

# M01 Module 9-11 Discussion: Compare Two Tea and Coffee Websites IA

The purpose of this assignment is to show that you can identify elements of an information architecture.

Note: This is not about critique or making recommendations for improvements.

Site 1: Empire Coffee & Tea - <http://www.empirecoffeetea.com/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

Site 2: The Cultured Cup - <http://www.theculturedcup.com/> ([Links to an external site.](#))

IA Methods Instructions |

Answer These 5 Questions

Use a screenshot and highlight the elements. Add a brief description if necessary (2-5 sentences).

Primary organization. What is the primary organization scheme? List major categories as well.

Where am I? Drill down to a single product page. What element(s) tell users where they are in relation to

the overall organization scheme?

How do I get to? For pages showing information about a specific product, what element(s) will get people

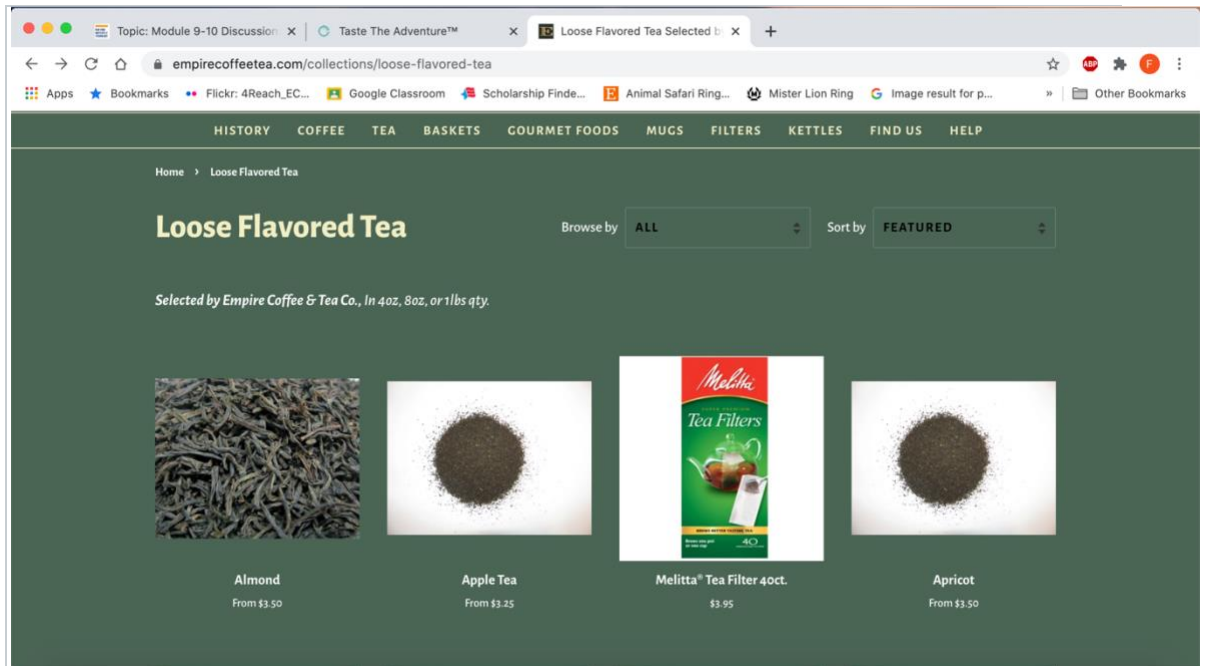
to all the other products in this category?

How do I see? For pages showing information about a specific product, what elements will help the user

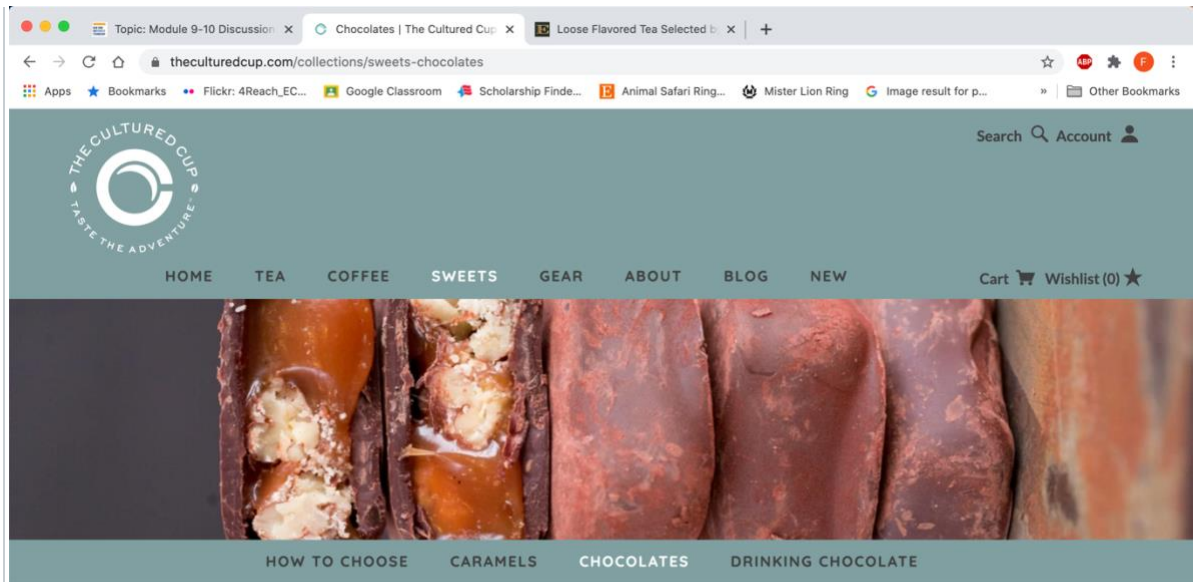
move up one level in the site so they can see all products of this type, and just this type?

What's not good? Briefly describe any potential problems with the IA as presented on the home page.

You don't need to correct the problems, but briefly describe some architectural problems with this page.



**Site 1:** This is the Empire Coffee Site. In this screenshot, I am on the Tea page of their website. Empire Coffee sells more than just coffee and they make that clear on the tabs of their homepage. It is made clear to me that they sell products such as tea, gourmet foods, mugs, etc. I have landed on their Tea page which they indicate to me with a big title and a list of previous pages that lead to this specific page that can be seen below the section tabs. On this page, there is a list of tea products (demonstrated in pictures) that you can scroll through and click on to view further. Besides the list below the section tab, there's no other clear way that indicates to the user what tab they are on. Usually whatever tab you are browsing on is highlighted so that it stands out from the other tabs and you know where you are.



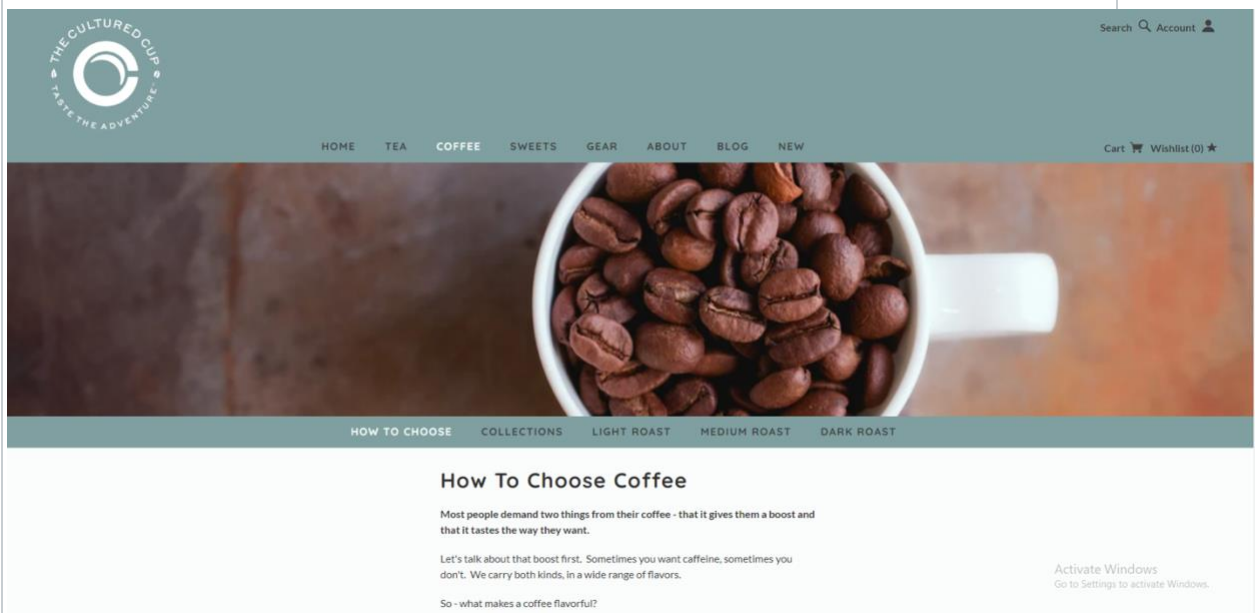
## Chocolates

Site 2: On the site for The Cultured Coffee, I have landed on the Chocolates page. Compared to the previous website, I had to do more clicking to get to this page. The Cultured Coffee makes clear what sections can be browsed through on the website by establishing tabs for them and sub-tabs under those sections. For example, in this picture, Sweets is highlighted to indicate the initial page and overall section that I am in, and under that, there are sub-tabs that appear that give more categories, and Chocolates is highlighted to indicate I'm there. When you scroll down, there is a list (demonstrated in pictures) of the products and a filter search option to refine your search. I think it would be helpful if the primary tab sections had a dropdown menu as a way to better organize my browsing options.



## Site 1: Empire Coffee & Tea

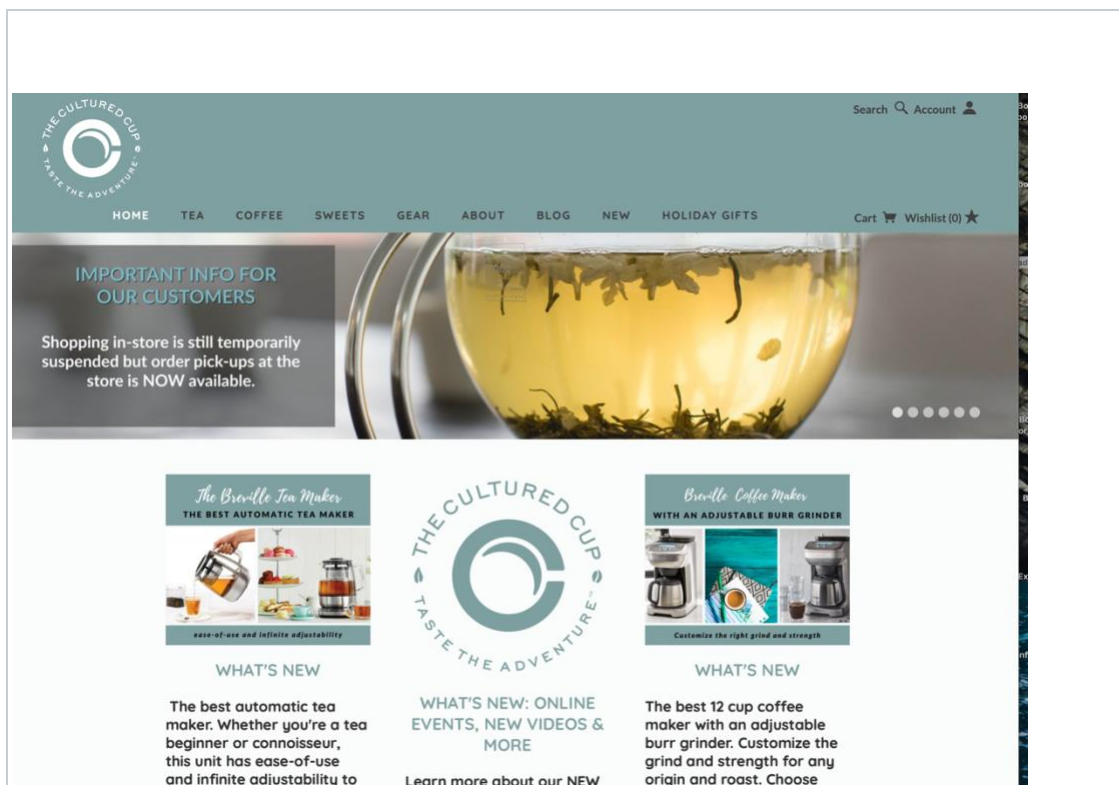
This was the Gift Basket category of the Empire Coffee and Tea Website. I accessed this page through the home page which had a clickable icon linked to this section. This site is organized well because it is clear from the top that we are looking at the page that will give us more information on gift baskets. There is also an important note regarding the product that is written in a large text size since it is important to read. The entire page clearly shows that this is the part of the site where users can buy gift baskets. If you were to scroll down, the prices and names of each basket are clearly displayed. The overall composition is not complicated at all and is very user-friendly. Users can easily click any picture and access more information on what they pressed. Since the images are cut off at the bottom, it signals the reader to scroll down to see more information on the page. I like the website a lot, but the completely centered text at the top is not necessarily a choice I would make, especially with the different leading used. I also would probably not make the white text all caps, because it is a large amount of text that might be easier to read with title case type. This is completely an aesthetic preference, but I would opt for a white background and use the brand colors in the type. It would give a cleaner look and would look a little more professional to me.



## Site 2: The Cultured Cup

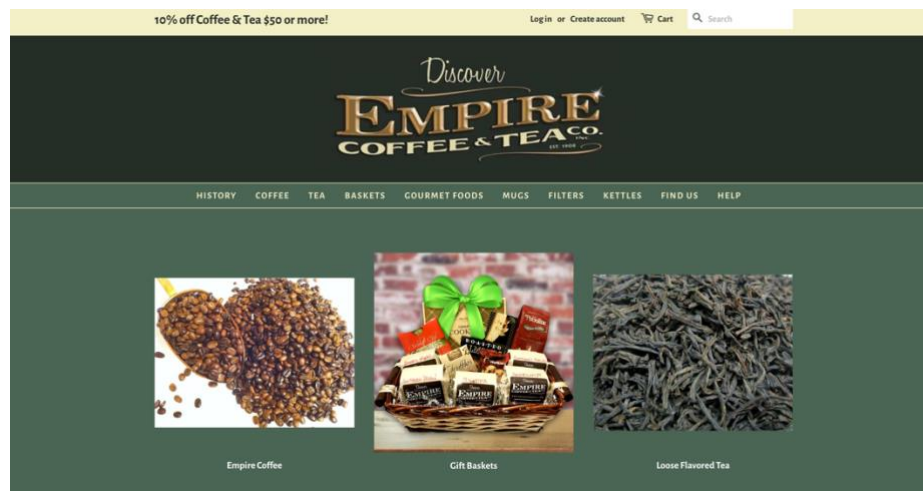
This was the Coffee page of The Cultured Cup website. I liked the look of this site better than the one for Empire Coffee & Tea. The page is organized well

and includes a relevant image at the very top, so readers immediately know the general context of the page they are on. The page also immediately features a title that is easy to read and is followed by subtext that works well with the title. This page was really easy to get to because it was one of the first categories listed at the top of the home page. The information is also organized in subcategories, which is helpful. Upon entering the Coffee page, you can choose between the categories "How to Choose Coffee", "Collections", "Light Roast", "Medium Roast", and "Dark Roast" - all straightforward categories that users are likely to respond well to. I really like the aesthetic of the page, so there is not much I would change. It's pretty much easy to follow as well. From a visual perspective, I think it would be nice to add some texture to the top section on each page. A coffee bean pattern at a low opacity would help to differentiate that strip of information from the other categories ribbon. Overall, however, I really like the design choices made for this website.



1. The cultured tea website has a color palette consisting of 3 colors that work smoothly together. It is a lot more attractive than the empire coffee & tea website I have to say. The website has all the categories are laid out for you. I wish it would have a better transition when clicking on each category it's an abrupt transition. There is a YouTube linking the middle of the page I also think is awkward it doesn't really flow with the website layout, maybe the

sizing could be bigger. Looking at some of the products and the description it seems a bit off for an example the origins coffee collection, I would suggest showing pictures of the actual product and packaging instead of a passport. Otherwise I do believe it is straight forward. I also noticed on the main page has a random pop up that comes on top of the page, I would suggest moving it in the middle. I do enjoy this website it is easy to navigate. But I do believe it can use updating. But I do believe the design is nice and just a few tweaks would make it into a great website.



2. The empire Coffee & Tea website can definitely use some updating. I believe the color palette isn't strong and doesn't really do anything for the website. One of the first things I noticed is that they have categories laid out visually and on the bar. I believe it is only necessary to present the categories once. When you click on the coffee, all the images are the same not making their products appealing. I did enjoy the roll over on the bar categories and they change colors that's a nice transition. I feel like their website is super outdated so it would be a good idea to make it more up to date and use better photos, and a different layout. The website seems unprofessional compared to the Cultured tea website with their layout and image choices. I think it would be a good idea maybe to just have images of the products on the main page under the categories making it into a slideshow and making the logo not the main thing you look at. There is no sense of hierarchy on this website. I think this website could be a bit more professional and could use work on how to present the products in a more formal way.





## Gift Baskets

Browse by ALL

Sort by FEATURED

DUE TO SIZE LIMITATIONS ONLY 1 GIFT BASKET MAY BE PLACED PER ORDER. IF YOU NEED TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR MORE THAN 1 GIFT BASKET PLEASE PLACE A SECOND ORDER AFTER THE 1ST ORDER HAS BEEN PLACED. ORDERS WILL BE SHIPPED AT THE EXACT SAME TIME.

YOU CAN CREATE YOUR OWN CUSTOM GIFT BASKET

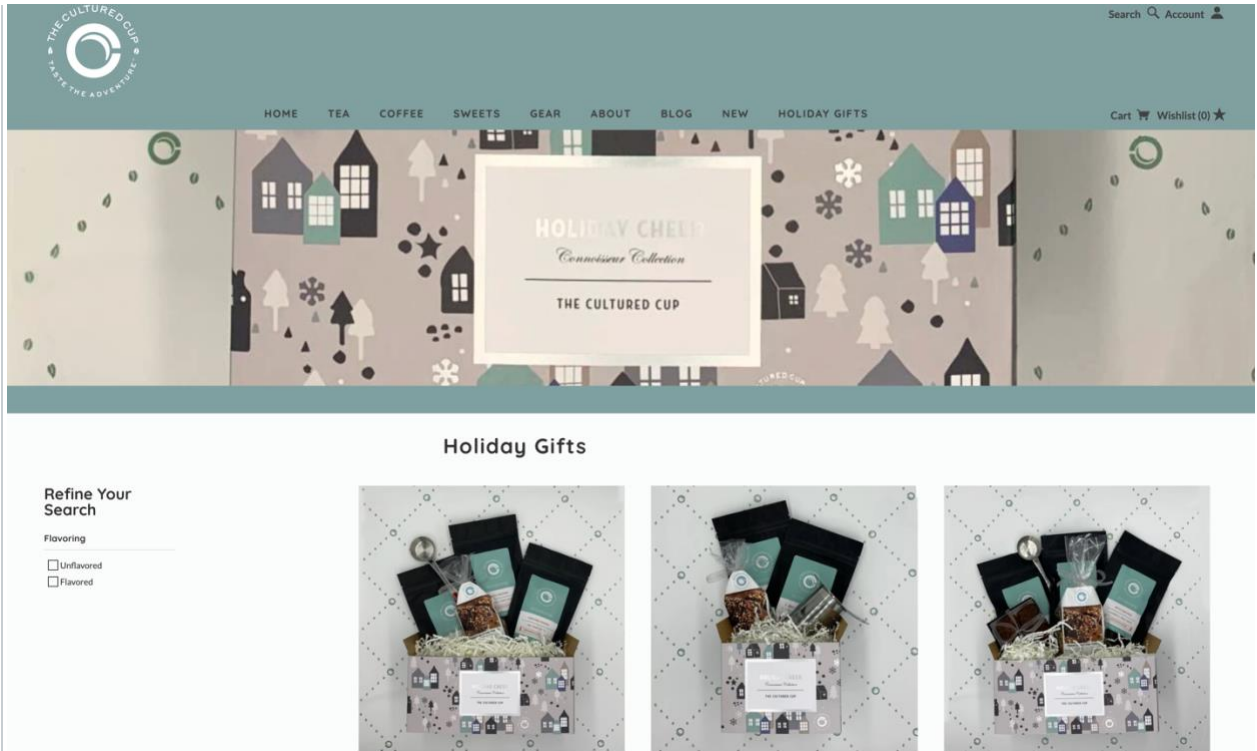
CALL 1-800-262-5908

We can pretty much accommodate any request.

Coffee Lovers Gift Basket  
\$42.00Coffee Lovers Gift Basket  
\$66.00Coffee Lovers Gift Basket  
\$72.00Tea Lovers Gift Basket  
\$42.00

## Site 1: Empire Coffee & Tea

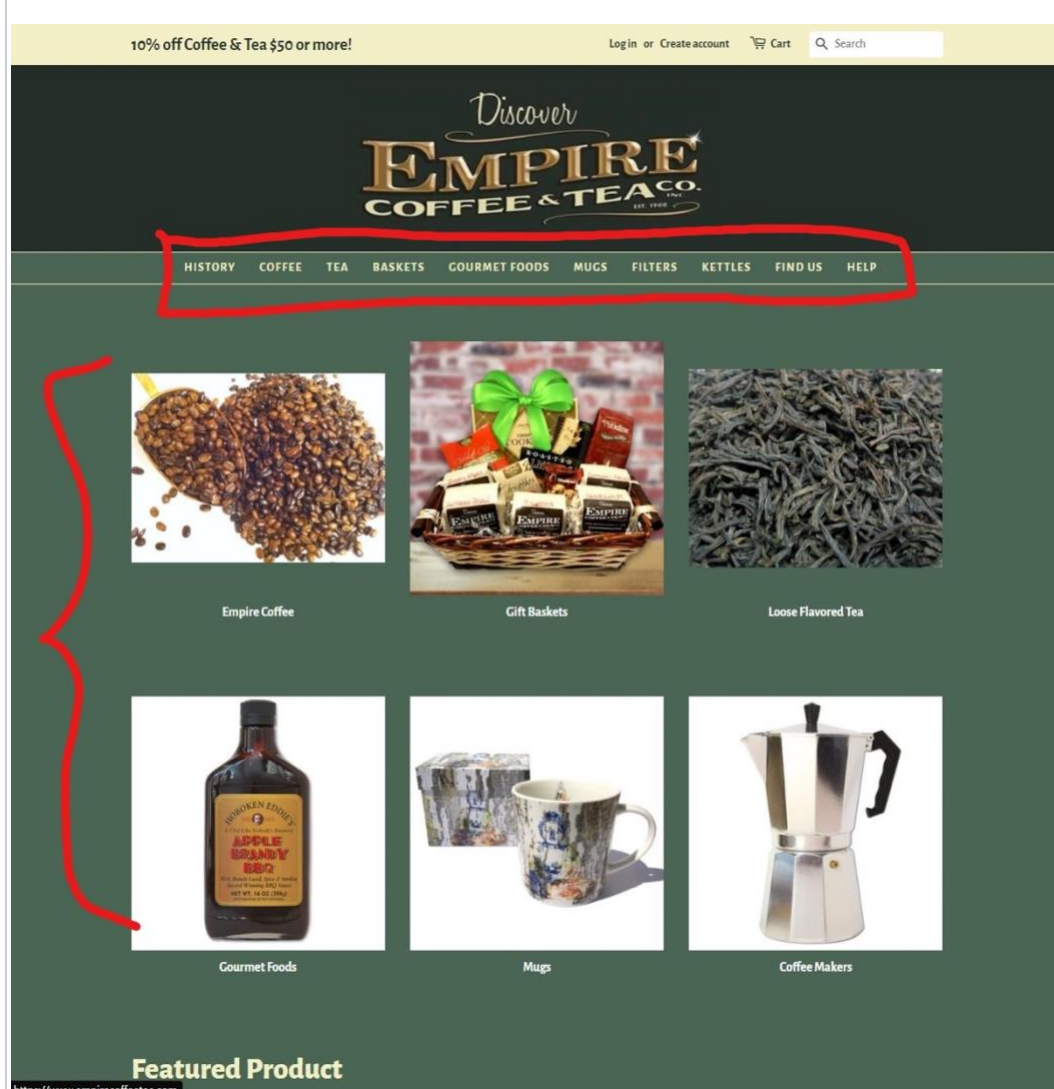
Empire Coffee & Tea is a traditional-looking website. It can be seen from the logo. Its website by its logo color as the primary color. Each function key of the website can be seen and used intuitively on the home page. However, the design of each page is straightforward; just put the words and pictures together. There is not much design on the user's visual effect. As a result, it looks like a functional but not beautiful website. The Gift Baskets page I chose was compared with The Cultivated Cup. It can be seen that The Cultivated Cup gives users multiple choices and visual comfort. From the choice of color and style to the setting of selection keys, Empire Coffee & Tea has room for improvement.



## Site 2: The Cultured Cup

The page design of The Cultured Cup is practical and straightforward. After entering the home page, I can clearly understand the meaning and usage rules of each bottom. After entering each page, the style continues the overall style of the website. Taking a color as the leading tone, and then using some similar banners as an auxiliary is a way to make users feel comfortable. In the holiday gifts, it puts the catalogue on the left, not on the top. I love this arrangement. The photo settings on the website are also clearer than those on Empire Coffee & Tea. The price is not clear on the price page. It enables me to know all kinds of information about this product when I use it.





### Site #1

My first impression of this coffee and tea site was that they didn't use a better design or mockup to highlight their product. Let's not talk about pictures for a moment. Usually, like me I just scan the first page of this site, I don't click on any other buttons. There is too little information on the first page. More, the tone gave me a very depressing feeling, as if I had walked into a shabby afternoon tea shop. Also, this site puts "10% off and Cart "at the top, which means it makes the consumer see it at first sight and urges the consumer to buy and check out. The other thing that really bothers me is the size of the picture. The first and third photo in the first row aren't the same size, but the middle "Gift Baskets" do stand out, and I think they need to sell their product urgently.

THE CULTURED CUP  
TASTE THE ADVENTURE

Search Account

HOME TEA COFFEE SWEETS GEAR ABOUT BLOG NEW HOLIDAY GIFTS Cart Wishlist (0) ★

IMPORTANT INFO FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Shopping in-store is temporarily suspended, but curbside order pickup is now available.

*The Breville Tea Maker*  
THE BEST AUTOMATIC TEA MAKER

*Breville Coffee Maker*  
WITH AN ADJUSTABLE BURR GRINDER

WHAT'S NEW

WHAT'S NEW: ONLINE EVENTS, NEW VIDEOS & MORE

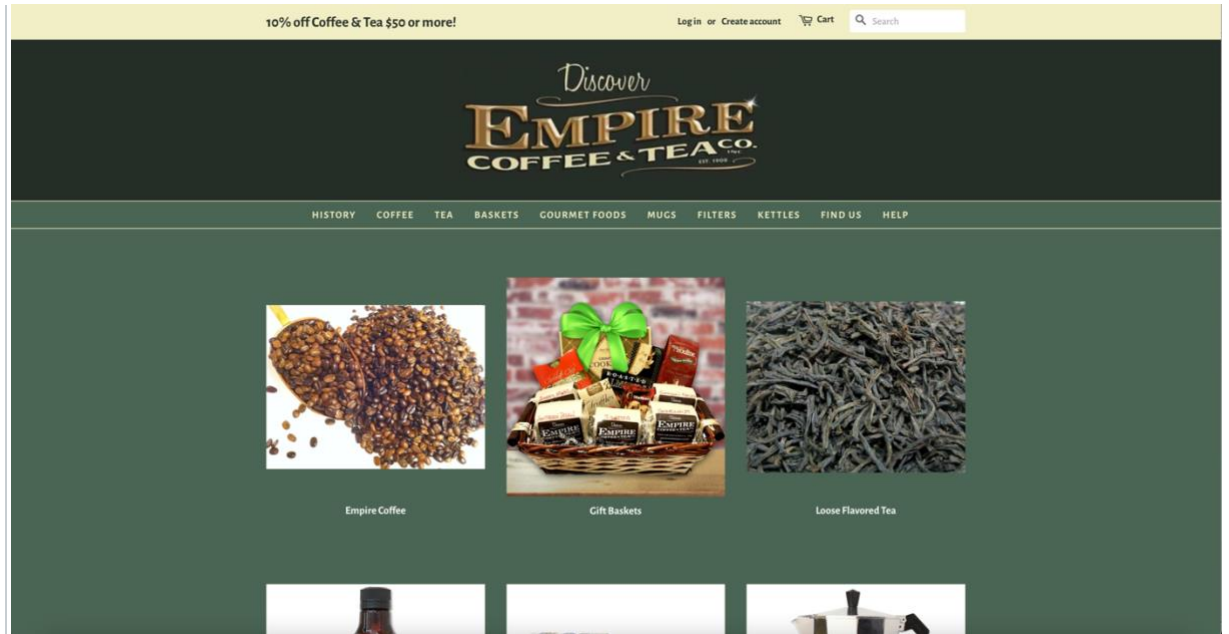
WHAT'S NEW

Free US Shipping on all orders over \$75

## Site #2

It is also a website selling coffee and tea. This website gives me a feeling of cleanliness and simplicity. Use long images to highlight their products and not clutter the site. At the same time, two new products are highlighted below. It gives me the feeling that if I have their coffee maker and tea maker, I will be able to drink delicious coffee and tea. The overall tone gives me a very comfortable feeling, I will not feel depressed. Font size is also a good choice. Large font size makes it easy for older people to read.

## Site 1:



- Primary organization. What is the primary organization scheme? List major categories as well.

It organized by different kinds of products, coffee, gift baskets, tea, gourmet foods, mugs and coffer maker.

- Where am I? Drill down to a single product page. What element(s) tell users where they are in relation to the overall organization scheme?

For example, I drill down to the AB Fab's page. On the top left under the main menu, there is a little line says "Home > Empire Coffee > AB Fab", which helps me understand exactly where I am and I can go back to the front page easily.

- How do I get to? For pages showing information about a specific product, what element(s) will get people to all the other products in this category?

Directly go back to the front page or press on the main menu, like "Coffee" then press to a second specific category like "French Roast" or "Empire Coffee" or so on on the top of the website or the little line shows how you get

to this page, like "Home > Empire Coffee > AB Fab", then audiences can choose home or empire coffee easily.

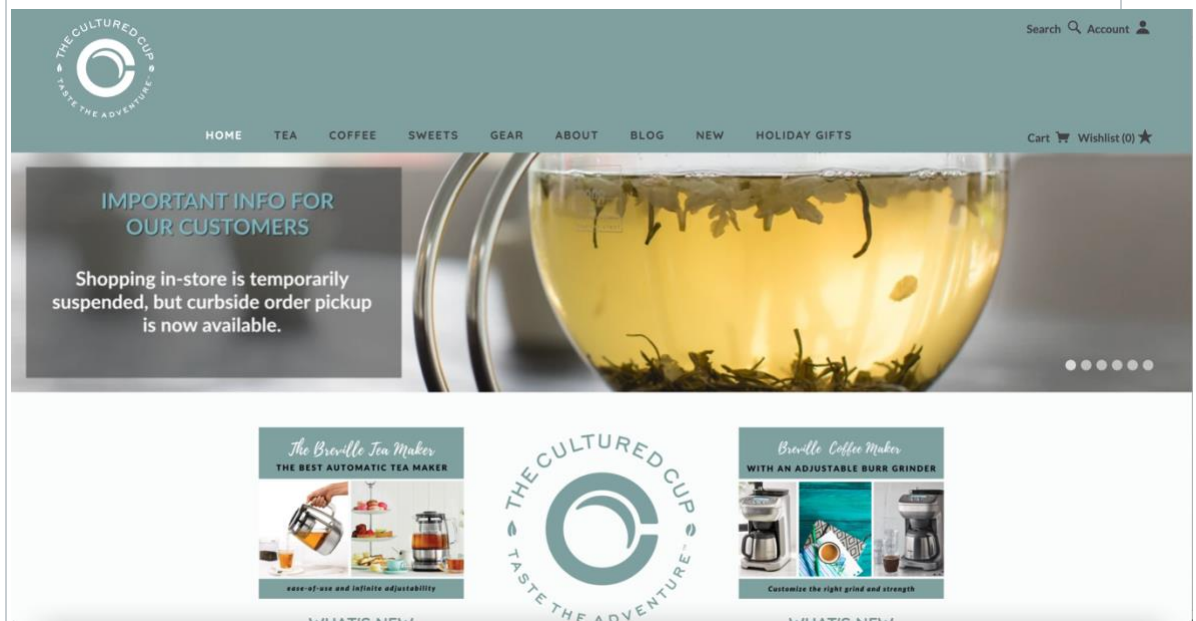
- How do I see? For pages showing information about a specific product, what elements will help the user move up one level in the site so they can see all products of this type, and just this type?

Press on the main menu, like "Coffee" then press to a second specific category like "French Roast" or "Empire Coffee" or so on.

- What's not good? Briefly describe any potential problems with the IA as presented on the home page.

Maybe bigger category like "Coffee" "Tea" is more suitable showing on the home page? I didn't even realize that they have other types of coffee as I was more willing and more will click on the "Empire Coffee" with picture rather than "Coffee" only words on the main menu which seems introduction of coffee but not about items.

Site 2:



- Primary organization. What is the primary organization scheme? List major categories as well.

Products. Tea, coffee, sweets and gear. Then under each of them have more specific categories of this thing.

- Where am I? Drill down to a single product page. What element(s) tell users where they are in relation to the overall organization scheme?

When I am at the "WHITE RIESLING" tea page, the second menu under the main menu shows where I am.

- How do I get to? For pages showing information about a specific product, what element(s) will get people to all the other products in this category?

Press the second specific menu to go back to the whole list or press the button on the top left under menus say "previous item" to see more item.

- How do I see? For pages showing information about a specific product, what elements will help the user move up one level in the site so they can see all products of this type, and just this type?

Press the main menu to go back to the whole list or press second specific menu to go back to the whole list or like only "White" in "Tea."

- What's not good? Briefly describe any potential problems with the IA as presented on the home page.

The "previous item" button on the top left under menus on the specific item page is actually a little confused, which I think is a function people doesn't need much, go back to the list where people get in can be a better choice.

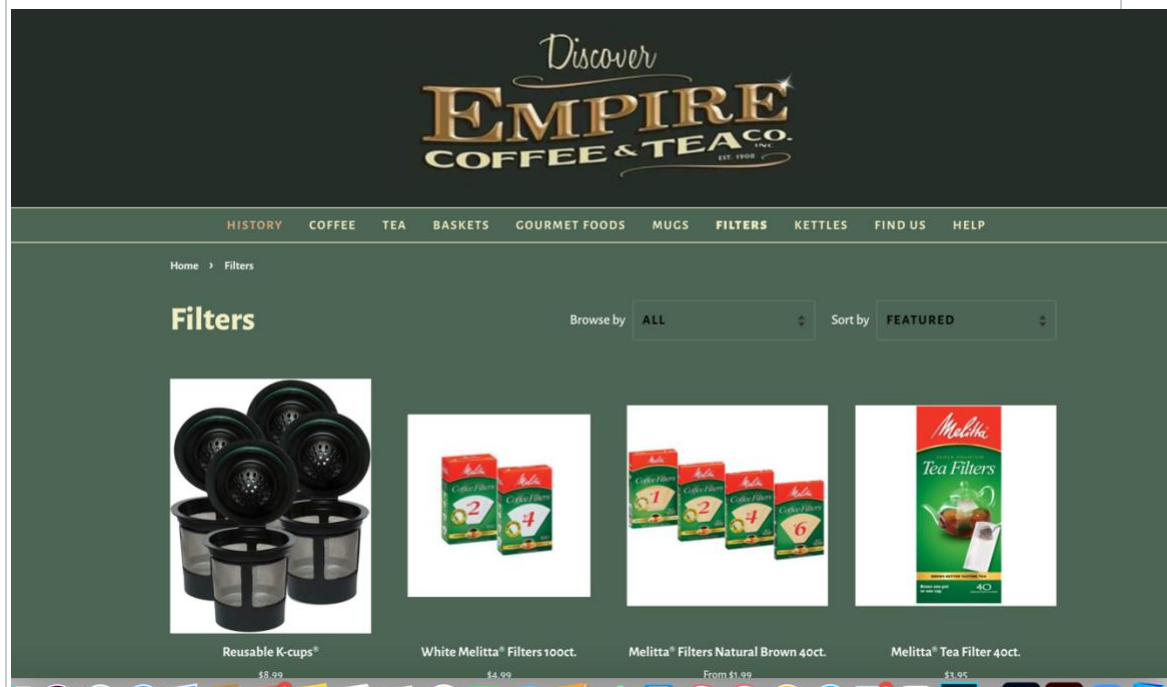
### **Site 1: Empire Street Coffee**

In this screenshot, I am on the gourmet foods section of this website. It is shown that Empire Street Coffee offers more than what is shown on the title. Based on the tabs there are baskets, gourmet food, mugs, filters, and kettle. The gourmet food tab in particular isn't appealing to the eye. The white sentence and the font is so small to read, and the photos displayed don't look very captivating. Each photo of their products should have a consistent background, each background is different and it maybe confusing to the consumer. Especially the " Breakfast Basket.

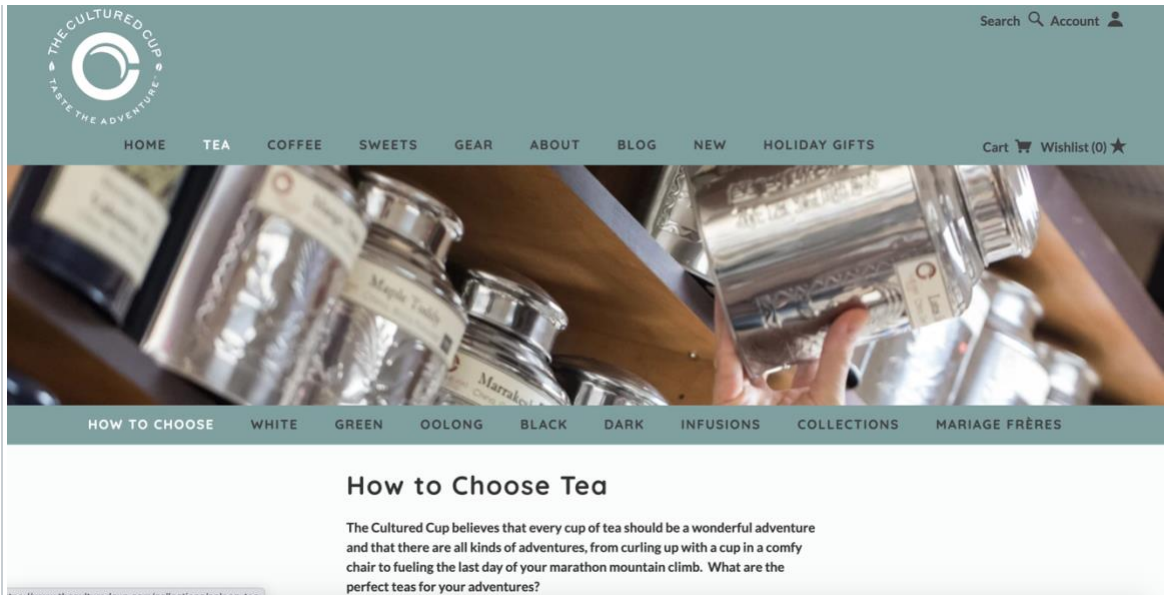
### **Site 2: Cultured Coffee**

Cultured Coffee has more of a minimalistic approach, rather than Empire Street Coffee. The typeface is more legible and everything seems to be more consistent. There is more clicking, when you're trying to navigate to a different tab, which leads to another. It was really easy to get to any page because of the categories listed at the top of the home page. The information is also organized in subcategories, which is helpful. And the logo for this site isn't too distracting.

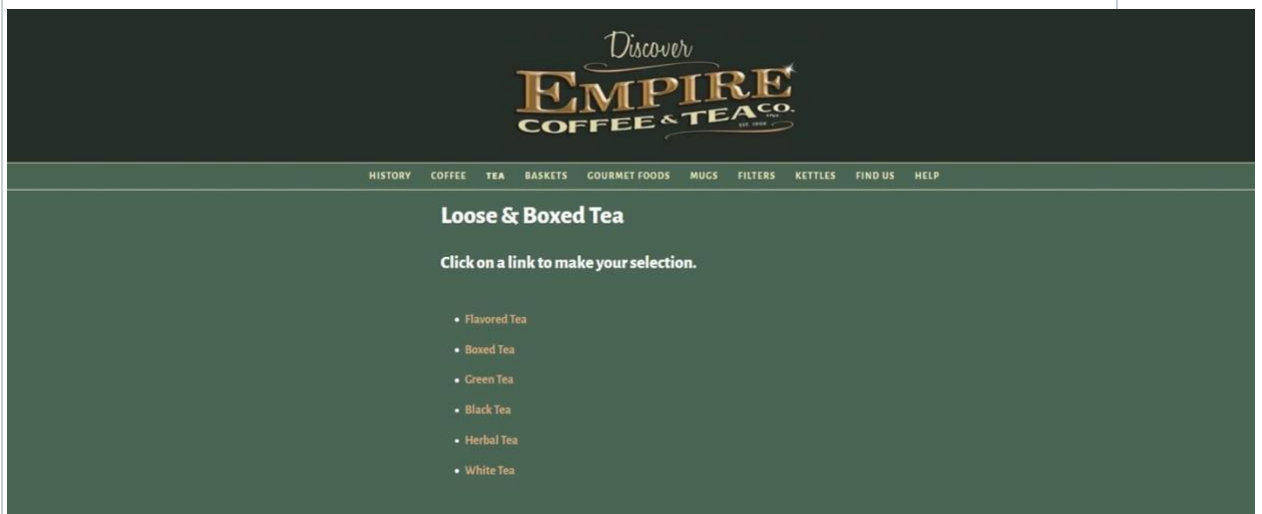




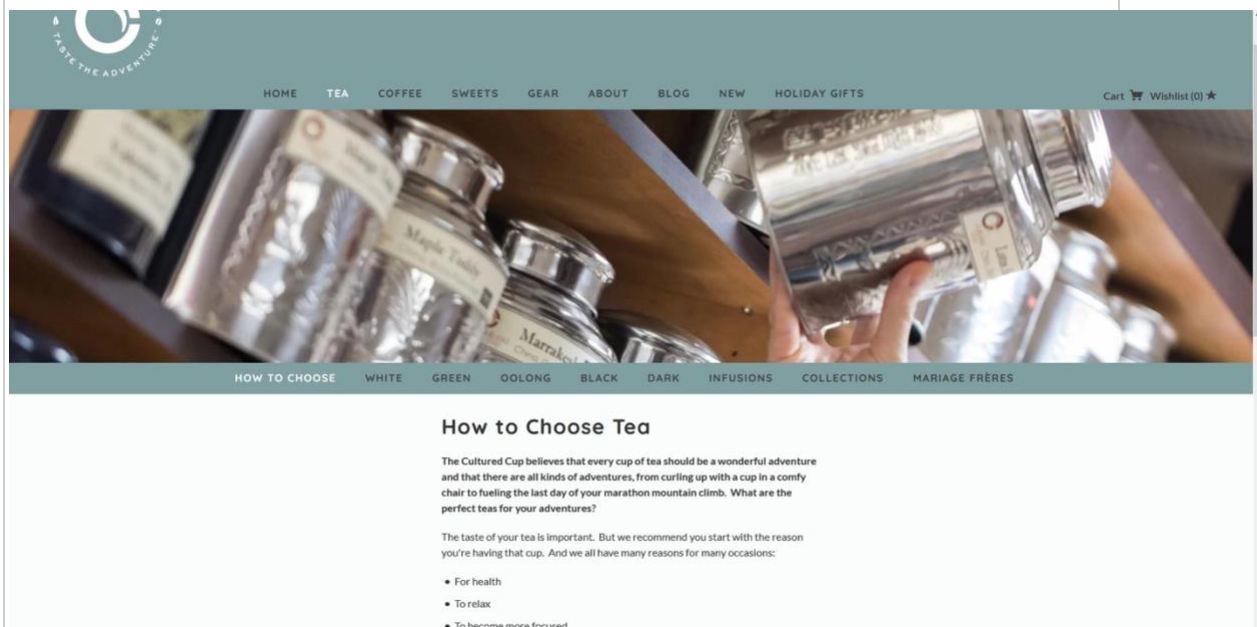
Above you see the filters page on the Empire Coffee & Tea website, which makes my eyes bleed by the way, but we will get to that later. Here is where you would go for a more organized search. You would pick a category, like a certain type of tea or coffee and then organize the list in any way you prefer (A-Z, Old to New, etc.). I don't see how this is helpful to people, considering they already have a separate page for each specific thing they sell, the category options seem very similar to the menu options on top, but in case that wasn't specific enough you can click the filters page on the menu. I think that pretty much explains this page and what's wrong with it. The menu consists of everything they sell when it can easily be cut down, not to mention the useless filters page is smack in the middle of mugs and kettles. Maybe put the filters on the side of your shopping pages or just add a search box. One last thing if I wasn't a millennial design student I would have never figured out how to get back to the home page, I'd be reading the history of the company thinking it was where I find featured products.



This is the Tea page and it's very similar to the other shop pages. There's other ways to navigate, but this company does something interesting in bringing in a separate menu to categorize which tea to search. Before they expect you to just pick a type of tea, that quite honestly looks like another language to me, they start you off with a brief educational paragraph to help you choose the right tea. After reading the short description I can feel confident in choosing the category that fits me. They make take an extra step, but to me it seems more like they care about their product and your experience with it, and for something like this I think it's necessary to add an extra 'How to Choose' page because it makes the other Categories easy to Navigate.



In the empire coffee website, I first clicked on the tea page, which led me here. The primary organization scheme seems to be a listing of different products they sell as tabs at the top. When these tabs are clicked, there are subcategories that appear like in this image. There is nothing to indicate where you are in the website except the text that appears after clicking on a tab, which is not enough. When it comes to design, I think this website is aesthetically dull. The color palette isn't that great, and it looks like not much time was spent on aesthetics. There is no style used in the website, it looks like a bunch of textboxes and pasted images on some pages. Nothing seems to fit very well, and is not pleasing to the eye.



When I look at the cultured cup website, it looks immediately better to me. In this image, I am on the tea page again, yet it is fairly different compared to the other site. Although the main organizational scheme is similar with main tabs on the top leading to subcategories, the overall look and feel is different. There is a clear indication of where you are just by highlighting one of the tabs. The tabs have overall a cleaner look and it is much easier to read the information as well as scroll through the website. The website is aesthetically pleasing as well. There is a clear theme and a style. There is not much

irrelevant information and the overall design is minimalistic. The typography also works much better with black on white background. The subcategory specific tabs under the image also helps the overall usability, and the main categories being at the very top looks good and saves space.

Overall looking at the both websites, at first glance they seem to share a similar style. Both websites have a similar visual look as well as similar tabs. Both are fairly organized and clear, and seem to be hard to get lost in. While empire coffee utilizes imagery more in their site, the cultured cup has a more minimalistic approach to it. The cultured cup website has a better aesthetic as well as easier usability. The subheaders are very clear, and they do not constantly redirect you to another page. This is very much the case in the empire coffee website. It seems to throw you from page to page, which can be frustrating. It seems much easier to get the required information for shopping from the cultured cup website. Overall I definitely prefer the cultured cup website as it is better designed, easier to use and aesthetically pleasing.

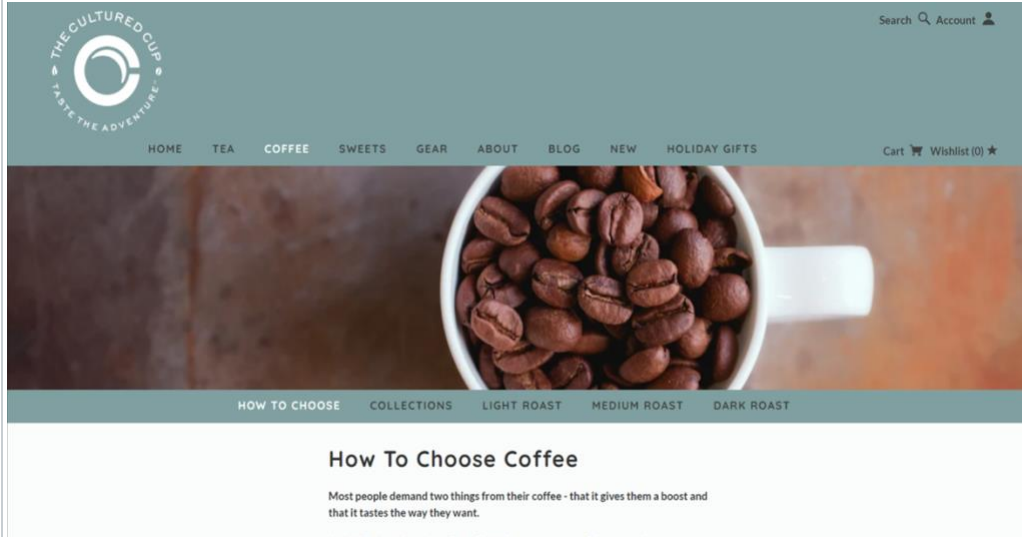
## 1. Empire



For the Empire Coffee and Tea site, I went with the coffee section specifically for this study. The site itself feels very primitive and simplistic in nature, but I feel it adds to the brand of it feeling more brawny and rustic in nature, although I feel of the options presented it could show a lot more visually what it has to offer besides text. Even if it's very simple and to the point which

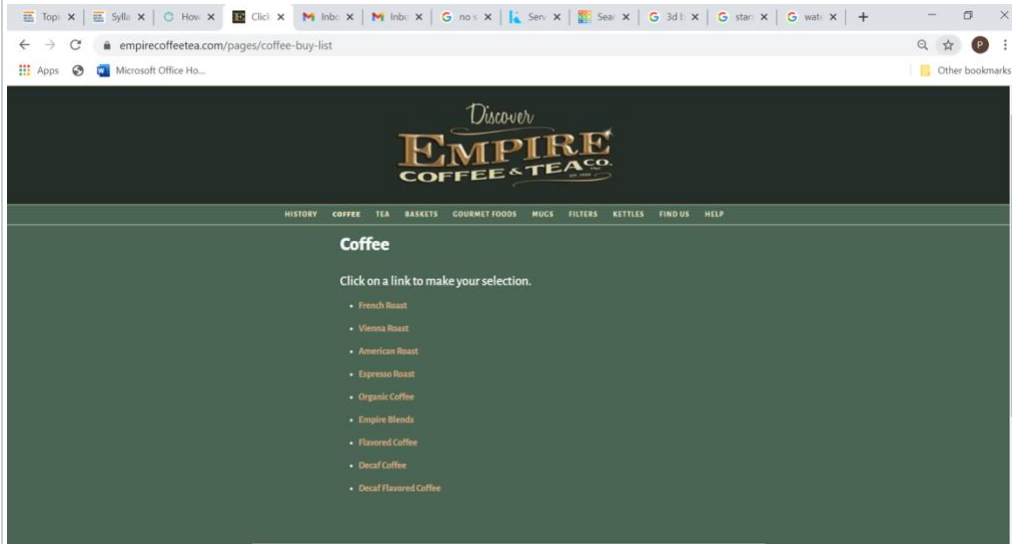
could help with the feedback of the actions of the site, visually it looks very unappealing and plain to me, even if it matches the brand's rustic, cozy look.

## 2. The Cultured Cup



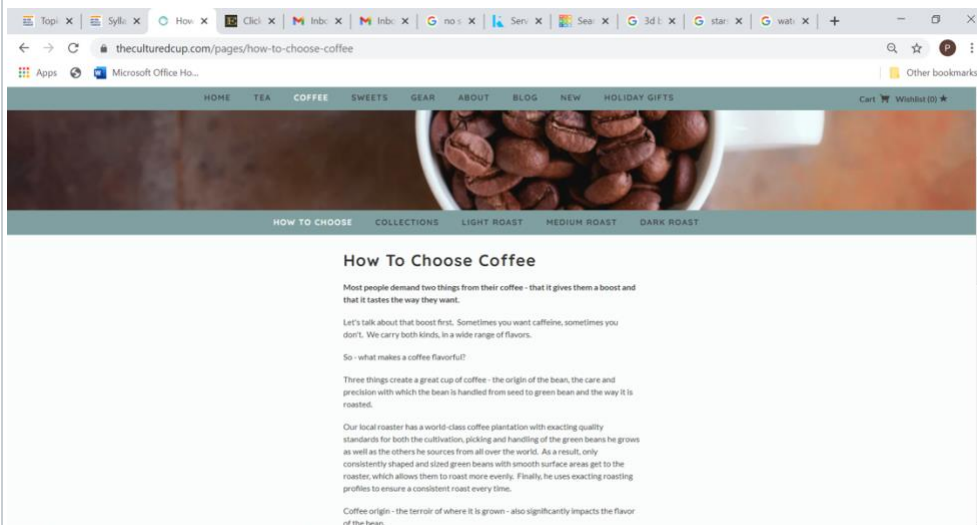
The overall look feels way more classy and well, cultured. I appreciate with the prospect of the products the site is selling that there is a visual to go with the information they will present. The color scheme and information are much well put together and presented while still being relatively simple to navigate. In addition, the overall look of the site is way more modern and sleek, giving an overall more presentable and approachable look to any users that may access this site compared to how Empire looks.

## The Empire Coffee



When I looked at the Empire Coffee site I chose the coffee section. The site itself looked ok, colors and font are ok. Although I feel like it should have more color and at least a few more images to show what coffees they were showing instead of a list of texts. When I look at the page I see I feel like they should also add what kind of ingredients the coffee has, its important to be sure if anyone is allergic to anything. The only thing I think that's not good would be is actually the color. To be honest the colors feel incomplete,, it should have colors that make It feel more old fashioned like one those old fashioned coffee houses.

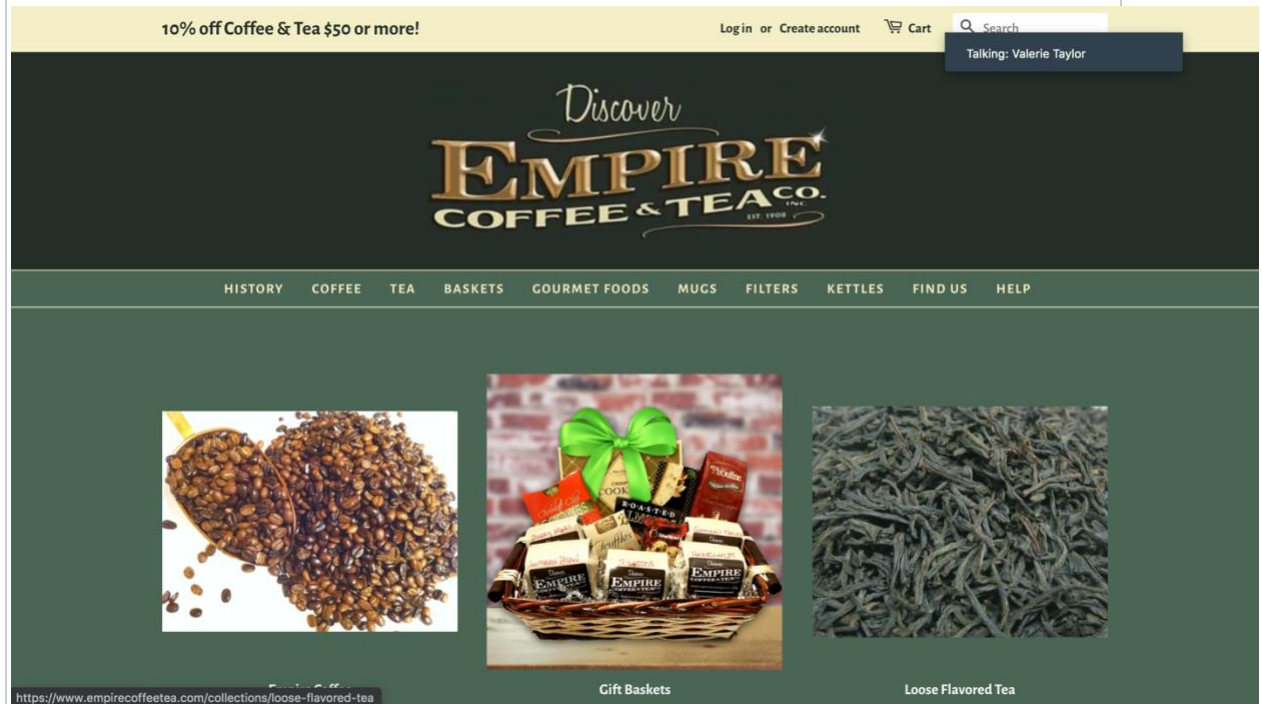
### The Cultured Cup



The cultured Cup design looked classy and well printed. When I checked the coffee page it showed a lot more text and gives the reader 3 tips on how coffee is great. The colors for this site as well as the info are well put out and



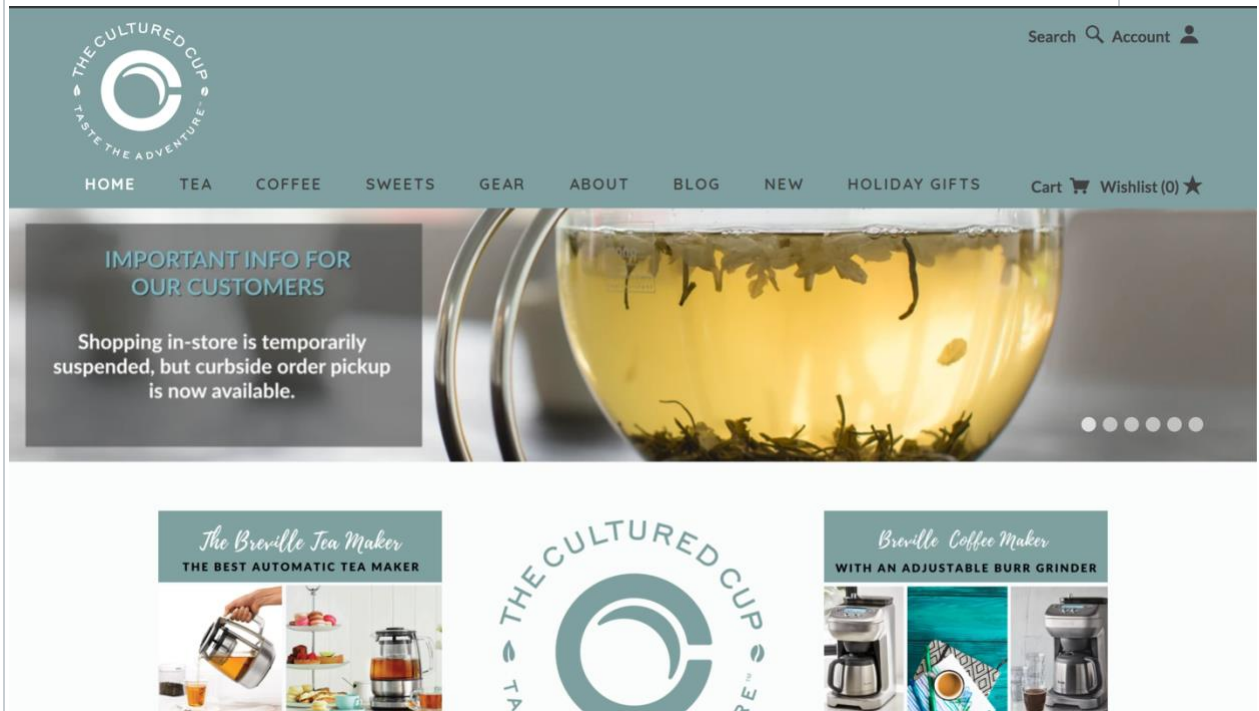
presented. The options above are easier to guide through. This sites look is overall great, it feels modern and picture of the coffee beans above is a nice detail. For this site I don't think there's anything bad to fix, this site shows much more improvement the Empire Coffee. Honestly that site could learn a thing or two about modernizing and fixing details.



### **Empire Coffee & Tea:**

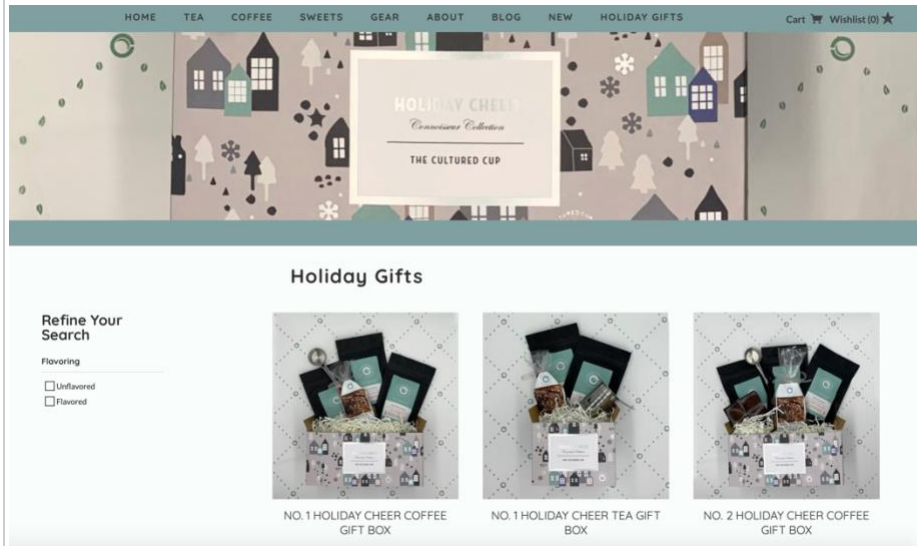
This website sells coffee, tea, gourmet foods, and few utensils. At the top of the page there's a horizontal list of their main items and underneath this list there are similar items shown with photos. The screenshot shows the homepage of the website and users can tell because most homepages nowadays usually have information on new items or filled with slides, or photos of main items, sale or items coming soon. You can see specific products from this website by clicking on coffee, tea etcetera. The website looks outdated but at the same time everything seems to direct you to the right place. There should be an updated version to make it more professional. The photos used, as seen on the screenshot, are not even and the website looks to be too flat. The history of the company's link shouldn't be the first link and users can only tell where they are after clicking a link by the boldness of the word and this can easily be

fixed if they make the link clicked on a different color instead.



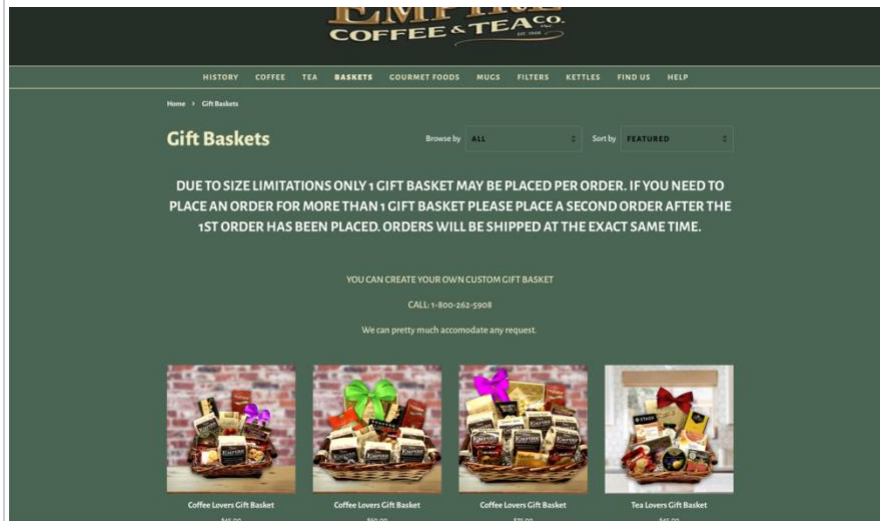
### The Cultured Cup:

This site also sells coffee and tea. It's similar to the first with the horizontal list of products at the top and their featured/best selling items seen at the bottom. The screenshot shows their homepage and I can tell I'm on the homepage because the word "Home" is highlighted in white while the other links are dark gray. This website is more professional looking than the first. It's more organized as well and doesn't look as bland as the first site.



### The Cultured Cup:

The Cultured Cup has a page specifically for Holiday Gifts (which is perfect for now). The primary categories of the website are shown at the top of their page, below their logo: Home, Tea, Coffee, Sweets, Gear, About, Blog, New, and Holiday Gifts. I've chosen to focus on the holiday gifts page since it's so specific it drew me in. The section is shown above the products, in a bolded font making it easy to see. From there, we can see neatly laid out products in rows of 3 with a clear title and the price below. There is a 'refine your search' according to the flavors, but there isn't a sort option (price, relevancy, etc.). I think if they had a sorting option, that would be helpful as I love sorting through products from low to high. I also believe that the font should be highlighted in the menu to indicate exactly where you are in case one has scrolled down and can't see the title at the top anymore. Other than those minor details, I think it is a nicely done and clean design. It's not overwhelming and easy to use.



## Empire Coffee and Tea Co:

Empire Coffee and Tea Co. has a similar menu to The Cultured cup, aligned nicely at the top (History, Coffee Tea Baskets, Gourmet Foods, Mugs, Filters, Kettles, Find Us, and Help). I am focusing on the Gift Baskets page, and the first thing I noticed was the very big disclaimer at the top. While I think it is good that they have their disclaimer at the top, I think it is much too prominent. They also include the "Create your own..." message along with their phone number and some extra detail. This could probably be featured at the bottom of the page or on the side. With that and the disclaimer, it feels a bit all over the place. I do notice the Browse By and Sort by options which are greatly appreciated. The title of the page is prominent in a good way, bolded in the upper left hand corner. The menu also highlights which page you are on. I also especially like that they have a list of the pages you have gone on (Home > Gift Baskets). That gives a good sense of organization. However, I will say I prefer the design of The Cultured Cup due to the color scheme and the overall less chaotic feeling.