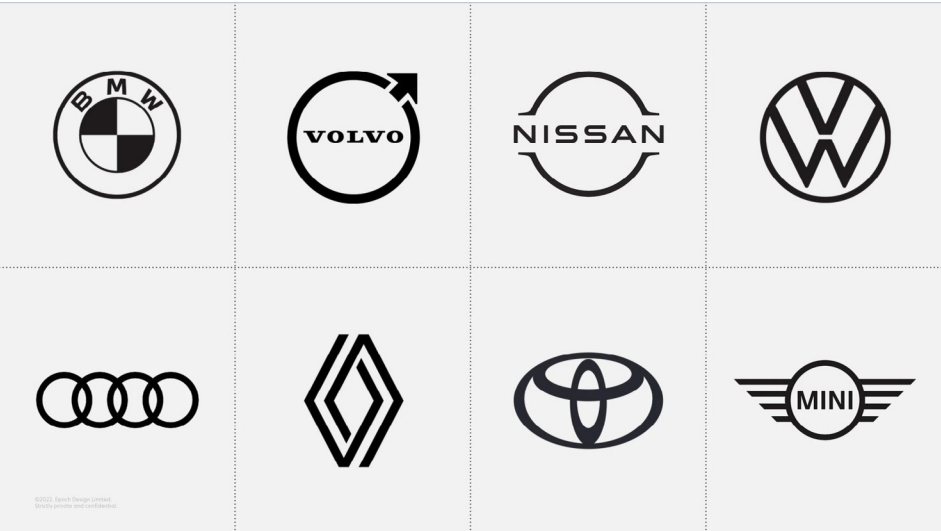
An idea for my project I had early on was to create a sort of faux automotive brand. I wanted this brand to epitomise the genericism and corporateness that so many real-world automotive brands exhibit, so when creating the brand’s logo I took heavy inspiration from the ultra-minimalism these companies have started using.

This phenomenon is reinforced by academic research, too (although not with this name). In particular, I looked to Wally Olins’ *The Brand Handbook*, which provides a good understanding for why companies shift their identities to flat design.

Olins, Wally. *The Brand Handbook*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2008.



<https://www.nssmag.com/en/art-design/23164/automobiles-flat-logo-trend>



https://i0.wp.com/images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5e13762b05aea-b4478a071d5/b0a5f012-0cd4-41be-a2f5-4910ebda8495/The%2BAge%2Bof%2BAverage_0007_Cars%2B-%2BLogos.jpg?resize=1500%2C842&ssl=1

CAR WEBSITES

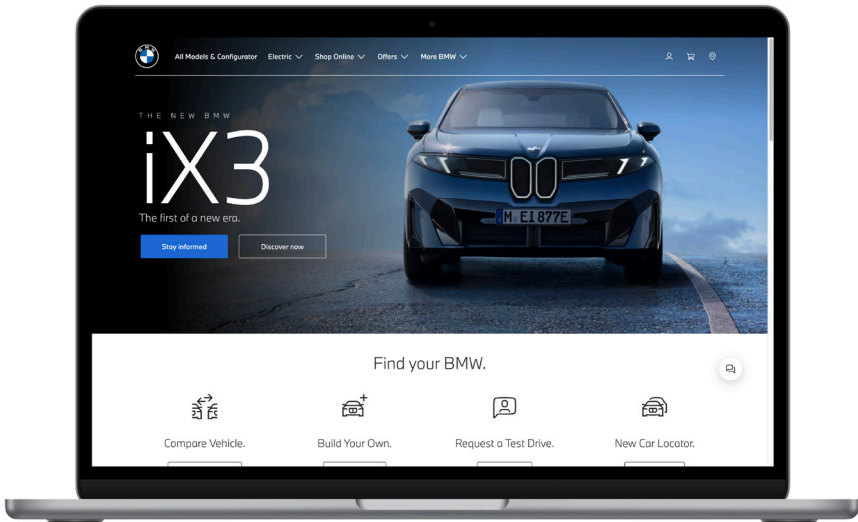
In the early stages of my project, I planned on creating an e-commerce website. I therefore looked directly to existing automotive companies' websites to take inspiration.

The main takeaway from these websites was that these companies use minimalism, simple design, basic colours and loud imagery to draw most of the user's attention to the cars themselves.

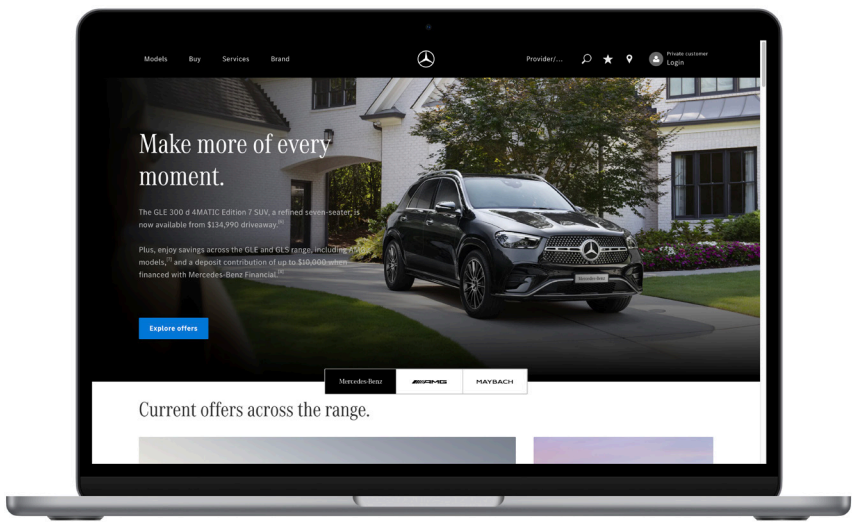
These websites tend to resemble each other after a while, further adding to this idea of industry-wide homogeneity. This also further ties into the idea of the brands essentially being copies of each other. If the brand name/logo were removed, most of these websites would be unidentifiable; there's nothing really unique about any of the designs save for one or two interesting design elements each. When creating my website design, I therefore chose similar colour treatments, typographic styles, uses of imagery and compositions to replicate these automotive websites.

Looking at these websites was also crucial in that these designs speak directly to the design languages and aesthetics of the brands themselves. Mercedes-Benz, for example, employs a serif font which genuinely stands out compared to the sans-serifs of virtually every other brand. In creating my brand, I tried to synthesise all the styles that were most used across the most brands to create the most generic brand possible.

Whilst I didn't end up creating an e-commerce website, my initial foray into these websites was still invaluable. This research directly informed my brand's design, and I reused several design elements throughout my final games, so the work was not in vain.



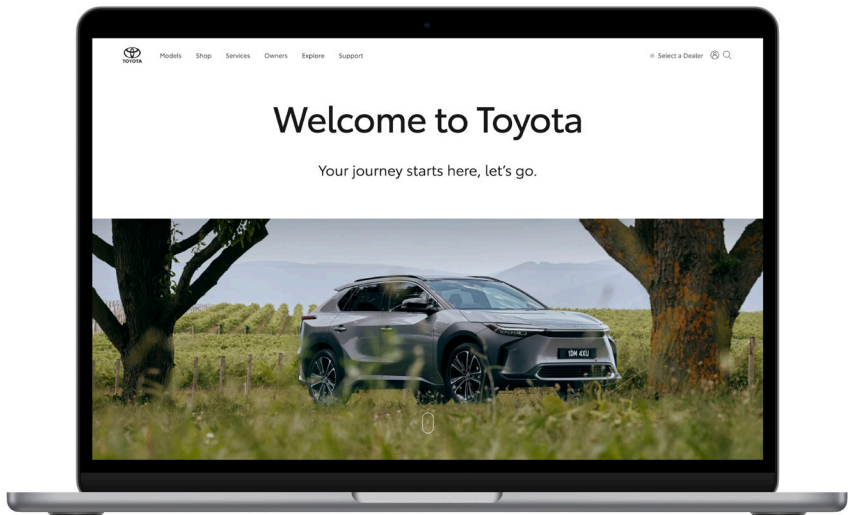
<https://www.bmw.com/en-au/home.html>
<https://www.volkswagen.com.au/>



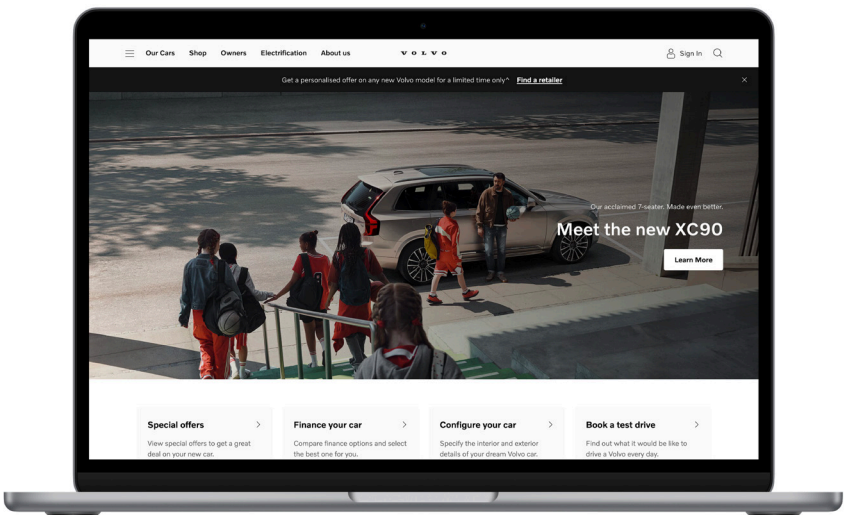
<https://www.mercedes-benz.com.au/>
https://www.tesla.com/en_au



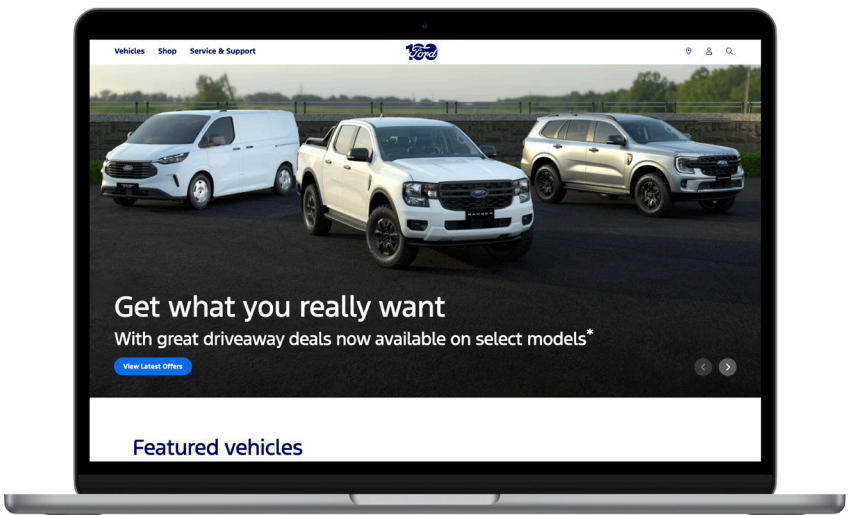
CAR WEBSITES



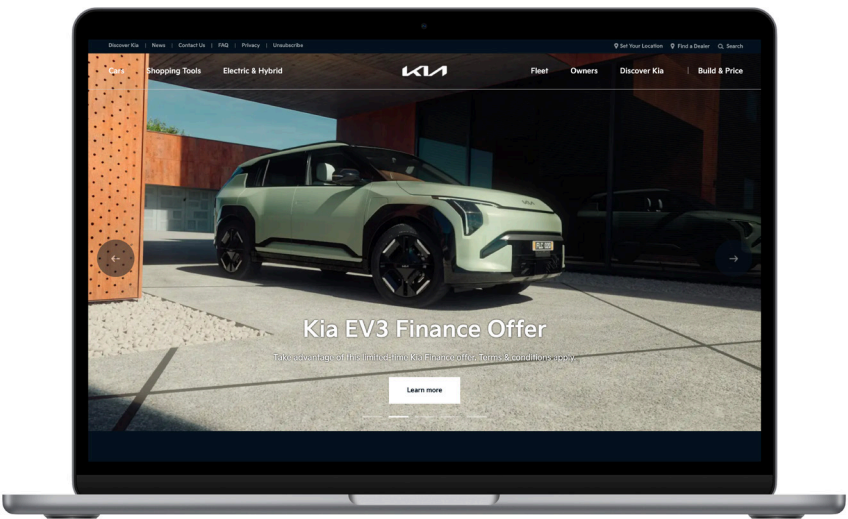
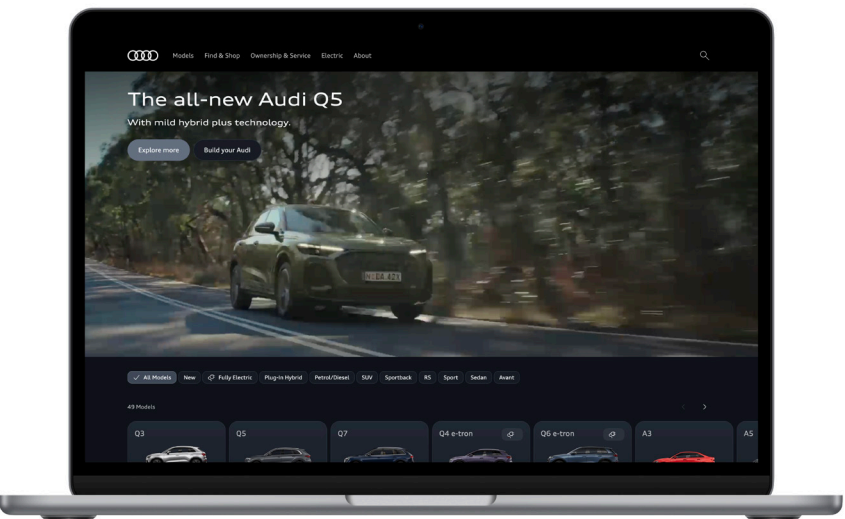
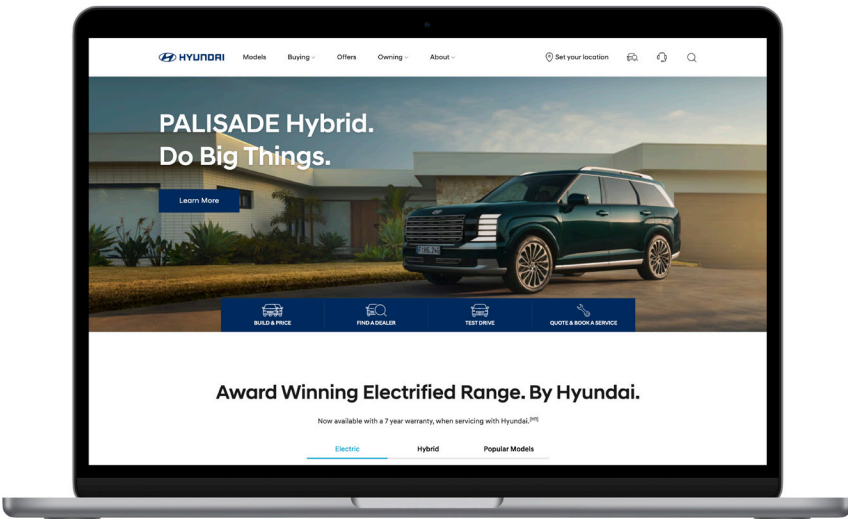
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<https://www.audi.com.au/en/>



<https://www.ford.com.au/>
<https://www.kia.com.au/main.html>



GAME DESIGN

For the later stages of my project, I primarily pursued game design. This presented another unique challenge in that games are typically designed to be (and expected to be) eye-catching, visually stimulating and unique to match the excitement that the game itself brings. My project calls for so-called ‘anti-games’, though, as I wasn’t necessarily designing for the purpose of entertainment but for confrontation.

I therefore looked to typical game designs, both board games and web app games that were popular in the 2010s, in an effort to not replicate any of the defining features. Notably, I tried to abstain from heavy-handed use of colour, interesting type, non-standard compositions, etc. Essentially, I tried to make my games look ‘boring’ and ‘corporate’ in line with the homogeneity of the cars themselves. This was also in line with the rough design language of my brand, which is supposed to mock overly-corporate design.



Sushi Go Party! and Monopoly Deal, two popular card games. Note their similar use of bright colours, imagery, interesting typography, and generally exciting design.
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Papa's Pizzeria and Fireboy and Watergirl, two classic web app games. I chose to look at web app video games specifically (as opposed to modern-day console or computer games) as the games I designed in my project most closely relate to these. Note these games' uses of colours, type, imagery, layout and aesthetics; they evoke an atmosphere. In my games, the only atmosphere I wanted to evoke was 'corporate'.
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PHASE 1:

INITIAL EXECUTION

	PHASE OVERVIEW			
		In Phase 1 of my project, my intended final outcome for the project was a fully-functional e-commerce website. The site would let users browse a wide range of models and customise their favourite. The catch was that all the brands would be removed, and each car would be called “SUV-001”, “SUV-002”, etc. The site would have offered several features beyond the basic homepage and product listing pages: • The user could select and ‘customise’ a car, but all the customisations (like ‘variant’, ‘powertrain’, ‘colour’, ‘wheel style’, etc.) would be essentially meaningless. • Users could go through a questionnaire to find their perfect car, but since there’s such little difference between any of the cars, the user would be suggested with every model regardless of what they entered. • Several joke pages, like a test drive page that just tells the user that driving a particular car is about the same as every other, a borderline-useless ‘assistant’ dialogue, etc. • Embedded mini-games that could grant discounts. Other than displaying the homogeneity of the cars, the website was also intended to poke fun at the corporateness, sameness and often frustrating aspects of automotive companies’ websites. Whilst I think this outcome could have been entertaining, I ultimately changed my direction as I believed the website idea was too one-note and not conceptually deep enough. Once the user gets the joke early on, there’s little else the website could’ve really done to further convey the message. Not wanting to scrap everything, I pivoted to focusing just on the mini-games I was going to embed anyway.		
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2			PHASE1 // 23

1.1:

DEVELOPMENT

BRAND NAME

Choosing the right brand name was critical as it would inform the rest of the brand’s identity. In choosing a name, I debated how mocking I wanted it to sound.

One option was to use a ‘.com’ name, which would highlight the digital nature of my project. This would probably have made the brand more a comparison-type website, and I thought it sounded a bit tacky. That could have been appropriate, but it wasn’t what I was going for.

The name itself also had to strike the right tone. ‘AnyCar’ and ‘GenericCar’ sounded too on-the-nose and possibly too much like a startup—I wanted my brand to have gravitas and sound like an established company.

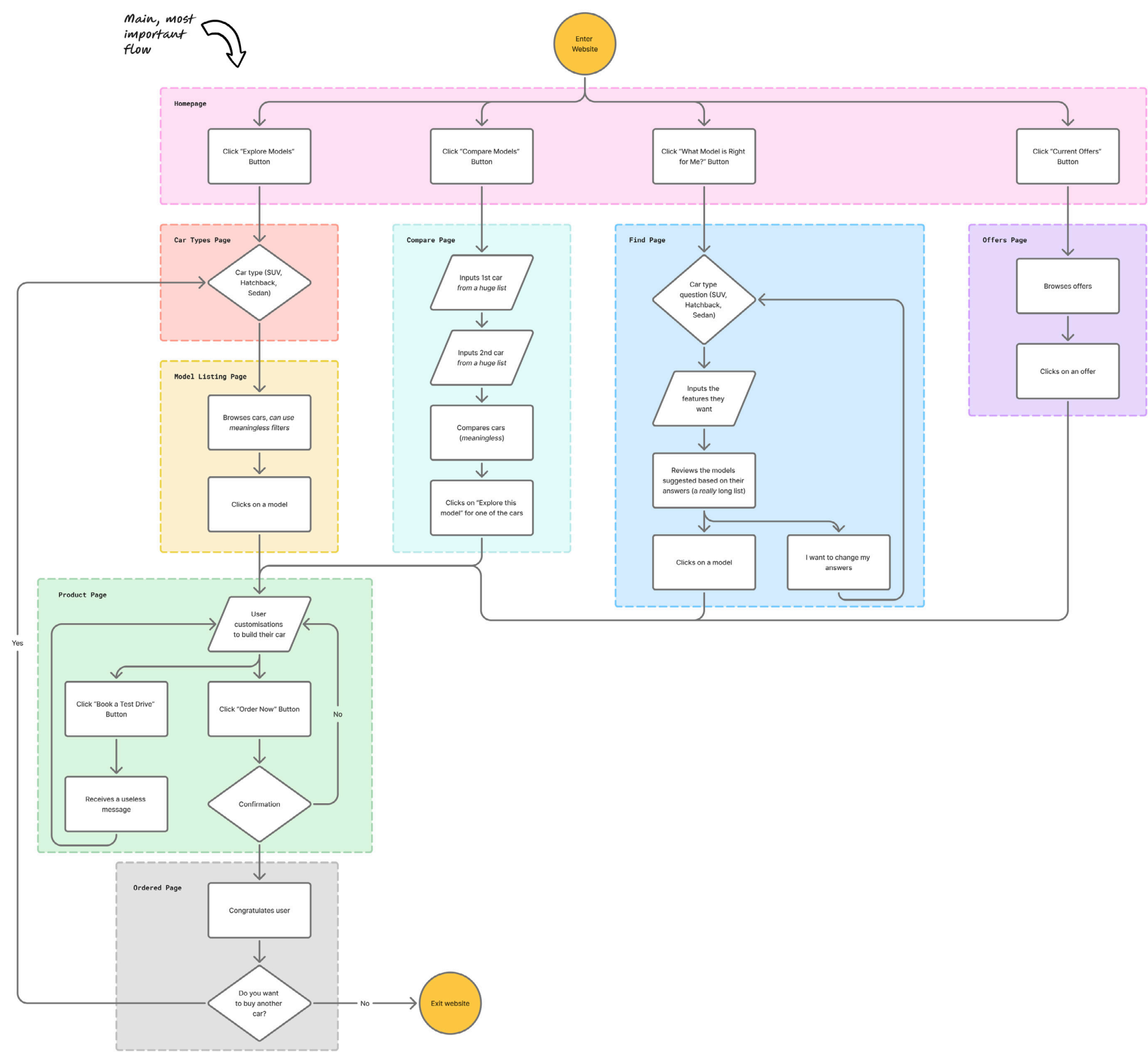
I eventually landed on ‘Generic Motors’. As an obvious play on the real company, General Motors, the name at first connotes much of the same establishment and legitimacy as is associated with the company before the listener registers the play on words. I also liked how using this named paid homage to the conceptual underpinning of the project with General Motors’ *Futurama* exhibition. On a personal note, I thought it was a nice coincidence that this brand name has the same initials and even general shape of my own name.

The Generic Car Co.
General Cars Inc.
Choose-a-car.com
GenericCar.com
AnyCar.com
EveryCarEver.com
The Every Car Co.
Generic Motors

USER FLOWS

The first real step in creating the website, as with any UX project, was to devise the user flows. User flows describe the ideal paths users should take when trying to accomplish different outcomes. In my case, all the flows would eventually lead to the same outcome—buying a car—although they might take different paths to get there. This reinforced the economics-driven priorities of real-life car companies: the goal is fundamentally to sell a product.

The main flow I designed (which I have labelled) saw the user browse cars as they would in a typical e-commerce setting. They would then select one and proceed to customise and buy it. Other flows I designed included comparing cars, a car-finding questionnaire and browsing offers, but these only would have been created if I had enough time.



WEBSITE FEATURES IDEATION

Website Pages

- HOME PAGE
 - SPLASHSCREEN
 - header +/- menu bar
 - CTA Buttons:
 - “Explore models” CTA button → [Car Types Page]
 - “Compare models” CTA button → [Compare Page]
 - “What model is right for me?” CTA button → [Find Page]
 - ~~“Current offers” CTA button → [Offers Page]~~
 - ~~“Build a car” CTA button → [Build Page]~~
 - ~~“Test Drive” CTA button → [Test Drive Page]~~
 - ~~“New Models” CTA button~~
 - Featured minigames for a discount
 - Cookies info
 - Feedback form?
 - FEATURED CARS SECTION
 - Carousel of featured cars (they all look exactly the same) like “SUV #003”, “SUV#025”, etc.
 - PARTNERED BRANDS
 - A list of made up car brands each with their own logo
- CAR TYPES PAGE
 - [SUVs] [Sedans] [Hatchback] buttons, when hovered over they do cool effects? And also show an info thing about what that title means
- CAR LISTING PAGE
 - Shows all the available models listed out in a grid. Each car is number like SUV #001—there should be nothing about the brand on them.
 - Filters system (changes nothing since it’s all really redundant features like “seatbelts”, “airbags”, “automatic windscreen wipers”)
- PRODUCT PAGE
 - MAIN SECTION
 - Carousel of images
 - ▼ Side panel:
 - Customisations:
 - Variant
 - SUV #004
 - SUV #004 Elite
 - SUV #004 Premium
 - SUV #004 Sport
 - What does this mean? “Well you’re paying more for the elite one, so it’s better”
 - Powertrain
 - Standard
 - Standard+
 - Extended range
 - Transmission
 - Brand-owned transmission
 - Brand-owned transmission+

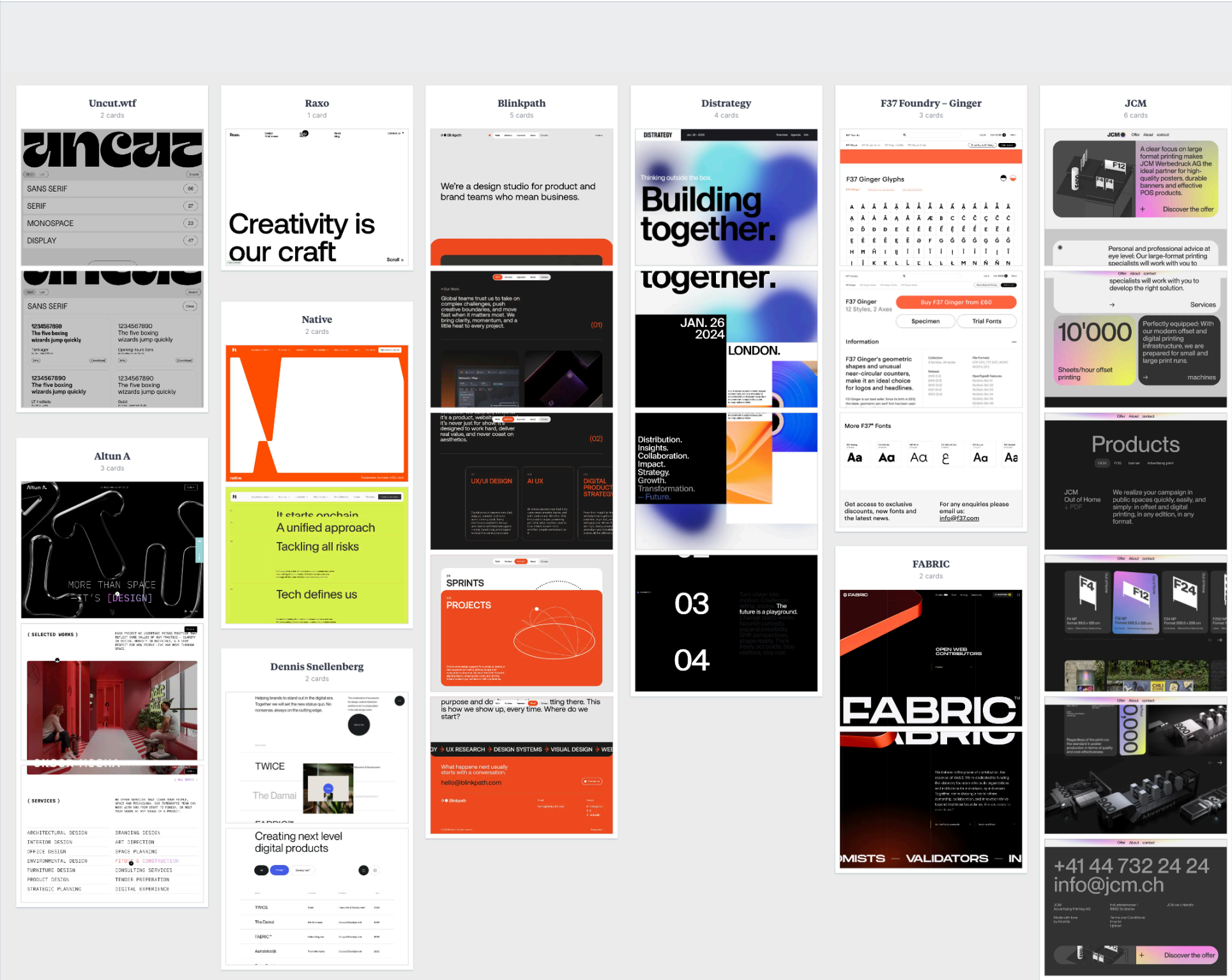
- Colour
 - General White
 - Generic Red
 - Generic Blue
 - Generic Silver
 - Generic Grey
 - Generic Black
 - A slightly interesting colour (unavailable)
 - Wheel style
 - Standard
 - Standard (Premium)
 - Grille style
 - Hexagon (Standard)
 - Hexagon (Sport)
 - Interior style
 - Standard
 - Enhanced comfort
 - “Ooh look at me” rainbow LEDs and louder speakers pack
 - Ultimate
 - Interior colour
 - Black
 - Literally any other colour (unavailable)
- STICKY FOOTER
 - Drive away price
 - View price summary:
 - Construction Price
 - Taxes
 - Associated Branding fee
 - Colouration fee
 - “You don’t have a choice in this” fee
 - Hidden fees
 - “Because we’re feeling nice” discount
 - “Order now” CTA
 - Confirmation: “You’re about to get the SUV #XXX. Not that there’s any real difference between this and any of our other cars, are you sure you want to confirm with this one?”
 - Second confirmation: “This model has a \$4000 cheaper with out [Offer]. But you didn’t know about that, so we won’t give it to you now. If you want to use this offer, you’ll have to start the process again starting with this offer.” [“Thanks for letting me know” button] → [Ordered Page]
 - when used with one of our offers. But you didn’t select this car from an offer,
 - “Book a Test Drive” CTA
 - Warning: This will be like every SUV you’ve ever driven, so is it really worth taking wasting time? → [Test Drive Page]
 - OR just “This will be like every SUV you’ve ever driven, so it’d just be a waste of time to test drive it.” [“Thanks for saving my time!” button]
 - SIMILAR MODELS
 - Carousel of randomly generated cars

- ORDERED PAGE
 - 404 error page as if the site crashed with error message: “Error: Individuality not found”
 - OR a big confetti animation and a huge “Congratulations” with text underneath like “You’re now the proud owner of the exact same SUV as everyone else. We hope you enjoy your indistinguishable driving experience!”
- TEST DRIVE PAGE
 - A questionnaire:
 1. What kind of car do you want to take for a test drive?
Multichoice from kinds of cars
 2. Have you ever driven an [SUV] before?
 3. **No:** What kind of cars have you driven before?
multichoice from kinds of cars → “Well, driving an SUV is just like a sedan but bigger and smoother. That’s all you really need to know!”
- ~~Ends with: “Well, my mate Freddy drives an SUV. It’s a bit beaten up and probably hasn’t been washed in a couple years but it should give you the gist for what driving an SUV is like. Here’s his personal phone number: 04xxxxxxx”~~
- FIND PAGE
 - A questionnaire that leads the user through finding the right car for them:
 - **What kind of car are you after?**
[Hatchback]
[Sedan]
[SUV]
[I’m not sure]
 - **What features are you looking for in your car?**
[Ridiculously long list of redundant features where users can select which features they want]
 - **Here’s some models we’d suggest based on your needs:**
[A long list of models that match the requirements, or just list all the cars regardless?] → [Product Page]

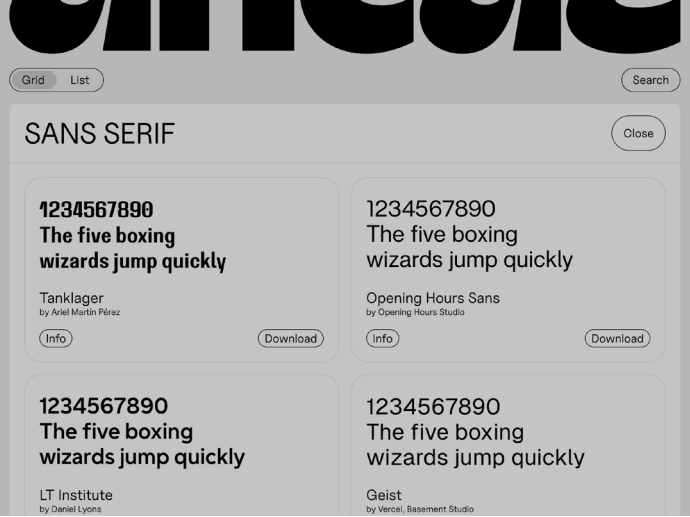
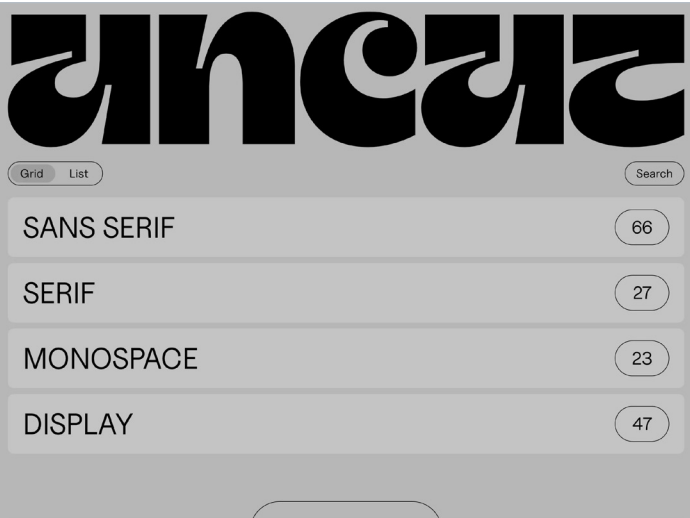
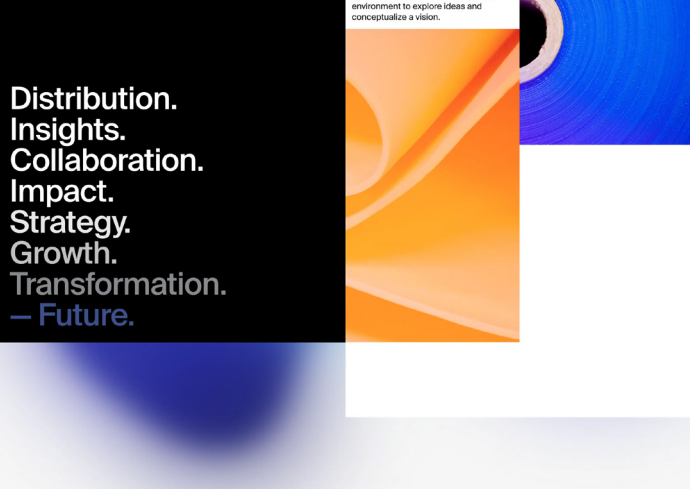
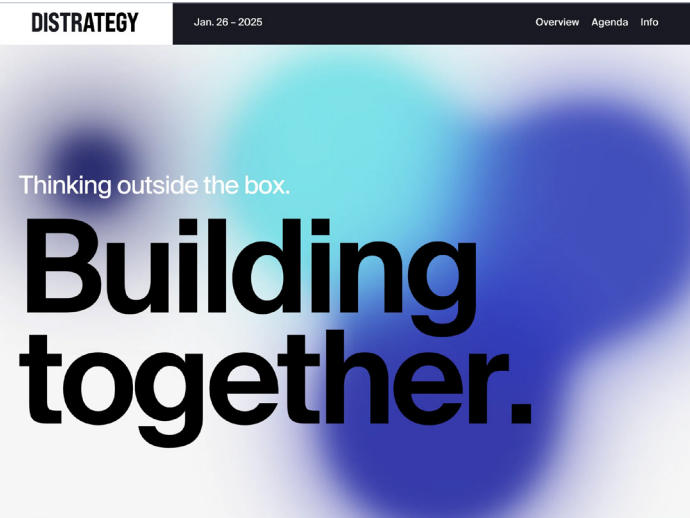
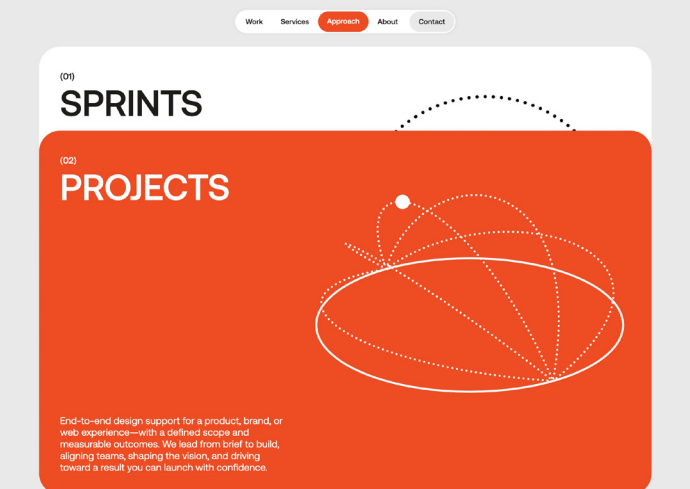
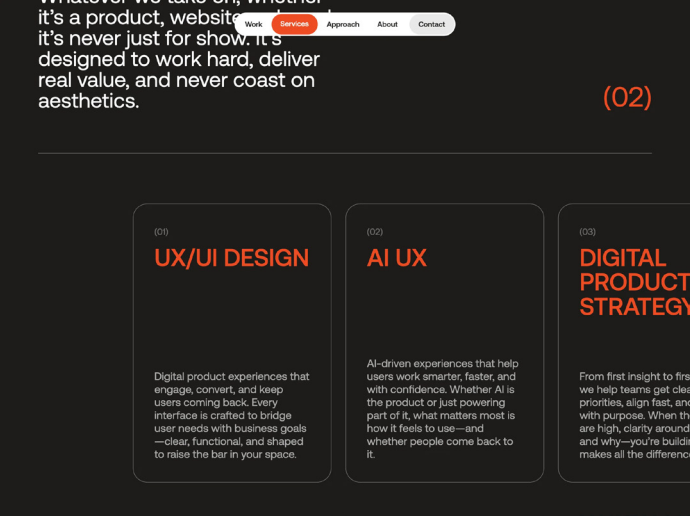
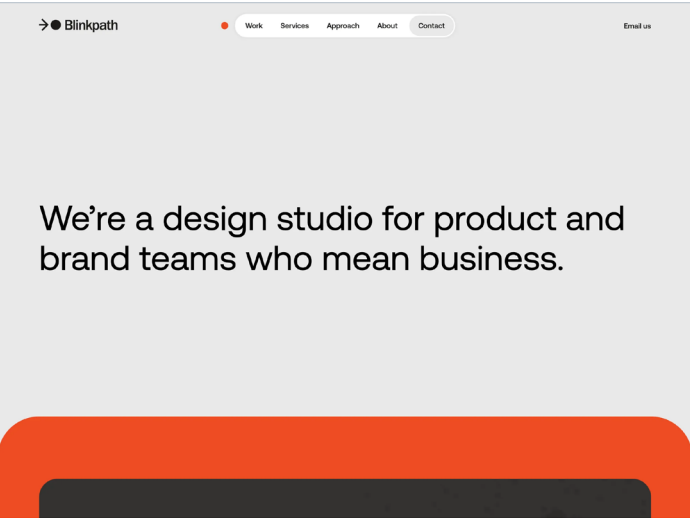
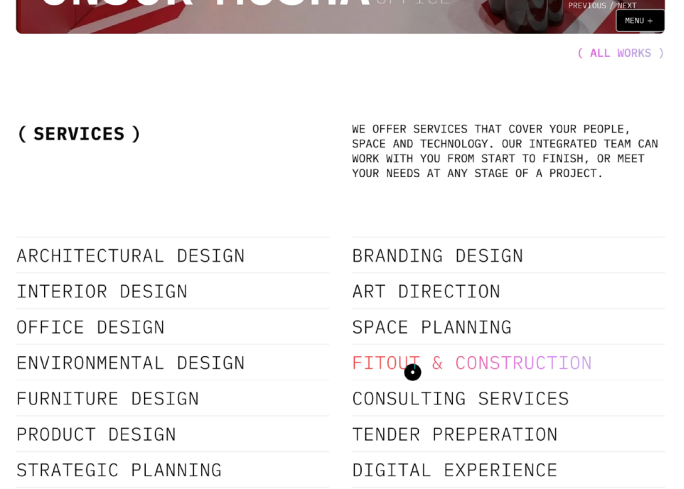
WEBSITE INSPIRATION

Aside from existing car websites, I wanted to gather a broader range of inspiration for crafting my website. Given this was still a graphic design project, I wanted the site to be designer and beautiful even though it was corporate and bland.

I looked at a wide range of sites across several disciplines/ purposes. Many of these sites are from my personal inspiration boards, but some I only came across during this project. The main aesthetics I was after were minimalism and a sort of designer corporatism, which is seen best in some of the studio websites.



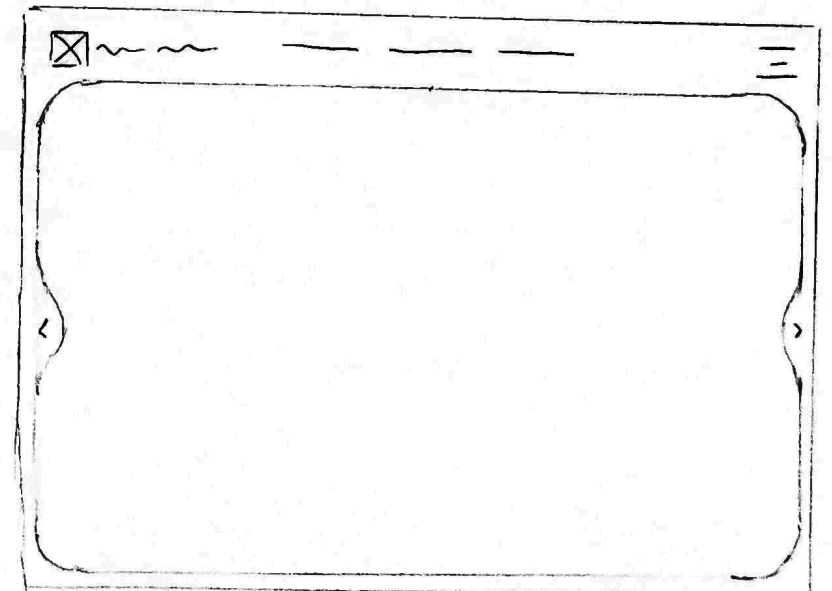
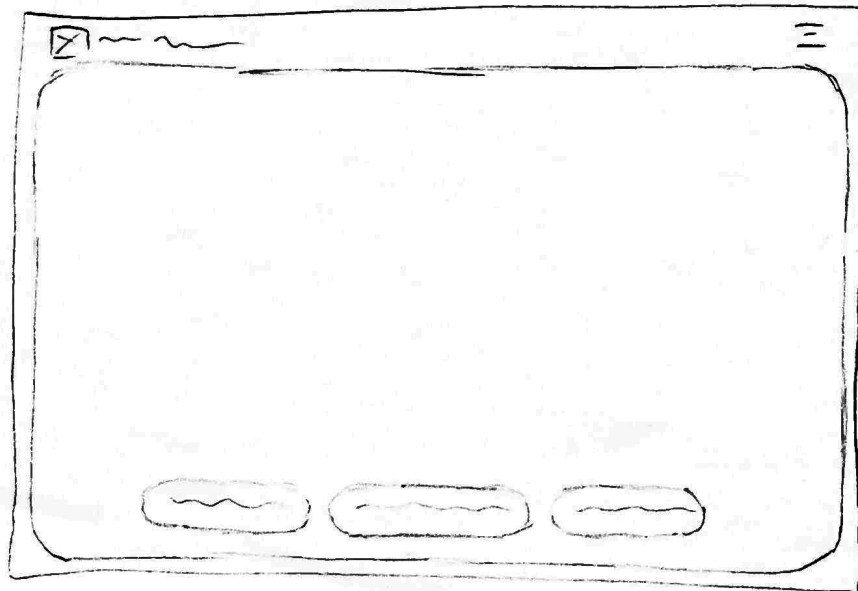
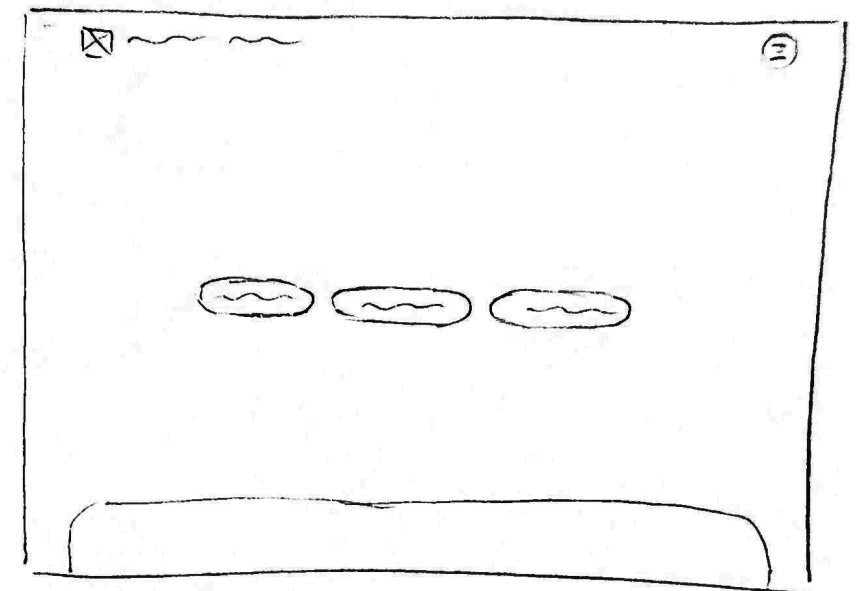
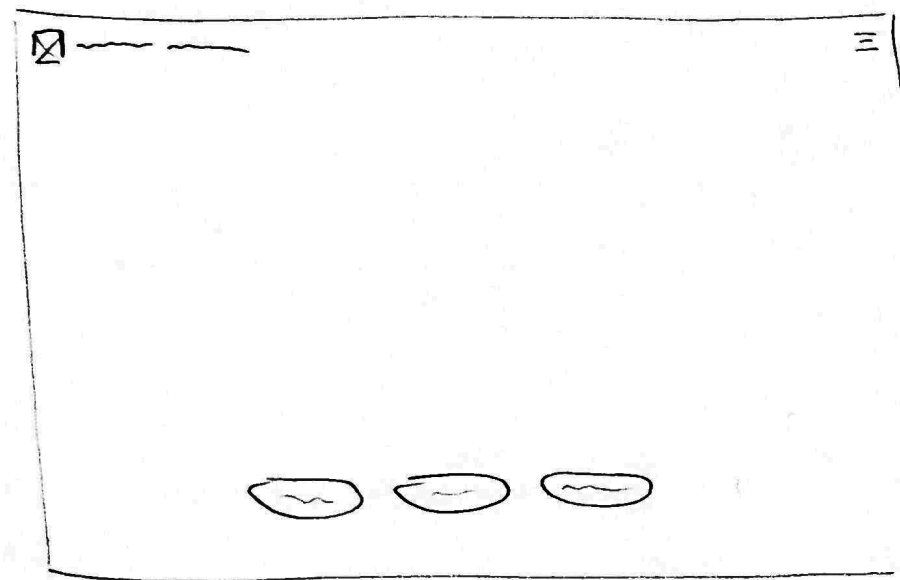
WEBSITE INSPIRATION



SKETCHES

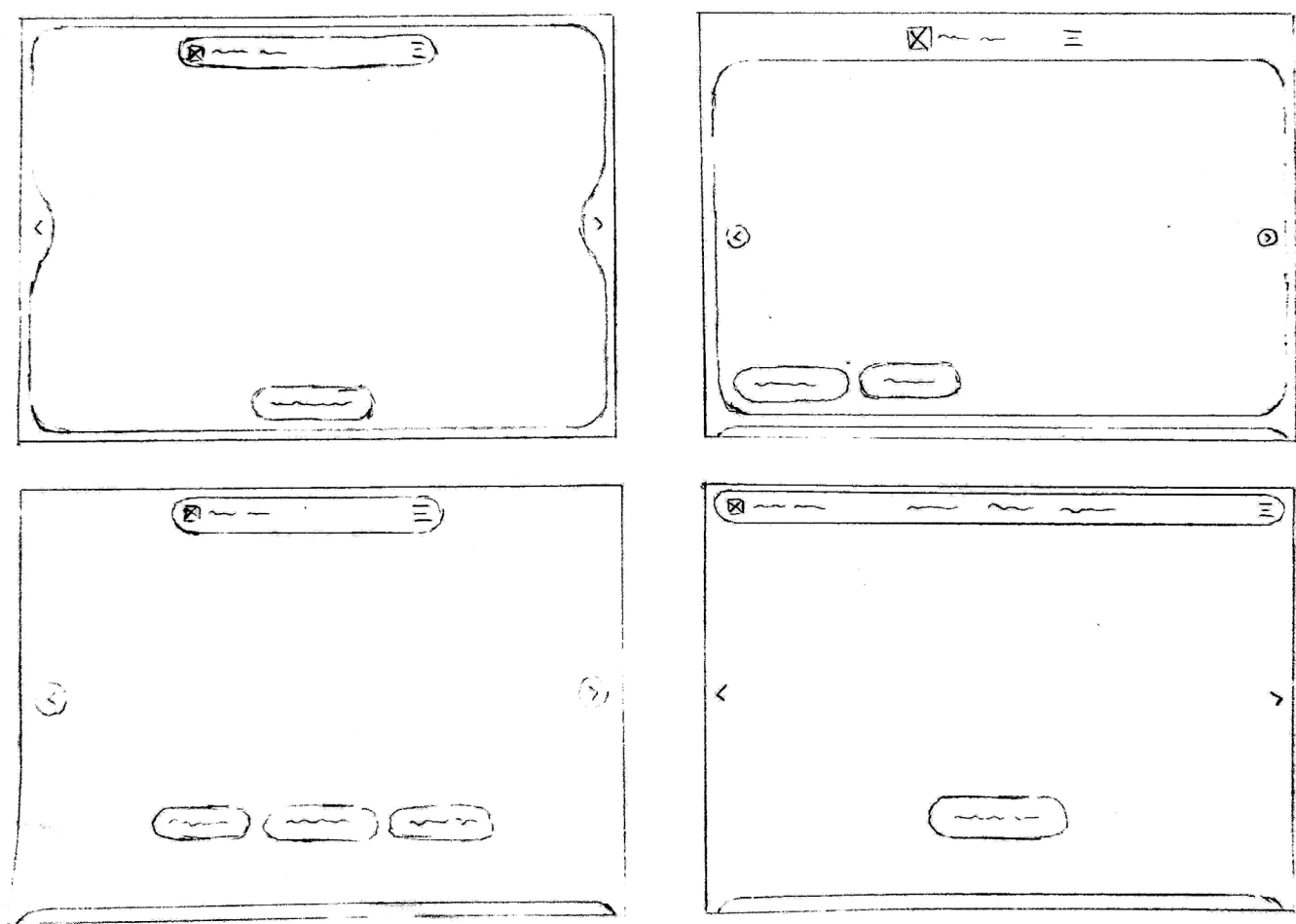
Having designed the user flows and collated my visual inspiration, I could now sketch out what the website might look like. These sketches were intentionally lo-fi (i.e., bare bones and minimal, with placeholder images and text) as the main purpose of this stage was to gauge layout, composition and what elements should appear where. I did several for the homepage due to its critical importance and because a homepage can take on so many different designs, but the other pages like the car listing page were simpler to construct.

HOME PAGE 1

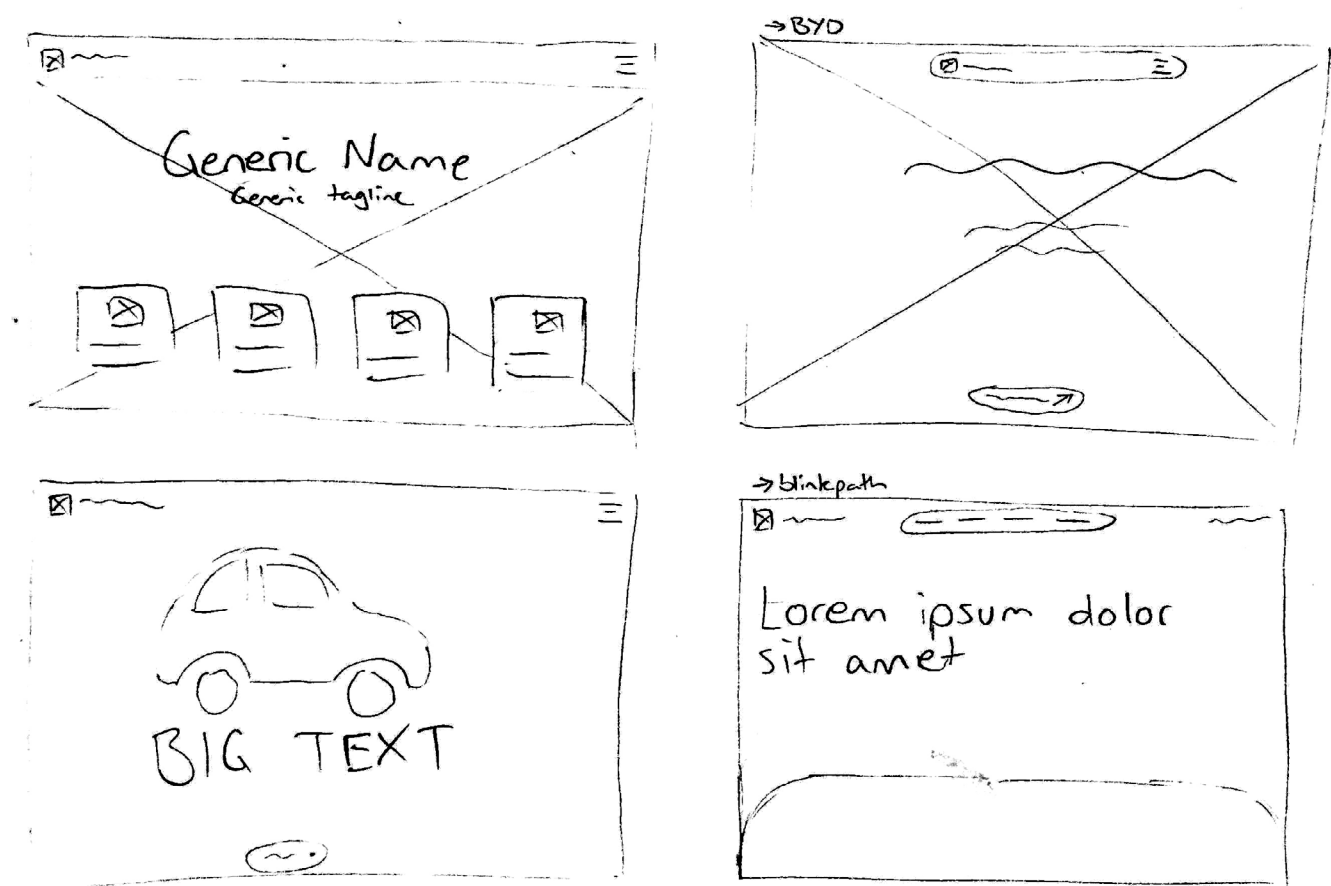


SKETCHES – HOMEPAGE

HOMEPAGE 2



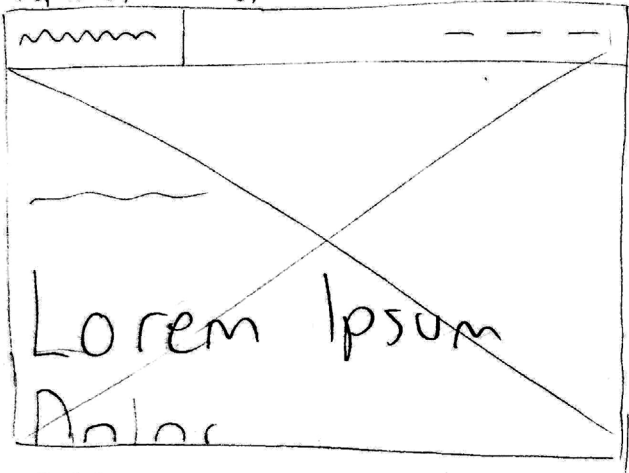
HOMEPAGE INSPO - 1



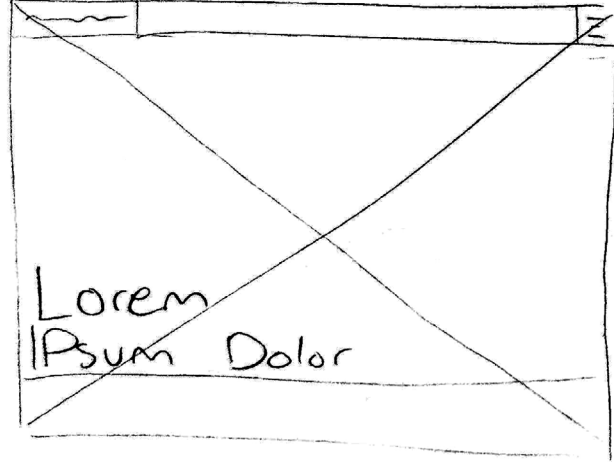
SKETCHES – HOMEPAGE

HOMEPAGE INSPO - 2

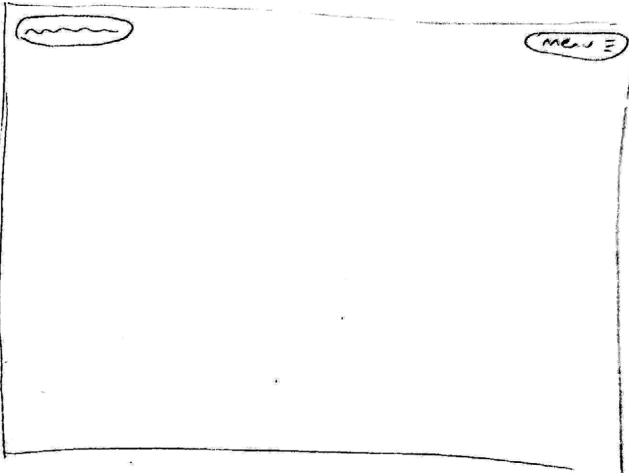
inspired by distrategy



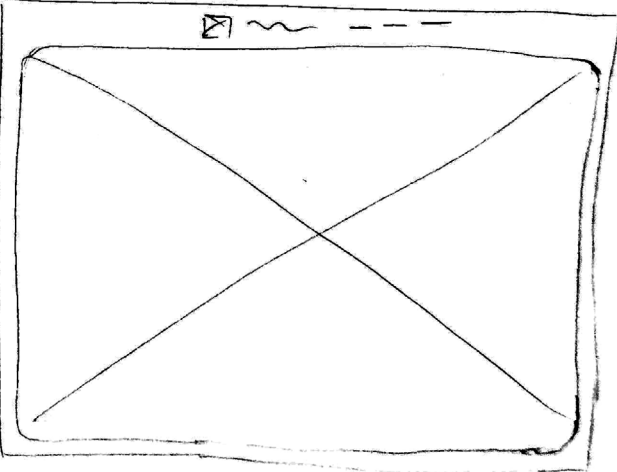
→ Abel Fragrances



→ Ask Phill

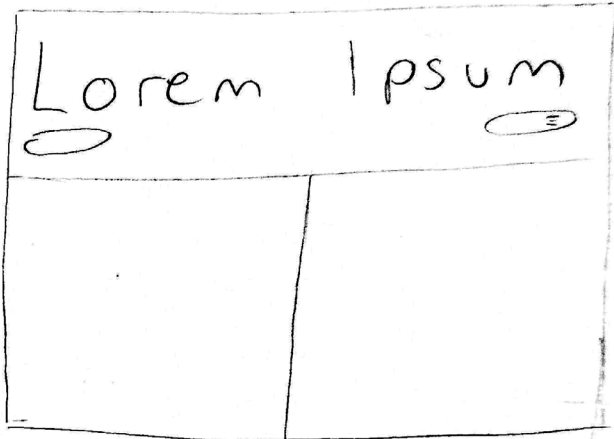
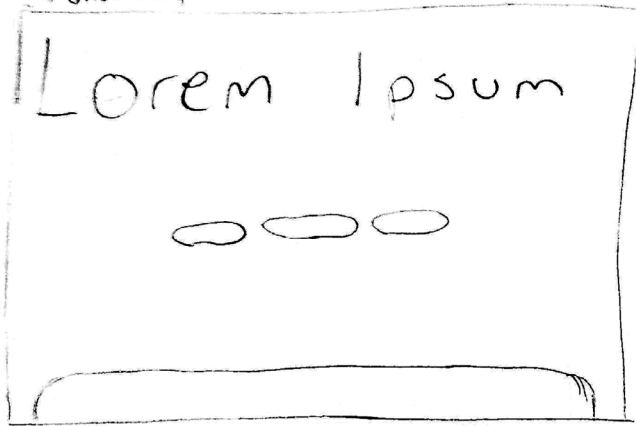


→ JCM → Equispace



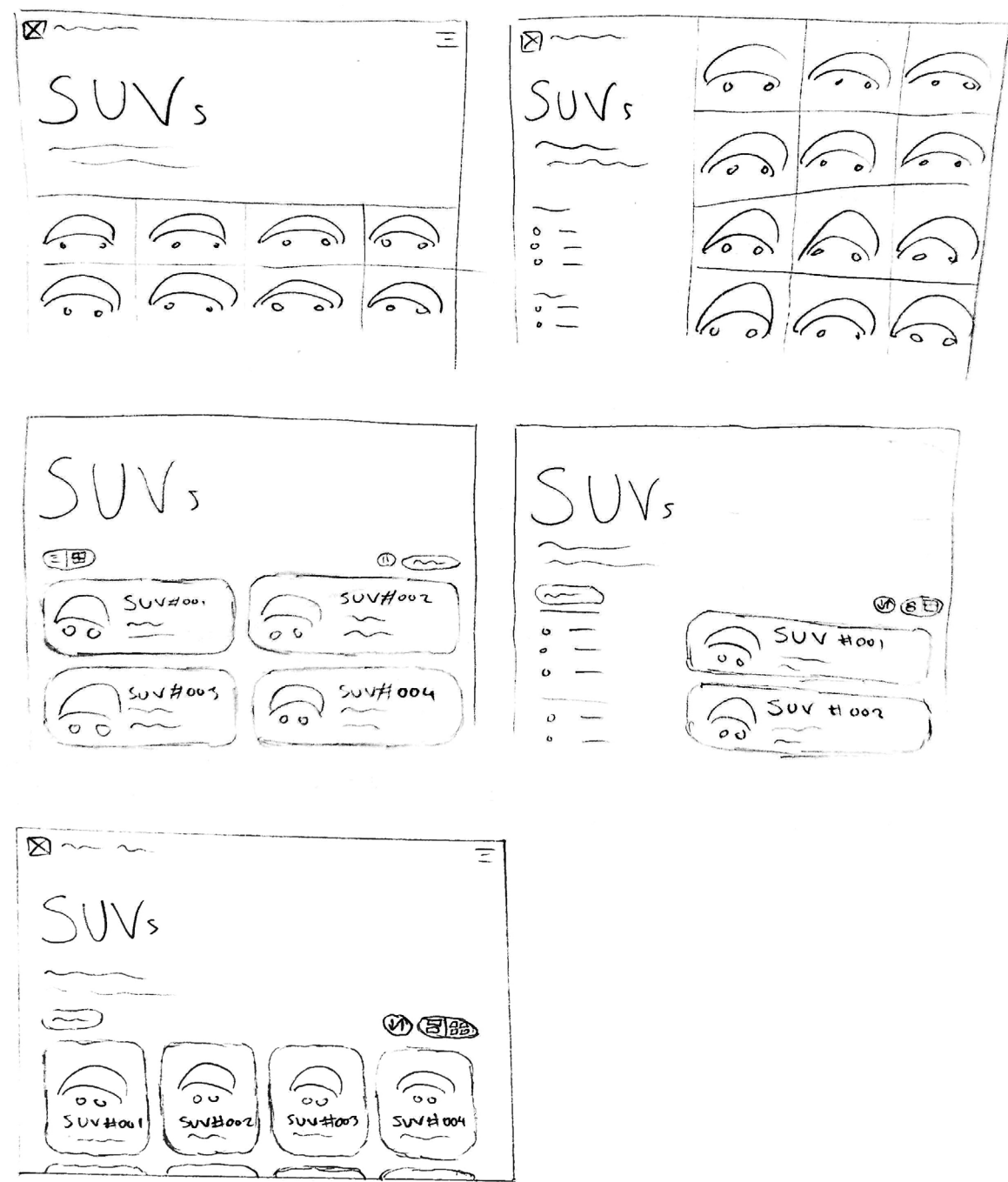
HOMEPAGE INSPO - 3

→ uncut.wtf

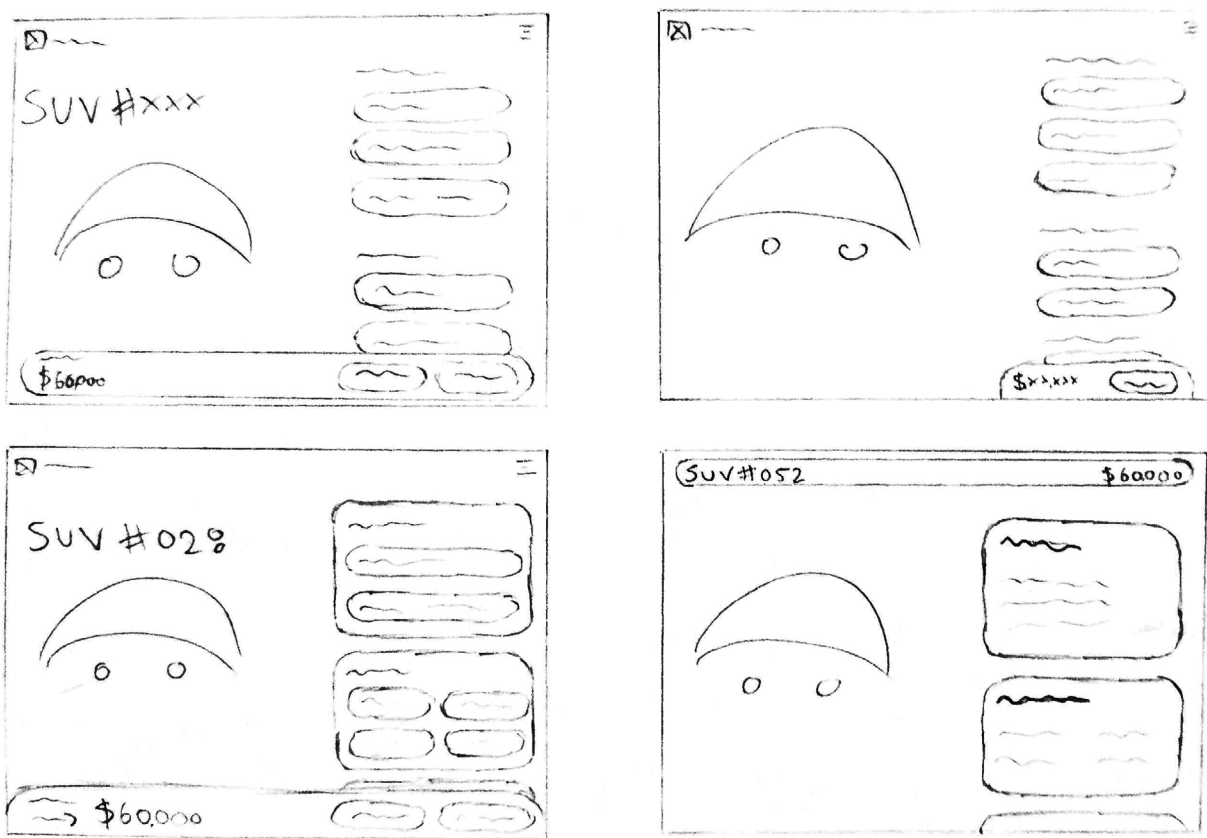


SKETCHES – PRODUCT LISTING PAGE

PRODUCT LISTING PAGE

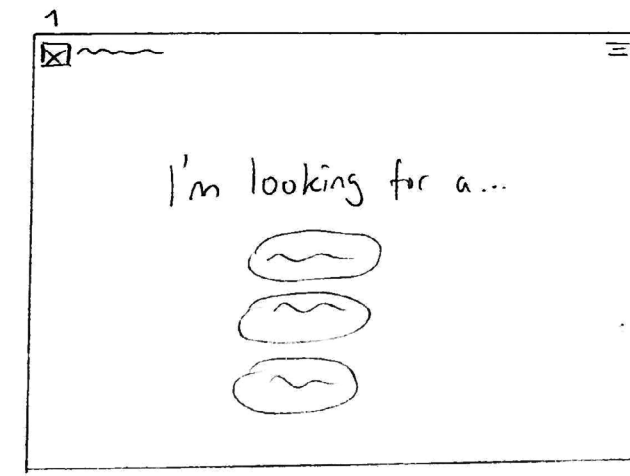
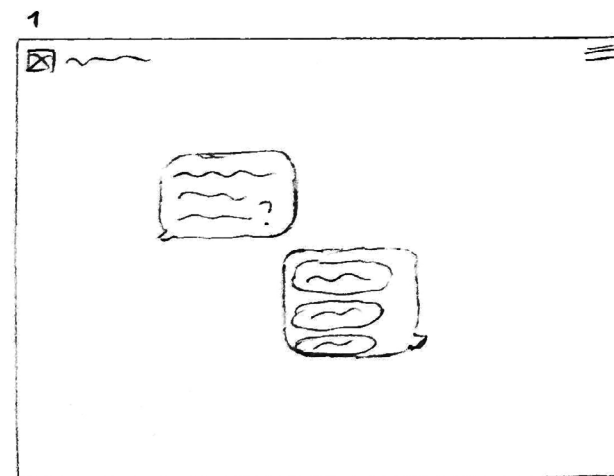
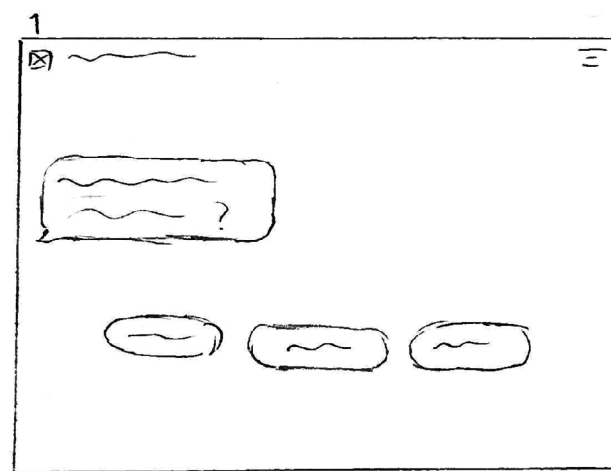
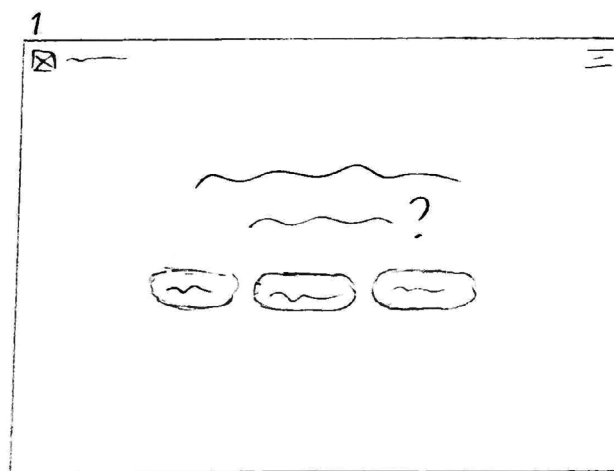


PRODUCT PAGE

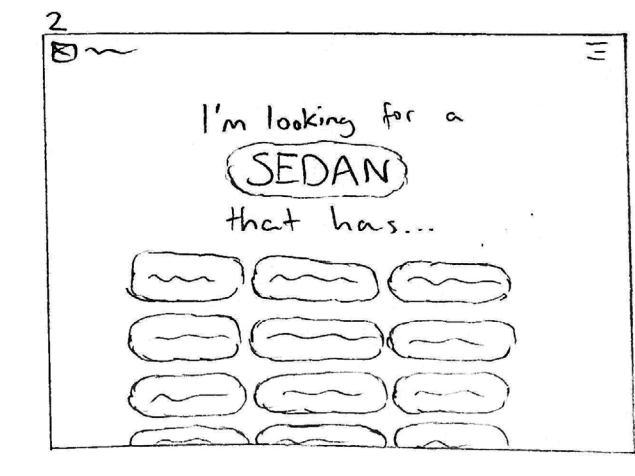
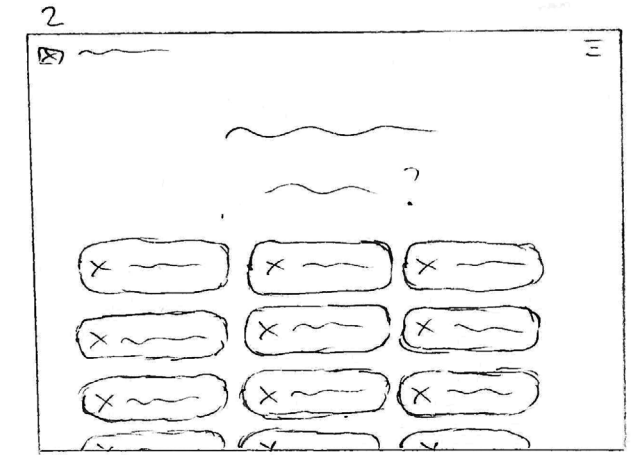
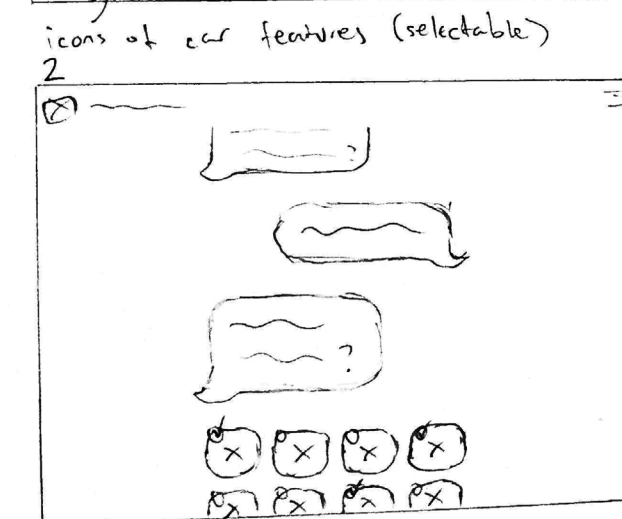
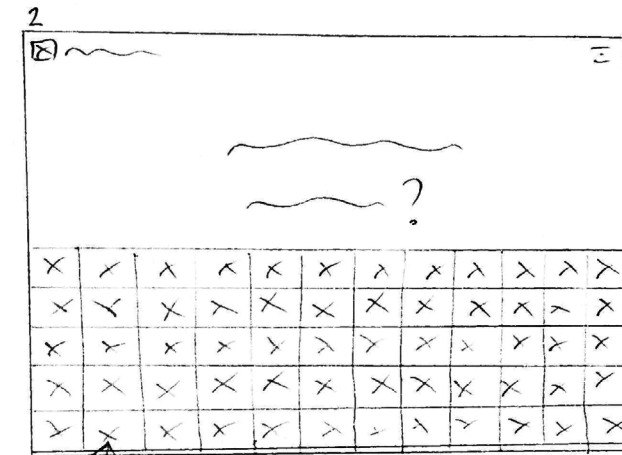


SKETCHES – CAR FINDING PAGE

FIND PAGE 1



FIND PAGE 2



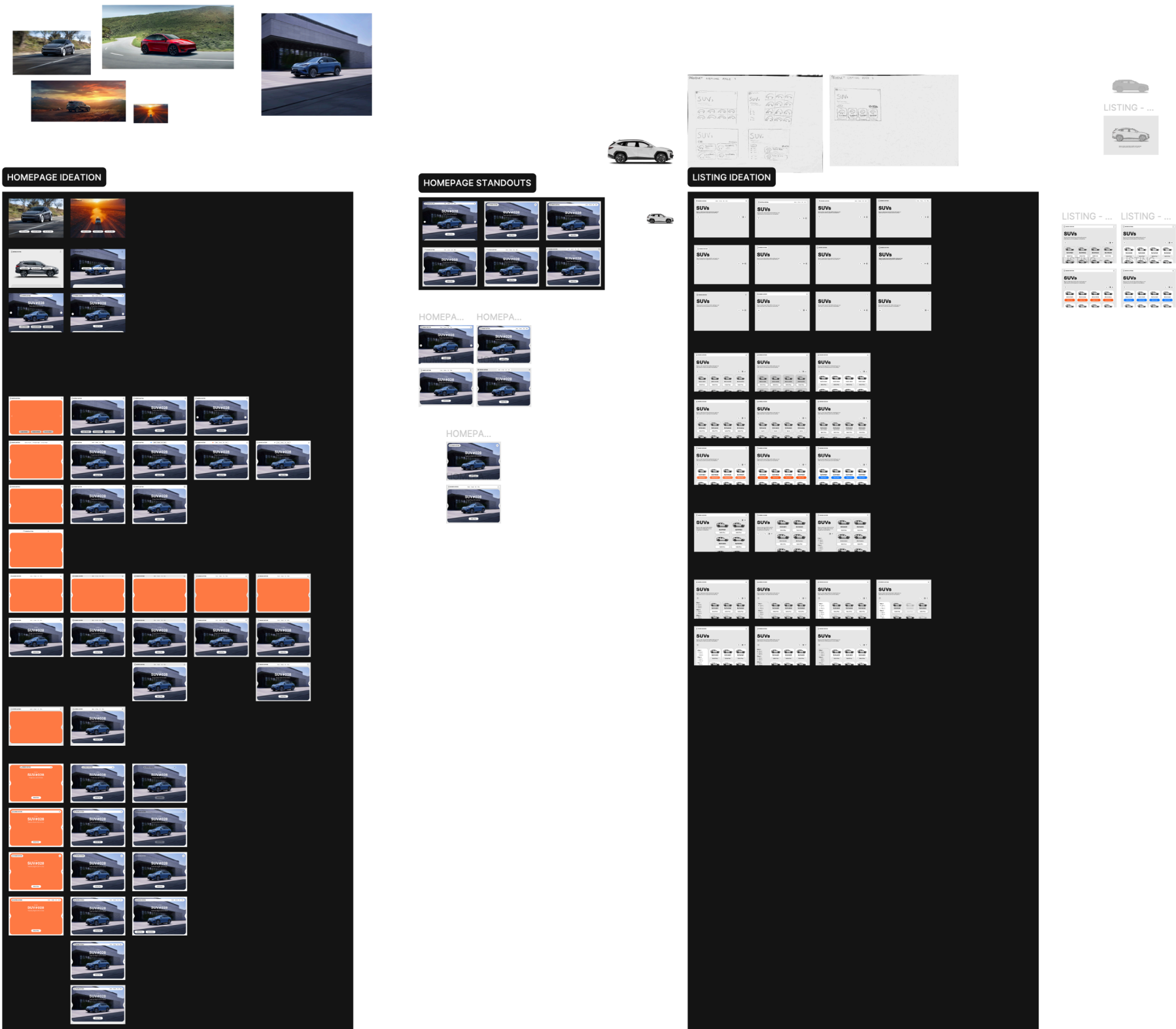
HI-FI PROTOTYPING

After sketching, the next step was to mock this up in Figma. Whilst the sketches let me experiment with many different layouts and design directions quickly and easily, they didn't really tell me much about how they would actually look or function in practice. This is where prototyping came in.

I did many prototypes of the homepage, with subtle iterations of the same designs until I found some designs I was happy with. This was crucial for figuring out the brand's design language.

Although I should have, I didn't really experiment much with type or colour here. I did more later on when I focused more on the brand design itself, but I really focused just on the layout more than anything else here.

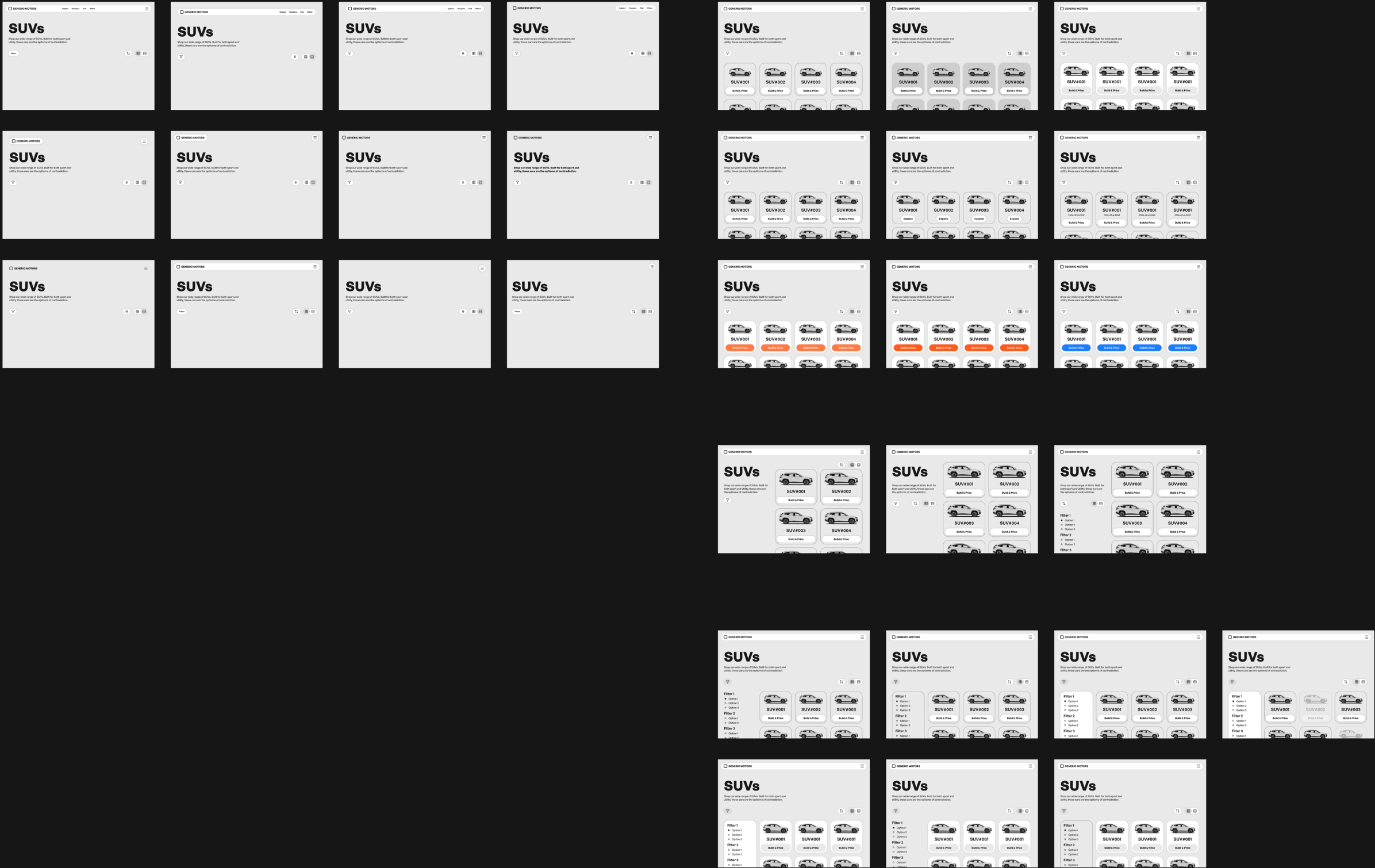
Also note that I was solely designing for a laptop/desktop experience here. This goes against modern UX/UI philosophy, which dictates that you should design 'mobile-first', i.e., design for a phone interface and adapt it to desktop instead of the other way around. This is especially important in this project given I wanted people to interact with the website from their phones at the EYE exhibition where it would be exhibited. In later phases of the project, I switched to designing mobile-first.



HI-FI PROTOTYPING – HOMEPAGE IDEATION



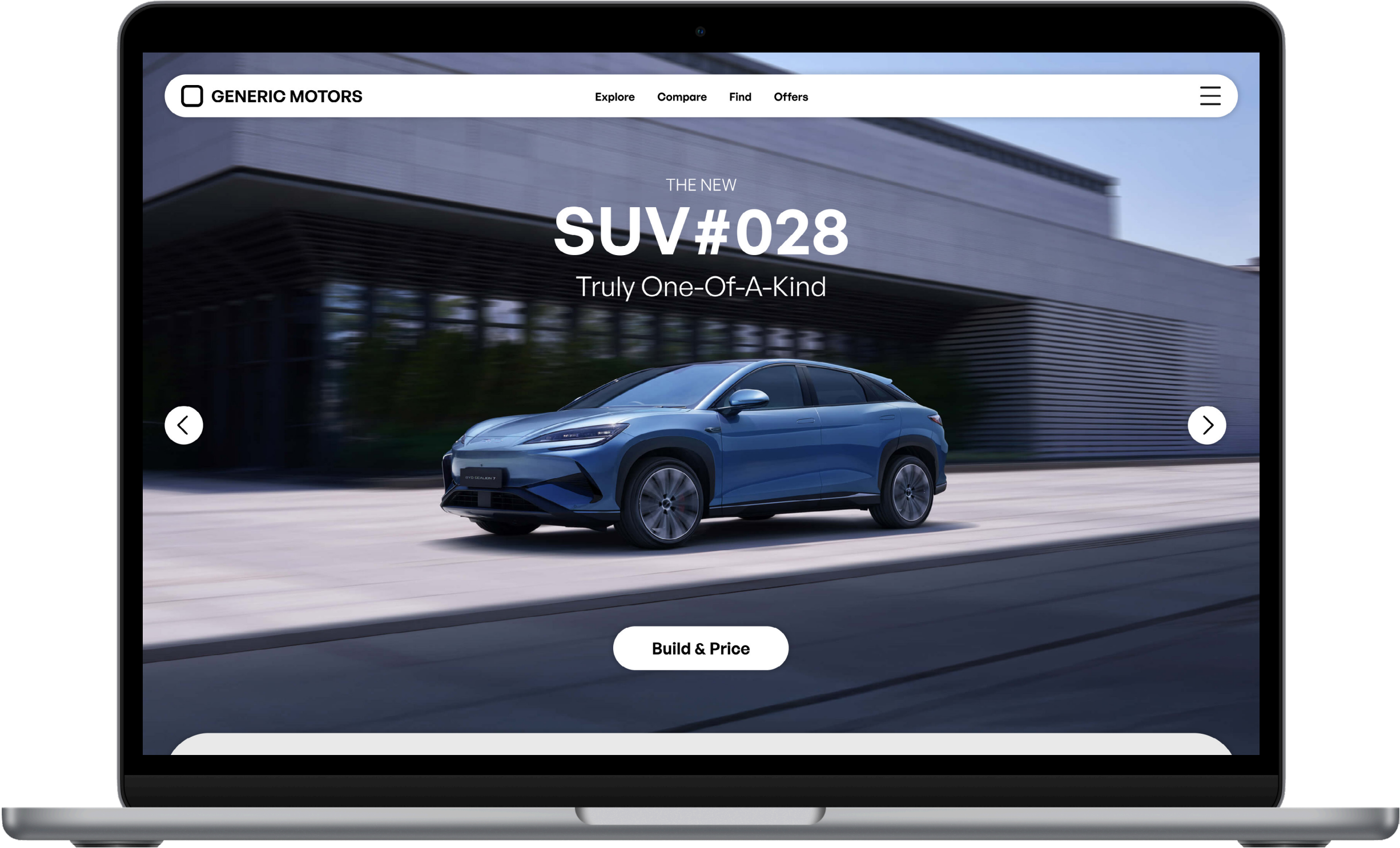
HI-FI PROTOTYPING – LISTING PAGE IDEATION



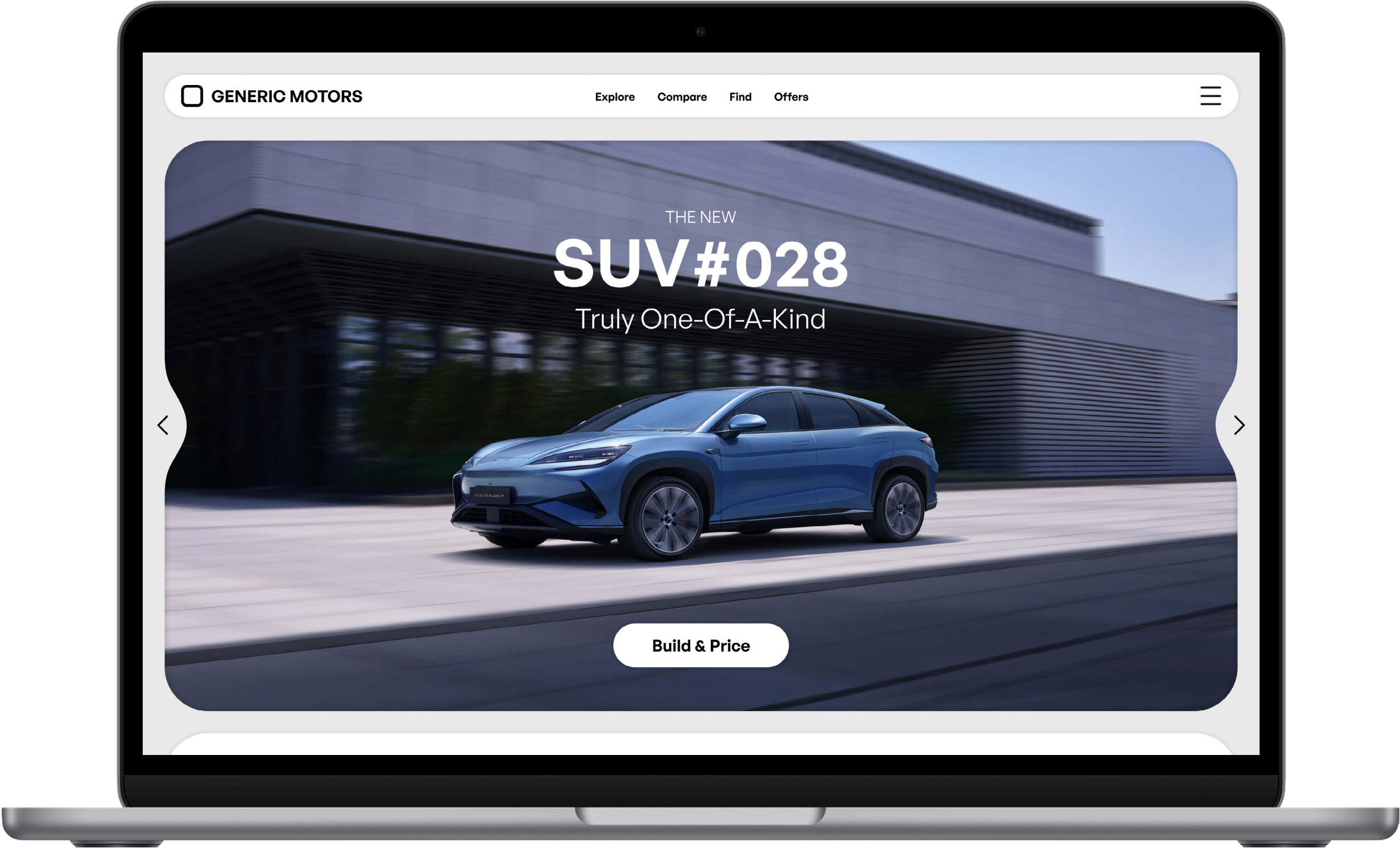
1.2:

PHASE 1 OUTCOMES

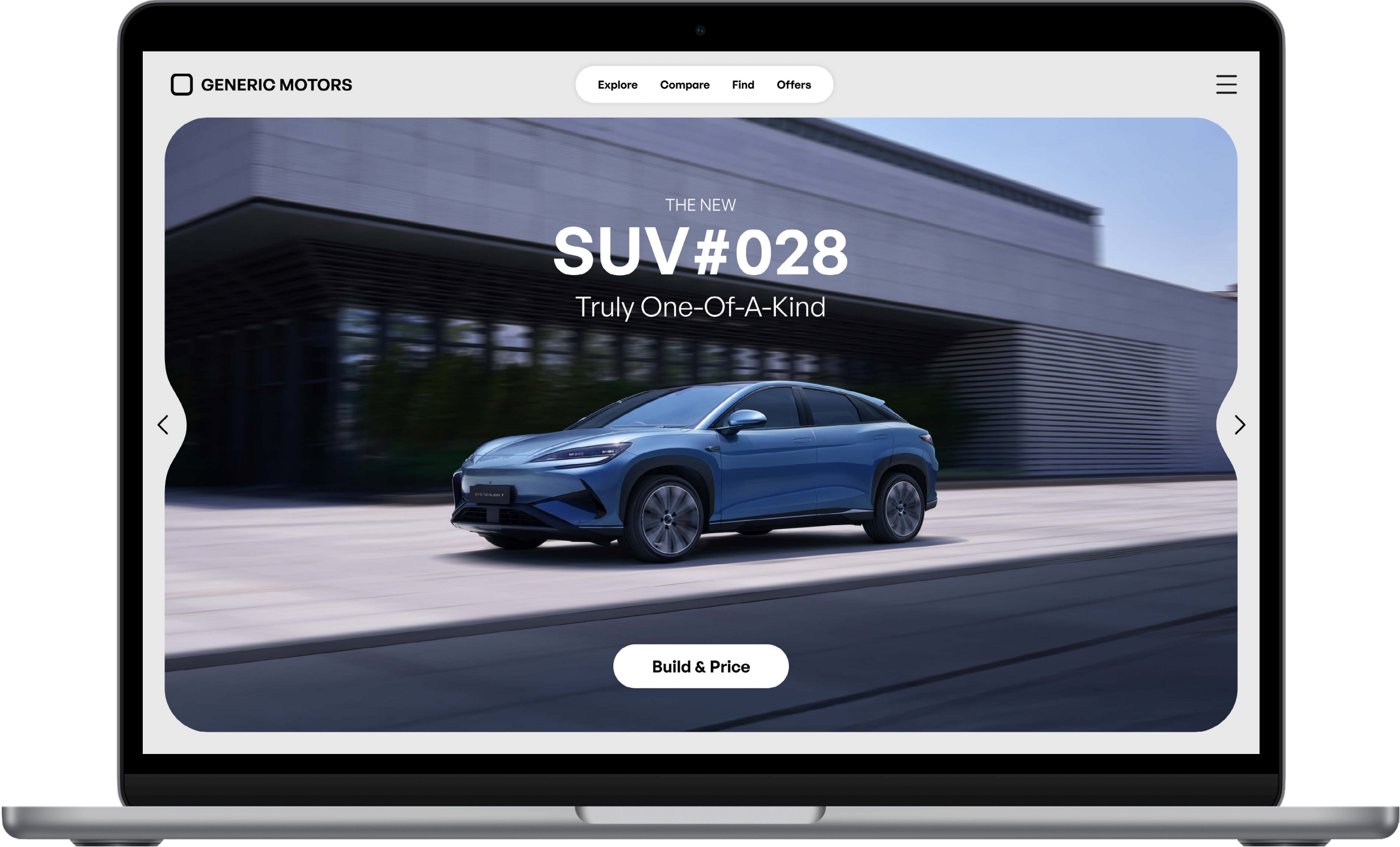
Homepage Design – Version 1



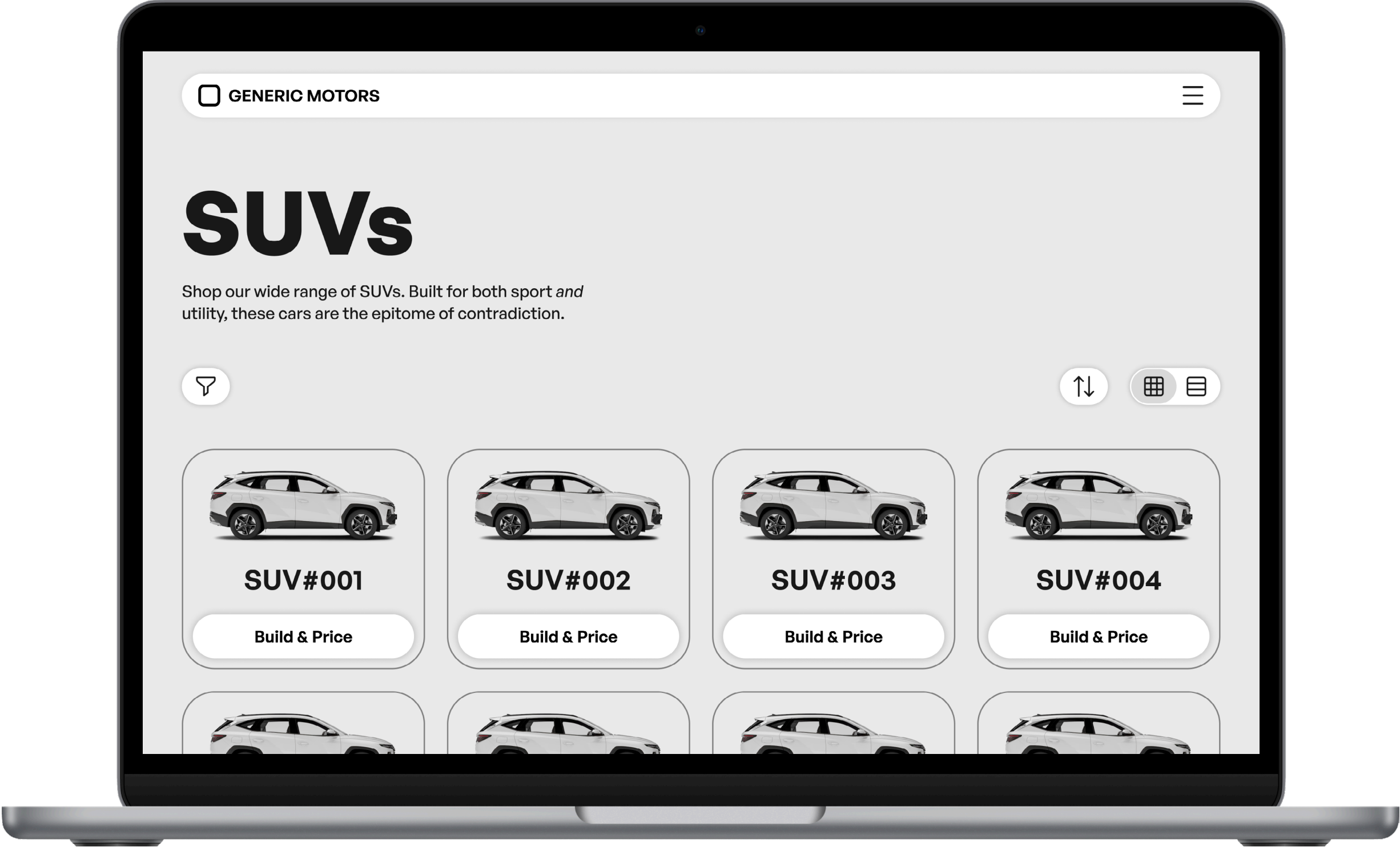
Homepage Design – Version 2



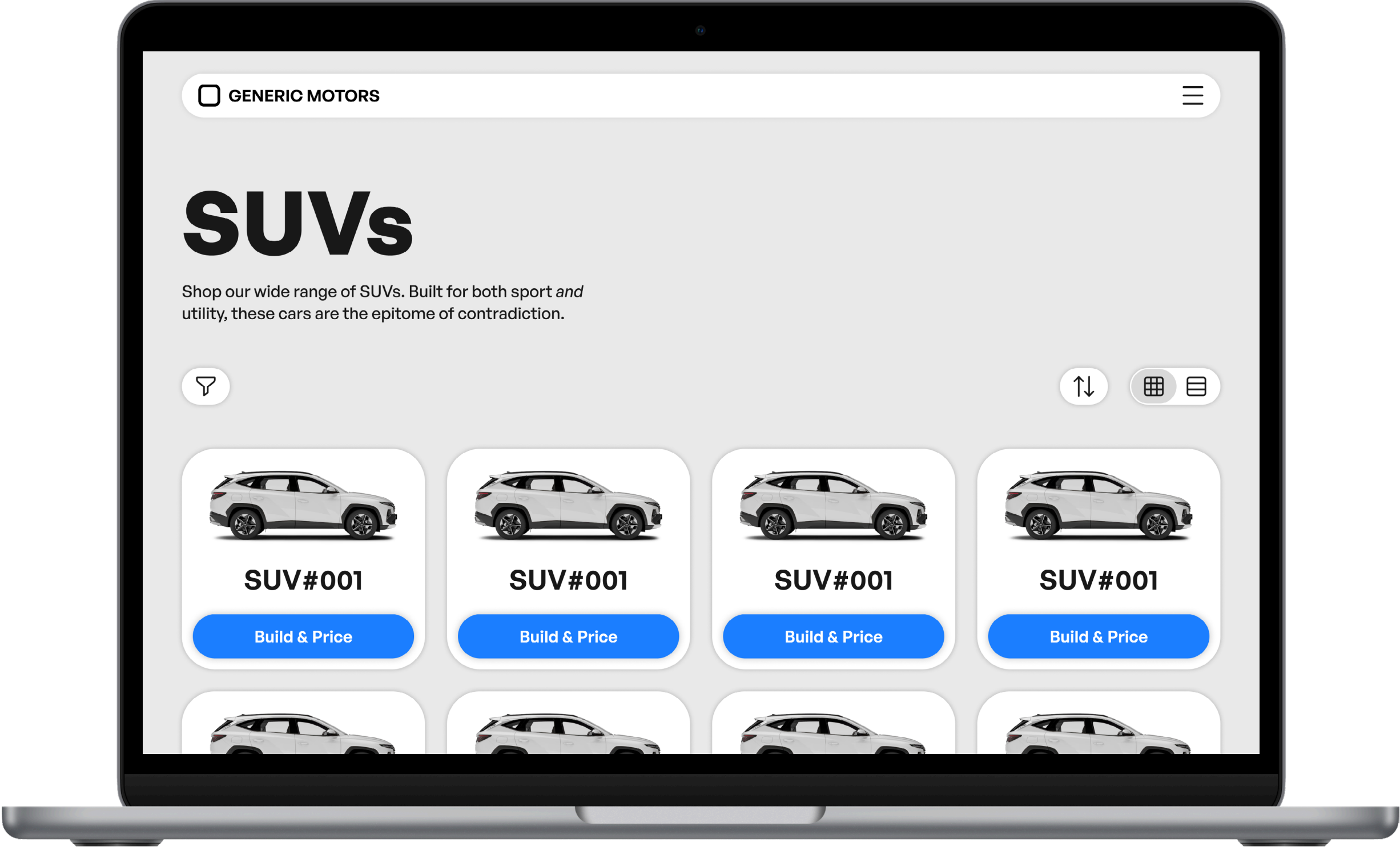
Homepage Design – Version 3



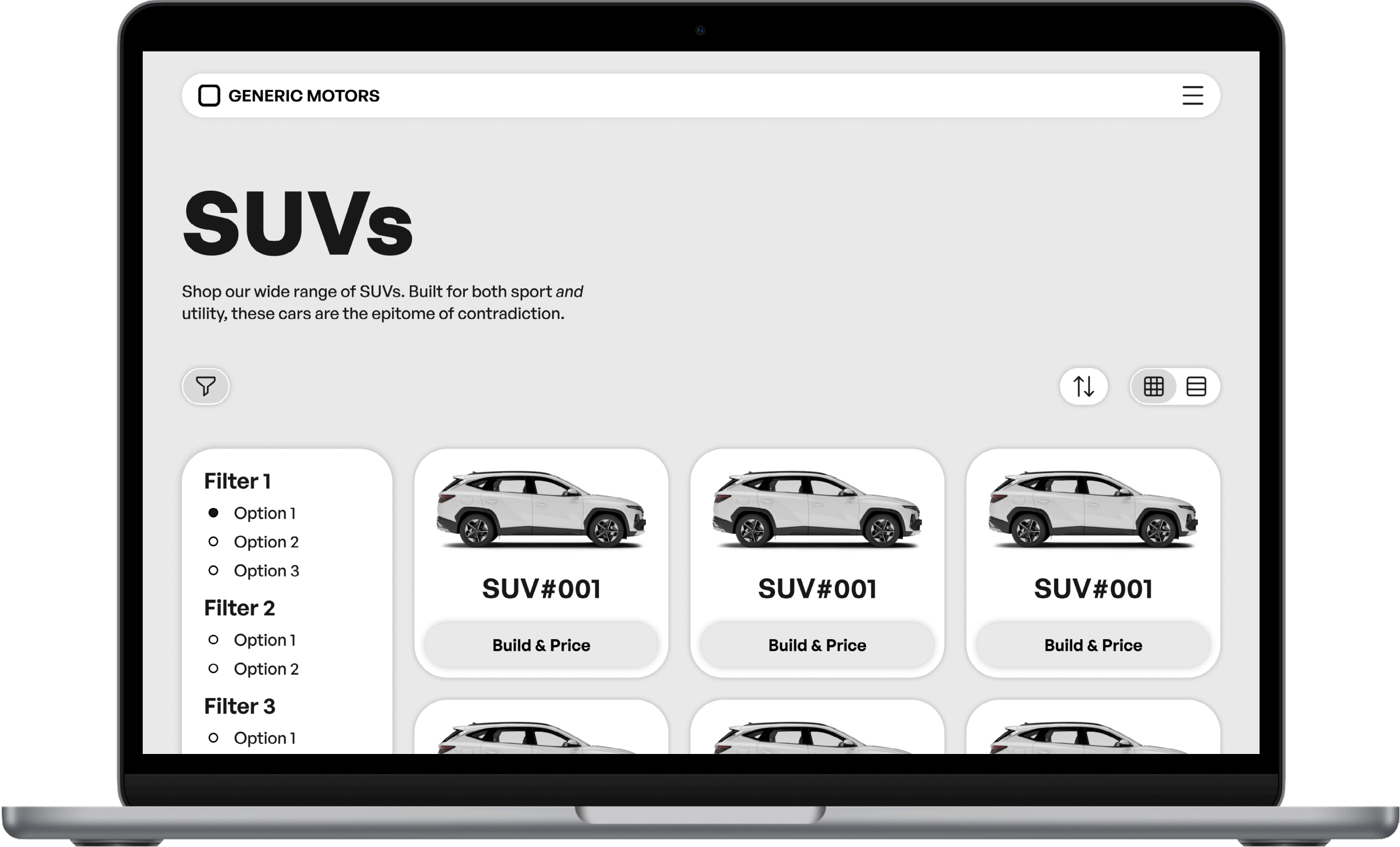
LISTING PAGE DESIGN – VERSION 1



LISTING PAGE DESIGN – VERSION 2



LISTING PAGE DESIGN – VERSION 3



PHASE 2:

REDIRECTION

	PHASE OVERVIEW			
		In Phase 2 of my project, I shifted away from an e-commerce website and instead towards a series of games. After the second presentation, the main criticism I received was that although the design was good, the actual product I was making was a bit too one-note. Whilst initially funny, once the user got the joke, there was nowhere for the humour or message to really go. In retrospect, I completely agree with this feedback and am grateful I was encouraged to pursue a different path. I think the website could have been somewhat effective, but the message was too limited and it was a bit too much ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’. Whilst in all honesty this feedback did derail me a bit, I eventually landed on pursuing the mini-games I had initially thought of with more rigour. This turned out to be a much more effective format, as the more involved interactions between the system and the user allows for a richer experience. By doing a <i>series</i> of games, I was able to convey slightly different messages with each one. The game format is also more conducive for players witnessing the intended message first-hand and being able to better interpret and understand it through their own experiences. At this stage, I envisioned making 2 physical card games (Top Trumps and Concentration) and 1 digital game (Trivia), although I didn’t start working on the digital games until Phase 3.		
	GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2		PHASE 2 // 46	

2.1:

DEVELOPMENT

	CARS DATABASE		
	A key part of this project was coming up with what games to include in the first place. I wanted each game to showcase a different aspect of the message. For example, Concentration would be good for how difficult it is to remember any defining features about the cars. Similarly, Trivia is good for conveying how similar the features of the cars are, beyond just the visuals. Choosing the games was a constant balance between potential entertainment and being realistic in what I could produce. Many of the games on this list would have been really difficult to create, and others would only really work with a second player (which I didn't want to have to rely on).	Games List: • Top Trumps • Memory/Snap • Guess the brand • Some sort of questionnaire/point total/trivia like ◦ User picks which car to do trivia about ◦ Questions like: Is the length of this car: (A) 15.4 ft (B) 15.5 ft (C) 15.6 ft (D) 15.7 ft • Akinator / "Guess my model"—the user roleplays as one of the generic cars and the site/bot tries to guess what model it is ◦ e.g., User: "I come in silver and have a sunroof", bot: "Oh you must be SUV #004!" ◦ The bot just spits out a random car each time, sometimes could say "Oh wait... that's literally every car we sell!" ◦ At the end when the user fails say "It's ok, there's literally nothing you could tell me that could distinguish your car from the rest" • Celebrity heads (instead of typing in a car name, the user selects from the long list of all cars after each clue) • Same/different car (two cars appear side-by-side and the user has to guess whether they're identical or different as fast as possible. There's a time limit and the user has to get as many right as possible within the time limit for their score) • Real or not real? (kinda like Same/different car, but instead is a real car vs an AI generated one) • Spot the difference??? • Some sort of sliding puzzle? • List • Ordering game (order the cars from shortest to longest) • Match the interior to the exterior	
GEORDIE MARSH // BRIEF 2			PHASE 2 // DEVELOPMENT // 48

CARS DATABASE

Given these games would rely on various forms of data, the first step before beginning the designing was to database all the cars and their features.

In selecting the cars, I did research on different segments, how they compare and how internally diverse they are. Three main segments stood out: SUVs (Sports Utility Vehicles), Hatchbacks and Sedans. I chose to go with SUVs as they are a uniquely modern product that I think best embodies the issue of automotive homogeneity. Another issue I encountered was that SUVs come in a range of sizes. In fact, the segment is nowadays subdivided into 5 sizes: extra light, light, medium, large and extra large SUVs. It wasn't fair to compare different sizes of SUVs; they look quite different and the prices and features aren't directly comparable. I therefore just stuck to the most popular type: Medium SUVs.

In making the list of cars, I trawled through several websites that listed best-selling cars or that compared cars within certain subcategories. I ultimately devised a list of 30 cars, although I couldn't use all of them for all the games since electric and hybrid cars physically and internally differ quite a lot from petrol cars. For each car, I gathered data on several typical features like dimensions, range, weight, etc., but also on some more obscure things like the colours they offered. This data enabled me to make games with real-world statistics across a range of topics.

Manufacturer	Model	Length (m)	Wheelbase (m)	Wheel size (in)	Kerb Weight (tonnes)	weight excl. Evs	Fuel Tank Capacity	Range (k)	Shades of grey	Price
Mercedes-Benz	GLC	4.72	2.89	18	1.8	1.8	65	747	6	\$103,000.00
Porsche	Macan	4.70	2.81	18	1.87	1.87	65	750	7	\$102,000.00
BMW	X3	4.76	2.86	18	1.85	1.85	65	870	6	\$89,000.00
Audi	Q5	4.66	2.82	19	1.82	1.82	70	764	4	\$74,000.00
Volvo	XC60	4.71	2.87	17	1.9		71	800		\$74,000.00
Genesis	GV70	4.72	2.89	18	1.89	1.89	66	670	5	\$69,000.00
Nissan	Ariya	4.60	2.77	19	2.18				5	\$67,000.00
Tesla	Model Y	4.75	2.89	18	1.92				3	\$64,000.00
Lexus	NX	4.66	2.69	17	1.71	1.71	55	949	6	\$63,000.00
Mazda	CX-60	4.74	2.87	18	1.82	1.82	58	773	5	\$61,000.00
Kia	EV5	4.62	2.8	19	2.2				3	\$60,000.00
BYD	Sealion 6	4.76	2.77	19	2.1		60		2	\$49,000.00
Peugeot	3008	4.54	2.68	17	1.55	1.55	55		4	\$48,000.00
Toyota	RAV4	4.60	2.69	17	1.65	1.65	55	815	5	\$47,000.00
Honda	CR-V	4.70	2.7	17	1.58	1.58	57	768	4	\$45,000.00
Skoda	Karoq	4.38	2.64	17	1.45	1.45	50	758	4	\$45,000.00
Volkswagen	Tiguan	4.54	2.68	17	1.55	1.55	58	753	6	\$44,000.00
BYD	Atto 3	4.46	2.72	17	1.75				3	\$40,000.00
Chery	Tiggo 7	4.54	2.65	17	1.51	1.51	51		4	\$40,000.00
Mitsubishi	Outlander	4.72	2.67	18	1.64	1.64	55	705	5	\$38,000.00
Subaru	Forester	4.64	2.67	17	1.66	1.66	63	851	4	\$38,000.00
Mazda	CX-5	4.55	2.7	17	1.63	1.63	56	812	5	\$37,000.00
Nissan	X-Trail	4.68	2.71	17	1.73	1.73	55	702	5	\$37,000.00
Hyundai	Tucson	4.63	2.68	17	1.46	1.46	54	667	4	\$36,000.00
KGM	Korando	4.45	2.68	17	1.5	1.5	50	652	3	\$36,000.00
Kia	Sportage	4.66	2.68	17	1.6	1.6	54	667	5	\$35,000.00
GWM	Haval H6	4.65	2.74	19	1.55	1.55	61		3	\$34,000.00
Nissan	Qashqai	4.43	2.64	17	1.55	1.55	55	901	5	\$34,000.00
MG	HS	4.57	2.7	17	1.6	1.6	55	797	4	\$33,000.00
Geely	EX5	4.62	2.7	18	1.72	1.72				
Average		4.63	2.742	17.6	1.72466667	1.65375	58.36	770.04762	4.4642857	
Min		4.38	2.64	17	1.45	1.45	50	652	2	
Max		4.76	2.89	8	2.2	1.89	71	949	7	
				5						
St. Dev.		0.102713	0.083227979	0.7701321	0.20119871	0.1334431	5.90112984	79.55594	1.1700631	

CAR IMAGES

Another puzzle in making the designs for this project was sourcing the car imagery I needed. Given I'm raising the point of car homogeneity, it was crucial that I had images of cars with identical positioning, framing, colours and lighting.

This proved harder than I expected. For one, car companies don't all provide the same sort of imagery for every car, especially not all in the same colour. Many of the images on car websites are also low quality. I actually ended up sourcing most of my car images from car reselling websites, although I had to heavily treat them in Photoshop to get them all looking good.

One notable change I had to make to the cars other than their colours was with the hubcaps. Wheels, as it turns out, seem to be the one part of a car that companies like to be experimental with in their design. The visual diversity of the hubcaps meant that cars could be easily told apart just with this alone, so I changed them all to a single, generic design.



CAR IMAGES – GENERIC HUBCAP



CAR IMAGES – PROCESS



→
Windows



↙
Chassis colour



→
Hubcaps



CAR IMAGES – FINISHED



CAR IMAGES – FINISHED



CAR IMAGES – FINISHED



TOP TRUMPS

The first game I envisioned was Top Trumps. This is a predominantly English card game for kids which is intended to teach them while they play. A deck will have a particular theme, for example, ‘birds’, and each card has a different bird on it. Each bird has various stats as well as a description and picture. The deck of 30 is divided in half and each player holds their 15 cards face down. In a new round, players flip over their topmost card and one player picks a stat, like “wingspan: 40cm”. If the opponent’s value for that stat is higher, they take that card, and vice versa. The player who ends up with all cards wins.

The point of this game is to compare and learn about the different items, animals, objects, etc. within the category. Through repeated play, the child eventually learns which cards are good for certain stats (subconsciously teaching them about the subject) which enables them to play more strategically. My thinking, though, was that if the cards are all so similar because SUVs generally have very few differences in their features, it would be essentially impossible (or at least very boring) to play, defeating the purpose. This would therefore convey the idea of car homogeneity.

When designing the game, I chose to keep the same general design language as I had used in my e-commerce website, given it was still based on the same research and concept. I continued to use this design language for the rest of my project.



<https://www.nda-toys.com/images/wholesale/top-trumps-birds-wholesale-80085.jpg>
https://c1-ebgames.eb-cdn.com.au/merchandising/images/packshots/cae99c571ae-c463eb789e4e8e22c8dc9_Large.jpg



<https://dataschools.education/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/toptrumps.jpg>

TOP TRUMPS – CARD DESIGN IDEATION

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Price

\$47,000

Price

\$47,000

Price

\$47,000

Price

\$47,000

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy (L/100km)

4.7

Boot Space

\$47,000

Length

\$47,000

Distinctiveness

\$47,000

Unique Colours

\$47,000

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy (L/100km)

4.7

Boot Space

\$47,000

Length

\$47,000

Distinctiveness

\$47,000

Unique Colours

\$47,000

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy

4.7 L/100km

Boot Space

542 L

Length

4.6 m

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy

4.7 L/100km

Boot Space

542 L

Length

4.6 m

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy (L/100km)

4.7

Boot Space (L)

542

Length (m)

4.6

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy

4.7 L/100km

Boot Space

542 L

Length

4.6 m

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy

4.7 L/100km

Boot Space

542 L

Length

4.6 m

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Specifications

Card

Toyota

RAV4



Price

\$47,000

Fuel Economy

4.7 L/100km

Boot Space

542 L

Length

4.6 m

Distinctiveness

2/10

Unique Colours

0

Specifications

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

UNIQUE COLOURS

0

Specifications

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

UNIQUE COLOURS

0

Specifications

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

SHADES OF GREY

5

Specifications

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

SHADES OF GREY

5

Specifications

Perfect for family trips and weekend adventures, the Toyota RAV4 combines comfort, space, and safety with a sleek, modern design ready for life.

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

SHADES OF GREY

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Specifications

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SHADES OF GREY

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Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

SHADES OF GREY

5

Specifications

Perfect for family trips and weekend adventures, the Toyota RAV4 combines comfort, space, and safety with a sleek, modern design ready for life.

Card

Toyota

RAV4



PRICE

\$47,000

FUEL ECONOMY

4.7 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

542 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

2/10

SHADES OF GREY

5

Specifications

Perfect for family trips and weekend adventures, the Toyota RAV4 combines comfort, space, and safety with a sleek, modern design ready for life.

Card

Mazda

CX-5



PRICE

\$40,000

FUEL ECONOMY

6.9 L/100km

BOOT SPACE

438 L

LENGTH

4.6 m

DISTINCTIVENESS

3/10

SHADES OF GREY

6

Specifications

Designed with families in mind, the Mazda CX-5 makes every journey effortless with advanced safety, generous space, and a smooth, comfortable drive.

CONCENTRATION

The other physical game I wanted to make was Concentration, also known as Memory. In this game, a deck of picture cards with two of each card is laid face-down in a grid. The player turns two cards over. If they match, they keep them face-up; if they don't, they turn them back over. The player keeps going until all cards are turned over. The beauty of this game is that it trains memory as you learn to remember where certain cards are.

This is, of course, impossible if there's no defining feature to remember a card by. Where you'd usually remember the name of the object, its colour, its shape, etc., these cars have nothing to really tell them apart, so it's impossible to remember where they might be. This makes the game basically random, conveying the idea that the cars essentially just copies of one another.

The design for this card game is very simple: just the car on the face-up. This game in particular is why I needed the car images to be so similar, as I needed there to not be any defining features that could be used to tell the cars apart.



https://fairplay.nz/cdn/shop/products/17a1e2_f4033c6b7cb049f0bd22b8216fdbd5d6_mv2.webp?v=1653107046



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/WMCZ_Protected_Areas_Card_Game-7_%28cropped%29.jpg

<https://i0.wp.com/mcusercontent.com/21ab45285a43248c52473f8e6/images/da4b7c04-027b-4033-a2d3-68c372c94299.jpeg?ssl=1>

CONCENTRATION – CARD DESIGN IDEATION

Toyota RAV4



Toyota RAV4



Toyota RAV4



Mazda CX-5



2.2:

PHASE 2 OUTCOMES

TOP TRUMPS CARDS

Toyota

RAV4



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE	\$47,000
FUEL ECONOMY	4.7 L/100km
BOOT SPACE	542 L
LENGTH	4.6 m
DISTINCTIVENESS	2/10
SHADES OF GREY	5

Perfect for family trips and weekend adventures, the Toyota RAV4 combines comfort, space, and safety with a sleek, modern design ready for life.

Mazda

CX-5



SPECIFICATIONS

PRICE	\$40,000
FUEL ECONOMY	6.9 L/100km
BOOT SPACE	438 L
LENGTH	4.6 m
DISTINCTIVENESS	3/10
SHADES OF GREY	6

Designed with families in mind, the Mazda CX-5 makes every journey effortless with advanced safety, generous space, and a smooth, comfortable drive.

CONCENTRATION – CARD DESIGNS

Toyota RAV4



Mazda CX-5



Kia Sportage



Audi Q5



Nissan X-Trail



Volvo XC60



Hyundai Tucson



GWM Haval H6



BMW X3



BYD Atto 4



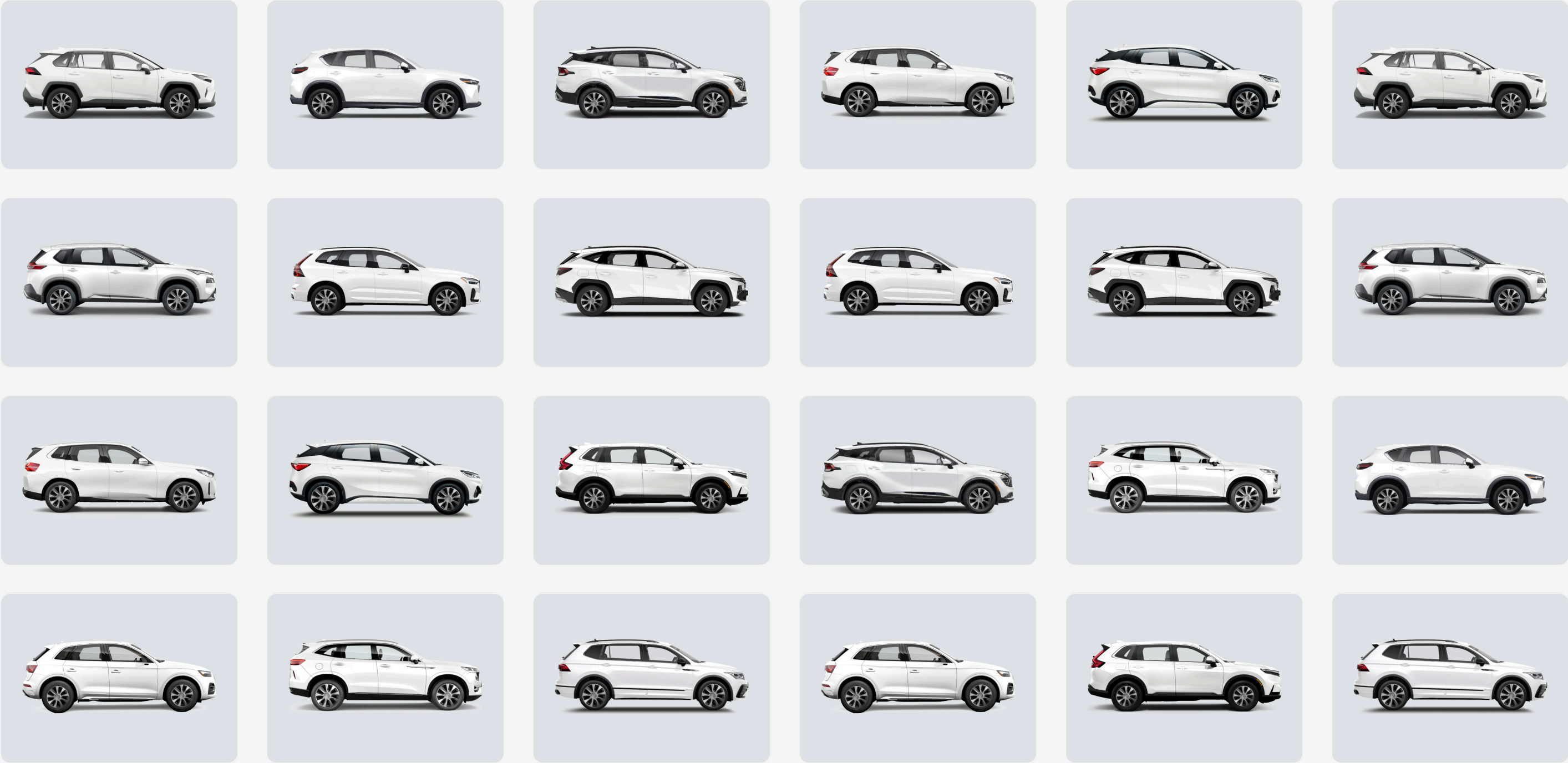
Honda CR-V



Volkswagen Tiguan



CONCENTRATION – CARDS IN GAMEPLAY



PHASE 3:

REFINEMENT

PHASE OVERVIEW

In the final phase of my project, after having received feedback on the games I had produced thus far, I honed in on creating a defined brand and I started the digital games.

Whilst the Concentration game proved successful, I found that the Top Trumps was too complex. There were a couple aspects of the game that didn't work at all—notably with the price and fuel economy stats, which are better when they're lower but this doesn't match the rules of the game—and generally having to compare the stats like this seemed a bit convoluted. The point I was trying to make through this game, mainly about the similarity of features, was already being conveyed through trivia anyway. This led me to get rid of Top Trumps from the project.

With the digital games, I started with Trivia. This game was where all the hard work took place, as I could just reuse these same elements and rework them for the other digital games. I produced 3 digital games in total, all of them targeting a slightly different aspect of the message.

3.1:

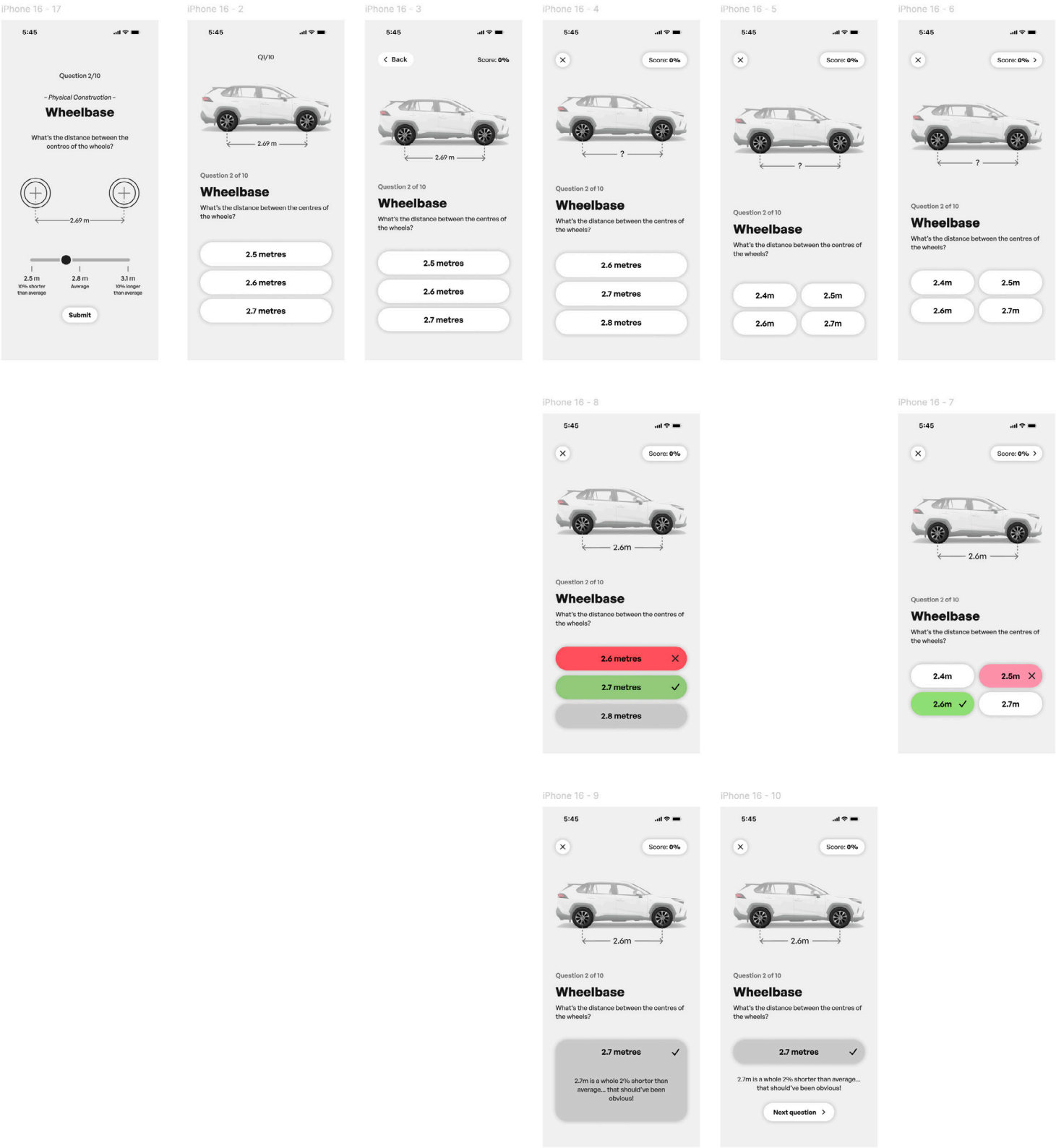
DEVELOPMENT

TRIVIA

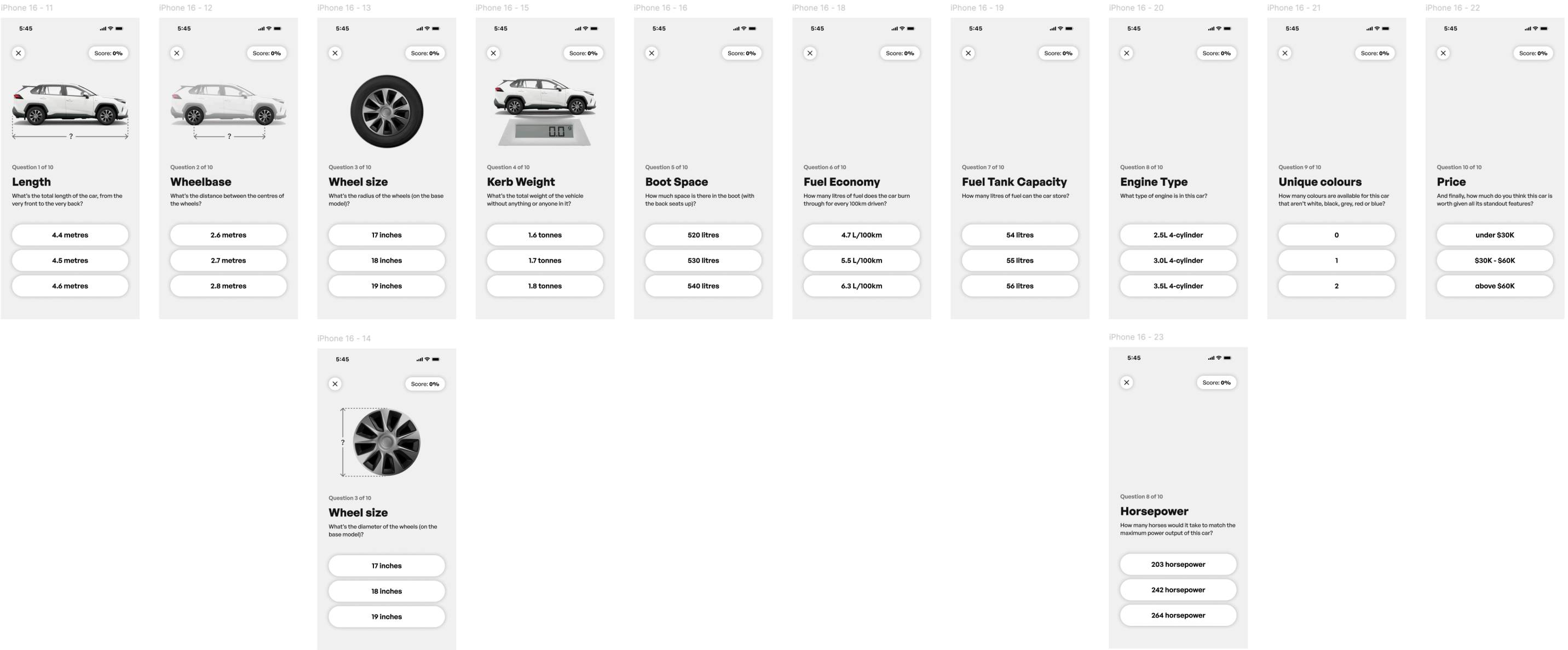
Designing the trivia game was harder than I had expected. The main difficulty I encountered was in how to convey the general averageness of all the features.

My initial idea was for the user to input their answer on a slider (e.g., from a minimum length to a maximum length) but it proved too difficult to work out how big the range would be, how the scoring system would work with this or if users would enjoy this level of specificity in the first place. Ultimately, I decided against it in favour of a simple, more traditional system of choosing 1 from 3 possible answers.

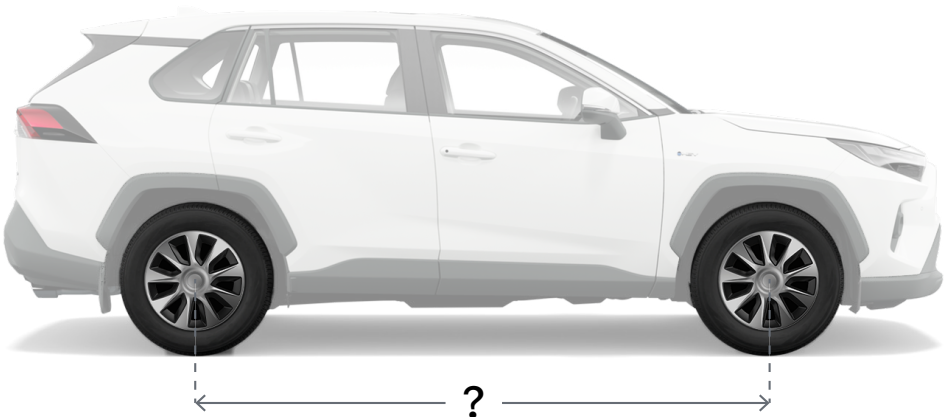
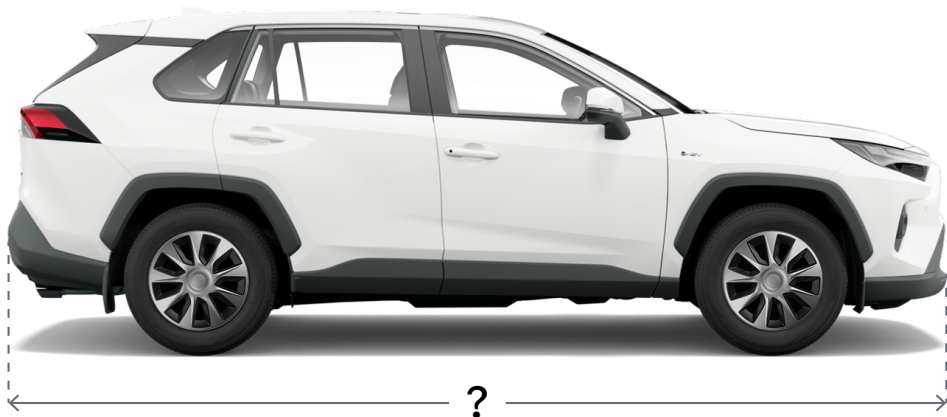
In the prototyping I only focused on the actual design, but when it came time to program it, I knew I wanted to focus a lot on the actual user experience. To keep the game from being too dull, I made sure to include seamless and satisfying animations that make the game feel more interactive, as well as fun elements like the score counting up at the end. To further drive home the message, I also included messages like ‘did you knows’.



TRIVIA – DEVISING THE QUESTIONS



TRIVIA – QUESTION IMAGES



TRIVIA – QUESTION IMAGES



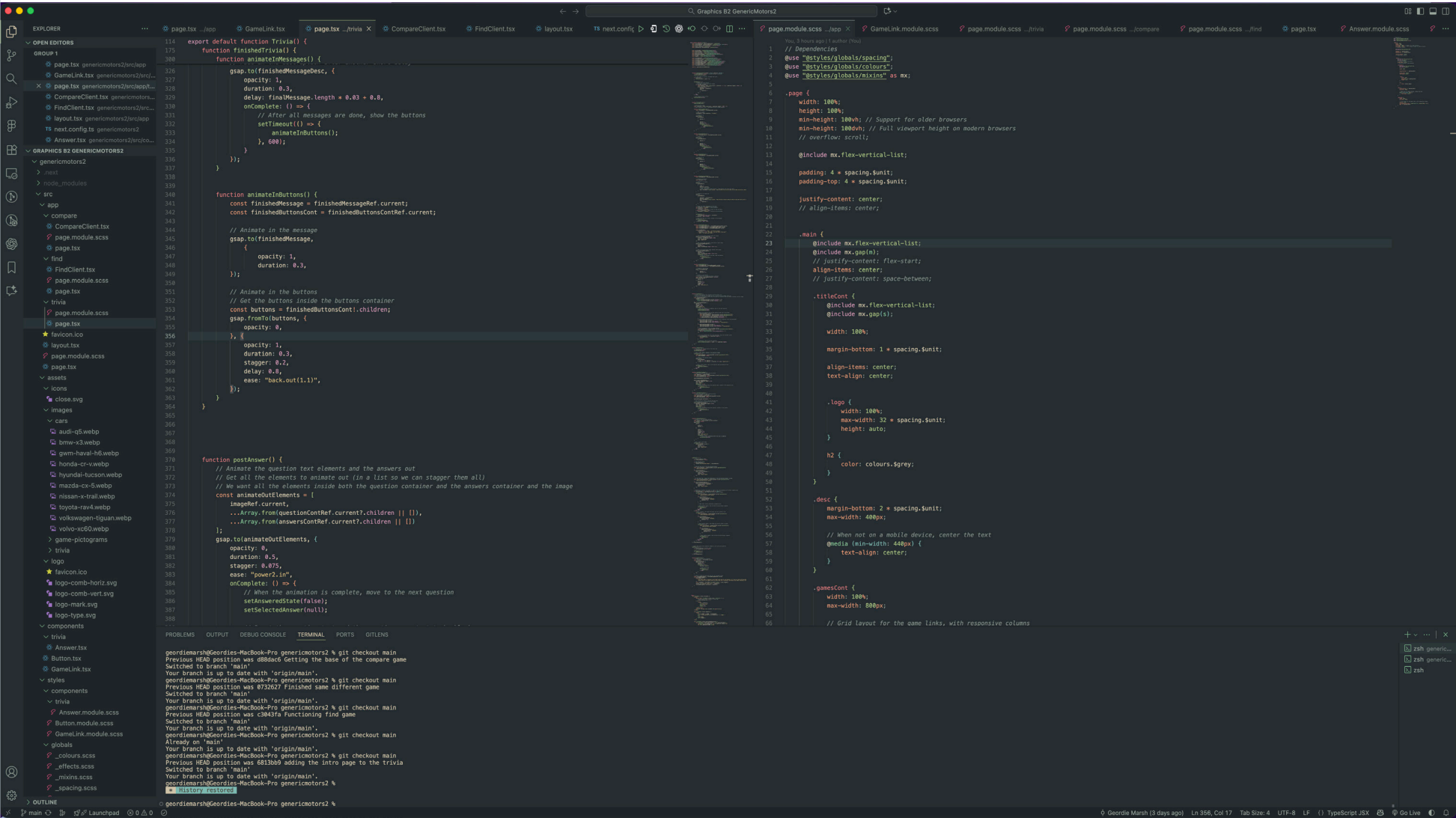
CODING

I coded all the digital games completely from scratch. This included both the front-end design and the game logic.

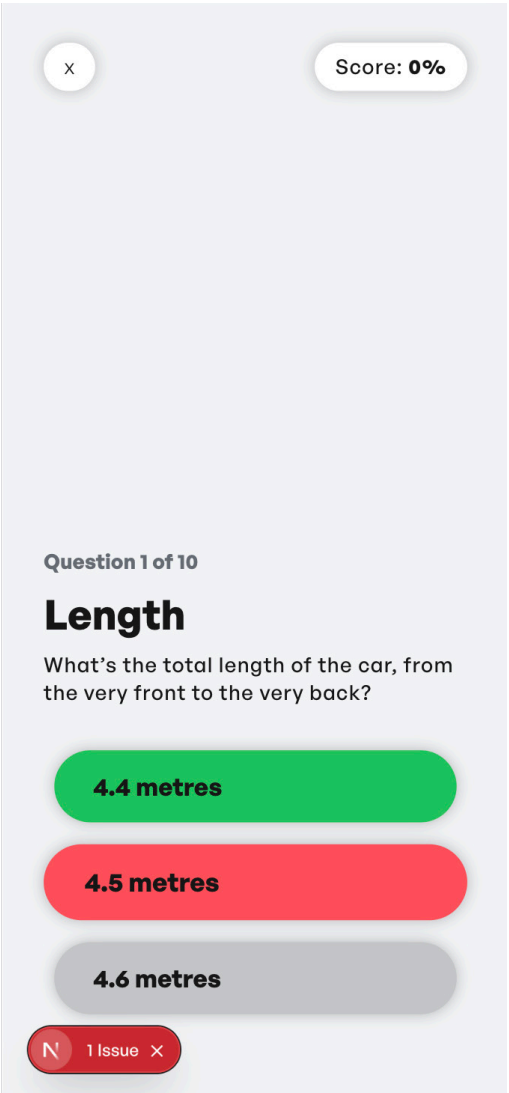
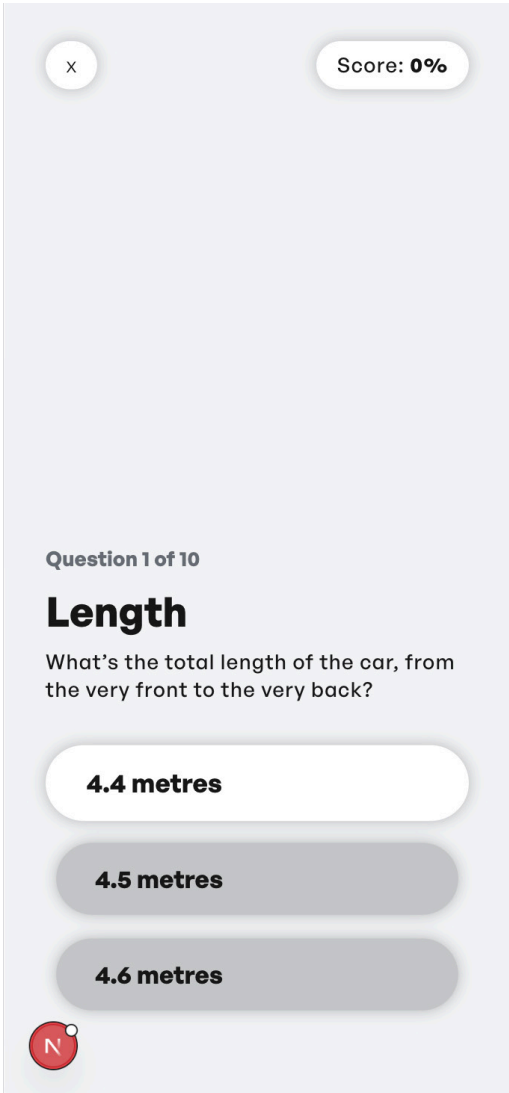
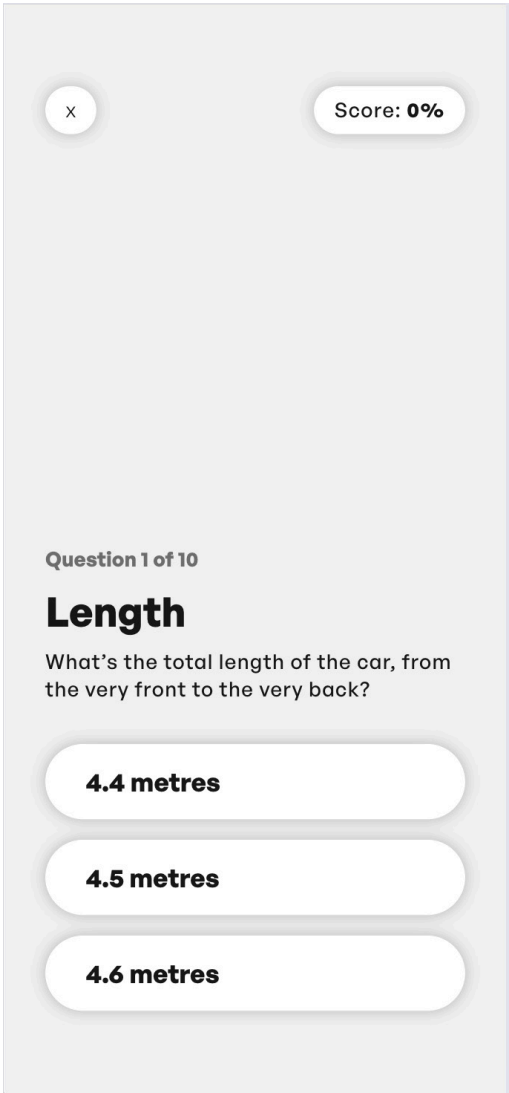
I coded using React / Next.js, SCSS and TypeScript. These are modern-day frameworks that extend the basic web languages of HTML, CSS and JavaScript. In particular, these languages are designed in such a way that it enables ‘modular design’, whereby you code individual modules that can be reused consistently throughout a project. This made coding something like these games, which use several commonly-used elements, much easier.

This setup also makes it easy to add interactivity and things like fluid animations, which was crucial for my project. I coded the Trivia and homepage first, but once these were coded it was much easier to code the other 2 games.

All my code can be found here: <https://github.com/Geordie-Marsh/GenericMotors>



TRIVIA – IMPLEMENTATION



TRIVIA – IMPLEMENTATION

X

Score: 0%

Question 2 of 10

Wheelbase

What’s the distance between the centres of the wheels?

2.6 metres

2.7 metres

2.8 metres

N

X

Score: 0%

Question 1 of 3

Length

What’s the total length of the car, from the very front to the very back?

2% shorter than average
(4.5 metres)

Almost exactly average
(4.6 metres)

2% longer than average
(4.7 metres)

N

X

Score: 0%

Question 1 of 3



Length

What’s the total length of the car, from the very front to the very back?

2% shorter than average
(4.5 metres)

Almost exactly average
(4.6 metres)

2% longer than average
(4.7 metres)

N

TRIVIA – IMPLEMENTATION

Trivia

Test your knowledge about our most popular model, **the Toyota RAV4**, by answering a series of questions!

Begin!

You scored...

40%

Well... at least you tried!

Did you know?

Almost none of our models differ by more than 10% in anything. We believe this makes choosing a car easier for our customers.

Try your luck again! Or explore our other games.

Try again

More games

Generic Motors

One of a kind

Comparing cars is difficult; there's so many differences between makes and models. To help we've designed a suite of games to help you compare all your options.



Trivia Challenge

Test your knowledge of car facts and figures

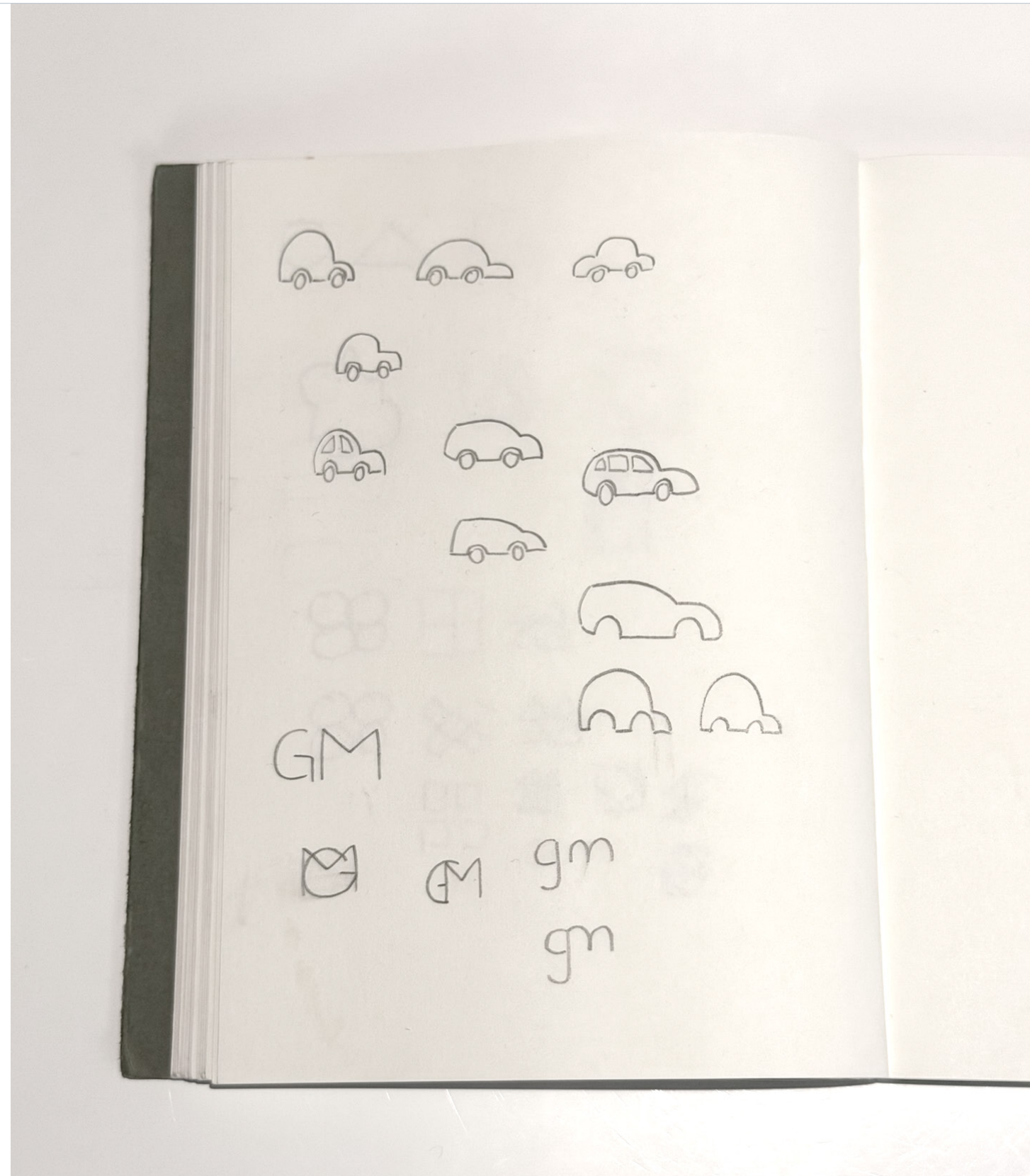
BRAND IDENTITY

By this point, I realised creating a proper brand identity was crucial. While I had already established things like the colour and typography, I needed a solid logo and identity.

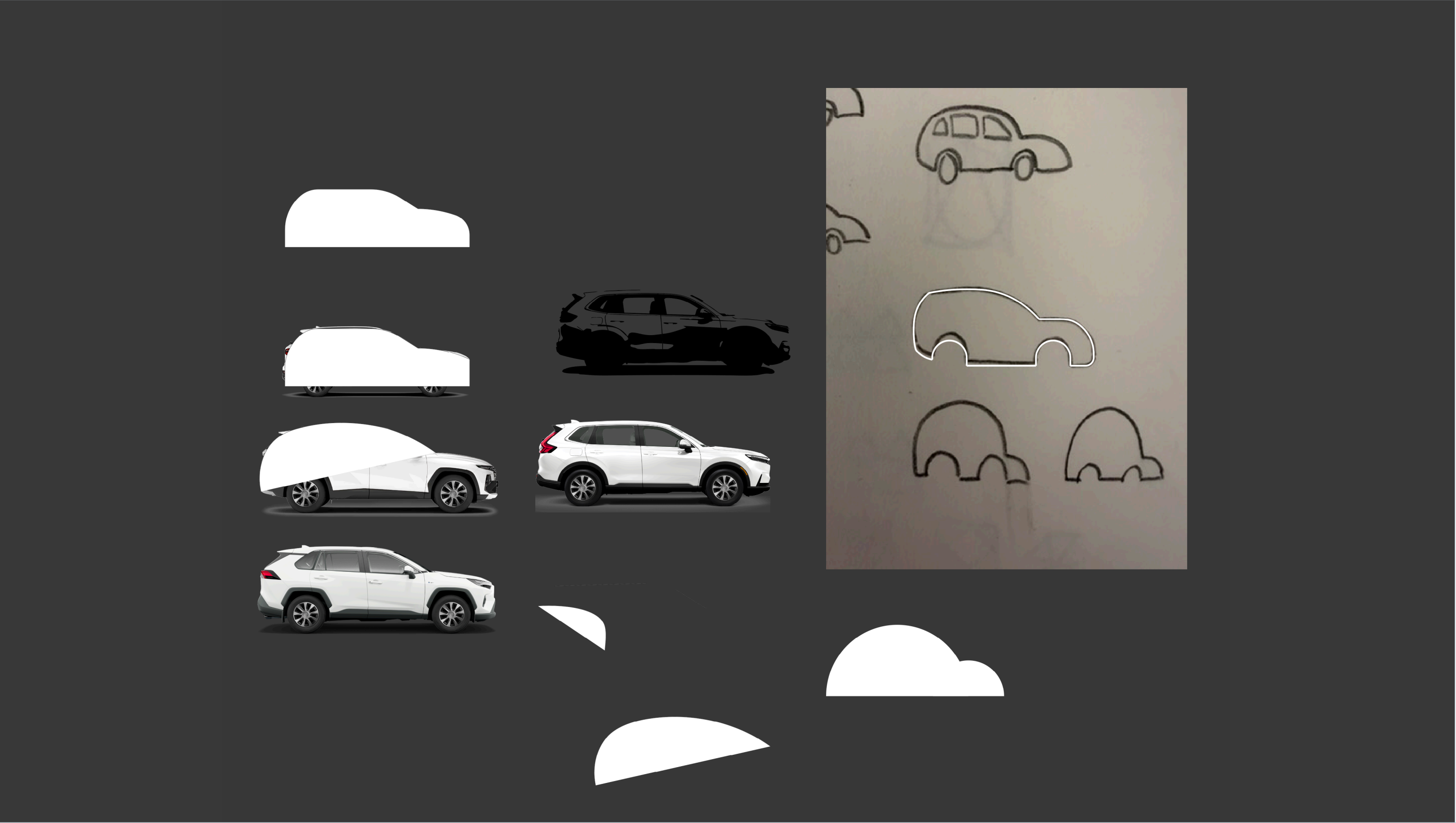
This was especially important for creating my physical Concentration game, as the backs of the cards and the box would need to be branded.

In creating the logo, I wanted the brand to resemble other automotive companies; this meant creating a badge of sorts. I created it really minimally, in line with the 'blanding' seen in modern-day car company logos. As for the design itself, I used the general shape of the side profile of an SUV's chassis. Not only does this speak to the designs I have created, but this part of the car is also what is generally the most homogeneous with other cars.

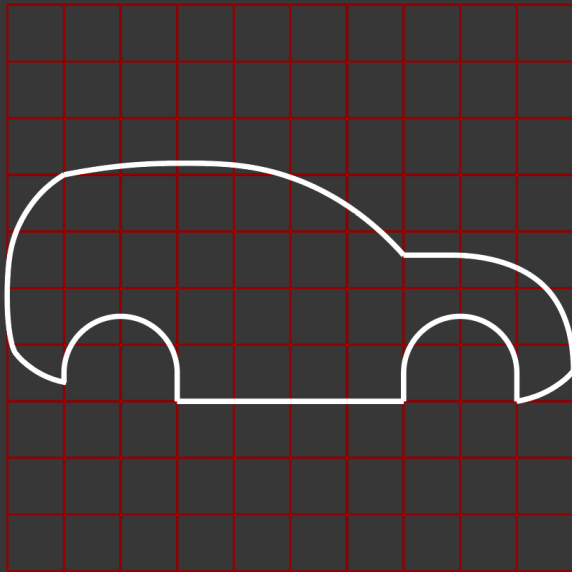
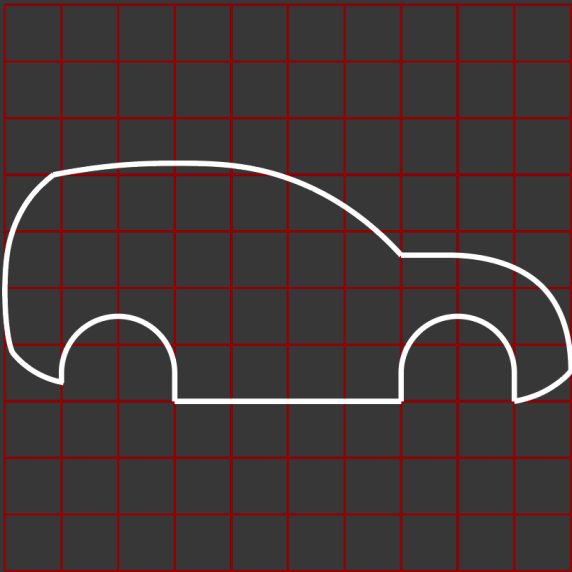
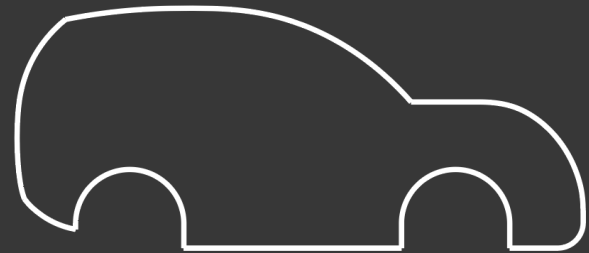
In terms of typography, I landed on one typeface early on that almost seemed too perfect for this project. As a geometric, sans-serif typeface, it resembles the typography typically employed by most automotive companies: it's legible, unimposing and attractive. This typeface also happens to be called General Sans.



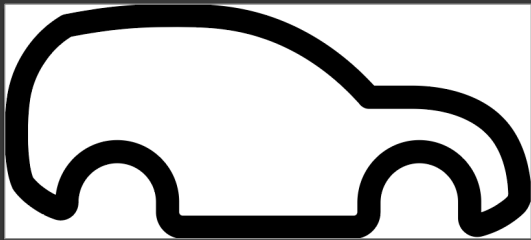
BRAND IDENTITY – DIGITISATION



BRAND IDENTITY – GRID ALIGNMENT



BRAND IDENTITY – LOGOTYPE AND COMBINATION MARKS



Generic Motors



Generic Motors

Generic Motors



Generic Motors



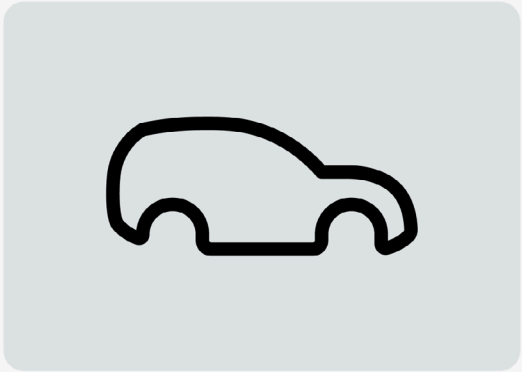
CONCENTRATION – CARD BACK DESIGN

Having already made the cards’ faces, I only had to design the cards’ backs and the box before I could print them. I chose to keep the design really minimal and simple in line with my brand’s design language.

For the card backs, I simply used the logomark. Not only is this likely how a real car company would use their branding on such a product, but it also nicely lines up with the card’s reverse in terms of shape and image.

With the box, I only included the crucial information. Where a typical game box would do everything in its power to jump off the shelves, I wanted this design to look almost apologetic in its corporateness.

Card back



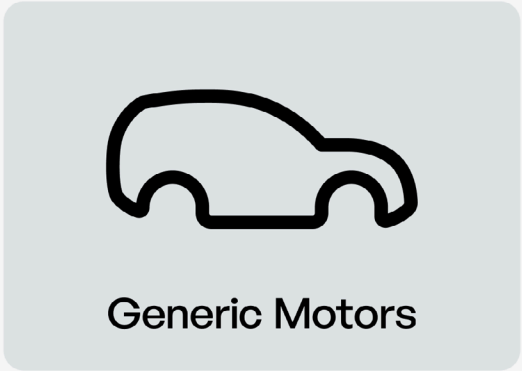
Card back



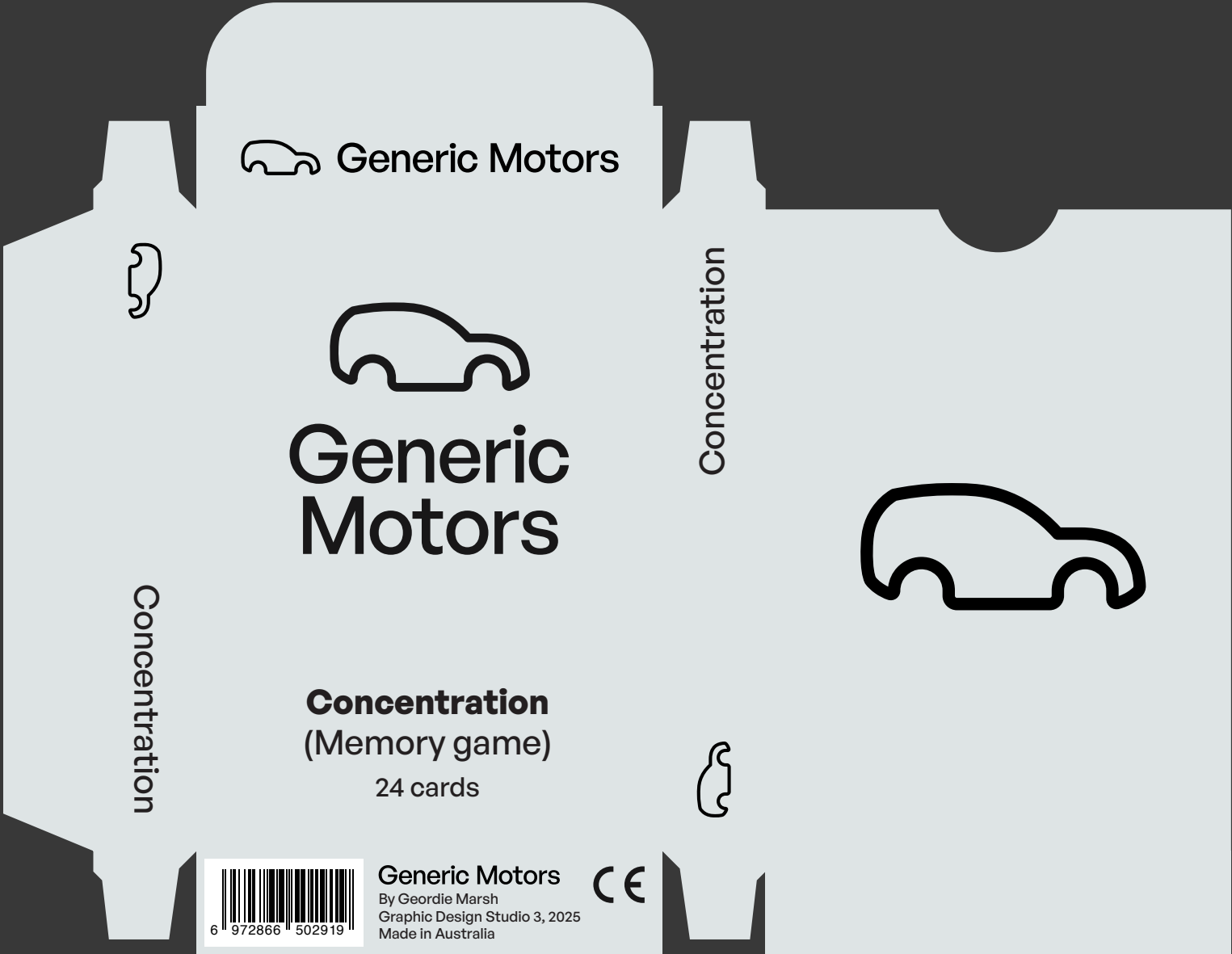
Card back



Card back



CONCENTRATION – BOX DESIGN

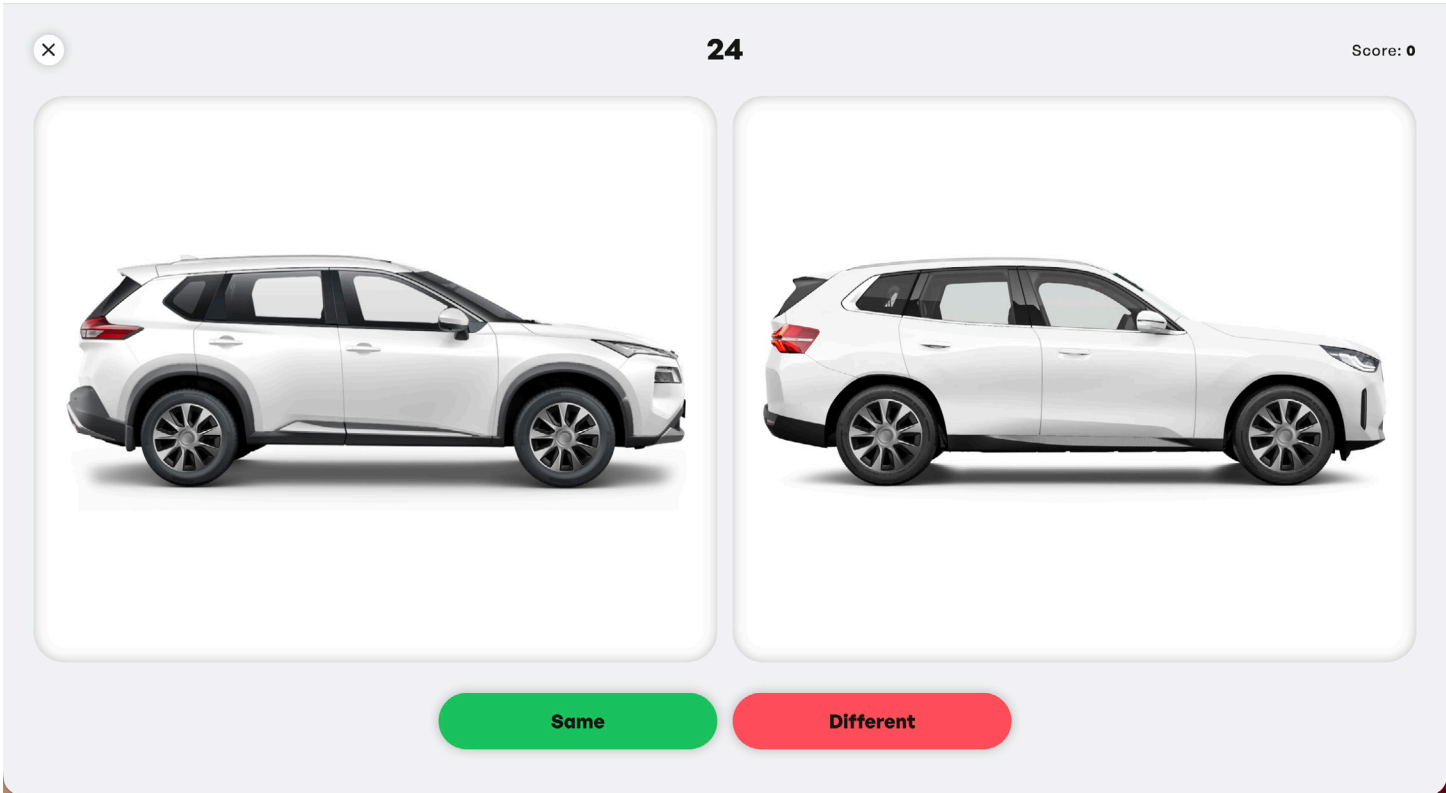


SAME / DIFFERENT GAME

For my second digital game, I wanted to convey the idea that these cars are hard to tell apart at speed. Whilst differences between the cars certainly do exist, my belief is that they are so minute that it takes a second to be able to actually observe them.

I created a game where users would have to determine whether two cars are the same or different. To up the ante, the objective of the game is to get as many right within a time period, incentivising players to be quick. Once the player is finished, a message about their score appears—if their score isn't high enough, they'll be encouraged to try again, which will force them to be quicker.

Having finished the Trivia game, this game was significantly easier to implement. Whilst the logic took a bit to figure out, the front-end was much easier to design as I already had the components ready to use.



SAME / DIFFERENT – IMPLEMENTATION

Same / Different

See how well you can tell apart our models.

You'll be shown two cars and you have to identify if they're the same or different. Try to get as many right as you can within the time limit!

Begin!

X

Score: 0%





Same

Different

You scored...

7

Come on, you can do better than 7!
Let's try again!

Try again

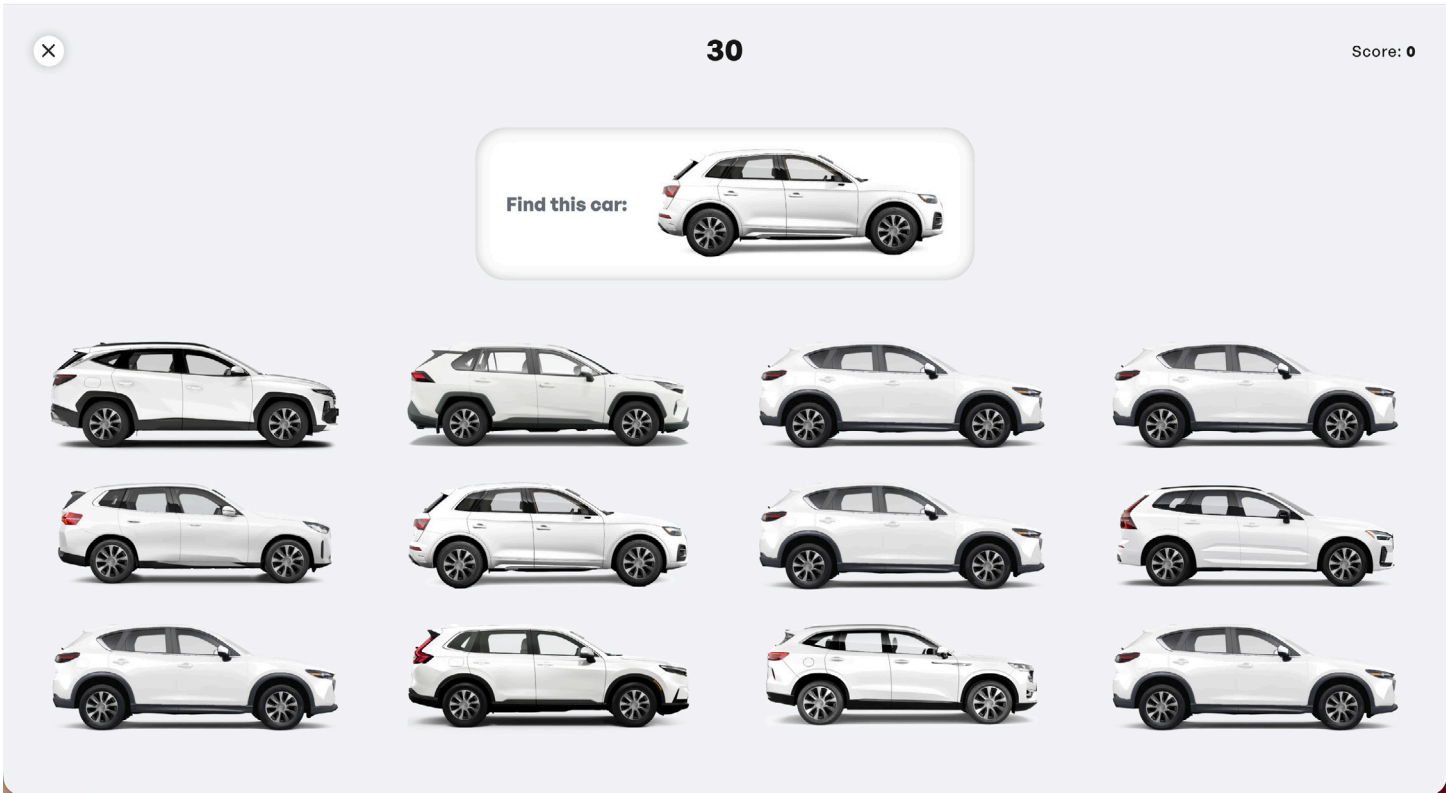
More games

FIND IT GAME

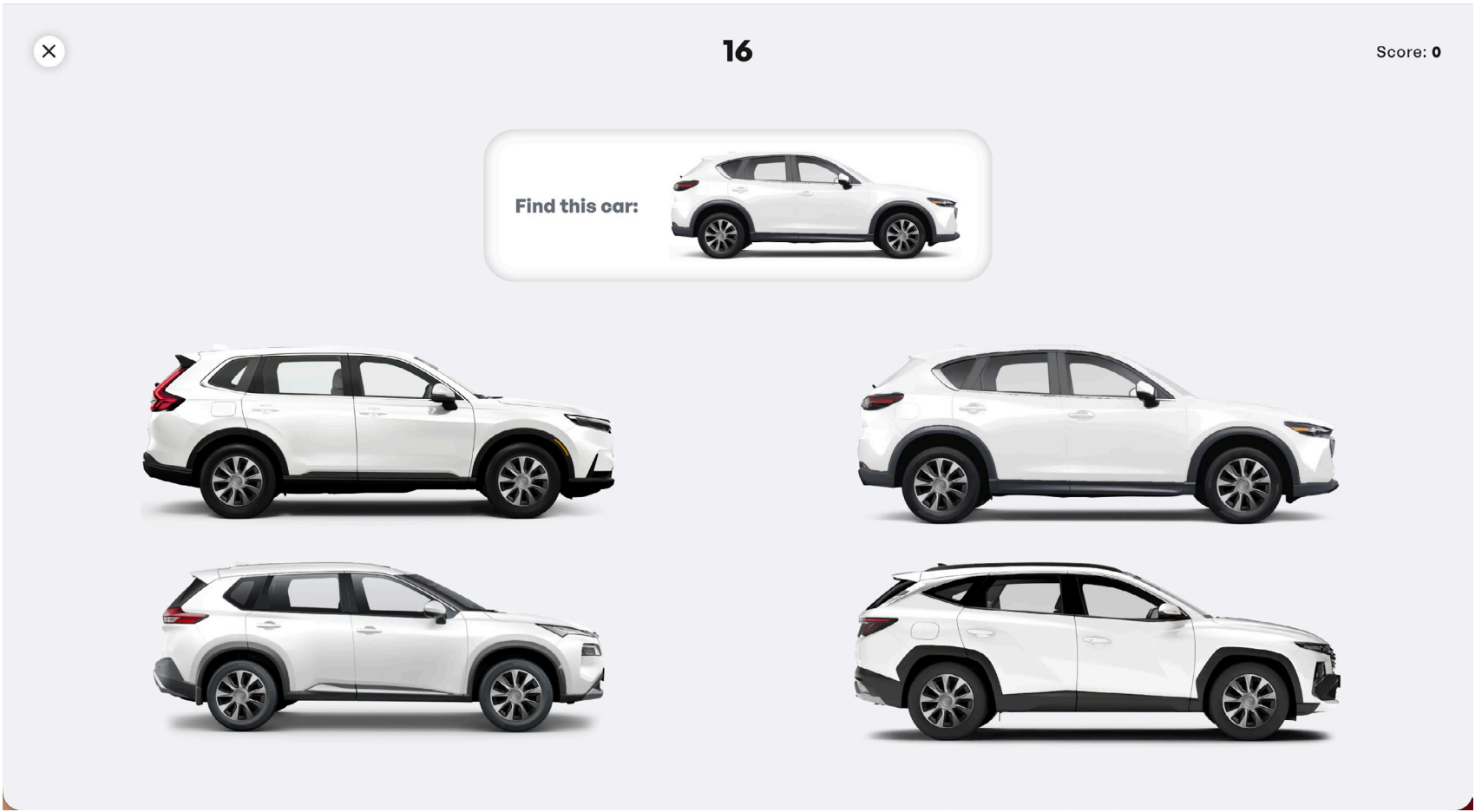
My last digital game focused on the idea of being able to *find* a specific model amongst many. This tests quite a different aspect of being able to tell models apart, as the user is forced to actually search for specific cars instead of just having to tell if two models are different.

Once again, this game was much easier to create having already made two, although I found it challenging making this game usable across different screen sizes.

In the end, I think this game in particular really drives home the message. It is genuinely difficult and makes the absurdity of the cars' homogeneity laughable in practice.



SAME / DIFFERENT – IMPLEMENTATION



SAME / DIFFERENT – IMPLEMENTATION



SAME / DIFFERENT – IMPLEMENTATION

×

30

Score: 0

Find this car:



























×

19

Score: 0

Find this car:



























SAME / DIFFERENT – IMPLEMENTATION

×

Generic Motors

Find it!

Test how eagle-eyed you are!

You'll be shown a target car and a series of randomly-generated models. Your job is to identify the target car among these models. One you answer, the grid will reset. Try to get as many right as you can within the time limit!

Easy mode

Medium mode

Hard mode

You scored...

3

Come on, you can do better than 3!

Let's try again!

Try again

More games

Generic Motors

One of a kind

Comparing cars is difficult; there's so many differences between makes and models. To help we've designed a suite of games to help you compare all your options.



Trivia Challenge
Test your knowledge of car facts and figures

Generic Motors

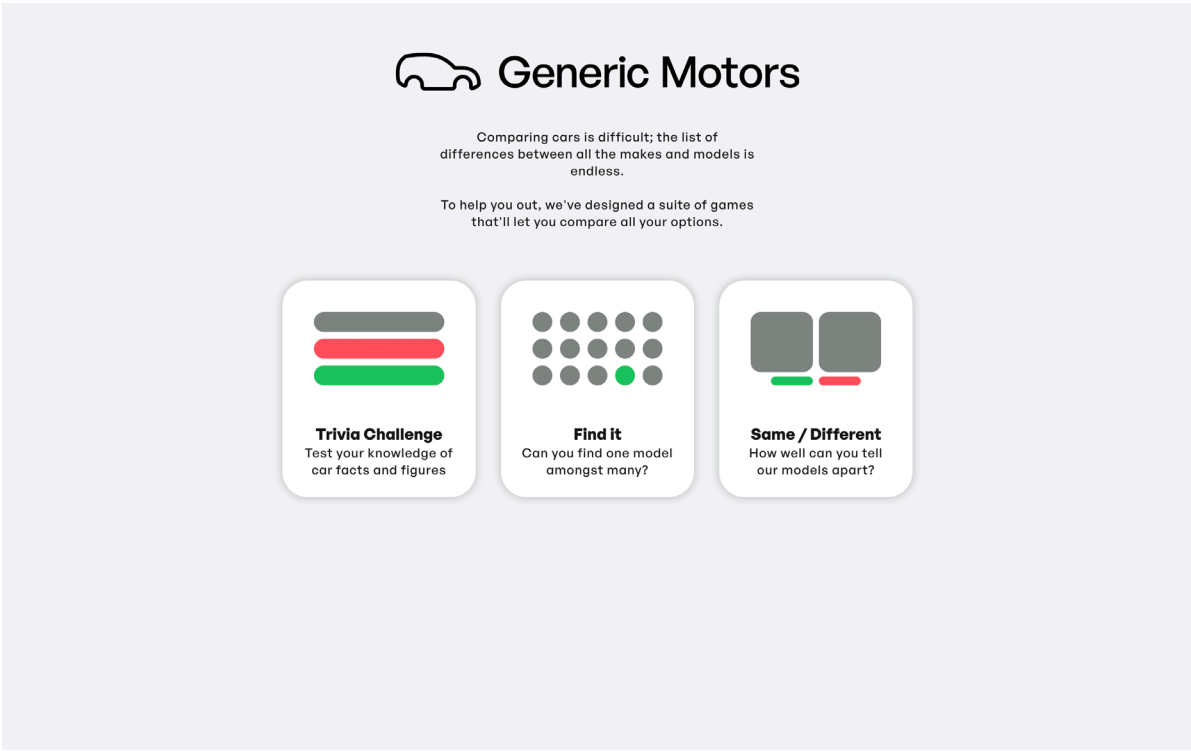
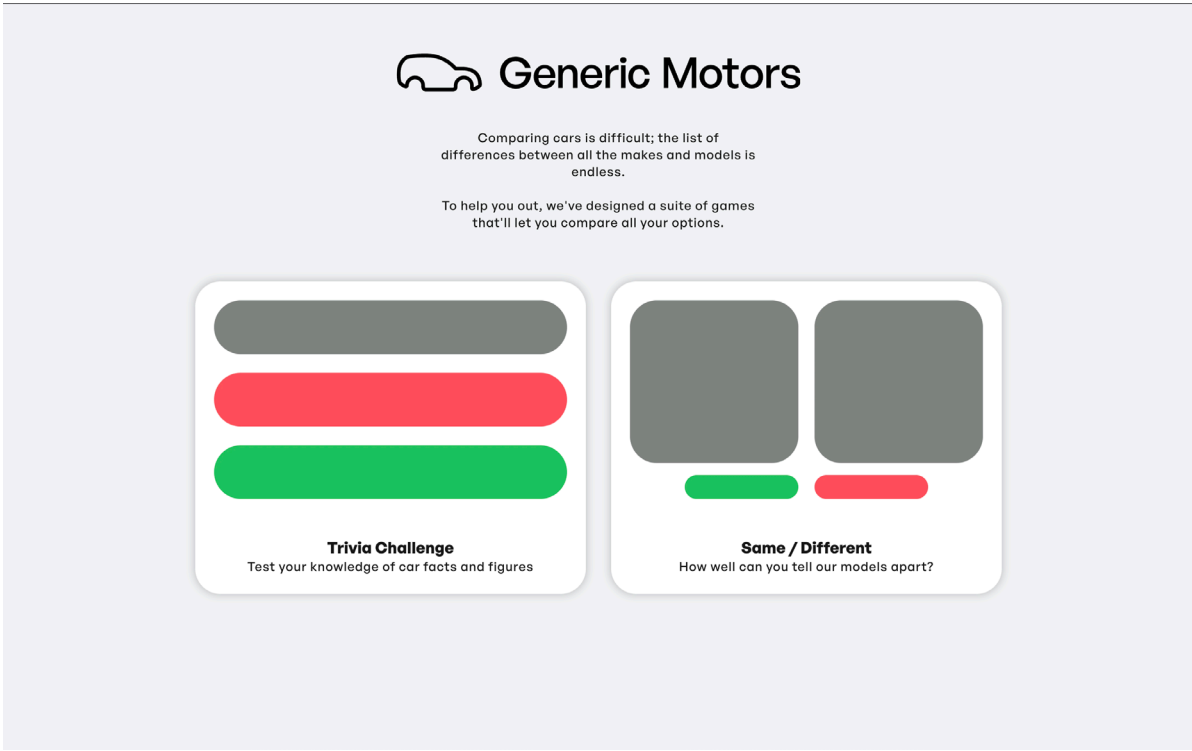
Comparing cars is difficult; the list of differences between all the makes and models is endless.

To help you out, we've designed a suite of games that'll let you compare all your options.

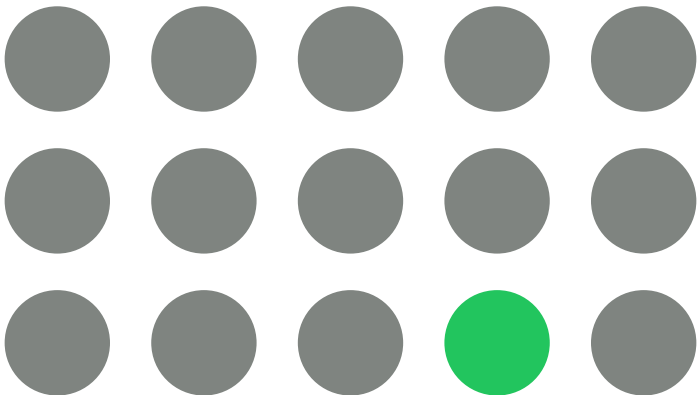


Trivia Challenge
Test your knowledge of car facts and figures

HOME PAGE



HOME PAGE PICTOGRAMS

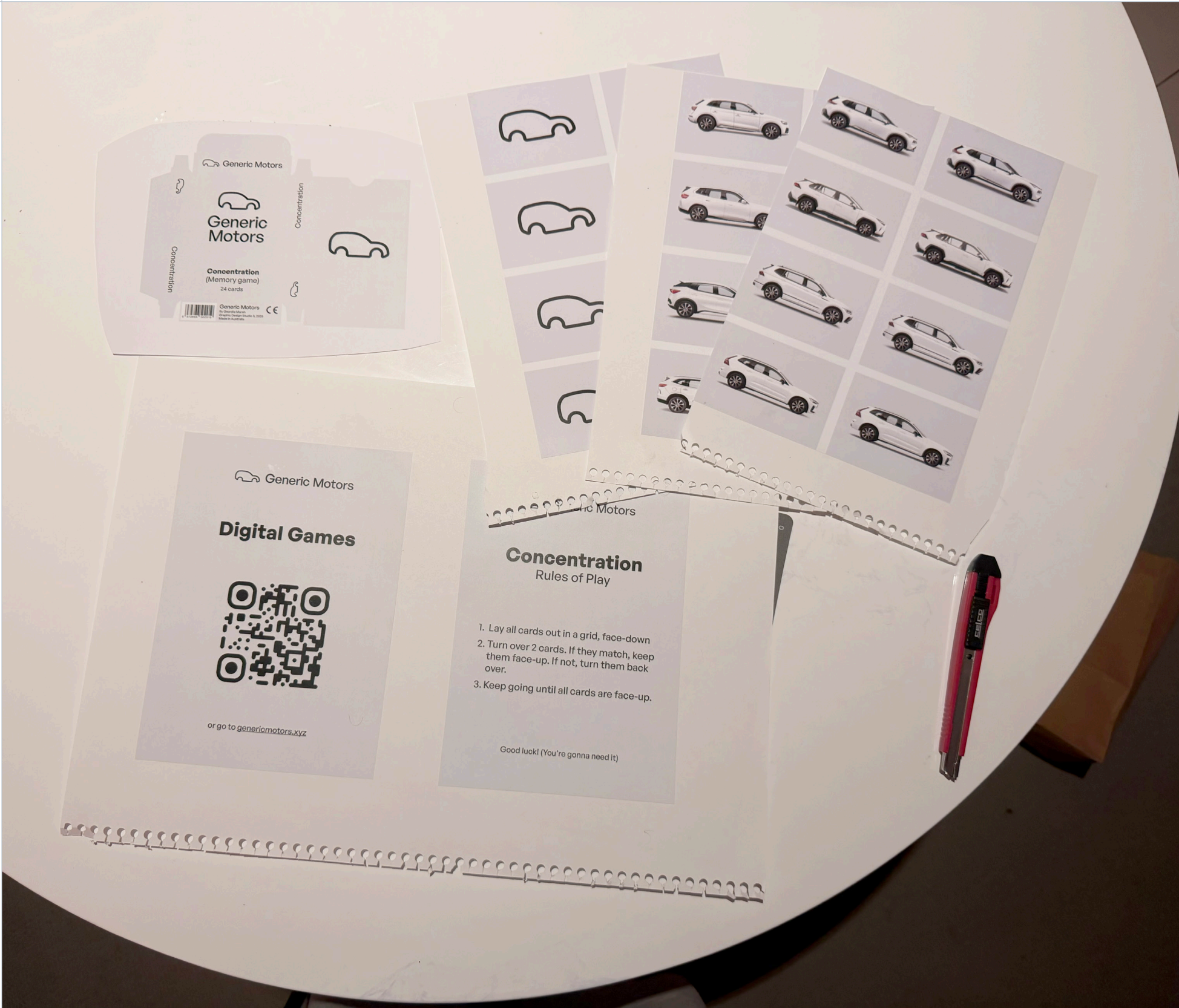


PRINTING

A previous class I took was Game Design. In this class, we had to construct our own board games from scratch, so luckily I had experience in making playing cards.

I printed at the Melbourne School of Design. I printed on thin paper that produced a nice image. This paper is also resilient, which is important for playing cards as they are constantly rubbing against one another. I then used spray adhesive to attach the fronts and backs together with thick paper in between. I cut them out by hand with a blade and used a corner cutter to round off the corners.

I used the same printing process for the box.



PRINTING



PUBLISHING

To create a more authentic experience with the digital games, I didn't want the website to be hosted on a random URL or a subpage of my portfolio website. I therefore decided to buy a custom domain for my project.

Although I would've ideally wanted genericmotors.com, this domain was already taken. Other options I considered (for varying prices) were .com.au, .co, .online, .io and .au. Ultimately, though, I went with .xyz as it relates to the project's digital nature and was inexpensive.

The website is hosted via GoDaddy (who I already have an account with) and run by Vercel, the makers of Next.js which is one of the frameworks I coded in. This integrates directly with GitHub, creating a really easy process.

3.2:

BRAND IDENTITY

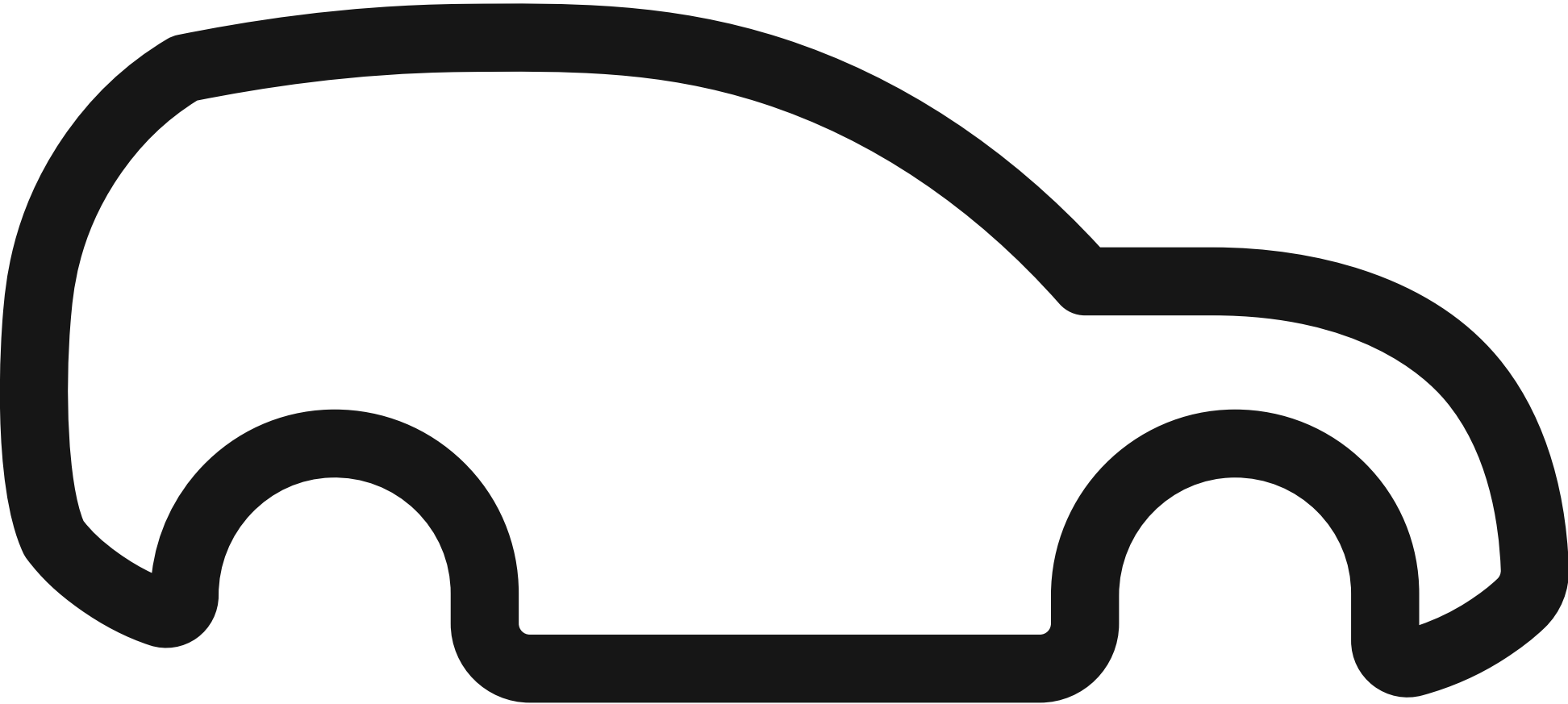
COMBINATION MARK



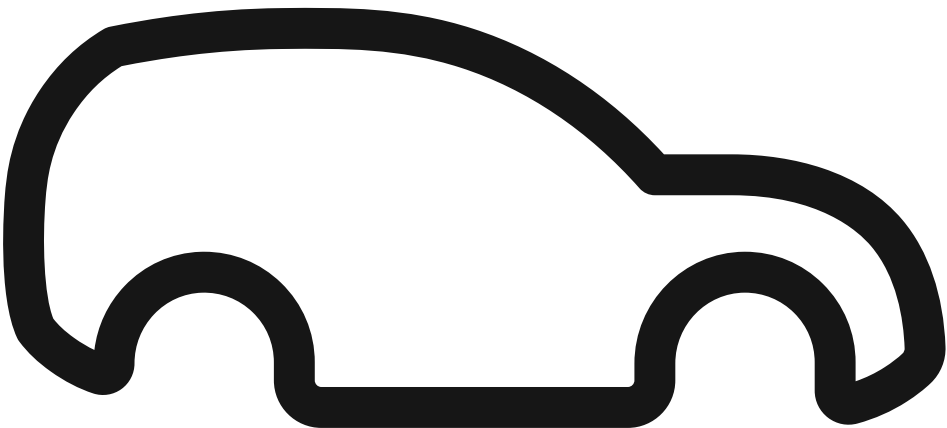
COMBINATION MARK



LOGOMARK



LOGOMARK



LOGOTYPE

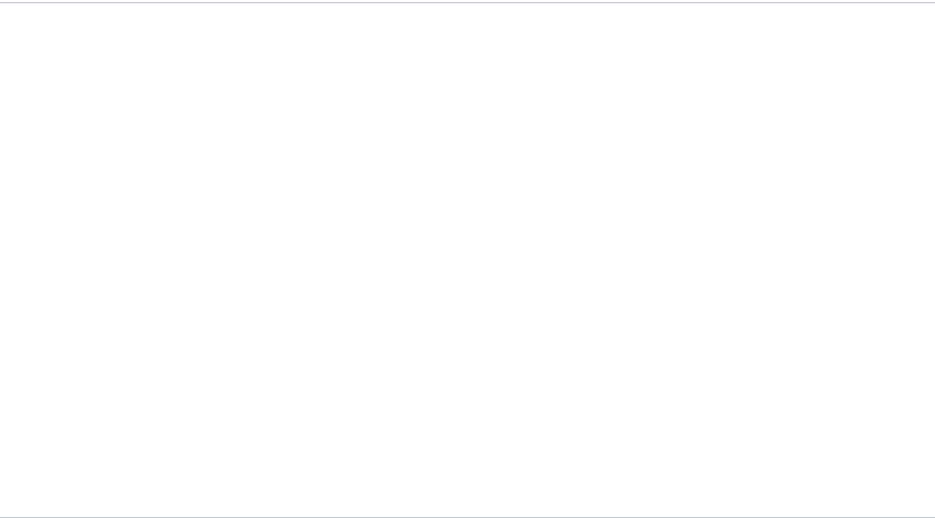
Generic Motors

LOGOTYPE

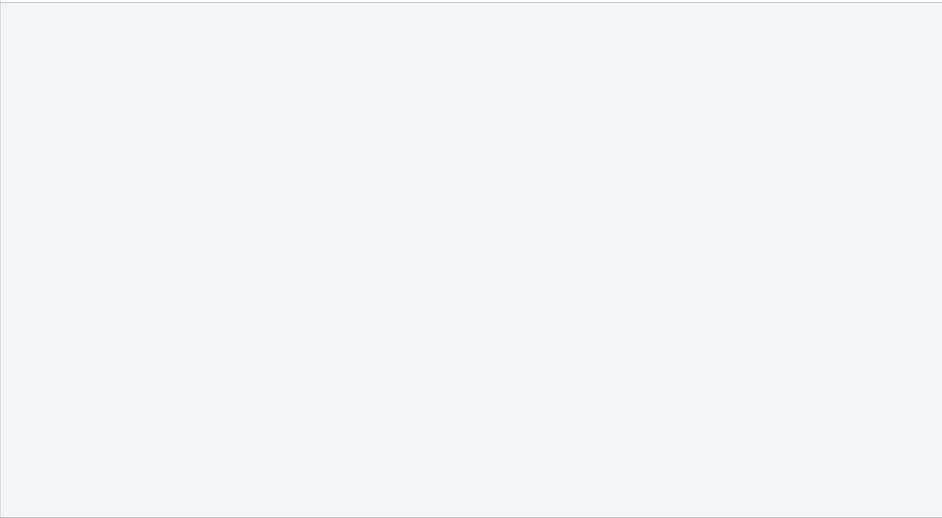
Generic Motors

Generic Motors

COLOUR PALETTE



Pure White
FFFFFFFF



Off-White
F2F4F6



Light Grey
C4C7C9



Grey
676D75



Black
181818



Green
22C55E



Yellow
FBBF24



Red
FF505B

TYPOGRAPHY

General Sans 700

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp

Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

! ? , . @ # \$ £ € % & * () ‘ “ : ; - /

Amazingly few discothèques provide jukeboxes

General Sans 500

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

! ? , . @ # \$ £ € % & * () ‘ “ : ; - /

Amazingly few discothèques provide jukeboxes

3.3:

FINAL OUTCOMES

WRITTEN STATEMENT

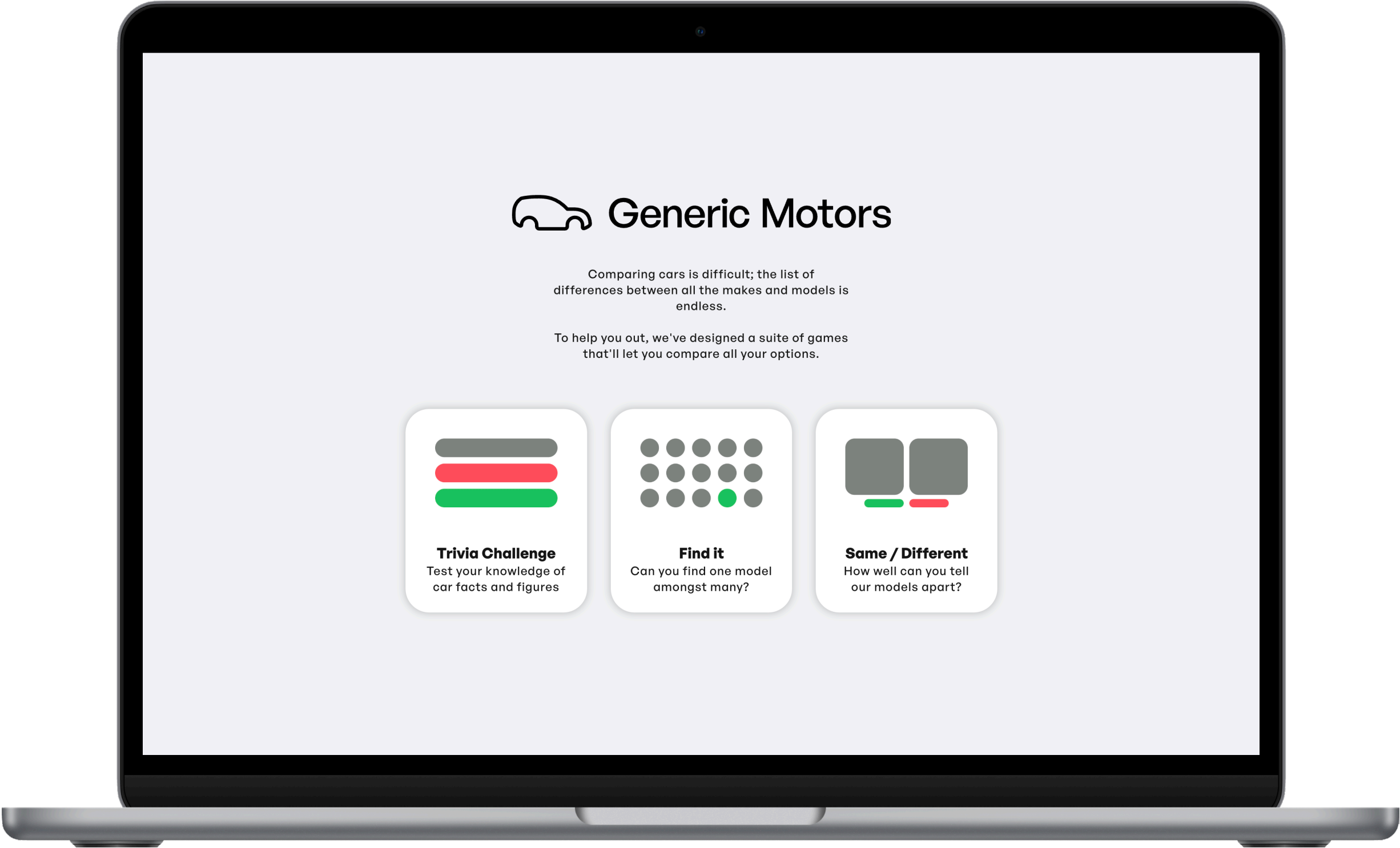
The suite of games sold by the invented brand, 'Generic Motors', enlightens its players to the homogenisation and loss of individuality in the modern-day automotive industry.

Compared to typical games, which are designed to be attention-grabbing and exciting, the uniformity and seamlessness of my games' elements draw attention to the sameness seen across car models' physical designs, feature sets and marketing. The interactivity and general familiarity of the game format makes the project's concept easy to grasp and witness first-hand. However, the somewhat unexpectedness of games that are self-critiquing, ironic and intentionally impossible makes clear the absurdity and sadness of the automotive industry's bleak, unimaginative state. My games allow players to experience and interpret the concept themselves rather than being explicitly told, encouraging a deeper understanding.

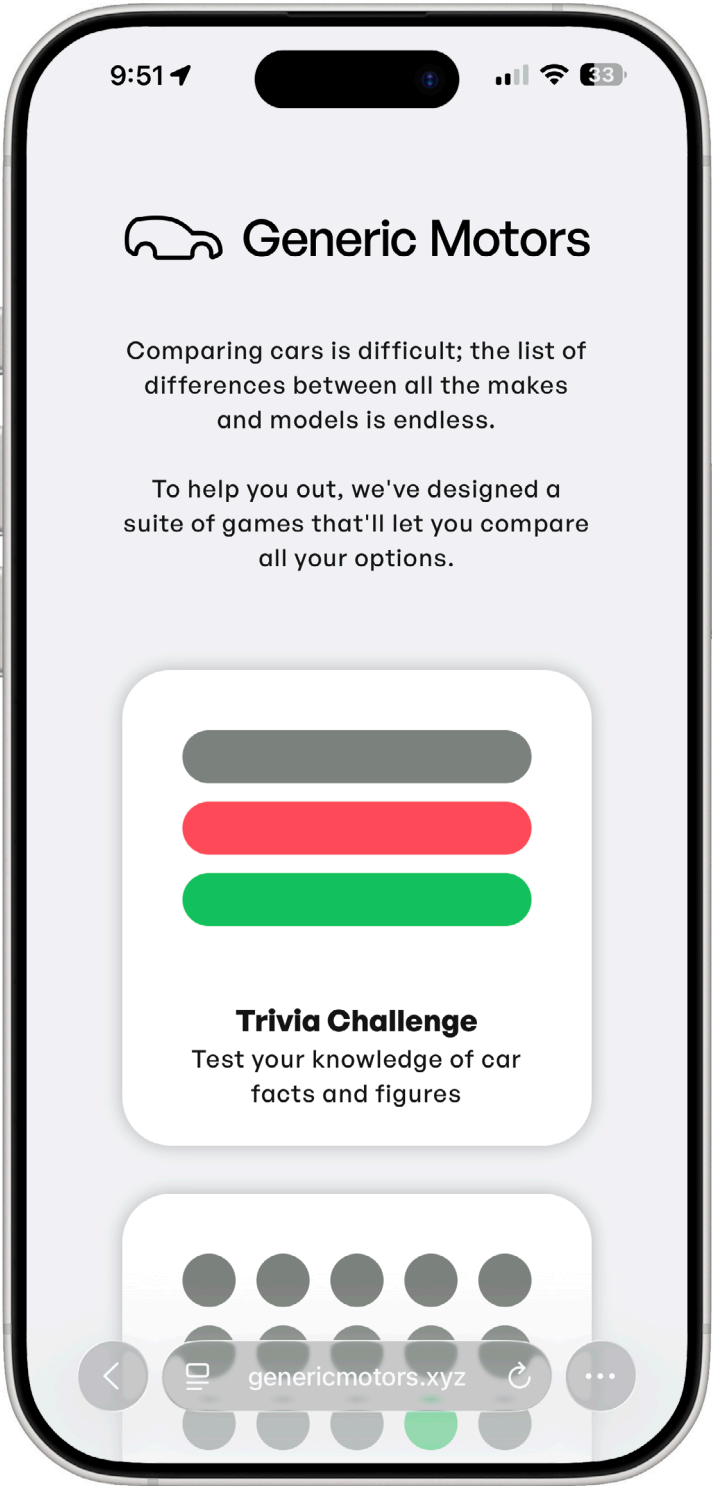
LINK TO WEBSITE

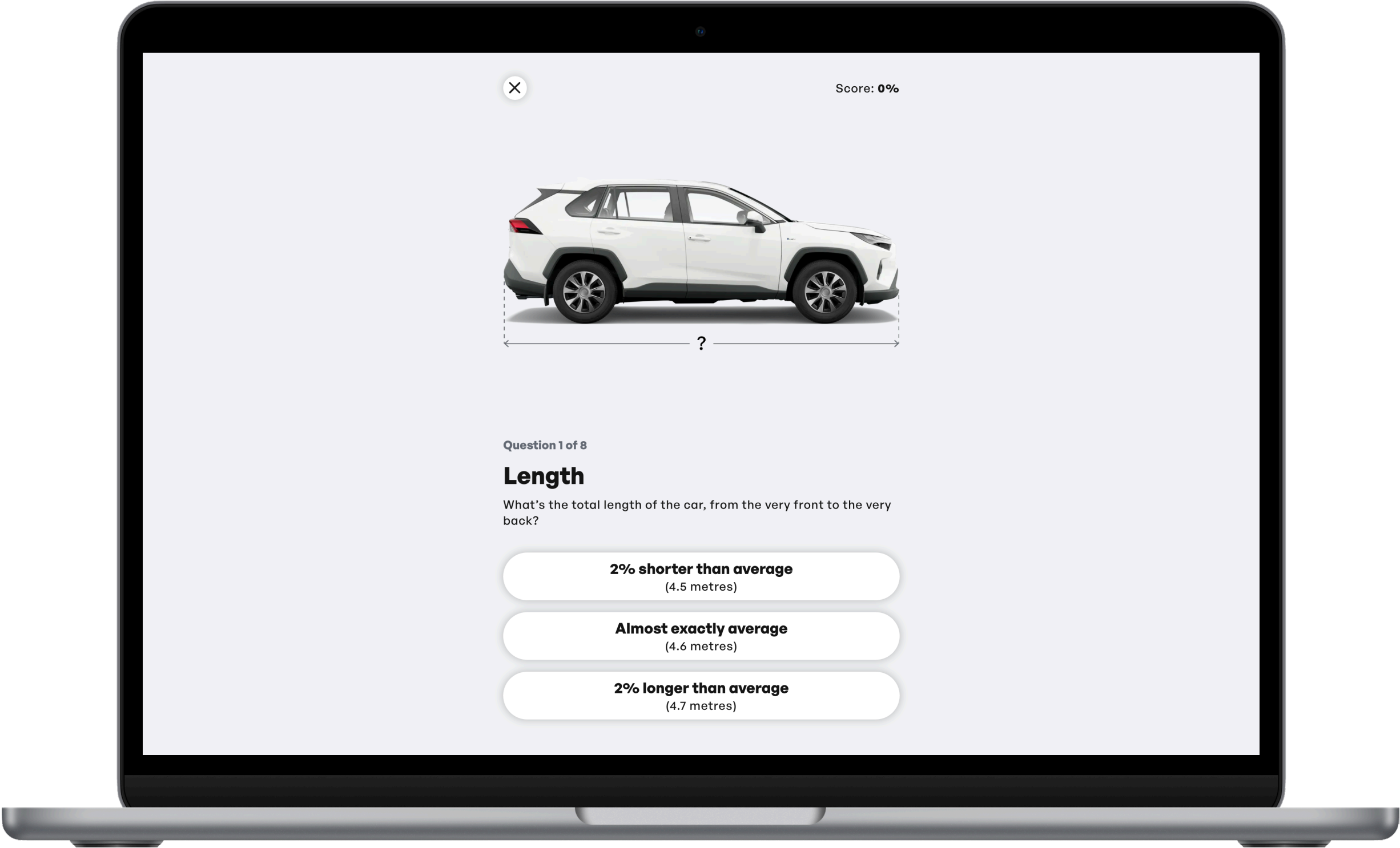
<https://www.genericmotors.xyz/>

WEBSITE HOMEPAGE



WEBSITE HOMEPAGE





TRIVIA

9:56

32

X

Score: 0%

?



Question 3 of 8

Wheel size

What's the radius of the wheels (for the base model)?

Used by 57% of models

(17 inches)

Used by 27% of models

(18 inches)

Used by 16% of models

(19 inches)

<

genericmotors.xyz

...

10:00

32

X

Score: 48%



Question 4 of 8

Kerb weight

What's the total weight of the vehicle without anything or anyone in it?

3% lighter than average

(1.65 tonnes)

Almost exactly average

(1.70 tonnes)

3% heavier than average

(1.75 tonnes)

<

genericmotors.xyz

...

9:56

32

X

Score: 13%



Question 5 of 8

Boot space

How much space is there in the boot (with the back seats up)?

Fits ~ 6 medium suitcases

(500 litres)

Fits ~ 7 medium suitcases

(540 litres)

Fits ~ 8 medium suitcases

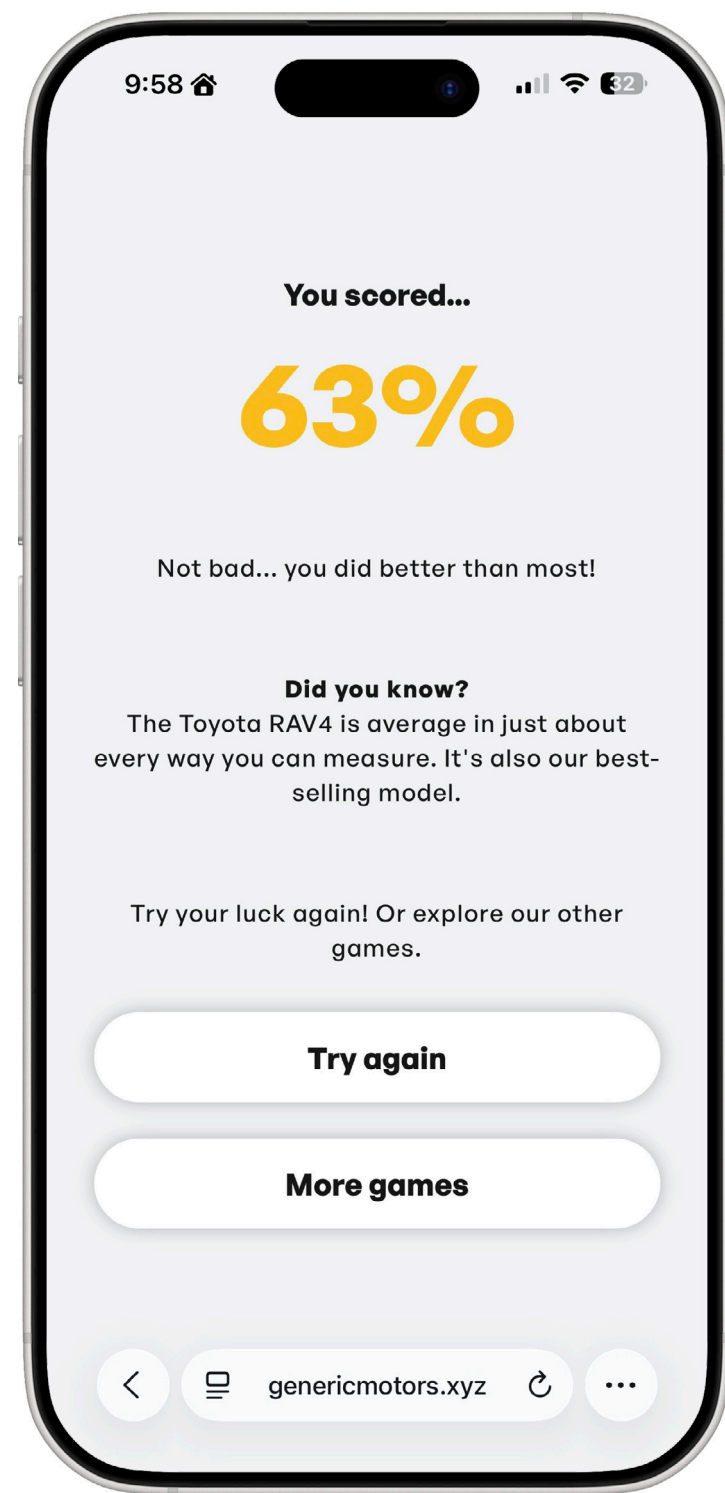
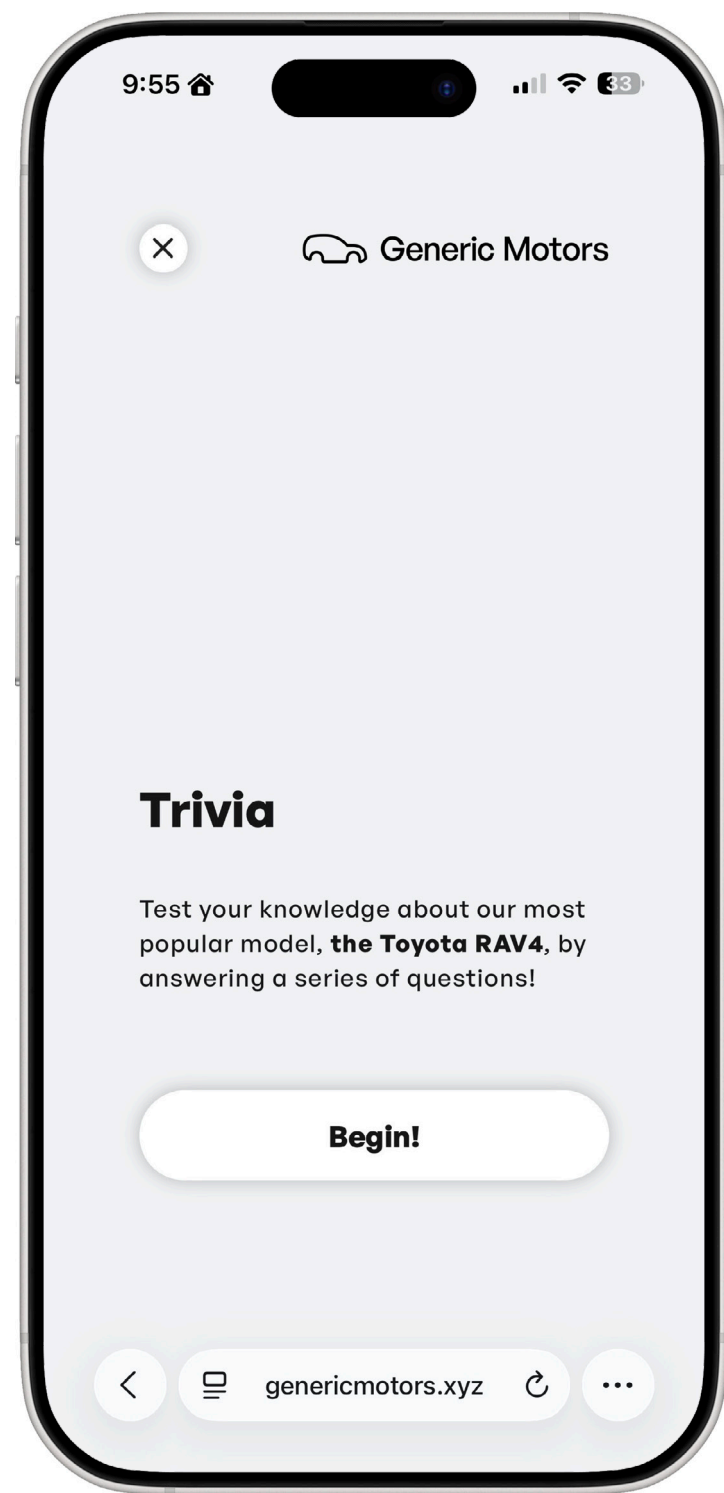
(580 litres)

<

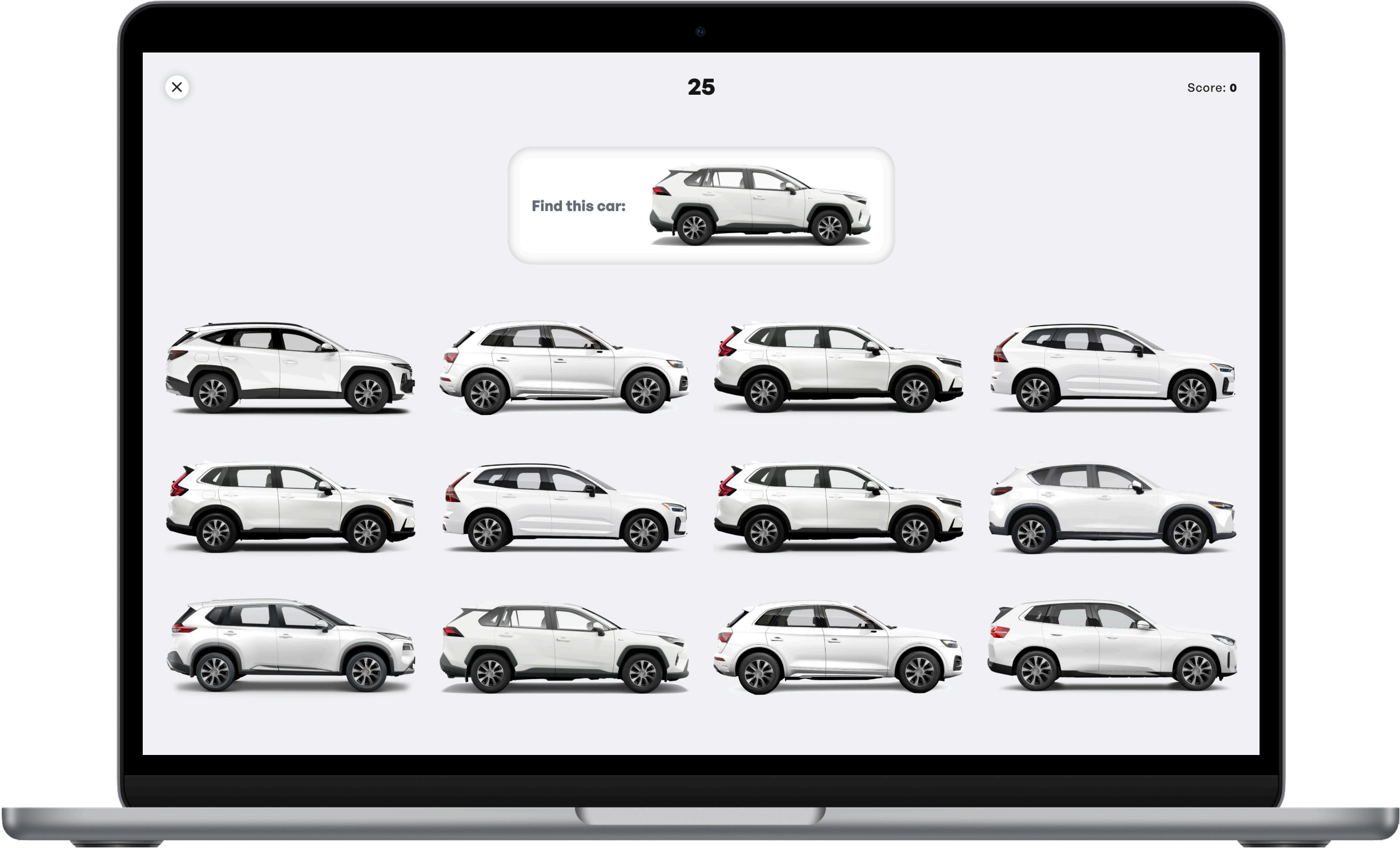
genericmotors.xyz

...

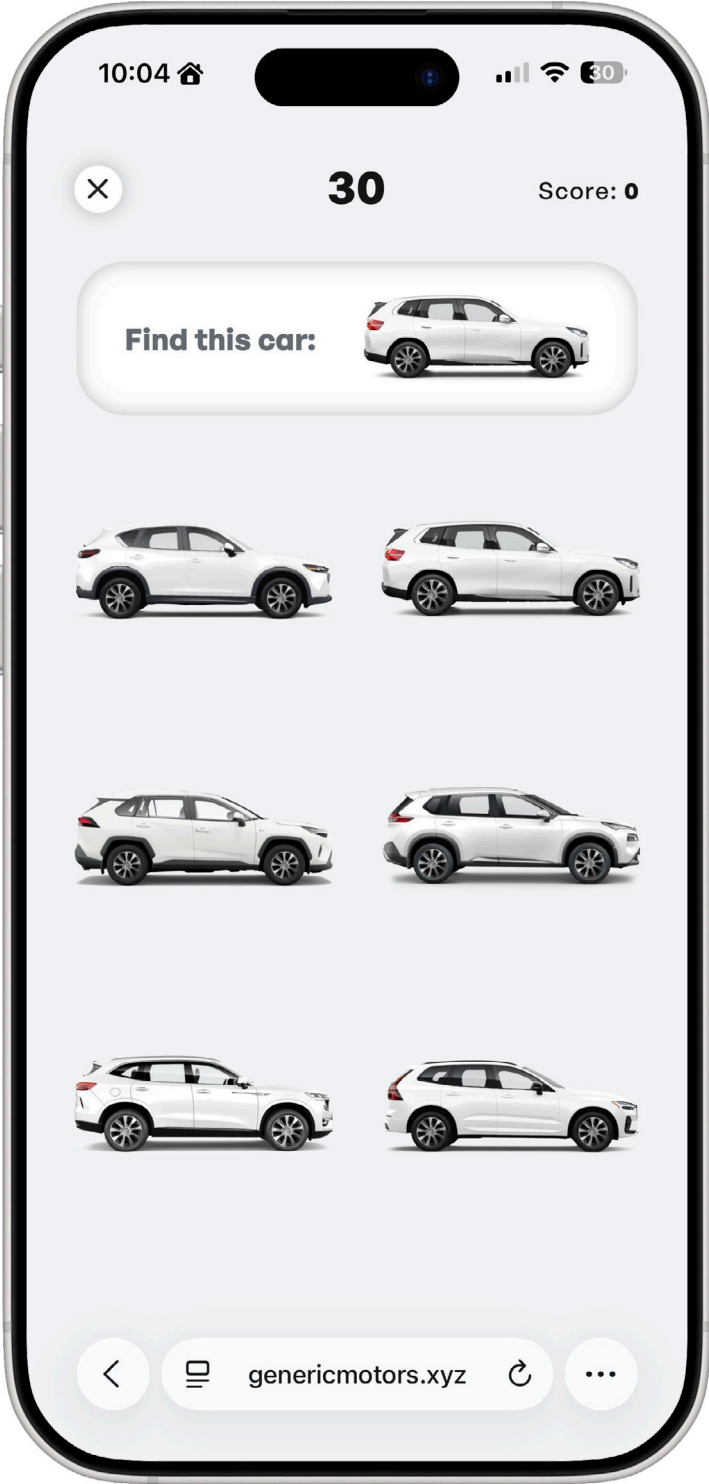
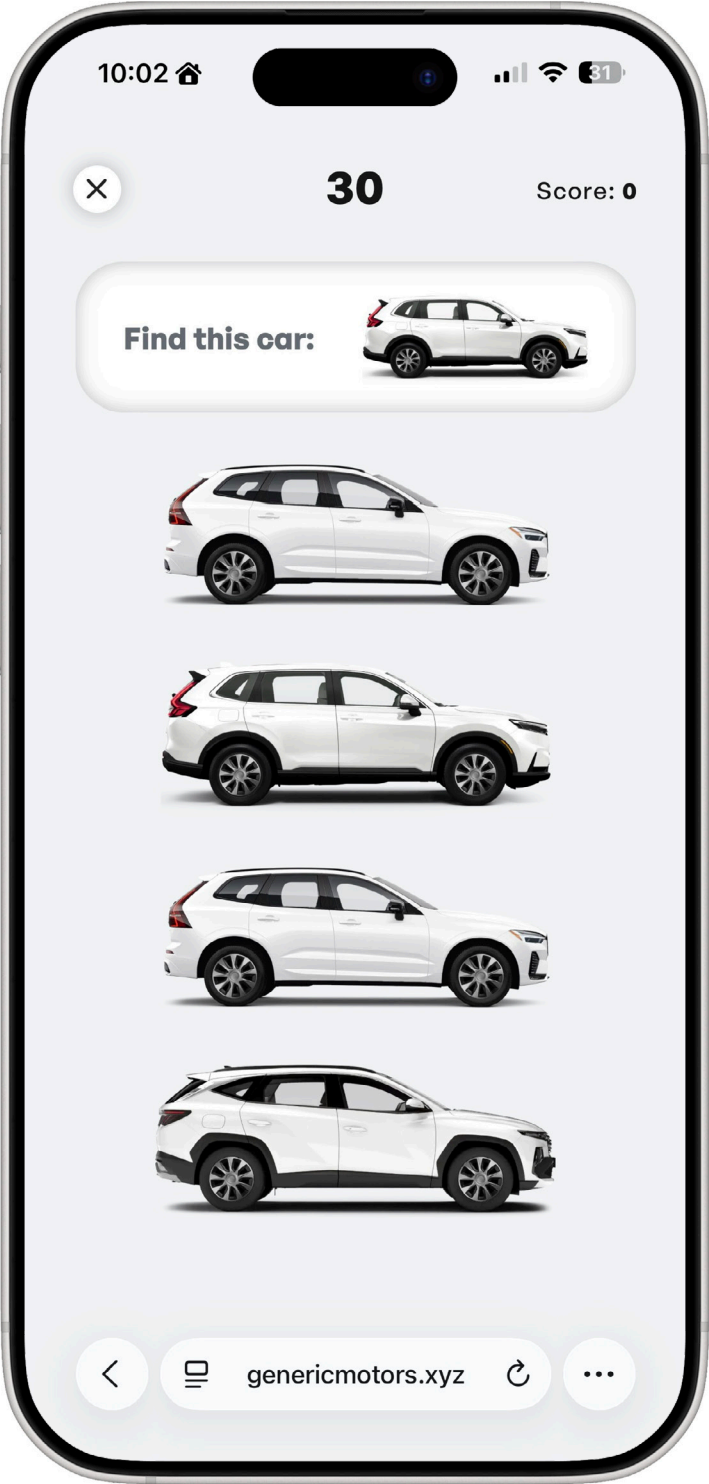
TRIVIA



FIND IT



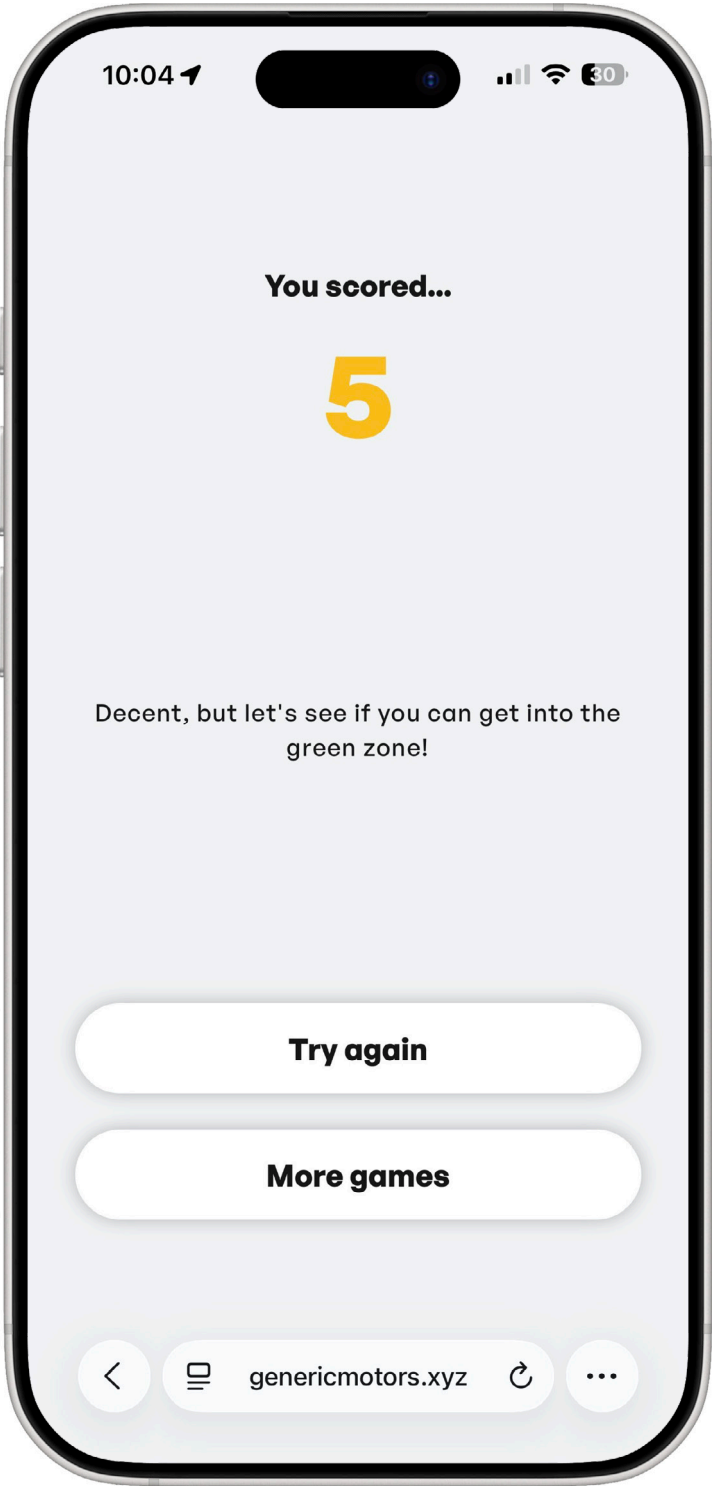
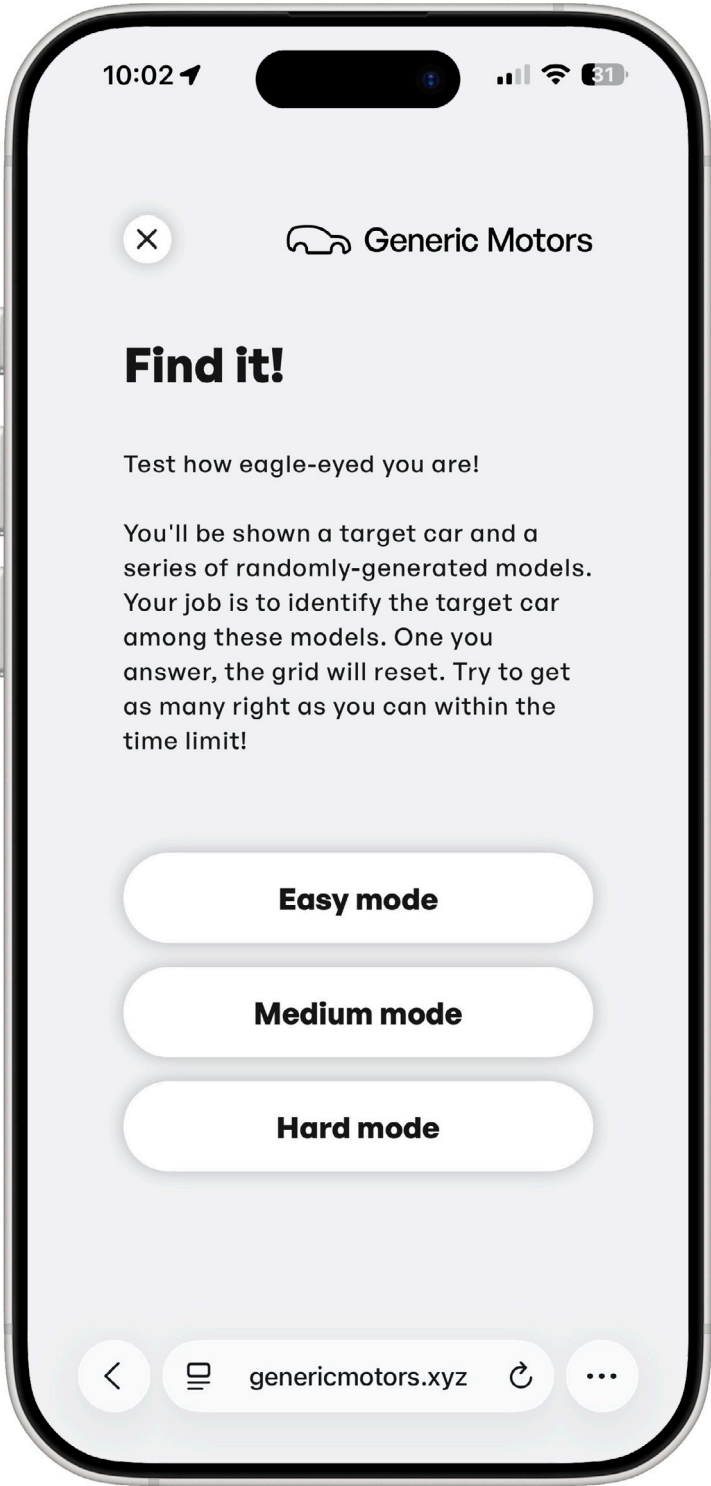
FIND IT



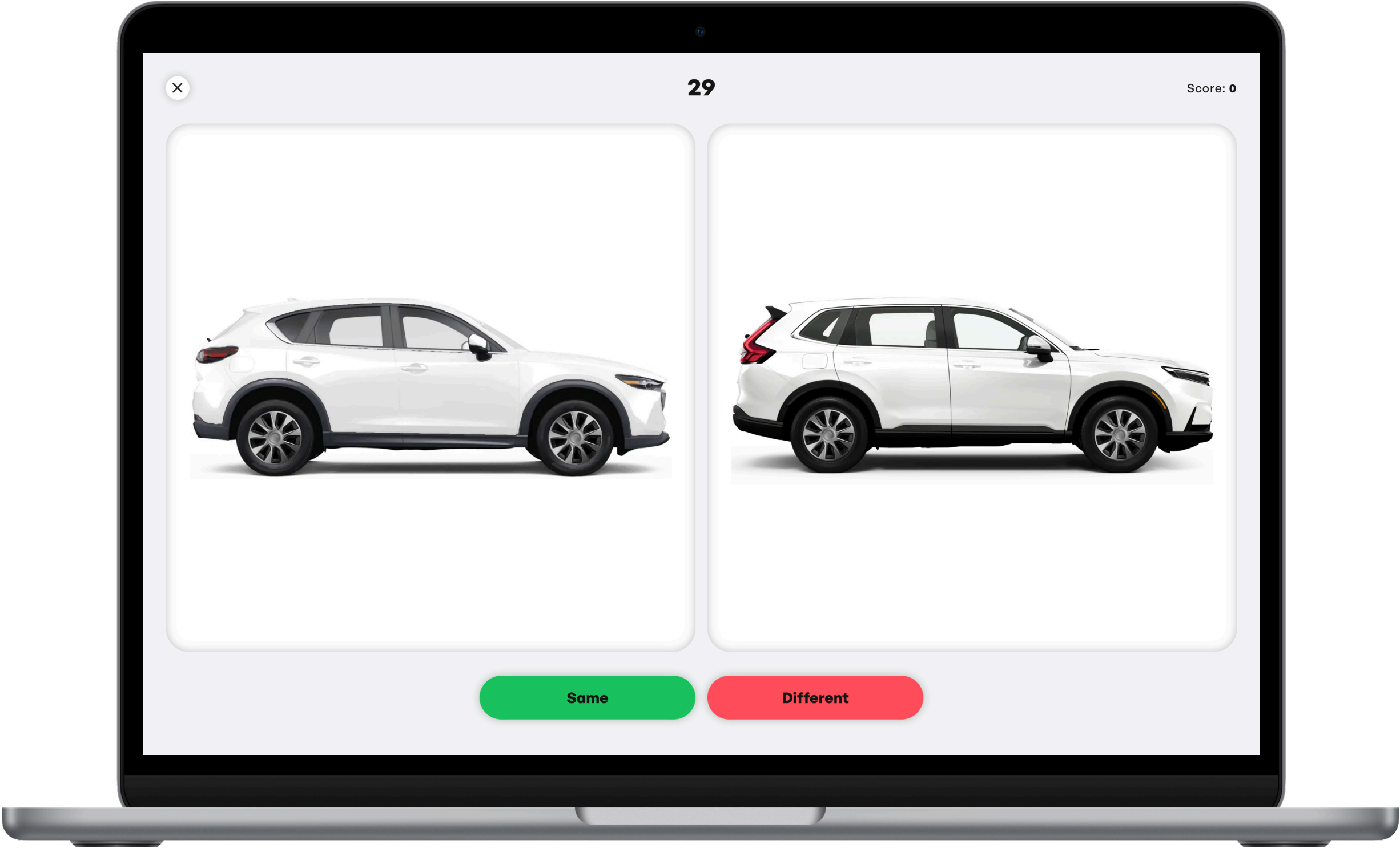
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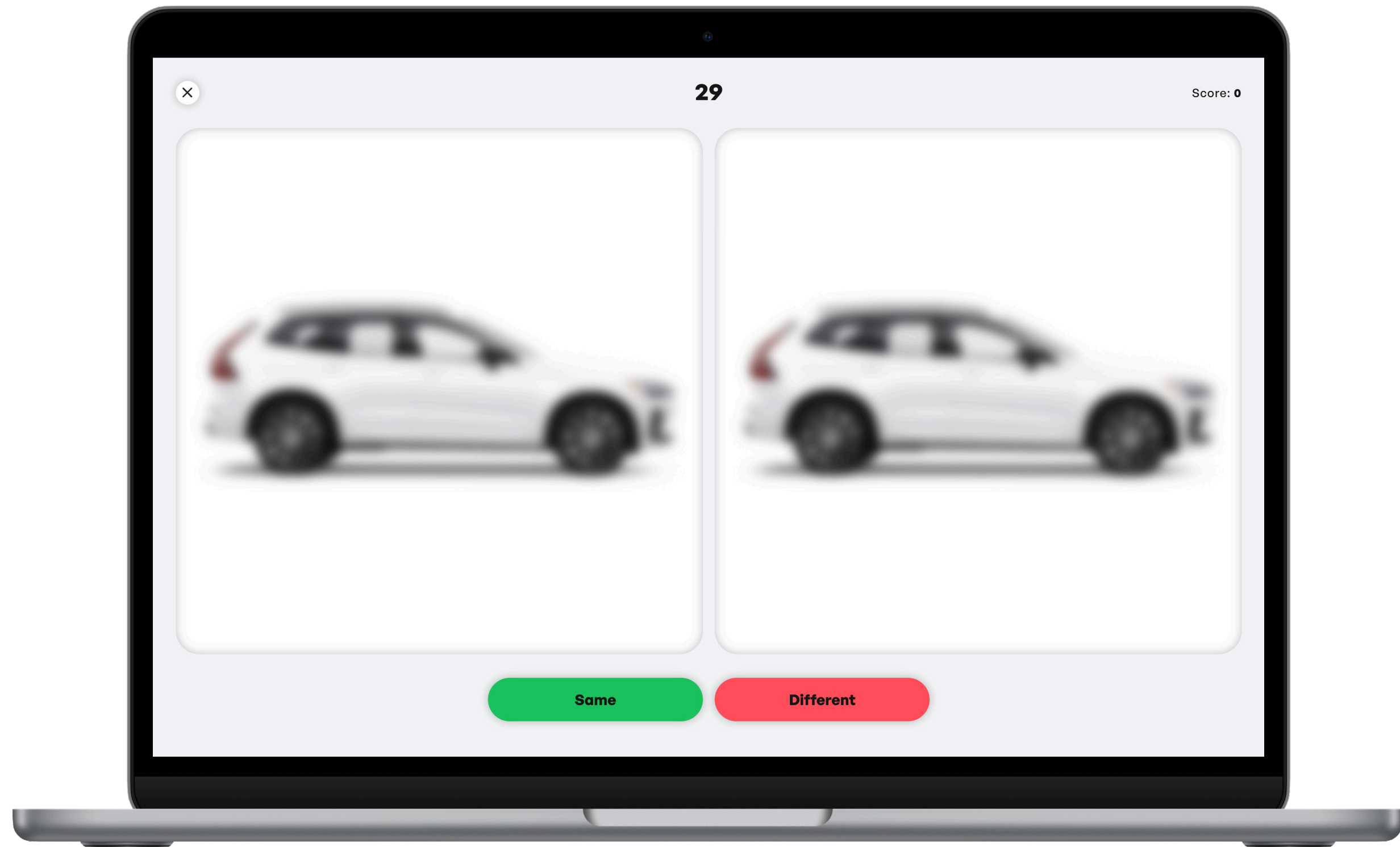
FIND IT



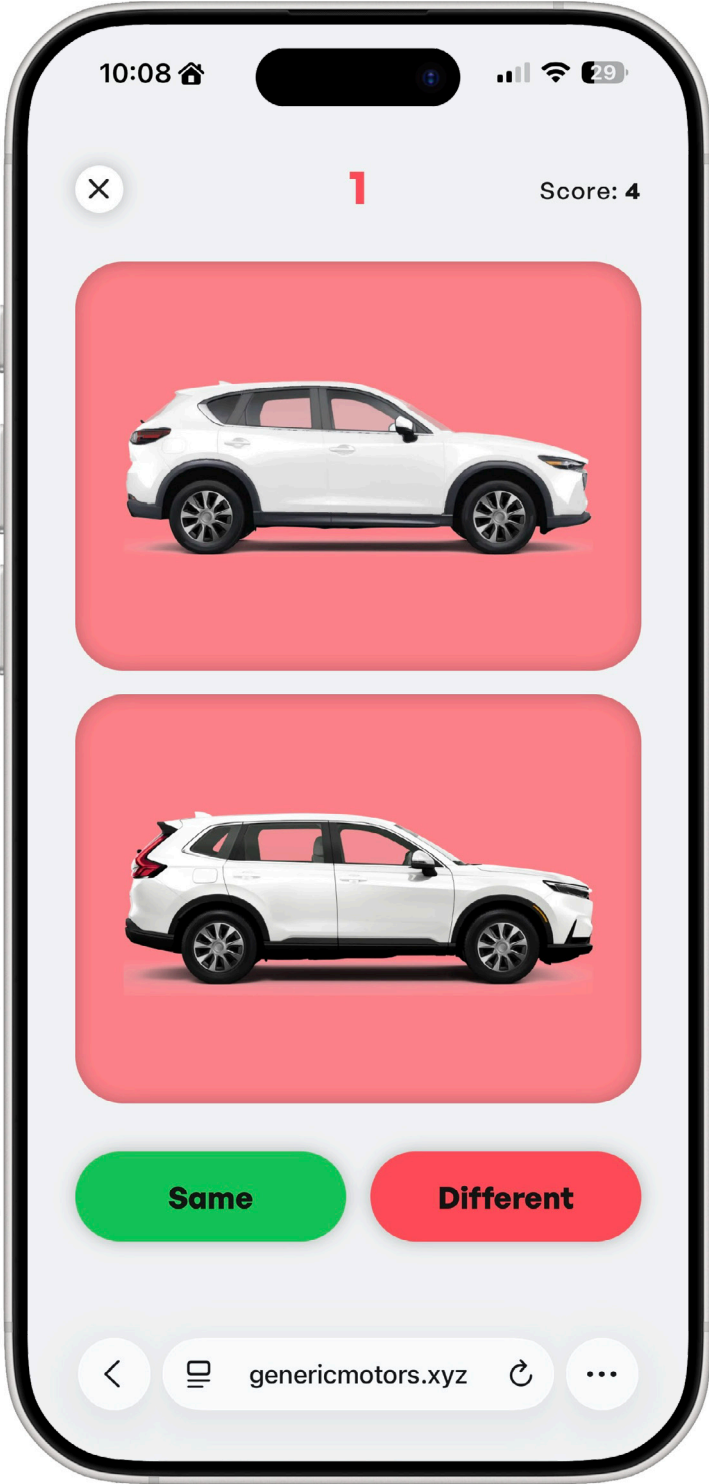
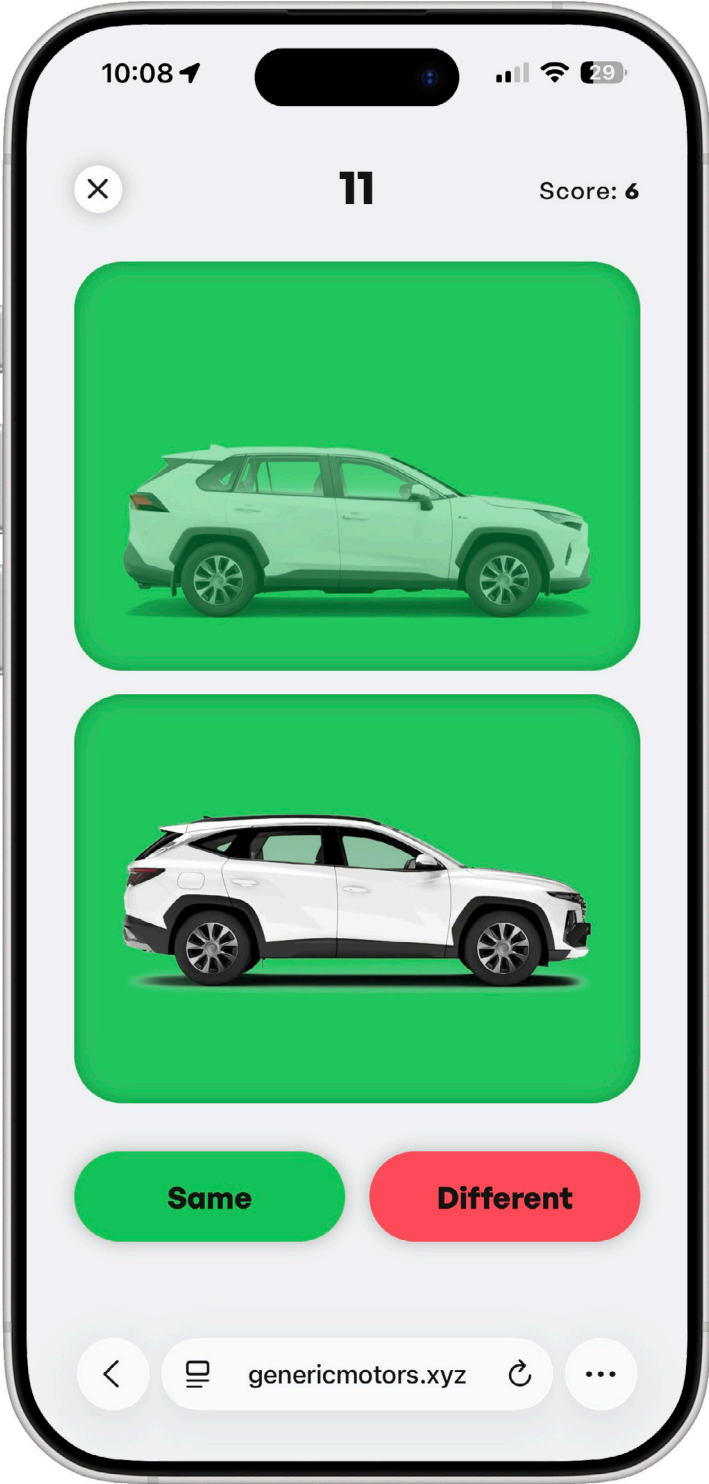
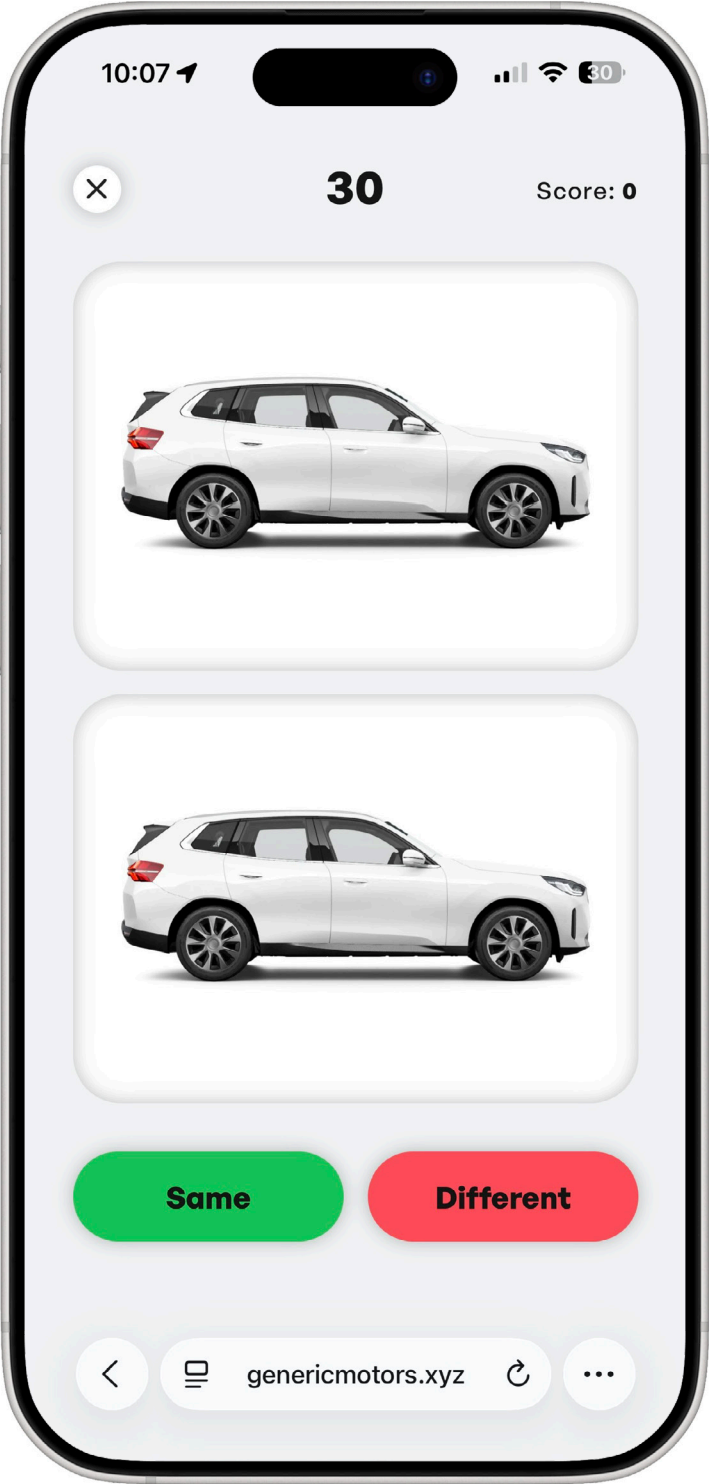
SAME / DIFFERENT



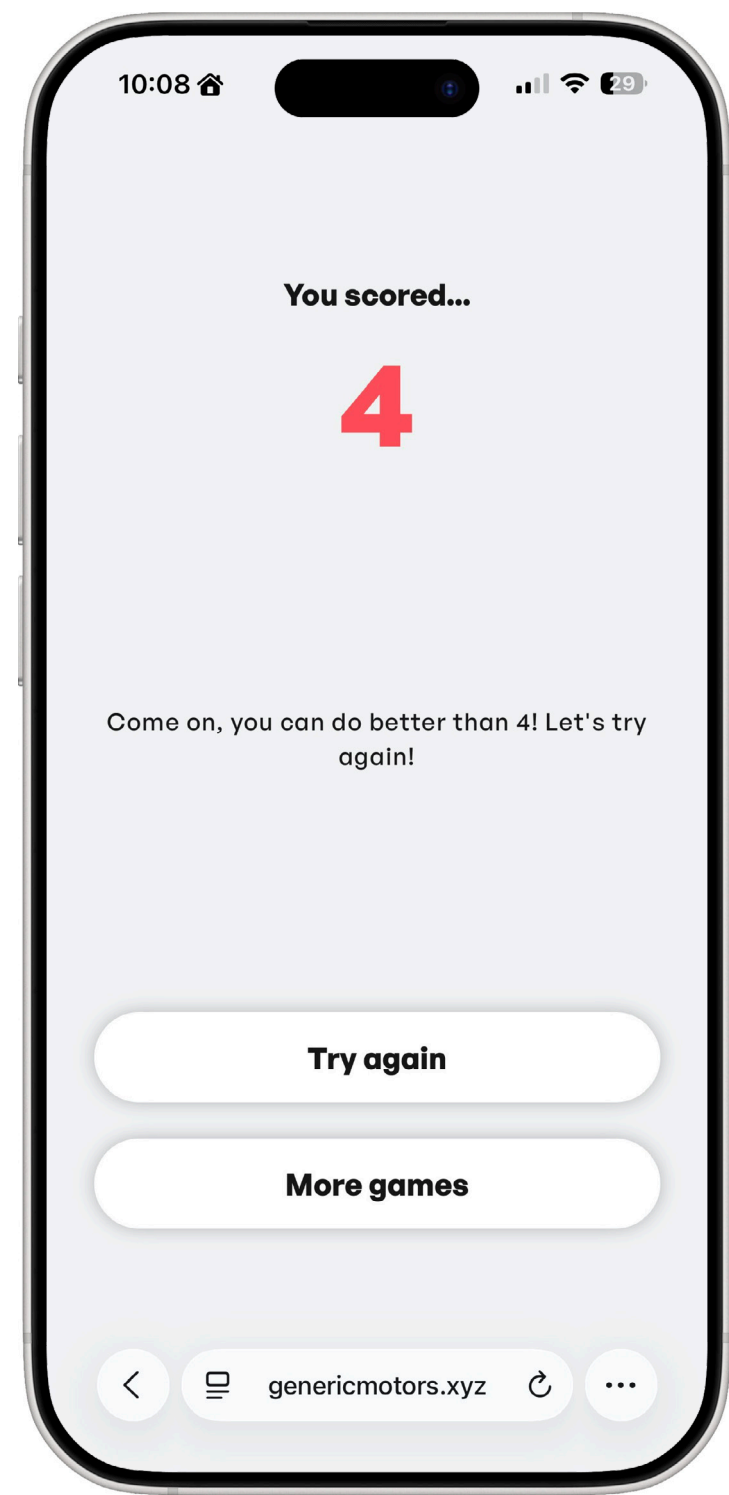
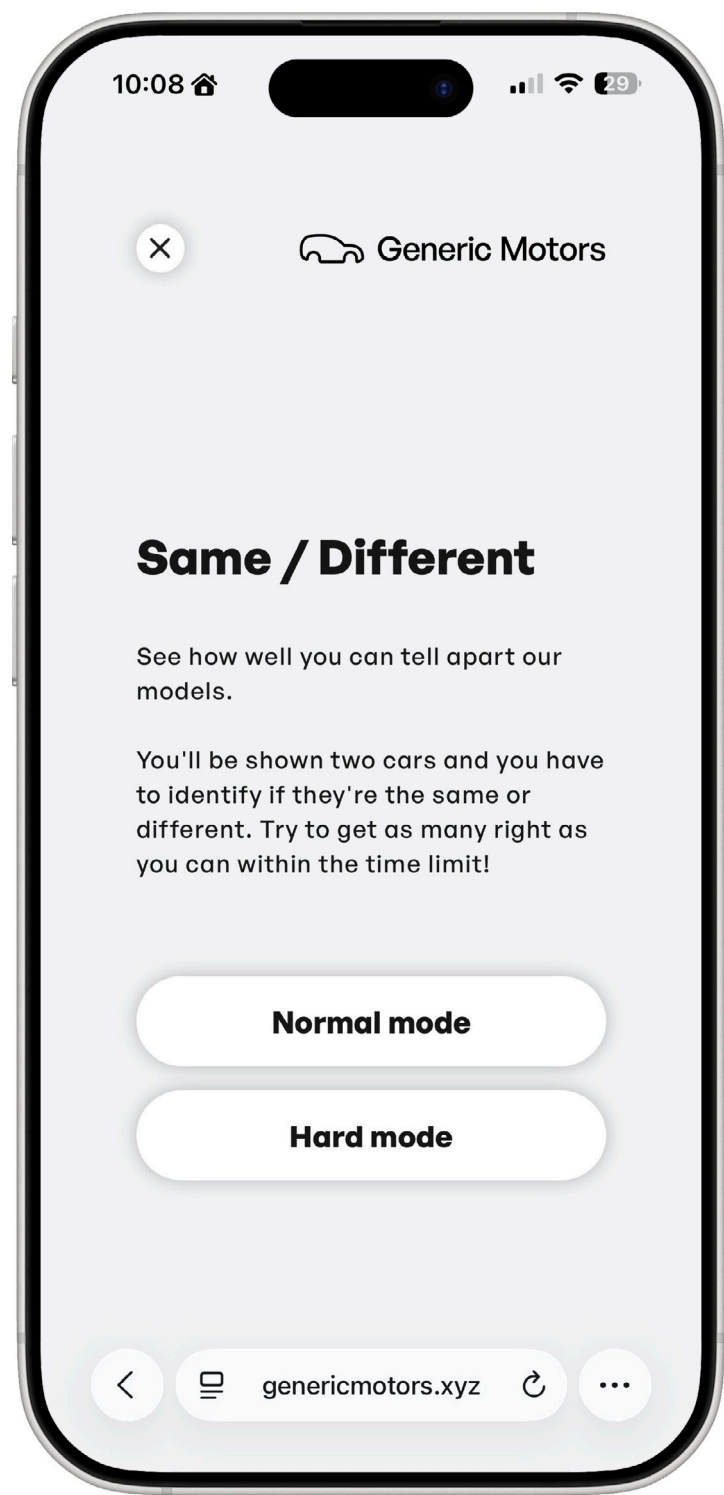
SAME / DIFFERENT



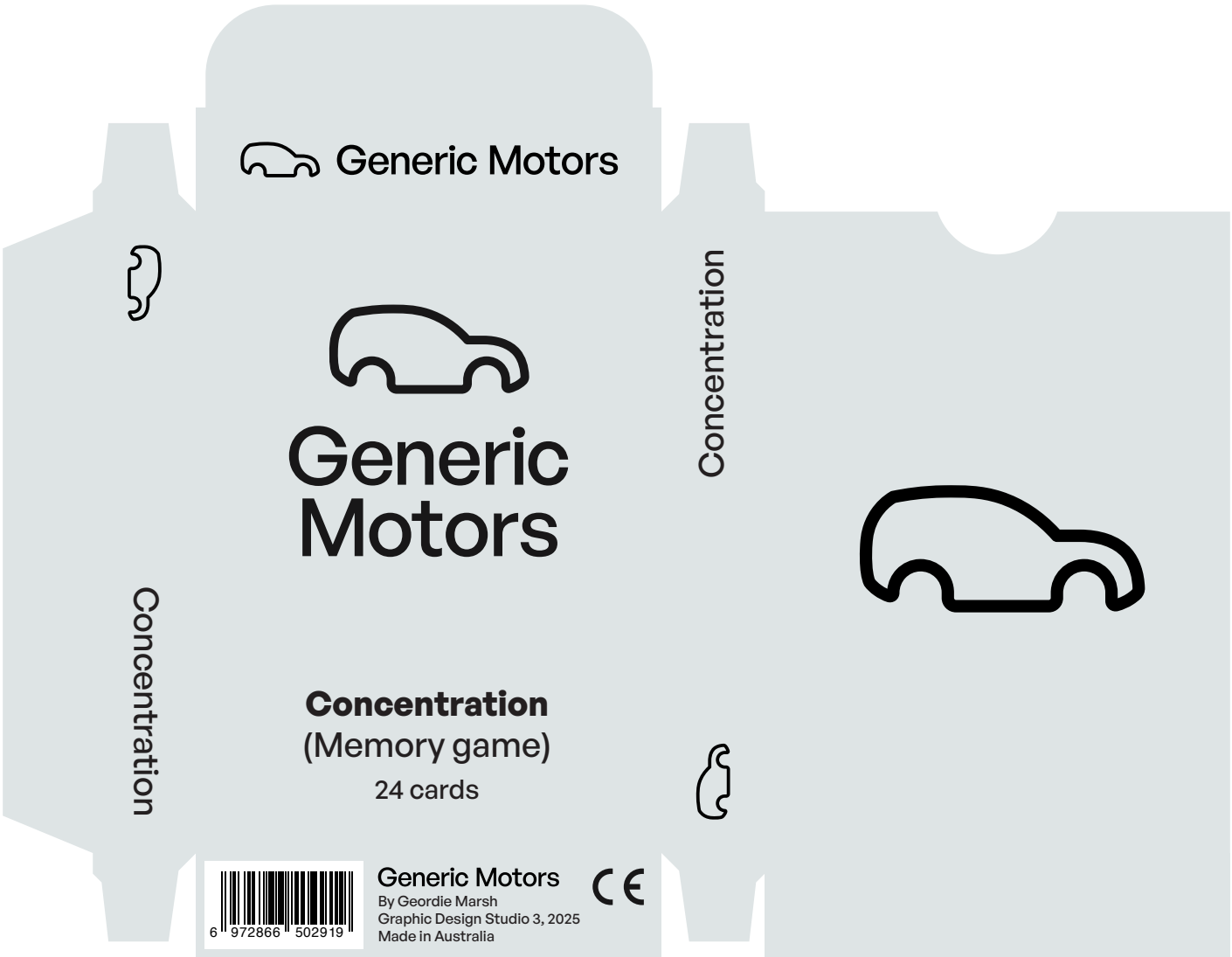
SAME / DIFFERENT



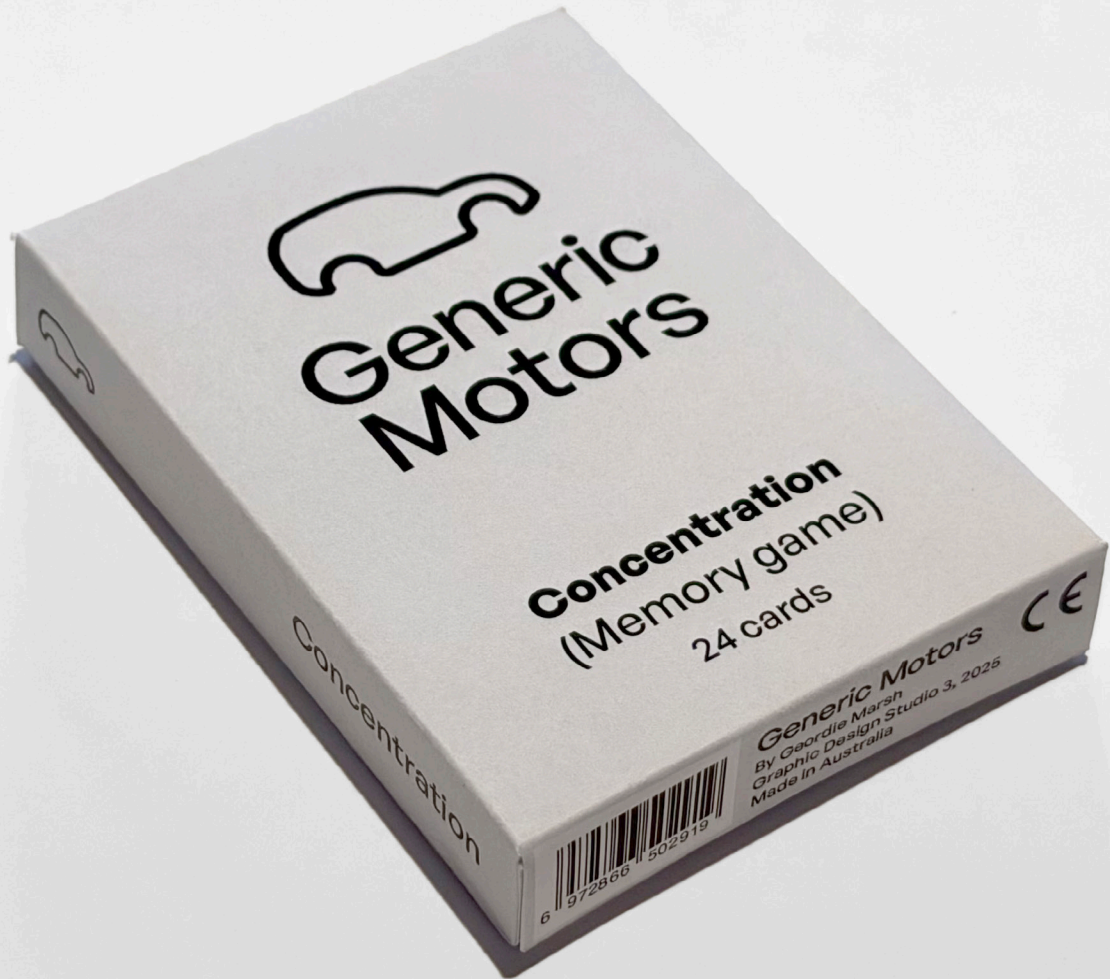
SAME / DIFFERENT



CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION



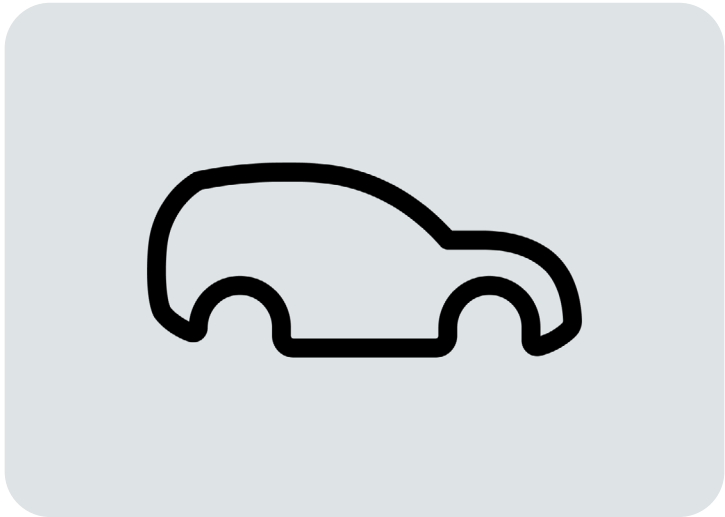
CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION



CONCENTRATION

