

MZ-1.1 · V1.2 (DRAFT)

MEZZÉ#1

MEDITERRANEAN EATERY & BAR



THE SOURCE OF IDENTITY

BRAND PLATFORM

WHO WE ARE. WHAT WE STAND FOR. HOW WE
BEHAVE.

Owned by Riad El Khaliabi & Irina Shlyakhova

FIRST EDITION · 2026 · CONROE · FULSHEAR

FM

FRONT MATTER

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The strategic and creative foundation of MEZZÉ#1. Owner-facing. Not distributed to employees.

This is the MEZZÉ#1 Brand Platform — the strategic and creative foundation of the restaurant. It is not a marketing brochure. It is the source document every owner-level decision should be tested against when the question is what MEZZÉ#1 stands for and how it should behave.

AUDIENCE

This document is read by ownership. It is not distributed to employees. Staff-facing operational standards live in the FOH Steps of Service PDF and the training documents (Training-001 through Training-008). The brand platform tells owners *why*; the operational documents tell employees *how*.

THE NINE SECTIONS

SECTION	WHAT IT ANSWERS
1. Founders & Founding Story	Who we are and how we got here.
2. Audience	Who we welcome and who we are building toward.
3. Brand Personality & Archetype	The character behind the colors.
4. Brand Promise & Positioning	What we guarantee and where we sit in the market.
5. Brand Pillars	The four ideas everything we do should reinforce.
6. Verbal Identity	How the brand speaks.
7. Visual Identity	How the brand looks.
8. Sensory & Experiential Layer	How the brand feels.
9. Application & Touchpoints	Where the brand shows up.

Each section is meant to be readable on its own. The document is strongest read in order. The earlier sections answer who we are; the later sections answer how we behave.

HOW DECISIONS GET MADE WITH THIS DOCUMENT

When a design choice, a marketing decision, a hiring question, or an operational change comes up, the document should be consulted before instinct. Every decision should be tested against three filters:

FILTER 01

THE FEELINGS

Does it serve the three governing feelings? **At Home. Satisfied. Charmed.**

FILTER 02

THE PILLARS

Does it support at least one brand pillar? **The Shared Table. Heritage with a Modern Hand. Hospitality Is the Love Language. Built to Be Loved for Decades.**

FILTER 03

THE OWNERS

Would Riad and Irina recognize it as MEZZÉ#1? If the answer is uncertain, ask before publishing.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

The platform is a living document. As the restaurant grows — through new tables, new programs, or new chapters — the platform should evolve with it. But the foundation in Sections 1 through 5 is meant to be durable. The expression in Sections 6 through 9 may sharpen over time.

SECTION 1

FOUNDERS & FOUNDING STORY

Who we are and how we got here.

THE FOUNDERS

MEZZÉ#1 is owned and operated by **Riad El Khaliabi** and **Irina Shlyakhova** — husband and wife, partners since 2003.

An economist and an artist. A man raised at a Damascene table and a woman trained in the museums of Moscow. Two halves of what a great restaurant requires: **discipline and beauty**.

THE JOURNEY

Riad left Damascus for Moscow to pursue a master's in economics. Eight years later — at 28 — he opened his first restaurant. Irina, 23, an art student when they met, became his partner in business as well as in life. Over the next two decades in Moscow, they built two restaurants together.

From Moscow, they moved to New York City to test themselves in one of the most competitive hospitality scenes in the world.

After COVID, they made a deliberate choice. Texas offered something New York no longer could: a fairer climate for small business, warmer neighbors, and communities that still value sitting down for a long meal. They didn't move south to escape. They moved to plant roots.

THE HEART OF IT

MEZZÉ#1 grew out of a simple conviction: that the Middle Eastern table — generous, communal, unhurried — has something the modern American dining scene needs more of.

THE NAME

The name says it plainly. **Mezzé** is the tradition of small dishes shared among friends and family. The **#1** is a personal promise: every plate, every pour, every guest, treated as if it's the only one that matters.

OUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

We measure this restaurant by two things, neither of which appears on a P&L:

A team that wants to be here. Not staff that needs the job — staff that chooses it, year after year.

- Guests who keep coming back.** People who trust us with their first visit, return for their second, and eventually bring the people they love most — partners, parents, kids.

Everything else — the menu, the music, the design, the marketing — exists in service of those two outcomes.

A NOTE ON HERITAGE

Riad's roots are in Damascus. Irina's are in Moscow. We honor both in our recipes, our hospitality instincts, and our private story. But MEZZÉ#1 is a Mediterranean restaurant by design — built to welcome everyone, anchored in tradition without being defined by a single border.



SECTION 2

AUDIENCE

Who we welcome and who we are building toward.

WHO WE WELCOME

MEZZÉ#1 is built for a guest who wants more from a meal than calories and convenience. Our audience is overwhelmingly the suburban Texan diner — affluent or aspirational, social, curious, generous with their time at the table. Most are not from Mediterranean or Middle Eastern backgrounds, which makes our role clear: **we are not serving a community its own food.**

We are introducing a tradition to people who are ready to fall in love with it.

OUR FOUR PRIMARY GUESTS

1. THE CONNECTOR · WOMEN'S NIGHT · ~30%

Late 30s to mid 50s. She's the friend who picks the restaurant. Six to ten women around the table, two bottles of wine in, photos of every dish. She came because someone she trusts told her to. She'll come back — and bring six more — if the staff remembered her name and the food gave her something to talk about.

2. THE FAMILY TABLE · ~30%

Two parents, two to four kids, sometimes grandparents. Sundays, birthdays, after a soccer game. They want a restaurant that takes their kids seriously without being a kids' restaurant. Mezzé is built for this guest — the table fills with small plates, the kids try something new, no one is rushed. They will become our most loyal demographic if we earn them.

3. THE WORKING DINNER · ~20%

Two to six professionals, weeknight, business in motion. They need three things: parking that works, a server who reads the room, and food they can talk through without explaining. They're not here for an experience — they're here to close the deal. If we get it right, they remember us next time they pick.

4. THE DATE NIGHT · ~20%

A couple — established or new. Looking for somewhere that feels like “going out” without an hour drive into Houston. They want lighting they look good in, a cocktail worth ordering, plates worth lingering over, and a dessert that gives them a reason to stay one drink longer. Romance lives in pacing, and our pace is built for them.

ONE AUDIENCE WE'RE BUILDING TOWARD

5. THE CATERING CLIENT · GROWTH PRIORITY

Corporate office managers, event planners, executive assistants, and home hosts planning a wedding shower, retirement party, or holiday gathering. They need three things: confidence the food will arrive correct and on time, presentation that makes them look good, and a contact at the restaurant they trust.

CATERING

Catering is not a side hustle for us — it's a brand extension that puts MEZZÉ#1 on tables we'll never set.

A NOTE ON WINE

Across every persona, wine is currently underperforming relative to our food. Mediterranean cuisine pairs beautifully with the wines of its own region — and that's where our list is anchored: Lebanese wines as the signature, with Old World and New World wines as the supporting cast.

Lebanese wine is our authenticity claim made liquid. Most Mediterranean restaurants in our market default to Italian and Californian. We don't. Musar Jeune is the house red for grilled meats — confident, food-friendly, a real conversation starter at the table. Every server should know at least three Lebanese wines cold: one red, one white, and one rosé or orange wine. Confidence with these names is part of the brand.

THE WINE PRINCIPLE

A guest who orders a second glass of wine is a guest who stays for dessert.

CONROE VS. FULSHEAR: ONE BRAND, TWO TABLES

The brand is identical. The audience emphasis is not.

	FULSHEAR	CONROE
Audience skew	Affluent, suburban, family-anchored	Mixed income, more weeknight traffic, more business dinners
Volume pattern	Larger parties, weekend-heavy, higher catering potential	More lunches, more first-time guests, more bar volume
Marketing emphasis	"Occasion" — birthdays, anniversaries, Sunday family dinners, private events	"Invitation" — approachable mezze, happy hour, lunch

Both rooms serve the same brand promise: **a generous Middle Eastern table, in Texas, run by people who know what they're doing.**



SECTION 3

BRAND PERSONALITY & ARCHETYPE

The character behind the colors.

THE THREE GOVERNING FEELINGS

Every decision at MEZZÉ#1 — a menu line, a host's greeting, a Sunday playlist, a printed napkin — is measured against three feelings we want our guests to leave with:

01

AT HOME

No posture required. The room knows you, the staff knows you, and you don't have to perform to belong here.

02

SATISFIED

The food was generous, the room was right, the bill was fair. The meal kept its promise.

03

CHARMED

They leave proud of the discovery and eager to come back — and to bring someone with them next time.

THE TEST

If a decision doesn't make a guest feel at home, satisfied, or charmed, it doesn't belong in MEZZÉ#1.

BRAND ARCHETYPE: THE GENEROUS HOST, WITH THE WARMTH OF A FAMILY ELDER

If MEZZÉ#1 were a person at the door, it would be the **Generous Host**: the one who pours your wine before you ask, makes sure you've met everyone at the table, and never lets you feel out of place — no matter where you came from.

And underneath that polish lives the soul of the **Warm Family Elder**: the one who feeds you until you can't stand up, hugs you on the way out, and asks about your mother by name the next time you're back.

This is not the brand of the trend-chaser, the scenester, or the celebrity chef.

THE BRAND IN ONE LINE

MEZZÉ#1 is the brand of the family that opens its table. **The food is the gift. The hospitality is the love language.**

PERSONALITY ADJECTIVES

- Generous** — with portions, with time, with attention.
- Warm** — the room, the welcome, the goodbye.
- Confident** — we know what we're doing. We've done this for over twenty years.
- Composed** — disciplined kitchen, beautiful plates, no chaos at the pass.
- Curious** — we still get excited when a guest tries baba ghanouj for the first time.
- Rooted** — Damascus, Moscow, NYC, Texas. Not pretending to be from anywhere we're not.
- Playful** — we take the food seriously. We don't take ourselves too seriously.

WE ARE / WE ARE NOT

WE ARE	WE ARE NOT
A family business	A chain
Mediterranean, Texan, and proudly multicultural	A theme restaurant
Heritage delivered with modern polish	A museum or a fusion experiment
The host who makes you feel at home	The scene that makes you feel watched
A place built to be loved for decades	A place built to go viral
Confident in our craft	Loud about our credentials
Generous	Stingy or transactional
Warm	Cold, ironic, or insider-coded

BRAND VOICE PRINCIPLES

When MEZZÉ#1 speaks — on a menu, a website, a social caption, an email — it sounds like:

- Spoken, not written.** Every line should pass the read-aloud test. If a server couldn't say it to a table, we don't print it.
- Generous in welcome, sparing in word count.** A great host says less, not more.
- Warm without being syrupy.** No "delight," "indulge yourself," or "tantalize." We're warm because we mean it, not because the marketing book said to be.
- Confident without bragging.** We don't list awards. We list dishes.
- Heritage-rooted, never heritage-burdened.** A reference to Damascus or Moscow earns its place when it deepens the moment — not as decoration.

Texan in pace. Unhurried. Friendly. Direct. No NYC sharpness, no LA performance.

REFERENCE BRANDS WE ADMIRE

Three brands triangulate the energy MEZZÉ#1 is reaching toward:

Illi (NYC)

The standard for Mediterranean hospitality at its most polished. We admire the wine program, the catering ambition, and the confidence of presenting Levantine cuisine without apology. We're not Illi — they're fine dining in Manhattan; we're a generous neighborhood table in Texas — but their hospitality discipline is our north star.

Gloria's Latin Cuisine

The standard for festive, multi-generational, Texas-suburban energy. We admire how a Tuesday night family dinner and a Saturday birthday party can feel equally at home in the same room. That is the texture we want at MEZZÉ#1.

Musaafer

The standard for visual ambition in a heritage cuisine. We admire how the room itself becomes part of the meal. Our two tables in Texas don't need to imitate the scale — but the principle holds: the room should tell the story before the menu does.

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SECTION 4

BRAND PROMISE & POSITIONING

What we guarantee and where we sit in the market.

THE BRAND PROMISE

THE PROMISE

Every plate, every pour, every guest — treated as if it were the only one that matters.

This is the promise behind the **#1** in our name. It is not a slogan. It is an operational standard. It governs how a host greets, how a server pours, how a line cook plates, how an owner walks the room.

It also tells our guests, without ever needing to say it out loud: *you are not a number here. You are the reason we opened the doors today.*

THE POSITIONING STATEMENT

For the suburban Texan diner who wants more from a meal than calories and convenience —

MEZZÉ#1 is the **Mediterranean Eatery & Bar** that delivers the generosity of the Middle Eastern table with the polish of internationally-trained restaurateurs and the warmth of a Texas neighborhood.

Unlike the grab-and-go Mediterranean concepts on one side and the unreachable Houston fine-dining destinations on the other, MEZZÉ#1 is the **everyday table you'd be proud to bring anyone to** — your boss, your in-laws, your best friends, or the person you're hoping to impress on a second date.

THE THREE SOURCES

Our discipline comes from twenty years of operating restaurants on two continents. Our beauty comes from an artist's eye on every plate. Our warmth comes from the people behind the door.

WHAT WE COMPETE AGAINST (AND WHAT WE DON'T)

We are not in a category war with the nearest hummus-and-falafel counter. The guest deciding between fast-casual Mediterranean and MEZZÉ#1 isn't the guest we're built for.

Our real competition is the guest's other "going out" options on a Friday night:

REAL COMPETITOR

WHAT MEZZÉ#1 OFFERS INSTEAD

The steakhouse — safe but predictable

More varied, more shareable, more interesting — without giving up the grill

The default Italian — been the default for ten years

The same warmth and familiarity, but with flavors they haven't memorized

The trendy Houston spot — hour drive, three-week wait

The same level of craft and beauty, fifteen minutes from home, with a host who actually remembers their name

Their own kitchen

A real night out — a room that feels like an occasion, food they couldn't make themselves, and a goodbye that makes them want to return

OUR DEFENSIBLE ADVANTAGE

Most Mediterranean restaurants in the Houston metro fall into one of three buckets:

- Authentic but rough** — strong food, weak room, no hospitality discipline.
- Polished but soulless** — corporate-feeling chains with no personal story.
- Ambitious but unreachable** — Houston destination concepts at \$\$\$\$ price points and a 45-minute drive.

MEZZÉ#1 is the only Mediterranean concept in our market that combines all three of:

- Authentic heritage** — a Damascus-born owner with Middle Eastern roots, recipes, and instincts.
- Operational polish** — twenty years of multi-restaurant experience across Moscow, NYC, and Texas.
- Suburban accessibility** — two neighborhood tables, accessible price point, a welcome that scales from a kid's birthday to a wedding rehearsal.

THE MOAT

That combination is hard to copy. A new entrant can copy the menu. A new entrant cannot copy two decades of running rooms across two continents.

THE ONE-LINE VERSIONS

Different rooms ask for different lengths. Here is MEZZÉ#1 at every scale:

THREE WORDS

Sip. Dip. Share.

ONE LINE · TAGLINE

A generous Mediterranean table, in Texas, run by people who know what they're doing.

ONE SENTENCE · ELEVATOR

MEZZÉ#1 is a Mediterranean Eatery & Bar in Conroe and Fulshear, where a Damascus-born restaurateur and his Moscow-trained partner serve the warmth of the Middle Eastern table with the polish of twenty years' international hospitality.

ONE PARAGRAPH · PRESS BOILERPLATE

MEZZÉ#1 is a Mediterranean Eatery & Bar with two tables in Texas — Conroe and Fulshear. Founded by husband-and-wife restaurateurs Riad El Khaliabi and Irina Shlyakhova, the concept brings together two decades of international hospitality experience across Moscow, New York, and Texas. The menu is anchored in the mezzé tradition of small dishes shared among friends and family, paired with a curated bar program and a curated wine list. The hospitality is built around a single promise: every plate, every pour, every guest — treated as if it were the only one that matters.

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SECTION 5

BRAND PILLARS

The four ideas everything we do should reinforce.

Brand pillars are the four ideas that everything we do should reinforce. They sit between the promise (what we guarantee) and the expression (how it shows up). When a marketing decision, a menu change, or a hiring choice gets made, it should clearly support at least one pillar — ideally two.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF MEZZÉ#1

1. THE SHARED TABLE

Mezzé isn't a category. It's a way of eating.

The Middle Eastern table is built around small plates passed between friends, not entrées defended by individuals. We design every menu, every layout, every plating decision around that truth. A meal at MEZZÉ#1 should feel like a slow conversation with food in the middle of it. Nobody eats alone here, even if they came alone.

This pillar governs: menu structure, table size, plating, family-style options, catering format, service pacing, the way servers describe dishes (“for the table” before “for you”).

2. HERITAGE WITH A MODERN HAND

Tradition is the recipe. Beauty is the plating.

We do not modernize Mediterranean food into something it isn't. Hummus is hummus. Kafta is kafta. But the way it arrives — on patterned ceramic, with a pomegranate-seed garnish, in a room with thoughtful lighting — is contemporary, composed, and visibly cared-for. An economist runs the kitchen with discipline. An artist plates it with beauty. That tension is the pillar.

This pillar governs: recipe authenticity, plating standards, photography direction, design language, menu copy, the room itself.

3. HOSPITALITY IS THE LOVE LANGUAGE

The food is the gift. The welcome is what they remember.

Anyone can serve good Mediterranean food in 2026. What they can't easily replicate is what happens between the host stand and the goodbye. Our staff is trained — and chosen — to treat every guest the way you'd treat a guest in your own home: pour the wine, learn the name, remember the order, ask about the kid by name next time. A team that wants to be here is the only way this pillar holds.

This pillar governs: hiring standards, training programs, host script, server behavior, complaint handling, loyalty program, staff retention as a brand metric.

4. BUILT TO BE LOVED FOR DECADES

Not the loudest restaurant in Texas. The longest-loved.

We are not chasing virality, scene status, or trend cycles. We are building a restaurant that earns repeat visits, multi-generational loyalty, and the quiet kind of success that compounds. Every decision passes a single test: **does this make MEZZÉ#1 more loved in five years, or less?**

This pillar governs: marketing tone (no gimmicks, no fads), menu evolution (slow, considered), expansion strategy, design durability, partnerships, the brand's refusal to chase scenes.

HOW THE PILLARS WORK TOGETHER

PILLAR	WHAT IT PROTECTS	WHAT IT DEFEATS
The Shared Table	The way of eating	Restaurants that feel transactional
Heritage with a Modern Hand	The food and the room	Either fusion shortcuts or museum staleness
Hospitality Is the Love Language	The team and the guest experience	Cold service, scripted warmth, staff churn
Built to Be Loved for Decades	The long game	Trend-chasing, viral gimmicks, shortcut thinking

THE SUMMARY

Together, the four pillars describe a restaurant that is communal, beautifully made, warmly served, and built to last. **Not a fashion. A foundation.**

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SECTION 6

VERBAL IDENTITY

How the brand speaks.

This is the section that turns the brand from a strategy into a voice. Once locked, it governs every word the brand utters: menu copy, website pages, Instagram captions, email subject lines, third-party listings, host scripts, catering proposals, even the phone greeting.

A great brand sounds the same whether you encounter it on a menu, on a sign, or from a server's mouth. That consistency is what makes a guest feel they're dealing with one coherent place — not a website, a restaurant, and a Google listing that happen to share a name.

THE TAGLINE SYSTEM

Most brands try to write one tagline that works everywhere. The good ones use a tagline system — different lines for different jobs.

PRIMARY TAGLINE · PUBLIC-FACING

PRIMARY

Sip. Dip. Share.

Three words. Already in use on the website. Action-oriented, alliterative, and captures the bar + mezzé + communal-table thesis in one breath. This goes everywhere: signage, social bios, footer of every email, business cards.

DESCRIPTOR LINE · FUNCTIONAL

Mediterranean Eatery & Bar.

Plain, accurate, SEO-clean. Sits next to the logo on the website, on Google listings, on signage. Not romantic — but romantic isn't its job. Findability is.

BRAND LINE · EDITORIAL

A generous Mediterranean table, in Texas, run by people who know what they're doing.

For longer-form moments: press releases, About pages, partnership conversations, hiring posts. Establishes the kind of restaurant we are without overselling.

OPERATING MOTTO · STAFF + SERVICE

Every plate, every pour, every guest.

Already lives on the website. This is the staff's daily reminder of the standard. It's also the answer when anyone asks, "what does the #1 mean?"

HOSPITALITY MOTTO · INTERNAL

The food is the gift. The hospitality is the love language.

Used in onboarding, in pre-shift meetings, in any conversation about what makes MEZZÉ#1 different from a restaurant that just happens to serve mezzé.

WORDS WE USE

WORD	WHY
Table	Our central metaphor. Always preferred over "venue," "spot," "place."
Share, shared, sharing	The mezzé ethos in one verb.
Generous	Our defining adjective for portions, hospitality, time.
Warm, warmth	The temperature of the brand.
Mezzé	Our category. Always italicized on first menu use.
The grill	The other half of our kitchen. Honest, hot, primal.
Pour	More evocative than "drink" or "beverage." A pour implies care.
Linger	Our preferred verb for what guests do at our table.
Heritage	Honest, earned word. Better than "authentic" or "traditional."
Neighborhood	We are a neighborhood restaurant, not a destination.
Family	Used carefully and meaningfully — never as a marketing word.
Slow / unhurried	Our pacing, our value.

WORDS WE AVOID

WORD	WHY
Fusion	Lazy. Implies inauthenticity. We are Mediterranean, not Mediterranean-meets-something.
Authentic	Self-defeating. Authentic restaurants don't claim authenticity.

WORD	WHY
Exotic	Othering. Our cuisine is not foreign — it's ours.
Ethnic	Same problem. Reductive.
Indulge / indulgent	Cliché marketing word. We say <i>generous</i> instead.
Tantalizing	Restaurant-copywriter-speak. Banned.
Mouthwatering	Same.
A culinary journey	Banned everywhere, forever.
Curated	Overused to meaninglessness. Use <i>chosen</i> or <i>built</i> instead.
Hidden gem	We are not a gem and we are not hidden.
Foodie / foodies	Diminishes the guest.
Vibe / vibey	Too casual. We have an atmosphere, a room, an evening.
Crafted	Overused. Use <i>made</i> , <i>built</i> , or just describe the dish.
Elevated	Implies the original was beneath us. We are not elevating Mediterranean food. We are serving it well.

VOICE PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

When in doubt, the brand voice asks itself six questions before publishing anything:

- Does it pass the read-aloud test?** Could a server say this to a table without sounding like a brochure?
- Is it generous in welcome and sparing in word count?** Can we cut a third of the words and keep the meaning?
- Is it warm without being syrupy?** Did we resist the easy emotion-trigger word?
- Is it confident without bragging?** Are we listing dishes, not awards?
- Did the heritage reference earn its place?** Or is Damascus / Moscow / Lebanon being used as decoration?
- Does it sound like us — or like every other Mediterranean restaurant?** Generic = wrong.

VOICE EXAMPLES: WRONG VS. RIGHT

MENU COPY · BABA GHANOUJ

✗ Our authentic, mouthwatering baba ghanouj is a tantalizing blend of smoky eggplant and a journey of Middle Eastern spices.

✓ Baba Ghanouj. Smoked eggplant, tahini, lemon, pomegranate. *Slow fire, slow flavor.*

INSTAGRAM CAPTION · LAMB CHOPS

✗ Indulge in our perfectly crafted lamb chops, an elevated culinary experience that transports you to the Mediterranean!

✓ Lamb chops. Off the grill. Pomegranate, mint, a squeeze of lemon. *Don't share these.*

WEBSITE · ABOUT PAGE INTRO

✗ Welcome to MEZZÉ#1, a hidden gem where authentic Mediterranean cuisine meets a vibey atmosphere for a truly unforgettable culinary journey.

✓ MEZZÉ#1 is a Mediterranean Eatery & Bar with two tables in Texas. Husband-and-wife owned. Twenty years of practice. One promise: every plate, every pour, every guest.

EMAIL · CATERING INQUIRY RESPONSE

✗ Thank you for your interest! We would love to indulge your guests with our curated, elevated Mediterranean offerings for your special event.

✓ Thanks for reaching out. The fastest way to put your order in is right here: mezze1.com/catering. Pick your menu, your headcount, and your date — we'll take it from there. Any questions along the way, just reply to this email.

WEBSITE CTA · RESERVE A TABLE

✗ Click here for an unforgettable culinary journey at MEZZÉ#1!

✓ Save a seat at our table. → [Reserve in Conroe] [Reserve in Fulshear]

CHANNEL RULE: DIRECT GUESTS TO THE RIGHT TOOL

The brand voice should always point guests to the most efficient path, not perform conversation:

- Reservations** → website reservation link, not phone or email back-and-forth.
- Catering** → website catering page, not a quote-by-email exchange.
- Online orders** → [order.online](#) link, not "call us to order."
- Events & buyouts** → events form, not a free-form email.

The brand should **never name the reservation platform out loud to guests**. Whatever system we use, that's plumbing. The guest-facing language is always "Reserve a table," "Save a seat," "Book your table" — never the name of the booking tool. The platform is a tool. The table is the brand.

THE PRINCIPLE

A generous host doesn't make you wait. The fastest, clearest path is hospitality.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

MENU SECTIONS

Use the names that already work on the website: **Mezzé. Grill. Salads. Bar.** Plain, confident, no theatrics. Resist temptation to rename them ("From the Flame," "Garden's Bounty"). Plain wins.

DISHES

Use the dish's real name first. Add a one-line description in plain English. *Baba Ghanouj. Smoked eggplant, tahini, lemon, pomegranate.* Not *Eggplant Spread (Baba Ghanouj)*. Trust the guest to ask if they need to.

COCKTAILS · THE HIGHEST-LEVERAGE NAMING OPPORTUNITY

Cocktails are where MEZZÉ#1's Heritage with a Modern Hand pillar can show up most playfully. Naming convention: a single evocative word, often a place, a person, or a poetic Arabic / Mediterranean reference. **Layla** (already on the menu — perfect). *Damascus. Beirut. Bosphorus. Levant. Halab. Aleppo. Andalus. Tigris. Cardamom. Zahra.* Avoid the punny direction (Mez-Tini, Hummustini). Ever.

CATERING PACKAGES

Catering is organized by format and headcount — by-the-tray for à la carte builds, group packages sized to headcount for fixed-price spreads, and individual boxed lunches for per-plate events. This structure matches how catering buyers actually think: they shop by headcount and budget, not by event theme.

The brand voice lives in the descriptions, the fine print, and the headline language ("Bring the table to them") — not in product names that try to romanticize a tray of hummus. Plain item names, generous descriptions, friendly rules. Trust the buyer to know what kind of event they're planning.

EVENTS

Same logic. *Wine on the Patio. Sunday at the Table. Mother's Day at the Table.* Plain, evocative, easy to say.

THE FUNCTIONAL VOCABULARY SPLIT

A formal rule: brand-voice contexts use one vocabulary, functional contexts use another.

BRAND VOICE (STORYTELLING, HEADLINES, INTERNAL COPY)	FUNCTIONAL (SEO, NAVIGATION, ADDRESSES)
Tables	Locations
The room, the evening	The restaurant
Our two tables in Texas	Our Conroe and Fulshear locations
Sip. Dip. Share.	Mediterranean Eatery & Bar

Both vocabularies are correct in their context. Mixing them up — using “tables” in the navigation menu, or “locations” in a press story — breaks the brand.

MEZZÉ#1 · MZ-1.1 · BRAND PLATFORM

VII

SECTION 7

VISUAL IDENTITY

How the brand looks.

The visual system inherits a strong starting point: a confident logo, a distinctive color story, a thoughtful typeface pairing, and — most importantly — a geometric pattern that few competitors in the category own. The job of this section is to take what already exists and turn it into a system with rules, ratios, and discipline.

THE LOGO SYSTEM

PRIMARY LOGO

The full MEZZÉ#1 wordmark with the geometric pattern bands above and below, plus the **Mediterranean Eatery & Bar** descriptor in burnt orange. This is the lead expression of the brand.

LOGO VARIATIONS REQUIRED

Every brand needs at least four logo files on hand:

- Full color on dark** — the existing logo on black or deep forest green.
- Full color on light** — the same logo on off-white. Pattern colors stay vibrant; wordmark goes deep forest green.
- Single-color reverse (white)** — for use on photography, dark patterned backgrounds, or ad placements where full color would clash.
- Single-color positive (forest green or black)** — for newsprint, embroidery, single-color printing, embossing, and any context where color isn't available.

WORDMARK-ONLY (NO PATTERN BANDS)

For very small placements (favicon, app icon, business card corner, social media profile photo), the geometric bands cannot be read clearly. A simplified wordmark-only version of MEZZÉ#1 should be used in those contexts.

CLEAR SPACE RULE

The logo must always be surrounded by clear space equal to the height of the # symbol on all sides. Nothing — text, photography, edges, other graphics — should enter that zone.

MINIMUM SIZE

- Print: the wordmark height must be at least **0.5 inch (12mm)**.

- Digital: the wordmark height must be at least **36 pixels**.
- Below those sizes, use the wordmark-only version.

LOGO DON'TS

- Don't stretch, skew, or rotate.
- Don't recolor the wordmark in non-palette colors.
- Don't add drop shadows, glows, or outlines.
- Don't place on busy or low-contrast backgrounds.
- Don't reproduce the pattern bands without the wordmark, except when used as the standalone Pattern System.
- Don't combine with other logos in a lockup without 1x clear space between.

THE COLOR PALETTE

The palette is distinctive, varied, and immediately ownable in the Mediterranean restaurant category, where most brands default to terracotta and olive. We need to formalize hierarchy and ratios so the colors don't fight each other in execution.

PALETTE DECISION

Solar Gold has been removed from the working palette at owner direction. Earlier drafts of this platform included Solar Gold (#F4CB13) as a 5% accent color. The active palette is five colors only: Forest Green, Burnt Orange, Sky Blue, Off-White, Charcoal.

MASTER PALETTE

ROLE	NAME	HEX	RGB	CMYK
Primary	Deep Forest Green	#224C24	34, 76, 36	82, 43, 100, 46
Secondary	Burnt Orange	#F15723	241, 87, 35	0, 82, 100, 0
Accent	Sky Blue	#45C5F3	69, 197, 243	60, 1, 0, 0
Neutral Light	Off-White	#FFF6F0	255, 246, 240	0, 3, 4, 0
Neutral Dark	Charcoal	#282829	40, 40, 41	0, 0, 0, 95

COLOR HIERARCHY & RATIOS

The palette is wide on purpose, but a wide palette without rules creates visual chaos. The 60/25/10/5 rule:

- 60% · Neutrals.** Off-White or Charcoal. The canvas. Backgrounds, large surfaces, breathing room. The brand lives mostly in the quiet.
- 25% · Deep Forest Green.** The brand's anchoring color. Logos, primary type, dominant accents.
- 10% · Burnt Orange.** Secondary system color. Descriptor lines, key callouts, button states, feature dishes.
- 5% · Sky Blue.** Punctuation, never structure. Used in the pattern, in small graphic accents, in occasional category coding. Never as a large block of color on its own.

Common mistake to avoid: using all colors at equal weight on the same surface. A menu cover, a flyer, or a social post that splits attention four ways reads as decorative, not branded. Pick the dominant, support with one secondary, accent with the others sparingly.

WHEN TO USE LIGHT MODE VS. DARK MODE

- Off-White background** — daytime contexts, menus, business documents, daytime photography. Reads *elegant eatery*.
- Charcoal or Deep Green background** — evening contexts, cocktail menus, event invitations, hero website sections, evening photography. Reads *vibrant table after dark*.

The same brand assets must function in both modes. Test every layout against both backgrounds before approving.

TYPOGRAPHY

The pairing — **Rift Bold + Sofia Pro** — is the canonical brand typography. Rift gives MEZZÉ#1 its architectural, condensed, almost-Brutalist headline voice; Sofia Pro provides the warmer, more readable counterweight.

BUILD STATE

Current build note: The PDFs in the documentation suite use Oswald (display) and Inter (body) as open-source substitutes pending installation of the licensed Rift Bold and Sofia Pro font files. When the licensed fonts are installed, a single typography-swap pass will rebuild all suite PDFs in the canonical brand fonts. The substitution is for build practicality only — the canonical brand typography is Rift Bold + Sofia Pro.

TYPE HIERARCHY

LEVEL	TYPEFACE	WEIGHT	USAGE
H1 · Display	Rift	Bold	Logo, large signage, hero headlines, menu titles, section heads
H2 · Subhead	Sofia Pro	Bold	Subsection heads, category labels, button text, callouts

LEVEL	TYPEFACE	WEIGHT	USAGE
H3 · Eyebrow	Sofia Pro	Bold (small caps, tracked)	Eyebrow labels, navigation, minor section dividers
Body	Sofia Pro	Regular	Body copy, menu descriptions, all running text
Body emphasis	Sofia Pro	Italic or Bold	Sparingly, for emphasis only

TYPOGRAPHY RULES

- Rift never runs in body copy.** It is a display face only. Beyond a few words, it becomes hard to read.
- Sofia Pro never replaces Rift in headlines** unless physical constraints (e.g., a very narrow column or small space) genuinely require it.
- All caps for Rift; sentence case for Sofia Pro is the default split.** Rift in mixed case can work for very short labels; Sofia Pro in all caps should be tracked +50 or used as eyebrow only.
- No more than three sizes on a single piece.** A menu, a flyer, an Instagram post should establish a clear hierarchy with restraint.
- Numbers in Rift Bold for prices.** The architectural quality of the typeface makes prices feel confident rather than apologetic.

THE PATTERN SYSTEM: THE BRAND'S MOST OWNABLE ASSET

The geometric bands above and below the wordmark — alternating diamonds, circles, and almond/eye shapes in the palette colors — are MEZZÉ#1's single most distinctive visual asset. No other Mediterranean restaurant in the Houston metro owns a pattern like this. Most don't have a pattern at all.

This pattern should be treated as a standalone brand element, not just a decoration on the logo.

WHERE THE PATTERN BELONGS

- Menus** — as a header band, footer band, or section divider.
- To-go packaging** — wrapped around takeout boxes, on bag handles, on coffee cups.
- Napkins, coasters, table runners** — printed as a repeating pattern.
- Email and social media headers** — establishing brand recognition before the wordmark appears.
- Interior signage and wayfinding** — bathroom doors, chalkboards, the path-to-patio.
- Apparel (back-of-house and front-of-house)** — apron straps, T-shirt collars, hat brims.

PATTERN VARIATIONS TO DEVELOP

- Full-color pattern on light background — the lead expression.
- Full-color pattern on dark background — for evening contexts.

- Single-element repeats — just the diamonds, just the eyes, just the circles, used as smaller textures or on small-scale items.
- Single-color pattern (forest green only, or charcoal only) — for embossing, debossing, embroidery, or contexts where multi-color printing isn't possible.
- Oversized pattern — used as a wall mural, a feature wall in either restaurant, or a large-format graphic on signage.

THE PRINCIPLE

The pattern is to MEZZÉ#1 what tartan is to Burberry. Used consistently and confidently, it becomes shorthand for the brand even without the wordmark present.

PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTION

Three modes govern all MEZZÉ#1 photography:

1. FOOD, CLOSE · &LDQUO;HERO PLATES&RDQUO;

Shot on a dark wood table with the patterned ceramic plates that are already in service. Top-down or 3/4 angle. Warm tungsten light from the side, never overhead flash. Garnish details (pomegranate seeds, parsley, sumac dust, olive oil) should be visible and crisp. Background slightly out of focus — warm light dissolving into soft glow behind the food. This is the photography that goes on Instagram, on the menu, on the website hero.

2. ROOM, WIDE · &LDQUO;THE EVENING&RDQUO;

Wide-angle, dim, atmospheric. Tungsten warmth. Lanterns lit. Some motion blur on people is fine — implies aliveness. **Never empty.** A shot of an empty MEZZÉ#1 dining room is not a brand shot. Always include people, food, light, or motion.

3. PEOPLE, CANDID · &LDQUO;THE TABLE&RDQUO;

Mid-shot of guests laughing, mid-conversation, mid-bite. Never staged smiles to camera. Faces in soft focus from light, hands and food and glasses sharp. Warm, human, lived-in feeling.

PHOTOGRAPHY DON'TS

- No overhead flat-lay food shots with white backgrounds. That's e-commerce photography, not restaurant photography.
- No cold, blue-toned, daylight-balanced food. Mediterranean food belongs in warm light.
- No empty room photos. A restaurant without people is a real estate listing.
- No stock photography, ever. Even for hiring posts, social media graphics, or website pages. If we need an image, we shoot it.
- No smiling-server-holding-plate shots. Stock-photo cliché.

PLATING AS VISUAL IDENTITY

The food on the plate is the brand expression — more than the menu, the website, or the napkin.

PLATING STANDARDS

- Always on the patterned ceramic.** The blue-and-white floral plates are a brand-defining visual asset. They appear in nearly every food photograph the restaurant produces. Resist any temptation to switch to plain white plates “for cleaner photos.” The pattern is the brand.
- Garnish is non-negotiable.** Pomegranate seeds, fresh herbs, sumac, Aleppo pepper, edible flowers, a drizzle of olive oil. Every dip plate, every grilled item, every salad gets a finish. Plates without garnish never leave the pass.
- Composition before plating.** Cooks should be trained to plate as if photographing — color contrast, height variation, asymmetry, intentional empty space. Irina's eye should be encoded into a plating training document.
- No squeeze-bottle decoration.** No drizzles, no swooshes, no “art on the plate.” The food is the art. The plate is the frame. Garnish, don't decorate.

MATERIAL & SENSORY LANGUAGE

The MEZZÉ#1 material palette includes:

- Warm wood** — tables, floors, accents. Never cold gray laminate.
- Brass and antique-gold metals** — light fixtures, hardware, serving accents.
- Patterned ceramic** — the blue-and-white plates, complementary serving pieces.
- Silver crocodile-textured leather** — banquettes, signature seating.
- Mosaic glass and tassel** — Turkish lanterns, ornamental light fixtures.
- Dried florals and willow branches** — decor, table arrangements, screens.
- Industrial wire pendants** — modern counterweight to the heritage elements.

Future renovations, new tables, or Conroe/Fulshear-specific design choices should pull from this material palette. The two rooms can be distinct, but the materials should rhyme.

ICONOGRAPHY

Brand icons (online ordering, catering, reserve, menu, location) should be:

- Linework only, no fill, in deep forest green or charcoal.
- Drawn in a slightly geometric, hand-feel style — echoing the geometric pattern, not generic Material Design icons.
- Consistent stroke weight across the set.
- Sparingly used. Icons support, never replace, words. A button that says “Reserve” beats a calendar icon every time.

THE VISUAL IDENTITY MASTER DON'TS

- No emoji-style decoration in marketing materials.
- No filtered, oversaturated photography. No Valencia, Lo-Fi, or aggressive Instagram presets.
- No competing logos in a single composition. One logo, breathing.
- No script fonts, ever. Including for elegance, weddings, or holiday menus. Rift + Sofia Pro is the system.
- No lazy heritage references. No camels, no pyramids, no fez illustrations, no Aladdin lamps. The geometric pattern carries the heritage.
- No food on white plates.

VIII

SECTION 8

SENSORY & EXPERIENTIAL LAYER

How the brand feels.

THE PRINCIPLE

A competitor can copy our menu in a month. They cannot copy a room that has been composed across five senses.

Everything in this section is in service of the three governing feelings: **At Home. Satisfied. Charmed.** If a sensory choice doesn't deliver one of those, it doesn't belong.

THE FIVE SENSES OF MEZZÉ#1

A guest's experience is built from five inputs, in roughly this order of impact:

- Sight** — the room they walk into.
- Sound** — the music, the volume, the conversations around them.
- Smell** — the air the moment the door opens.
- Touch** — the napkin, the chair, the temperature of the bread.
- Taste** — last, because the others have already shaped how it lands.

Most restaurants invest in #5 and leave the other four to chance. **We invest in all five.**

1. SIGHT: THE ROOM AS A STORY

THE ROOM HAS TWO MOODS

- Day & early evening (lunch through 7:00 PM).** Warm but bright. Natural light through the windows. Lanterns on at low intensity. Music ambient. The room reads *eatery* — welcoming families, business lunches, casual dinners.
- Evening & late (7:00 PM onward).** Lights dim incrementally. Table lamps fully on. Lanterns at full intensity. Music shifts. The room reads *table* — communal, lingering, romantic.

This shift should not be a single switch at 7:00. It should happen gradually across about thirty minutes, the way the sun actually sets. The room performs a slow exhale into the evening. Most guests will never consciously notice it. They'll just feel that something settled.

LIGHTING DISCIPLINE

- Dimmers on every fixture. No exceptions.
- No overhead fluorescent or harsh white LEDs in any guest-facing area, ever.
- Color temperature stays warm: **2700K to 3000K range**. Tungsten warmth is the brand's color of light. This is the spec for new locations and renovations — applied at build time, not retrofitted into existing rooms.
- The bar should be brighter than the dining room — bartenders need to see, and the bar reads as a destination within the room.
- Bathroom lighting matters.** Guests reapply makeup, check their hair, take selfies. Warm, flattering, dimmable. Not gas-station fluorescent.

SEASONAL & OCCASION DECOR

The room dresses for the season — but with the same visual discipline as the rest of the brand. Christmas garlands look beautiful when they're consistent with the room's existing materials (greenery, brass, warm metallics). They look cheap when they're plastic Santa cutouts and big-box-store snowflakes. **Decor must honor the material palette.**

2. SOUND: THE SOUNDTRACK OF THE TABLE

Music is the most underrated brand expression in restaurants. A guest can't quote the tagline, but they remember whether they liked the music. Get this right and they associate the feeling of MEZZÉ#1 with the sound of MEZZÉ#1.

THE MEZZÉ#1 SOUNDSCAPE

The brand sound sits at the intersection of Mediterranean / Middle Eastern roots and modern global polish. Think: **Arabic, Turkish, North African, and Levantine influences, blended with contemporary instrumentation, electronic textures, and lounge sensibility.** Warm. Confident. Never aggressive. Never nostalgic.

SUGGESTED REFERENCE ARTISTS & LABELS

- Habibi Funk (label)** — reissued Arab funk, jazz, and disco from the 60s–80s.
- Acid Arab** — French electronic duo blending dabke and house.
- Bedouin** — modern Middle Eastern–inflected electronic.
- Onur Engin** — Turkish-influenced disco edits.
- Dengue Dengue Dengue, Nicola Cruz** — global rhythmic electronic, useful for shoulder hours.
- Ibrahim Maalouf, Anouar Brahem, Erkan Oğur** — for daytime and quieter dinner moments.
- Souad Massi, Natacha Atlas, Yasmine Hamdan** — vocal anchors for evening.

TWO PLAYLISTS, TWO MOODS

- Lunch & daytime** — instrumental, melodic, warm. Volume around 55–60 dB. The music supports conversation without entering it.
- Dinner & evening (5:00 PM onward)** — vocal-forward, Mediterranean-rooted, modern production. Volume rises gradually from 60 to 65 dB as the room fills in. The energy of the evening, never the energy of a

club.

SOUNDSCAPE DISCIPLINE

- Never silence.** A restaurant without music feels like a waiting room.
- Never loud enough to compete with conversation.** A guest who has to lean in to be heard is a guest who leaves early.
- Never the wrong era for the time of day.** No Habibi Funk dance-floor cuts at 12:30 PM Tuesday lunch.
- Never a streaming service's free Mediterranean playlist.** Those are full of cliché belly-dance music and brand-killing oud-and-ney soundtracks. Curate, or pay someone to curate.

RECOMMENDATION

Commission a custom brand playlist — one for each of the two moods — and audit it quarterly. Hospitality-grade music services (Soundtrack Your Brand, Mood Media, Wynd) can host the curated lists, manage the licensing, and rotate them automatically by time of day.

3. SMELL: THE AIR WHEN THE DOOR OPENS

The first sensory impression a guest has of MEZZÉ#1 is not the host's greeting. It is the air. They have already decided whether they like the place before they say a word.

THE MEZZÉ#1 SMELL

The dominant scent of the room should be **the food itself** — warm bread, the grill, garlic, olive oil, herbs. This is non-negotiable and already true. The kitchen is the brand's primary fragrance, and we should never mask it.

WHAT SHOULD NEVER SMELL

- Cleaning chemicals, especially bleach.** A guest who walks in and smells bleach has walked into the wrong room. Cleaning happens before opening, never during.
- Stale grease or stale air.** HVAC and exhaust hoods should be on a strict service schedule.
- Cigarette smoke from the patio drifting indoors.** Patio doors close, or smoking sections are positioned downwind.
- Heavy commercial air fresheners or scented candles.** They fight the food and signal cover-up.

ONE SUBTLE LAYERING

A small, carefully chosen ambient scent at the entrance — not in the dining room — can reinforce the brand:

- Cardamom and orange peel** in a low-volume diffuser at the host stand.
- Rose water and bay leaf** in the bathroom.
- Cedar and frankincense** in the entryway in winter; mint and citrus in summer.

THE RULE

The ambient scent should be barely perceptible. A guest should never be able to name it. They should only feel that the place smells good.

4. TOUCH: THE TACTILE BRAND

MEZZÉ#1 TACTILE STANDARDS

- Cloth napkins, always.** Already in service. Never paper, even at lunch.
- Heavy flatware and glassware.** Weight = perceived value. A light cocktail glass undermines a \$14 cocktail.
- The bread is warm.** One of the highest-leverage tactile signals in the entire industry. Cold bread means a kitchen that doesn't care. Warm bread means love.
- The water is cold and refilled before it's empty.** Old-school standard. Still the gold standard.
- The chair is comfortable for a 90-minute meal.** Test every chair against this standard. If a guest is shifting after 45 minutes, the chair is wrong.
- The temperature of the room is right.** Slightly cool, never cold. A restaurant that's too cold means staying for one course; a restaurant that's slightly warm and slightly social means staying for three.

MENUS AND PRINTED MATERIALS

- Menus are printed on substantial paper — minimum 100 lb cover stock. Light, flimsy menus undermine perceived value.
- Menus get replaced when they get worn. A stained, dog-eared menu is brand damage.
- Event booklets and welcome packets for confirmed private bookings are printed with the same discipline. The host will pass them around.

5. TASTE: BEYOND THE RECIPE

THE FIRST-BITE RULE

The first dish from the order — whatever the kitchen sends out first, almost always a mezzé — sets the bar for everything that follows. It must be flawless: temperature right, plating composed, garnish present. **This is the moment a guest decides, consciously or not, what kind of restaurant they're in.** Get this dish right and the table is leaning in for the rest of the meal.

THE BREAD STANDARD

- Warm. Always.** The single highest-leverage tactile signal of the meal.
- Sized to the order.** Pita comes in standard portion with dips; some grilled dishes don't include pita. The portion is part of the menu structure.
- Extra pita is available for a small charge.** When a guest asks, it arrives warm and quickly — that's where the hospitality lives.
- The bread that does arrive is fresh, never reheated past its prime, never delivered cold to the table.

THE LAST-BITE RULE

The other end of the meal matters as much as the first. The guest's final taste is what they carry out the door.

A small offering at the end of the meal — a piece of Turkish delight, a date, a tiny sweet, a small pour of arak — should arrive with the check. Not for every guest, every shift (cost matters), but as a recurring brand gesture, especially for tables that lingered, ordered well, or had an occasion. **The cost is pennies. The memory is enormous.**

CROSS-PAIRING THE KITCHEN AND THE BAR

Ingredients should travel between the bar and the kitchen.

Pomegranate, mint, cardamom, rose water, sumac, orange blossom, tamarind — each of these should appear both in a dish and in a cocktail.

THE PRINCIPLE

A guest who orders the baba ghanouj and the Layla cocktail should taste a thread between them. They won't articulate it. They'll just feel that the meal makes sense.

HOSPITALITY: THE SIXTH SENSE

This is the master sense — the one that ties the other five into a feeling. It is the most ownable, because **no competitor can copy a team that genuinely cares.**

THE TEN HOSPITALITY STANDARDS

HOW TO READ THIS

These ten standards are how owners evaluate the floor. They are not the operational sequence — that's the 9 Steps of Service, which the team reads and works from. The standards are **principles**; the Steps are **procedure**. Each standard below notes where it shows up in employee-facing operational material.

1. THE GREETING IS PERSONAL

A guest is welcomed by a person, not pointed at a podium. Eye contact, a smile, a warm “welcome to MEZZÉ#1” — never “do you have a reservation?” first.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 01 (Greeting & Seating).

2. WALK THE GUEST, DON'T POINT

A guest is escorted to their table, never instructed where to find it.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 01.

3. THE WATER ARRIVES BEFORE THE MENU

Hospitality begins with care of the body. Hunger and thirst come before commerce.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 02 (Server Welcome & Water).

4. THE FIRST SERVER VISIT IS CONVERSATION, NOT A TRANSACTION

"How are you tonight?" before "what can I get you?"

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 02.

5. FIRST-TIME GUESTS ARE RECOGNIZED AS FIRST-TIME GUESTS

A simple "is this your first time with us?" and a brief, warm orientation to the menu transforms a stranger into a guest.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 02.

6. NAMES ARE REMEMBERED

When a guest returns, the host or server ideally remembers them. Our reservation and guest-history system supports this — the team should use it. **Recognition is the highest-leverage hospitality act.**

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Steps 02, 08, 09.

7. ALLERGIES AND DIETARY NEEDS ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND WARMLY

"We can absolutely take care of that" is the only acceptable response. Never sighing, never "let me check," never visible inconvenience.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 04 + Protocol A (Allergy Handling).

8. CHILDREN ARE WELCOMED, NOT TOLERATED

A coloring page and crayons for the kids. A simple "thank you for bringing the family." A high chair that's already wiped down. When a child melts down, the server quietly offers to fire the kids' food early; if it continues, the server offers to box the meal up so the family can leave without pressure. **Parents remember which restaurants made it easy.**

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 04.

9. THE CHECK COMES ONLY WHEN ASKED

We do not drop the check to signal the meal is over. If a guest is still in conversation, offer another coffee, another pour, dessert. If they're ready, the check arrives immediately. Until then, the table is theirs. **A full room is part of the brand** — a guest who stays an extra thirty minutes is a guest we're glad to have, and other guests can see the room is full.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Steps 06 & 08.

10. THE GOODBYE IS AS WARM AS THE GREETING

A guest leaving MEZZÉ#1 should be acknowledged at the door — not just by their server, but by anyone nearby. "Thanks for being with us tonight" is the brand. "Have a good night" is generic.

Operationalized in: FOH Steps of Service, Step 09 (Farewell).

THE MANAGER WALK (AND THE OWNER WALK)

Every full table receives at least one manager visit per shift, where operationally possible. A thirty-second visit — “is everything good? did you try the lamb chops?” — converts a satisfied guest into a returning one. The manager walk is the operational standard, and it protects brand consistency at scale across two tables in Texas.

When Riad or Irina is on the floor, the **owner walk** becomes the bonus on top — a personal visit from the founders, which is the single strongest hospitality signal a family-owned restaurant can send. A chain cannot copy it. But the brand cannot depend on the founders being in the room. **The manager walk is what guarantees the standard. The owner walk is what elevates it.**

THE TWO TABLES HAVE TWO SOULS

Conroe and Fulshear share the brand. They do not need to be identical experiences.

- Fulshear** — slightly more polished. The wine program leans deeper, the patio is set more formally for occasions, the room feels more like a destination. *Special is its texture.*
- Conroe** — slightly more neighborhood. The bar runs warmer, the energy more weeknight-friendly, the lunch crowd more woven into the room. *Familiar is its texture.*

Both are MEZZÉ#1. Both deliver the three feelings. They simply emphasize different notes of the same chord.

IX

SECTION 9

APPLICATION & TOUCHPOINTS

Where the brand shows up.

A brand only exists where guests encounter it. This section maps every place MEZZÉ#1 shows up and defines what each touchpoint must do, what it must avoid, and how it ladders back to the platform.

THE TOUCHPOINT MAP

FAMILY	WHAT IT COVERS	BRAND PRIORITY
In-Restaurant	Everything inside the four walls	Highest
Digital	Website, social, email, listings	High
Reviews	How we answer Google, Yelp, and other public reviews	Brand-protecting
Print & Physical	Menus, packaging, collateral	High
Hospitality Programs	Catering, events, loyalty, gift cards	Growth-critical
Team & People	Hiring, training, uniforms, internal comms	Brand-defining

1. IN-RESTAURANT TOUCHPOINTS

EXTERIOR & SIGNAGE

- The MEZZÉ#1 wordmark visible from the street, lit at night.
- Window decals or etched glass with the geometric pattern, never with promotional copy ("Now Serving Brunch!" stickers are brand damage).
- A small chalkboard or printed daily card by the host stand for specials, in brand typography only.

HOST STAND

- A clean, uncluttered podium. The pattern shows up here as a printed runner or panel.
- A tablet for the reservation system, but never visible at guest height as the dominant object.
- A small dish of MEZZÉ#1-branded mints at the host stand for departing guests. Small, wrapped, brand-printed — they extend the last-bite rule across every table and create a small parting brand moment as the

guest walks out. **The mint goes home in a pocket; the brand goes with it.**

TABLES

- Wooden table, patterned ceramic, dried floral arrangement, lamp, cloth napkins. Already correct.
- Nothing else on the table.** No QR cards, no loyalty signup flyers, no third-party branded napkins, no upsell tents. The composition is already complete. Hospitality drives loyalty signups and online orders — not table clutter.

MENUS (IN-RESTAURANT)

Menu format follows menu function. Different parts of the meal earn different physical surfaces. The kitchen menu is the dinner ceremony. The bar menu is a destination within the room. The lunch insert is ephemeral. The guest should sense — without thinking — that they've moved into a different chapter of the same brand.

The shared rules across all three:

- Substantial paper, thick stock, replaced when worn.
- Sectioned per the existing structure: Mezzé. Grill. Salads. Bar.
- Heritage-italics on first dish-name use (*Baba Ghanouj*, *Hummus*), then plain.
- Wine list as a separate piece, not buried inside the food menu — wine deserves its own surface.
- One-page lunch insert, full dinner menu, dedicated cocktail and wine lists, dessert menu printed separately and presented after the meal.

The kitchen menu

- Leather menu covers, debossed wordmark only — not the pattern bands. Centered, restrained, confident.
- Deep forest green leather (#224C24) where possible; olive or rusty as backups. Avoid black (too cold) and pure brown (too generic).
- Crazy horse or thick Italian leather. Aging gracefully is on-brand — a worn cover is character.
- Elastic-band or leather-lace binding so the printed insert can be swapped easily.
- 8.5 × 5.5 booklet format (8.5 × 11 folded in half). Substantial in the hand without being unwieldy.
- Wipe clean, never soak. Replace any cover that's stained — worn is character, stained is brand damage. Build replacement into the budget every 18–24 months.
- Order in pairs of 30–40 per location to start. Wholesale pricing available for hospitality businesses.

The bar menu

- Different physical language from the kitchen menu. Different cover, different format, or different scale — the guest should sense the shift into the bar chapter without being told.
- Smaller in the hand, faster to scan. Bar reading happens at a stool under low light.
- Either two surfaces (cocktails / wine) or one menu with cocktails on one side and wine on the other.
- If using leather, choose a contrasting color from the kitchen menu (charcoal, rusty, or olive against the dining room's forest green) so the two are visually distinct in the same room.

- Cocktail names in the brand naming convention: single evocative word — Layla, Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Halab. Never punny.

The lunch insert

- Tall, narrow format — around 3.5 × 8.5". Off-white or kraft paper, single-color print in forest green.
- Brand typography (Rift / Sofia Pro). Today's specials, plainly stated.
- Slipped into the table at lunch service, removed at dinner. Optionally weighted with a small brass clip or held in a slim leather sleeve.
- Replaced daily or weekly. Date visible at the bottom — if a guest sees yesterday's specials, the brand has slipped.
- No QR codes, no upsells, no third-party logos. Today's offers, today's prices, signed in brand voice.

BAR

- The pattern as an installed feature behind or above the bar — wallpaper, tile, or carved wood panel.
- A printed cocktail list, brand-formatted, with single-word evocative cocktail names.
- The bar's lighting slightly brighter than the room.

BATHROOMS

The single most-overlooked brand surface in restaurants. **Get this right.**

- Warm dimmable light, brand-coordinated soap and hand cream, a small dried-floral arrangement, ambient scent (rose water, bay leaf), and ideally one piece of art or pattern that ties to the room.
- Bathrooms that feel cared-for tell a guest the kitchen is, too.

PHOTOS & FILMING

Guests are welcome to photograph anywhere in the restaurant. There are no preferred spots, no "photo walls," no restrictions. The room and the plates are made to be photographed — every guest with a phone is a marketing channel we don't pay for.

Filming inside — food reviews, social-media content, vlogs, reels — is welcomed for the same reason. We do not ask permission, we do not require a release, we do not turn it away. **Free brand exposure that comes voluntarily is the best brand exposure.**

The manager intervenes only if photography or filming is actively disturbing other tables — bright continuous lighting, loud filming, blocking aisles. The conversation is brief, warm, and operational, not territorial: "We love that you're shooting — could we just dim the light a bit for the table next door?" Hospitality first, even with the camera.

2. DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS

WEBSITE (MEZZE1.COM)

- Hero is photography or video, not text-heavy.
- "Sip. Dip. Share." as the primary line.

- Two-table structure honored throughout — never collapse Conroe and Fulshear into one ambiguous “Locations” tab.
- Reservation and online ordering linked from every page, never more than one click away.
- The catering page is its own destination, not a footer link.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILES (CONROE, FULSHEAR)

- Photography refreshed quarterly. Hero image rotates seasonally.
- Hours updated for every holiday, in advance.
- Q&A monitored and answered in brand voice.
- Reviews answered — every review, positive and negative, within 48 hours. Always in brand voice. Never templated. See *Reviews: How We Respond* below for the full method.

INSTAGRAM (@MEZZE_1)

- Three content pillars only:** the food, the room, the people. No memes, no holiday-stock-photo posts, no AI-generated graphics.
- Photography per Section 7 standards. No filters, no oversaturation.
- Captions in brand voice — short, evocative, action-rooted.
- Stories used for daily life: a chef plating, the bar at 6:30 PM, the room before service. Polished, but human.
- Reels used sparingly and with intent.

FACEBOOK

- Used primarily for events, community engagement, and the older guest demographic that still relies on it.
- Same content discipline as Instagram. Never auto-cross-posted with a watermark from another platform.

EMAIL

- A monthly newsletter is enough. More than that, you erode the audience.
- Subject lines in brand voice. Not “You won’t believe these specials!” but “What’s on the table this month.”
- Designed in brand typography and color. A plain-text email signed by Riad or Irina occasionally — the personal touch matters more than the design.

THIRD-PARTY LISTINGS

- Profile photos, descriptions, and brand language consistent everywhere.
- A quarterly audit of every listing the restaurant appears on. Out-of-date phone numbers, old menus, and mismatched hours quietly cost guests.

3. REVIEWS: HOW WE RESPOND

Reviews are the most public face of our hospitality. A bad review answered well does more good than a good review answered poorly. The platform mandates: **every review is answered, within 48 hours, in brand voice, never templated.** This is how we deliver on that mandate.

THE PRINCIPLE

A review response is a conversation, not a press release. Imagine the reviewer is sitting across from you with a glass of wine. That's the tone. Not corporate. Not defensive. Not begging. **Just a real person from the restaurant talking to a real person who came in.**

The single biggest mistake most restaurants make: they sound like robots reading a script. "Thank you for your feedback. We are sorry to hear about your experience and strive to provide..." **Skip all of that. Forever.**

THE SIX RULES

- Open like a human, not a customer service department.** Never start with "Thank you for your review" or "Thank you for your feedback." Open with something specific to what they said — but in your own words.
- Don't parrot their words back.** If they said "the service was slow," don't write "we're sorry the service was slow." That sounds like a chatbot confirming an order. Reframe what happened in your language, or just acknowledge it broadly.
- Sign your name.** Every response ends with "— Riad," "— Irina," or "— The MEZZÉ#1 team." Reviewers are talking to people. People should answer.
- Take a position, don't dodge.** If something went wrong, say it went wrong. If we genuinely think the reviewer is mistaken, we can say that — kindly. Never write something so neutral it sounds like a hostage statement.
- For unhappy reviews, move the conversation off the platform.** Public review threads are not the place to debate, apologize at length, or offer compensation. The closing line for any negative review invites the guest to write to info@mezze1.com so the conversation can continue privately. **Never offer comps publicly** — that trains other reviewers to complain for compensation.
- Keep it short.** Three to five sentences is the sweet spot. Longer responses look defensive. Shorter responses look careless.

HOW TO SOUND, BY REVIEW TYPE

A glowing five-star review

Don't oversell the response. They already loved it. A genuine, brief thank-you is enough.

✗ Thank you so much for your wonderful 5-star review! We are absolutely thrilled that you enjoyed your culinary journey at MEZZÉ#1 and look forward to welcoming you back soon!

- ✓ Glad the lamb chops landed. Tell Sarah hi from us next time you bring her — and come back hungry. — Riad
- ✓ This made our day. The whole team will see it in the morning. Thanks for taking a minute to write it. — Irina

A solid four-star review

Positive but with one gripe. Acknowledge the gripe directly, briefly. Don't over-explain.

✗ Thank you for your 4-star review! We apologize that the wait time was longer than expected. We strive to seat all our guests promptly...

✓ Thanks for the kind words on the food. The wait that night was on us — Saturdays have been busier than we planned for, and we're working on it. Hope you'll give us another shot. — Riad

A specific complaint

Food was off, service was slow, the room was loud. Take it seriously. Don't argue. Move the conversation private.

✗ We are very sorry to hear that your hummus was not to your liking. We assure you that all our hummus is made fresh daily and we have very high standards...

✓ That's not the meal we want anyone to leave with. I'd like to hear more about which night and which table — would you mind writing me at info@mezze1.com? I want to make this right. — Irina

✓ This isn't how we serve a table. I'm sorry it landed that way for you. If you're open to it, write me at info@mezze1.com and we'll talk through it properly. — Riad

A vague or unfair negative review

Be calm. Be brief. Don't get defensive in public. Invite them to email.

✗ We're sorry you had a bad experience. Without more details we can't address your specific concerns, but please know that we always strive...

✓ Sorry the visit didn't land for you. We'd genuinely like to understand what happened — info@mezze1.com if you're open to talking. — The MEZZÉ#1 team

A review that seems inaccurate

We can disagree, but kindly. Never sound rattled. Never argue specifics in public.

✓ This doesn't sound like a night we recognize, but we'd like to. If you're open to it, write us at info@mezze1.com with the date and what happened, and we'll look into it. — Riad

An abusive or trolling review

Brief, dignified, no escalation. One short response and let it go.

✓ Sorry this didn't work for you. — The MEZZÉ#1 team

That's it. Don't write more. Don't engage further.

WORDS TO AVOID

The same vocabulary rules from Section 6 apply. Never use:

- Thrilled, delighted, excited* — sound like a press release
- Strive, endeavor, committed to providing* — sound like a corporation
- Culinary journey, exceptional dining experience* — sound like a brochure
- Apologies for any inconvenience caused* — sound like a phone tree
- We value your feedback* — sound like a survey email

Also skip:

- Excessive exclamation points (one is plenty).
- Emojis (rarely, and only for unambiguously happy reviews).
- "Hope to see you again soon!" closings (every restaurant says this).
- Asking the reviewer to update or change their review (looks desperate).

WORDS THAT WORK

- Glad, thanks, appreciate* — warm, human, brief.
- Sorry, my fault, on us, that's not how we serve* — real accountability.
- Come back, see you soon, next time* — forward-looking without begging.
- Tell us, write us, talk to us* — invites conversation.
- Honest, real, genuinely* — signals a person, not a script.

THE ESCALATION PATTERN

For every negative review (1–3 stars), the closing line follows this structure:

CLOSING STRUCTURE

[Brief acknowledgment]. [If you can be specific, be specific]. Write me at info@mezze1.com and we'll talk through it. — [Name]

This does three things at once: takes the conversation private (where complaints actually get resolved), signals seriousness (using a real email, not a generic form), and protects the brand (future readers see a restaurant that handles problems gracefully, without us having to negotiate publicly).

TIMING

- Within 48 hours, every time.** A delayed response signals a restaurant that doesn't care.
- Don't respond when angry.** If a review stings, wait four hours. The response that sits overnight is almost always better than the one written immediately.
- Saturday morning is a good slot.** We have time, we've slept on Friday's reviews, and the reviewer is more likely to see the response.

WHO RESPONDS

Ideally Riad or Irina, or a designated manager who knows the brand voice cold. **Never let a third-party agency, a generic social media tool, or AI write our review responses.** Reviewers can smell a template from a mile away. The whole point of a response is that a real person from the restaurant noticed and cared.

If responding is delegated to a manager, give them this section. Read their first ten responses before they go live. After that, they'll have it.

THE FOUR RULES IN ONE LINE

Answer like a generous host. Sign your name. Move complaints private. Keep it short.

4. PRINT & PHYSICAL TOUCHPOINTS

BUSINESS CARDS

Riad, Irina, and select managers carry them. Pattern band on one side, contact info plus a QR code on the other. The QR routes to mezze1.com — from there, guests reach the catering page (where they can see the menu and order directly) and the reservation page. The business card is the universal leave-behind for catering inquiries, networking events, partner conversations, and any moment that calls for a follow-up. Heavy stock.

THE CATERING LEAVE-BEHIND

The business card is the catering leave-behind. The QR code on it routes to the live catering page on the website — always current pricing, always the latest menu, always one click to order through our existing platform.

We do not print a separate catering brochure. A printed brochure goes stale the day prices change, fills office storage closets, and creates a translation layer between our brand and the live website where the actual order happens. The card-plus-QR approach is more current, more useful, and more brand-disciplined: the website is the single source of truth, and every business card is one tap away from it.

GIFT CARDS

Physical card in brand color and pattern. Heavy stock. The card itself should feel like a small gift before it's given. A digital version available, designed with the same discipline.

THE UNIVERSAL CELEBRATION CARD

One designed card covers every celebration in the restaurant — birthdays, anniversaries, engagements, retirements, graduations, baby showers, and the table that hosted a closing toast. Heavy off-white stock, forest green wordmark, pattern band, printed signature from Riad and Irina.

THE CARD

Thank you for choosing our table for this special day. Many more to come. — Riad & Irina

Printed signature, not handwritten — the warmth is in the consistency, not the calligraphy. Order in quantities of 200–300 per location at a time. A celebration card that runs out mid-shift is a missed brand moment we cannot recover.

BRANDED MINTS

Small individually wrapped mints printed with the MEZZÉ#1 wordmark. Live in a dish at the host stand. Guests take one — sometimes two — on the way out. Total cost: pennies per guest. **Total brand value: a small parting**

moment in the pocket of every departing diner, and a refresher between dinner and the rest of their evening. This extends the last-bite rule beyond the tables that received a Turkish delight or a date.

TO-GO PACKAGING

The single biggest underused brand surface in most restaurants.

- Branded paper bags with the pattern band.
- Branded napkins inside every order. A small card thanking the guest, in brand voice. "Thanks for letting us cook for you tonight."
- Branded stickers sealing the bag — both functional (tamper-evident) and brand-reinforcing.
- A printed catering and reservation card slipped into every to-go bag. Quiet, useful, on-brand.

APPAREL (FRONT-OF-HOUSE)

Servers wear black shirts and black pants. Restaurant provides black aprons and name tags. The brand's visual identity lives in the room and on the plate, not on the staff. Uniforms stay clean, simple, and disciplined. **Name tags are non-negotiable** — they make hospitality personal, and they help guests learn names quickly.

APPAREL (BACK-OF-HOUSE)

T-shirts and chef coats with the wordmark. Comfort and durability over style.

MERCHANDISE (OPTIONAL)

Restraint is the rule. A small line of branded items — a tote bag with the pattern, a coffee mug, a hat — sold at the host stand or online. Never branded objects that don't reflect the brand (water bottles, koozies, novelty items).

5. HOSPITALITY PROGRAM TOUCHPOINTS

CATERING

- Dedicated landing page on the website (already exists; ensure it's brand-disciplined).
- Branded packaging for catered orders that scales: aluminum trays with branded lids, branded compostable cutlery, branded napkin packs.
- The leave-behind is the business card with QR code, routing to the live catering page. No separate printed brochure — the website is always more current and the order flow is built in.
- Same hospitality standards on delivery as on the dining room: warm food, beautiful presentation, a card thanking the host.
- A clear catering minimum and lead time published on the page — *clarity is hospitality*.

EVENTS & BUYOUTS

- A dedicated page describing private dining, semi-private spaces, and full buyouts.
- Photography from real events held at the restaurants — never stock images.
- A direct contact form, not a generic email address.

- An events welcome packet for confirmed bookings: a single beautifully designed page outlining timeline, expectations, and contacts.

LOYALTY PROGRAM

- Sign-up takes under 90 seconds.
- Every table is asked at check time: "Do you have a loyalty account with us?" If yes, look up by phone at the POS. If no, offer to set them up in 30 seconds. **This single question is the biggest driver of loyalty program growth** — it is non-negotiable, every shift, every table.
- Rewards are food-and-drink-based, not discount-based.** A free dessert for a loyal guest is more brand-aligned than 10% off. Discounts erode brand. Generosity reinforces it.
- Loyalty also flags birthdays and anniversaries in the system, which triggers the celebration rituals below.

CELEBRATION RITUALS

MEZZÉ#1 marks special occasions consistently. Whether a guest tells us at the reservation, the loyalty system flags the date, or the server catches it at the table — once we know, we deliver. **Inconsistent celebration is worse than no celebration:** every guest who says "it's our anniversary" has earned the ritual that follows.

The birthday ritual

- A complimentary dessert arrives with a sparkler — approximately two minutes of burn time. Not a candle. The sparkler is part of our celebration language; the candle is generic.
- An Arabic birthday song plays through the restaurant audio system (via Spotify), timed to start the moment the dessert leaves the kitchen.
- Available employees gather around the table and clap throughout the duration of the sparkler. The whole room knows it's happening.
- A universal celebration card is placed at the table.
- The server offers to take a photo of the guests.

The anniversary ritual

- Two glasses of complimentary champagne or sparkling wine arrive shortly after seating — not held back for dessert. **The celebration begins with the meal, not at the end of it.**
- A universal celebration card is placed at the table.
- The server offers to take a photo of the couple.

GIFT CARDS

Available physically (in-restaurant) and digitally (website). Promoted seasonally — Mother's Day, Father's Day, anniversaries, December holidays — in brand voice. "A seat at our table makes a generous gift." Never "Holiday Sale! Save on Gift Cards Today!"

6. TEAM & PEOPLE TOUCHPOINTS

HIRING

- Job postings written in brand voice. They are the first sentence the future team reads. "We're hiring servers who treat a guest the way they'd treat someone in their own home."
- The hiring conversation includes a question about hospitality philosophy, not just experience. *Why do you want to work here, specifically?*
- Riad and Irina are involved in every hire above hourly support, where possible. **The owners hire the team that hires the team.**

ONBOARDING

- Onboarding is run through 7shifts, where new hires receive the standard documentation and orientation materials.
- The brand platform's internal-facing 2-page summary — the founders' story, the four pillars, the three governing feelings, and the ten hospitality standards — should be added as a required document inside 7shifts.
- New hires are encouraged (where operationally feasible) to dine at MEZZÉ#1 as a guest before their first shift. **They cannot deliver the experience until they've felt it.**

TRAINING & ALIGNMENT

- The ten hospitality standards from this section are the front-of-house onboarding syllabus.
- Plating discipline is the kitchen onboarding syllabus.
- Manager-level testing is conducted on hospitality and operational standards. Managers are responsible for cascading the brand's expectations to their teams.
- Brand alignment lives in the weekly manager meeting rather than in all-staff sessions.

UNIFORMS

- Servers: black shirts, black pants — provided by the staff member.
- Restaurant-issued: black apron and name tag.
- The brand's visual identity lives in the room and on the plate, not on the staff. Uniforms stay clean, simple, and disciplined.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- All internal operational communication runs through 7shifts — schedules, announcements, shift notes, document distribution.
- The most important brand-and-operations forum is the **weekly manager meeting**. This is where Riad and Irina maintain alignment, surface issues, reinforce standards, and shape the team's understanding of what MEZZÉ#1 stands for. Managers then carry that message back to their shifts.
- The platform document should be a recurring reference at these meetings, not a one-time read.

RECOGNITION · DEFERRED

A formal recognition program (anniversaries, monthly call-outs, or another format) is currently under consideration. *Not formalized in the platform until Riad and Irina decide on the right format for MEZZÉ#1.*

The platform recommends revisiting this in the future, since multi-year staff retention is one of the two stated definitions of success for the brand. When the time is right, a recognition program becomes a natural extension of *Hospitality Is the Love Language* — applied internally as well as externally.

THE TOUCHPOINT AUDIT

Once a quarter, conduct a 60-minute brand audit:

- Walk through both restaurants as a first-time guest. Take notes from the parking lot to the bathroom to the bill.
- Order takeout from each. Inspect the bag, the card, the packaging.
- Open every social channel and listing. Spot the inconsistency.
- Read the most recent newsletter, the catering page, and the reservation confirmation.
- Ask three trusted regulars: “Where could we be sharper?”

THE DISCIPLINE

The audit is the only way to keep the brand from quietly drifting. **Schedule it. Don't skip it.**

WHAT'S NOT A TOUCHPOINT (AND SHOULD STAY THAT WAY)

A short list of places MEZZÉ#1 should not appear, even when it's offered or affordable:

- Daily-deal sites** (Groupon, LivingSocial). Discount-led acquisition erodes the brand and attracts the wrong guest.
- Generic chamber-of-commerce shared print ads** where the logo is one of fifteen.
- Restaurant aggregator “Best of” pay-to-play lists.**
- Generic holiday-themed marketing kits** from third-party platforms. Better to skip a holiday than to post off-brand.
- Co-branded promotions that don't fit** (fast-food crossovers, novelty partnerships).
- AI-generated marketing imagery, ever.**

X

CLOSING

CLOSING

What the platform is, and what the discipline is.

A great brand is not what you say. It is what you keep.

The platform you have just read is a foundation, not a constraint. Its purpose is to give every owner-level decision a single source of truth about who we are, what we stand for, and how we behave.

It will not write your menu for you. It will not run your kitchen for you. It will not greet your guests for you. **But it will tell you, on any given Tuesday, whether the choice in front of you is a MEZZÉ#1 choice or someone else's choice.**

THE POINT

The discipline is not in writing the platform. The discipline is in keeping it.

MEZZÉ#1

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