

User Experience (UX) Design Audit of GulfSothebysRealty.com and Luxhabitat.ae

Frank Garofalo, Garofalo UX

18-November-2018

Report Cover Page

Assessment and Suggestions Enclosed

Report Sections:

I.	Overview	page 1
II.	Color Palette and Accessibility Assessment	page 2
III.	User Experience and Usability Audit Assessment	page 4

I. Overview

Websites included in review:

- <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/>
- <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/>

Prioritized List of key webpages:

1. <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/>
2. <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/properties-for-sale-in-dubai> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/property-for-sale/dubai/>
3. <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/developments> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/new-developments/dubai/>
4. <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/lifestyle/blog> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/the-journal/>
5. <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/non-exclusive-developments/la-cote> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/areas/dubai/jumeirah/villa-amalfi/>
6. Header
7. Footer
8. Search functionality
9. Property Cart - <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/favorites>

II. Color Palette and Accessibility Assessment

- Color Palette of [gulfsothebysrealty.com](#):

[link](#)

White #FFFFFF
 Blue1 #324B72
 Text2 #363636
 Text1 #4A4A4A
 Black #000000
 Gray1 #F5F5F5



White #FFFFFF **Blue1** #324B72 **Text2** #363636 **Text1** #4A4A4A **Black** #000000 **Gray1** #F5F5F5

	White text #FFFFFF Aa	Blue1 text #324B72 Aa	Text2 text #363636 Aa	Text1 text #4A4A4A Aa	Black text #000000 Aa	Gray1 text #F5F5F5 Aa
Gray1 background #F5F5F5						
Black background #000000						
Text1 background #4A4A4A						
Text2 background #363636						
Blue1 background #324B72						
White background #FFFFFF						

The color combinations of text color and background color with the slash should be avoided. This means that some people would have difficulty reading the text. Employing accessibility best practices improves the user experience for all users.

- Color Palette of **luxhabitat.ae** :

[link](#)

- White #FFFFFF
- Medium #999999
- Dark #333333
- Dark2 #222222
- Black #000000

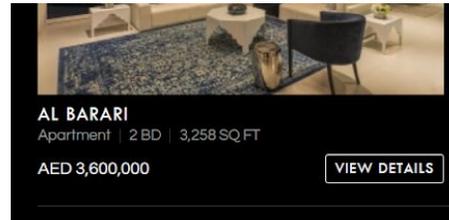


	White text #FFFFFF Aa	Medium text #999999 Aa	Dark text #333333 Aa	Dark2 text #222222 Aa	Black text #000000 Aa
Black background #000000	Aa	Aa	/	/	/
Dark2 background #222222	Aa	Aa	/	/	/
Dark background #333333	Aa	/	/	/	/
Medium background #999999	/	/	/	Aa	Aa
White background #FFFFFF	/	/	Aa	Aa	Aa

The color combinations of text color and background color with the slash should be avoided. This means that some people would have difficulty reading the text. Employing accessibility best practices improves the user experience for all users

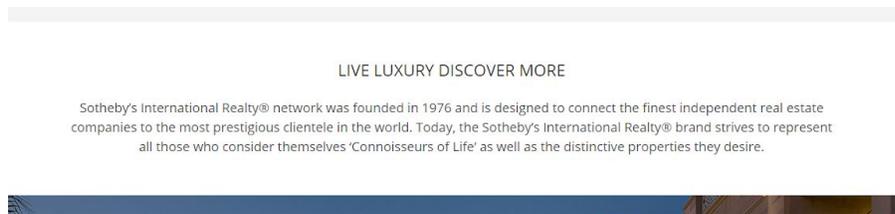
III. User Experience and Usability Audit Assessment

1. **Opinion:** The dark color palette of **luxhabitat.ae** (with light colored text on dark background colors), does provide a sophisticated, luxury style. Although, light text on dark background may decrease legibility and cause difficulty reading the text for some website users. Photography is great, with clear, crisp pictures.
2. **Opinion:** The light color palette of **gulfsothebysrealty.com** , does provide a modern, sophisticated, luxury style. The dark text on a light background has an easy legibility. The dark blue is used wisely to emphasize some elements of the webpage. Photography is great, with clear, crisp pictures.
3. Item 1: Review of <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/>
 - a. **Visual Design:** Gulfsothebysrealty.com hero image includes video clips as well as an image carousel, compared to a static hero image on luxhabitat.ae
 - b. The featured listings displayed on gulfsothebysrealty.com provides more details than the featured listings on luxhabitat.ae, such as bathrooms and automobiles.

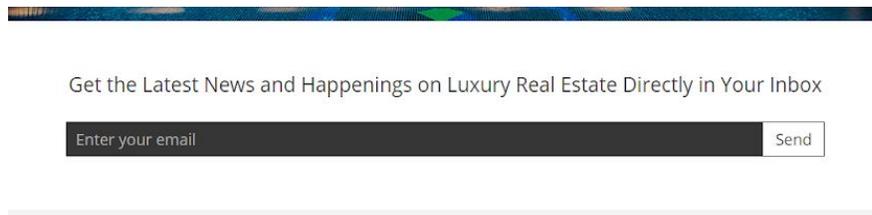


- c. On luxhabitat.ae additional information is displayed for the featured listings, but only on a mouse-over of the thumbnail picture.
- d. **Usability Issue:** On the gulfsothebysrealty.com site, the icons for beds, bath, and automobile should have HTML titles / alternative text for usability & accessibility.
- e. Both sites display Featured Developments, however luxhabitat.ae displays “Selected Neighborhoods” and gulfsothebysrealty.com seems to display a list of neighborhoods near the bottom of the webpage although the section is not labeled and it’s difficult to determine.
- f. **Usability Issue:** Most of the links on luxhabitat.ae provide an affordance that they are clickable by providing a mouse-over style change, whereas most of the links on gulfsothebysrealty.com do not provide an affordance that they are clickable. Consider having a mouse-over style change for all links. Current best practices recommend both a color and shape change (such as displaying an underline or background color change).
- g. On the luxhabitat.ae homepage, displays a generic description of the Expert staff / specialists with a button to “Find an Expert,” whereas on the gulfsothebysrealty.com site there are brief introductory paragraphs for some of the Consultants. The gulfsothebysrealty.com approach increasing the personal appeal by allowing the website user to begin to get to know their staff members.

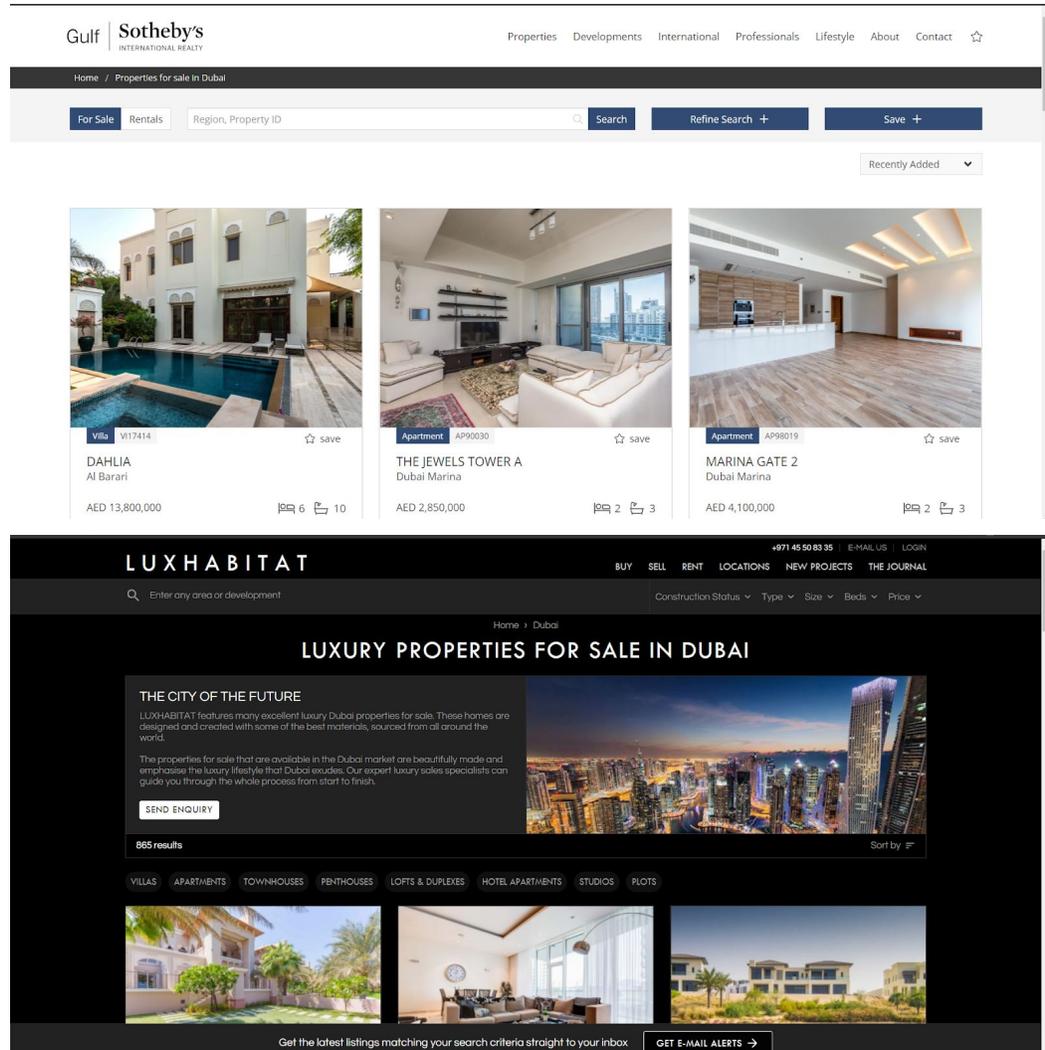
- h. **Minor-Usability Issue:** On gulfsothebysrealty.com, the speed of the carousel displaying the staff / consultants goes too fast, not allowing time to read the full paragraph. Consider either (a) removing the automatic rotation, and provide buttons to manually click through the staff; or, (b) pause the automatic rotation timing while a mouse-cursor has hovered over the staff / consultant description.
- i. **Minor-Usability Issue:** Both homepages include paragraphs of text which are centered aligned, which decreases readability. It takes more effort for a person to read large blocks of text which are center-aligned.



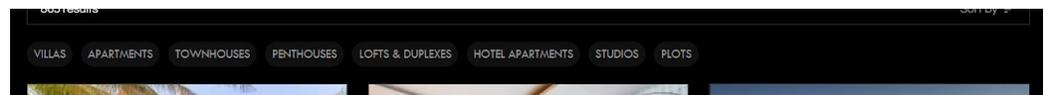
- j. **Visual Design & Minor-Usability Issue:** On gulfsothebysrealty.com it seems odd to have a text input field for an email address to subscribe to the newsletter. Consider using the same visual style as the Search / Filter input field.



- 4. Item 2: <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/properties-for-sale-in-dubai> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/property-for-sale/dubai/>
 - a. On gulfsothebysrealty.com the available properties are displayed just below the search and filter options, whereas on [luxhabitat.ae](https://www.luxhabitat.ae) displays a marketing description and picture which questionably provide any additional value to a website user.



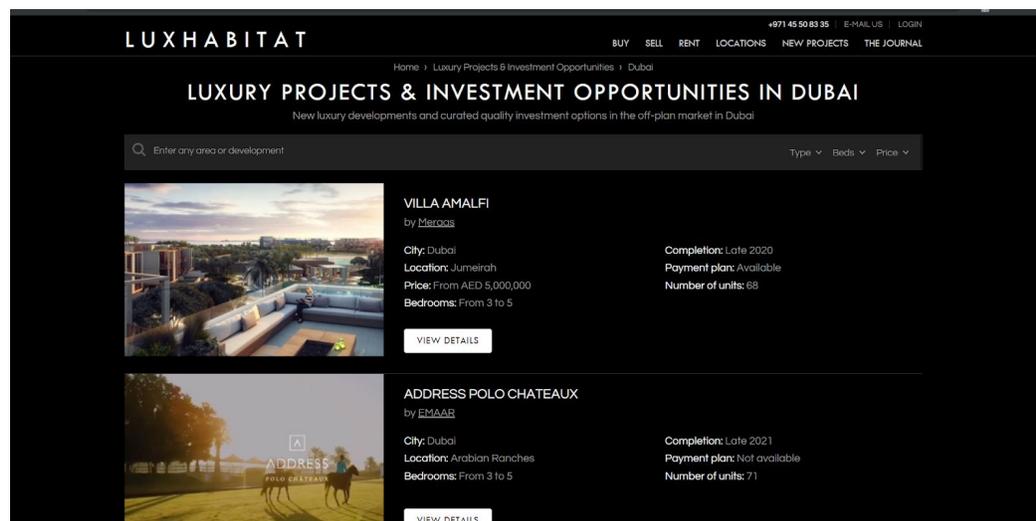
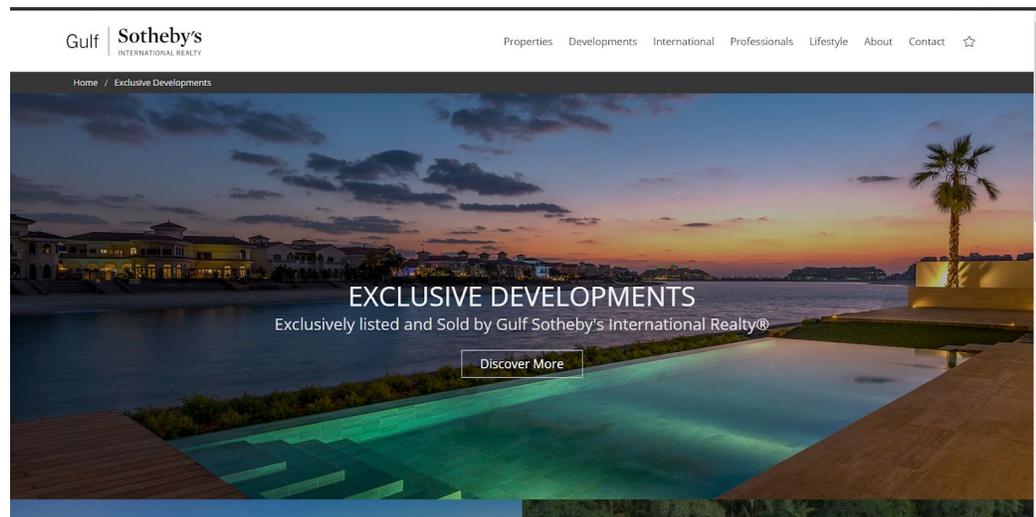
- b. On luxhabitat.ae there is a horizontal bar with links to filter the property types, whereas on gulfsothebysrealty.com a website user must expand the “Refine Search” to change the property type. As mentioned in the *Item 8: Search functionality* section of the report, keep a consistent search / filter options displayed throughout the site.
- c. **Usability Issue:** While the horizontal bar with links to filter the property types on luxhabitat.ae, once a selection is made, then the horizontal bar is no longer displayed.



- d. Similar to the homepages, the listings displayed on gulfsothebysrealty.com provides more details than the listings on luxhabitat.ae, such as bathrooms and

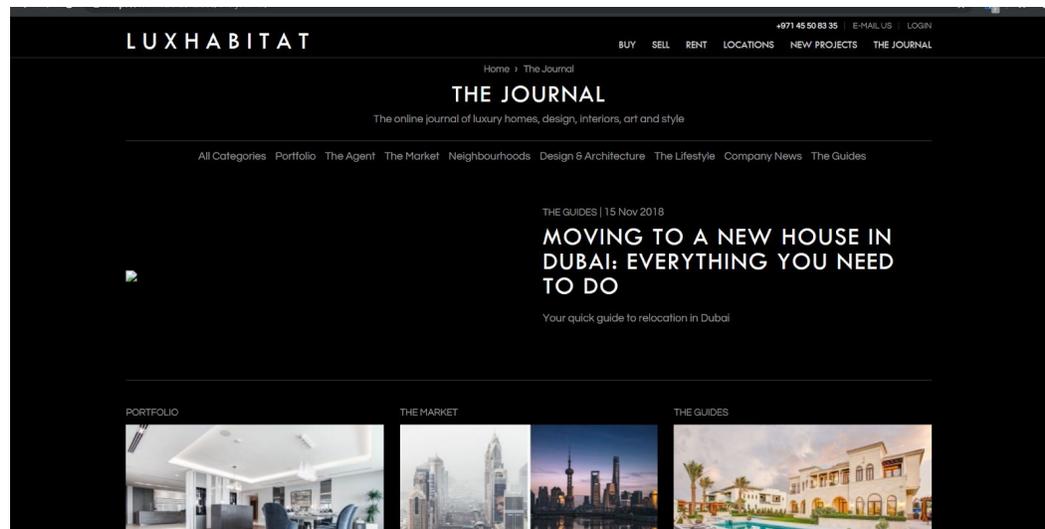
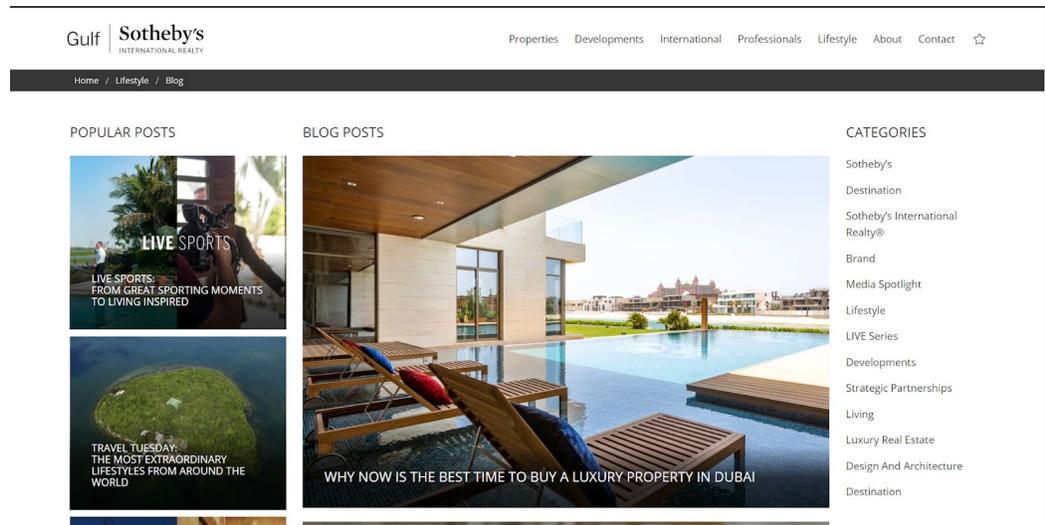
automobiles.

5. Item 3: <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/developments> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/new-developments/dubai/>
 - a. The [gulfsothebysrealty.com](https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/developments) page has an emphasis on the visual imagery in the pictures, which may be appealing for website users to explore more, though it relies upon the website visitor clicking one of the “Discover More” buttons. Whereas, on [luxhabitat.ae](https://www.luxhabitat.ae) there is more information communicated directly on the page about each development. Perhaps a middle-ground between the two design styles might be the most impactful, in other words: larger imagery than currently displayed on [luxhabitat.ae](https://www.luxhabitat.ae) while keeping all the information communicated on [luxhabitat.ae](https://www.luxhabitat.ae).

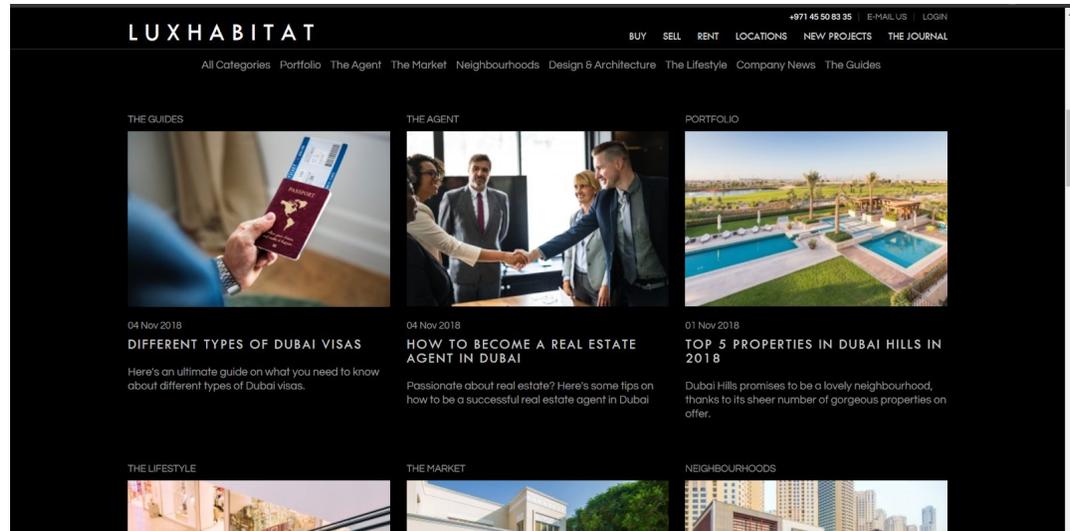


6. Item 4: <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/lifestyle/blog> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/the-journal/>

- a. **Visual Design** & **Minor-Usability Issue**: On gulfsothebysrealty.com the popular blog posts, categories, and recent blog posts are easy to distinguish. On luxhabitat.ae, despite an image not loading, there is quite a bit of text at the top of the web page, so the categories are less distinguishable



- b. On gulfsothebysrealty.com the blog article titles are overlaid in the lower-left corner of the article image thumbnail, whereas on luxhabitat.ae the blog article titles are displayed below the article image thumbnail.
- c. On luxhabitat.ae, each blog article displays a few lines of text about the article in addition to the title, image, category, and date published. On gulfsothebysrealty.com only the title and image are displayed for each blog article.
- d. **Visual Design** & **Minor-Usability Issue**: On luxhabitat.ae, it seems odd to have the blog category title displayed above the blog article thumbnail. Consider moving the category title to the right of the date.



For example:



7. Item 5: <https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/non-exclusive-developments/la-cote> vs <https://www.luxhabitat.ae/areas/dubai/jumeirah/villa-amalfi/>
 - a. On gulfsothebysrealty.com perhaps something isn't displaying correctly since there is a large white horizontal stripe on the page:



b. The layout of information on luxhabitat.ae is clear and easy to understand, whereas the it takes more effort to discern the information displayed on gulfsothebysrealty.com



- The First Master Community that is Freehold in Jumeirah 1
- Inspired by the coastal towns of the Mediterranean, Cote d'Azur, Monaco, French Riviera, Montenegro, Amalfi, Portofino, Santorini, Mykonos
- World class Yacht club and 192 berth Marina
- Low rise Residential buildings – no building is planned to be higher than 6 floors
- Low Density Population – this is not a project with 30 towers, each 46 floors, and with 9,000 units. This is a master community that will be great for end users and investors, and for those that know the value of the location of Jumeirah 1
- 5 Star Hotels
- Beach Access for Residents
- Very close to the La Mer Laguna Waterpark and retail areas

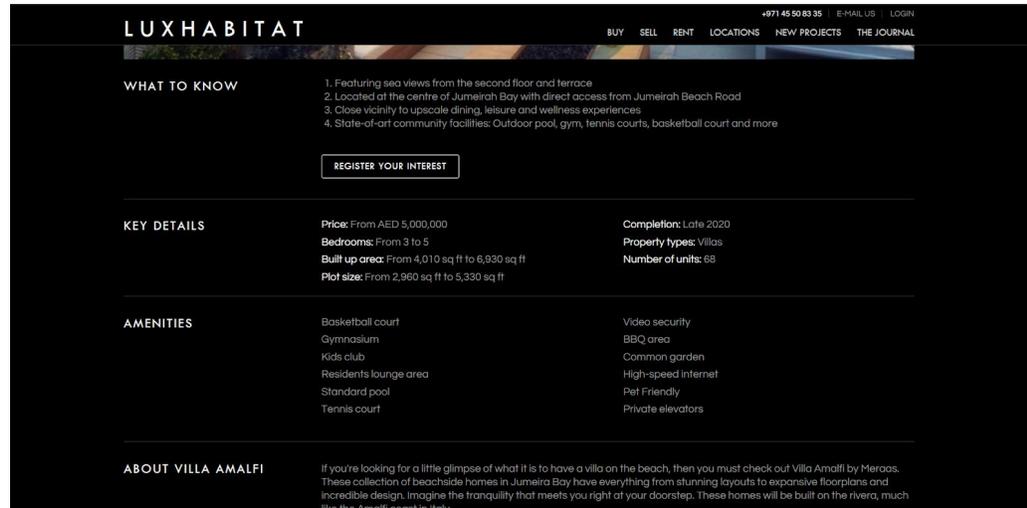
ENQUIRE VIA WHATSAPP

KEY FEATURES

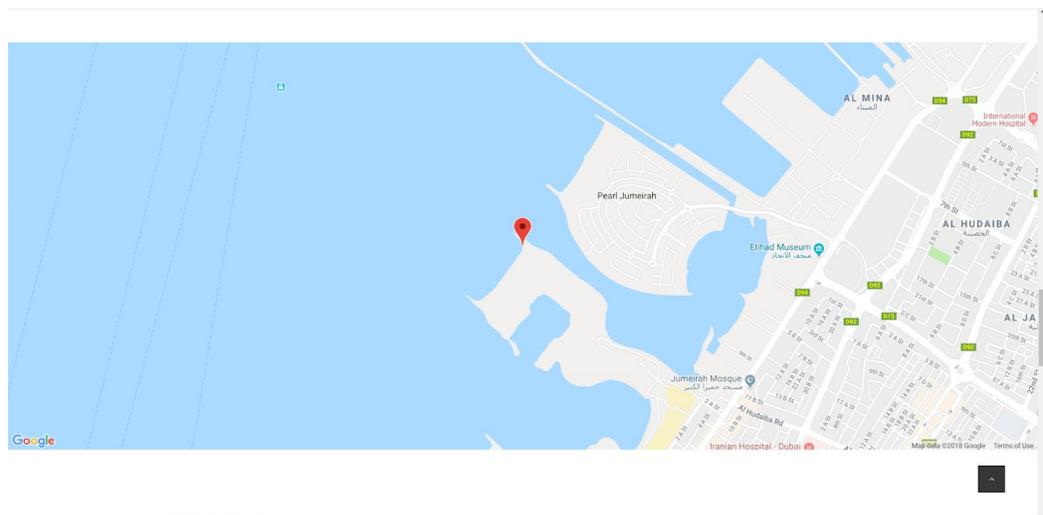
- 5 low rise residential buildings comprising of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Penthouse) Bedroom Apartments
- 15 Food, Beverage and Retail units
- Kid's Pool
- Multi-Purpose room
- 408 apartments
- 2 Pools
- 2 Gyms
- Distance between buildings is approx. 20 meters so there is privacy

PAYMENT PLAN

5%	5%	10%	10%	10%	60%
Purchase Date	5th November 2018	5th May 2019	5th November 2019	5th May 2020	25 Dec 2020



- c. The map displayed on gulfsothebysrealty.com is helpful for context of the location of the development.



- d. **Visual Design & Usability Issue**: The list of properties on gulfsothebysrealty.com uses a consistent format as other webpages throughout the website, whereas on the list of properties luxhabitat.ae is displayed as a table/list. Consider using a consistent format on luxhabitat.ae rather than a table/list.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE BY MERAAS



BULGARI RESORT & RESIDENCES
Jumeirah

AED 60,000,000



APARTMENT BUILDING 3
Bluewaters

AED 3,000,000



APARTMENT BUILDING 8
Bluewaters

AED 3,700,000

PROPERTIES FOR SALE IN VILLA AMALFI

Address	Type	Size	Bedrooms	Asking Price	Floorplan
Jumeira Bay View details	Attached townhouse	4,010 sq ft	3	AED 4,999,998	-
Jumeira Bay View details	Semi-detached townhouse	4,765 sq ft	4	AED 7,399,998	-
Jumeira Bay View details	Semi-detached townhouse	6,930 sq ft	5	AED 8,999,998	-

- e. Displaying the consultant / specialist, in addition to the construction developer, is helpful information to provide a face to communicate.

KINSHUK KULSHRESHTHA
Villa Amalfi Specialist

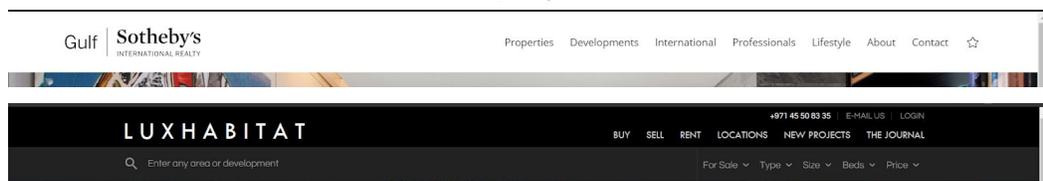


Kinshuk is a specialist with over 6 years of expertise in the Dubai luxury real estate market. Currently serves as Associate Director at Luxhabitat.

Kinshuk also specializes in [La Côte](#), [Jumeira Bay](#), [Azalea](#), [Golf Plaza](#)

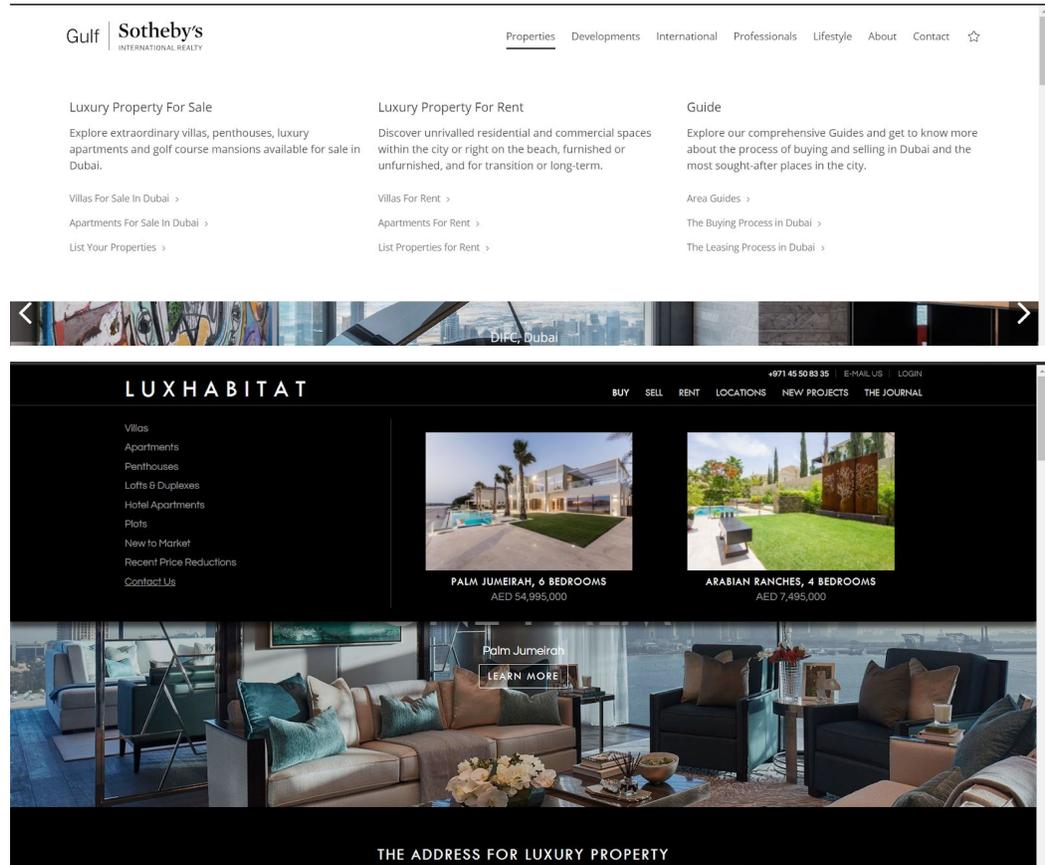
[CONTACT THE SPECIALIST](#)

8. Item 6: Header
- Luxhabitat.ae provides a phone number as part of the header, whereas gulfsothebysrealty.com does not.
 - The page width of gulfsothebysrealty.com is wider than the page width of luxhabitat.ae
 - The terminology of the links vary slightly. The link terminology for luxhabitat.ae is arguably more explicit than the link terminology on gulfsothebysrealty.com Though the link terminology on gulfsothebysrealty.com is inviting you to learn about not only the properties and developments, but also to learn more details on their Professionals and About the company.



The image shows two website headers. The top header is for Gulf Sotheby's International Realty, featuring a navigation menu with links: Properties, Developments, International, Professionals, Lifestyle, About, Contact, and a star icon. The bottom header is for Luxhabitat, featuring a search bar with the text 'Enter any area or development', a phone number '+971 45 50 83 35', and links for 'E-MAIL US' and 'LOGIN'. Below the search bar are filters for 'For Sale', 'Type', 'Size', 'Beds', and 'Price'.

d. Both sites use a mega-menu format as part of the header navigation.



e. Both sites have inconsistencies for each link in the top navigation, not displaying a mega-menu. The “International” and “Contact” links for gulfsothebysrealty.com. The “Sell” and “The Journal” links on luxhabitat.ae

9. Item 7: Footer

a. **Visual Design**: The social media links / icons on gulfsothebysrealty.com are clear and easy to see, however most of the social media links / icons on luxhabitat.ae appear “faded,” except for What’s App. If social media is important, consider making the icons on luxhabitat.ae more visible, such as the same color as the text color.

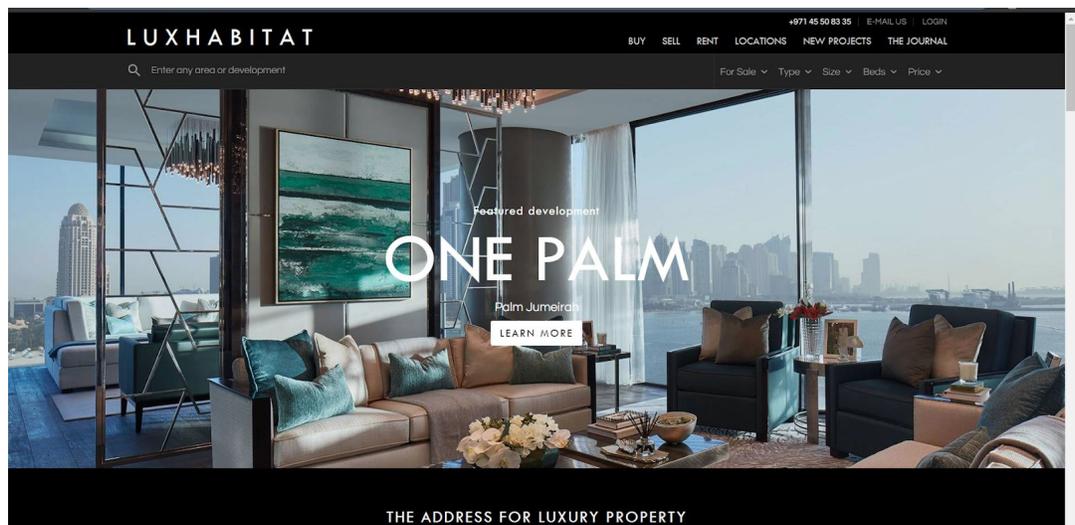
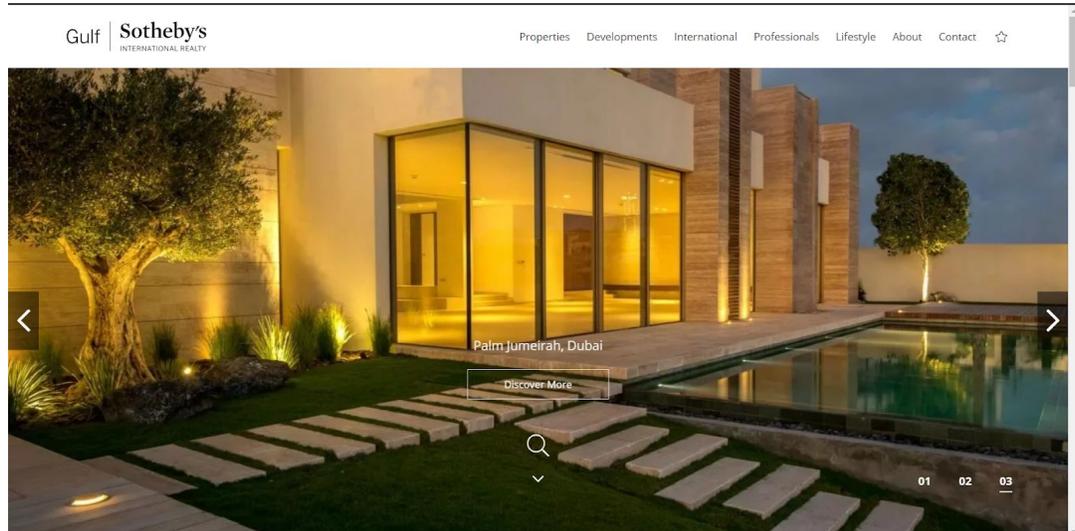


b. **Visual Design** & **Minor-Usability Issue**: The footer links on luxhabitat.ae have a small font size, which may decrease legibility. The footer links on gulfsothebysrealty.com are difficult to distinguish as links.

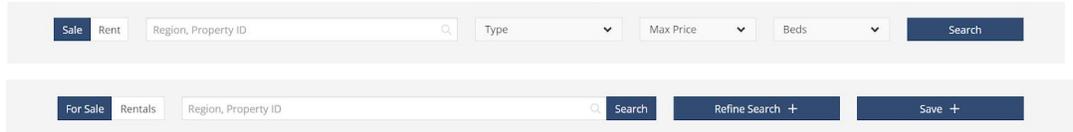
- c. Luxhabitat.ae provides the ability to change the measurement units and financial units, whereas gulfsothebysrealty.com does not.

10. Item 8: Search functionality

- a. **Visual Design** & **Minor-Usability Issue**: The search bar of luxhabitat.ae blends into the top navigation (above the hero image), whereas the search / filter capabilities of gulfsothebysrealty.com are displayed below the hero image. The filter capabilities of luxhabitat.ae maybe overlooked by website users.

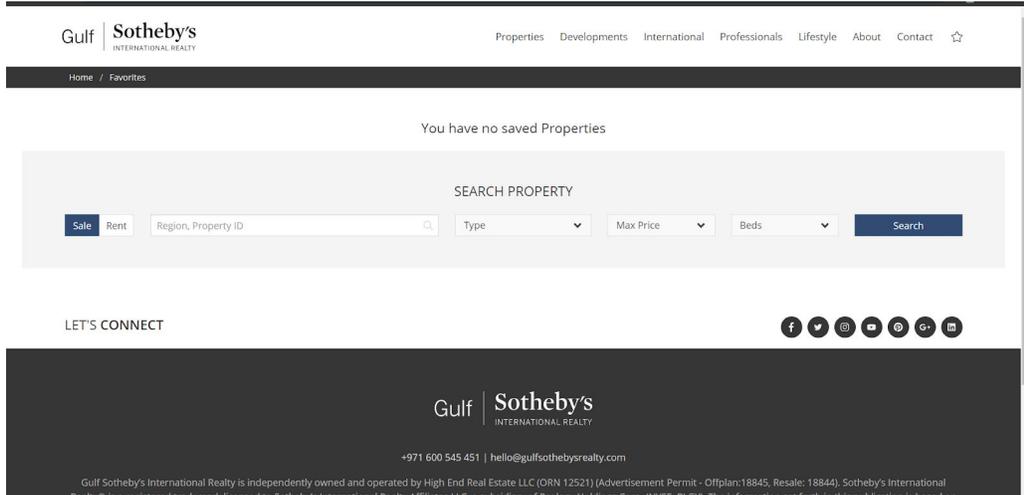


- b. When filter selections are made using luxhabitat.ae, the site begins to start searching / filtering, whereas on the gulfsothebysrealty.com site the filters are first selected then a "Search" button needs to be clicked.
- c. **Visual Design** & **Usability Issue**: On gulfsothebysrealty.com, the format of the search bar changes depending on the page. Consider making this consistent.

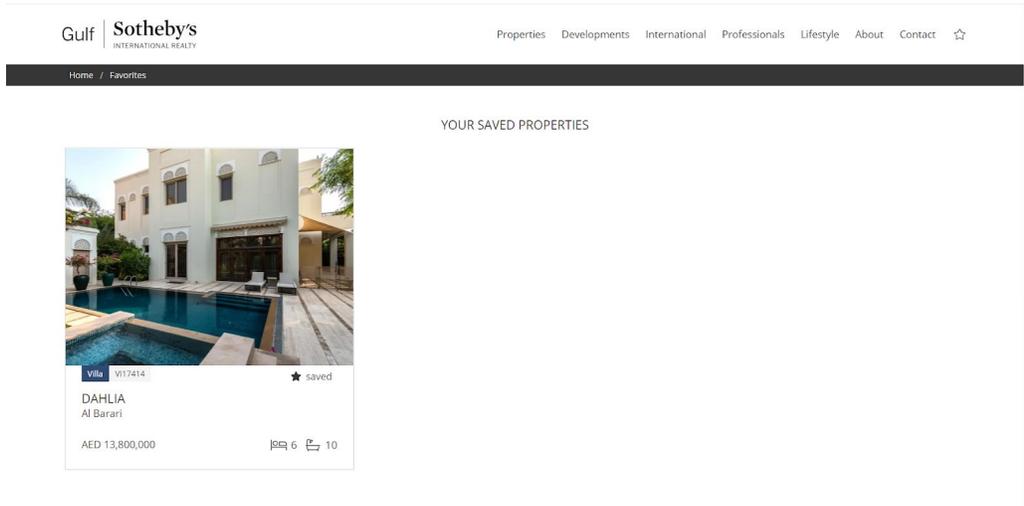


11. Item 9: Property Cart (<https://www.gulfsothebysrealty.com/favorites>)

a. Usually a “empty results” message is displayed below the search / filter options:



b. Once a property has been selected / added to the Saved Properties, there is no longer search & filter options displayed on the page. Consider to keep the search / filter options at the top of the page (above the “Your Saved Properties” title)



c. From a user’s perspective, it was nice to be able to select a saved property without the need to create a user account and sign-in.