

Hotel Website

Desktop Case Study

Project 1 Competitive Benchmarking

By Richard Styring

Task

- Identify 3 hotel websites and 1 related website such as an online travel agent or aggregator
- Review the booking process offered by each competitor
- Analyse and categorise their individual functionalities (such as how they handle locations, dates and options)




Objectives

- Learn how best-in-class websites are solving problems
- Highlight what practices are working well and can be applied to the design
- Better understand the conventions that should be followed
- Recognise pain points that should be avoided

Analysis Categories

- ① Home Page
- ② Search & Select
- ③ Finalising Order

Evaluation Legend

-  **Positive**
This is used when a feature or function clearly adds a benefit to the site
-  **Neutral**
This is used when it is unclear whether a feature has a positive impact on the site
-  **Negative**
This is used when a feature or function may well have a negative effect on the site

Websites Reviewed

MERCURE
HOTELS

Mercure Hotels

mercure.accor.com



Britannia Hotels

britanniahotels.com

**one hundred
shoreditch**

Onehundred Shoreditch

onehundredshoreditch.com



Hotels.com

Hotels.com

2 direct competitors were reviewed

A luxury brand hotel

An aggregator platform

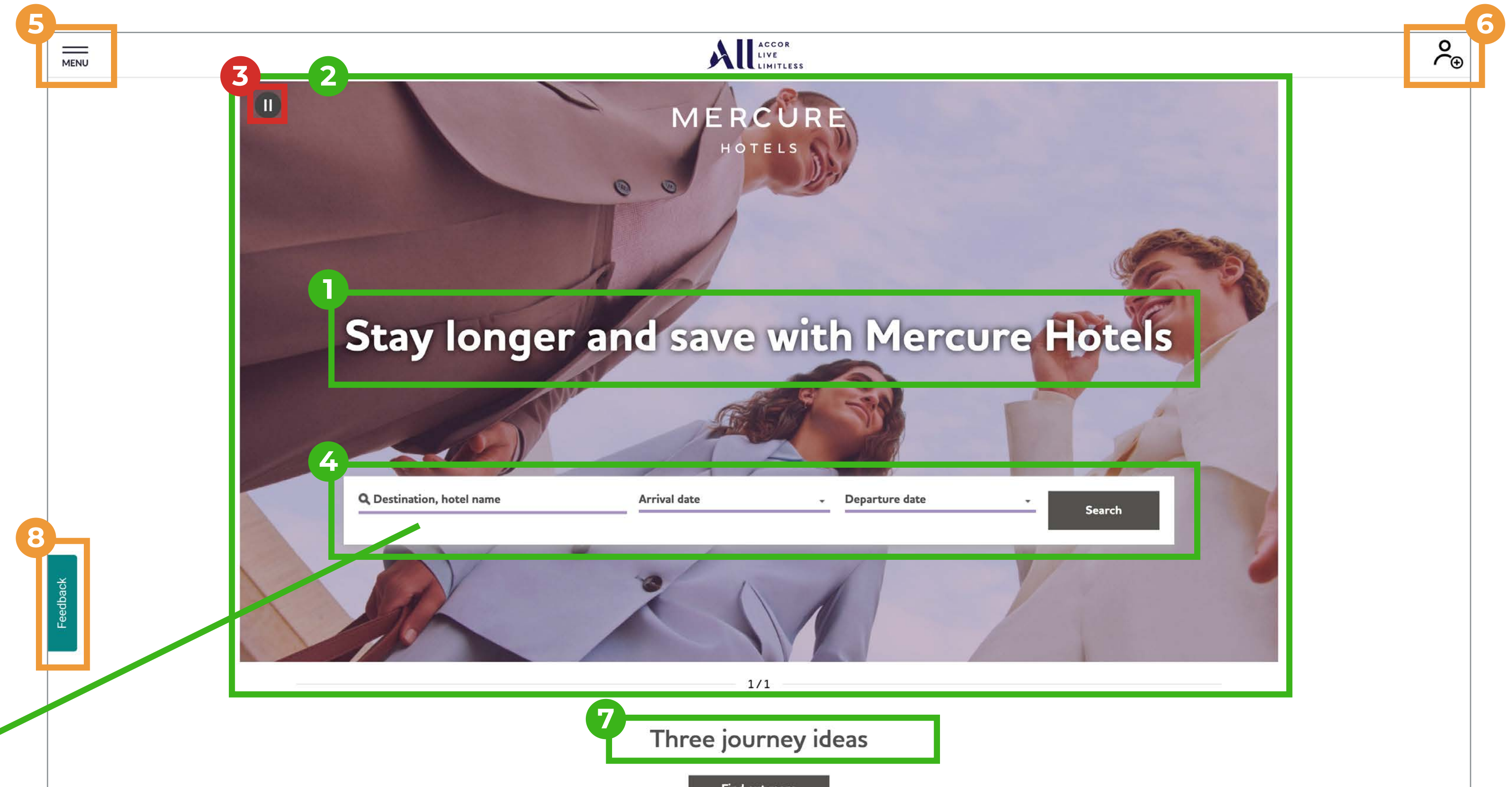
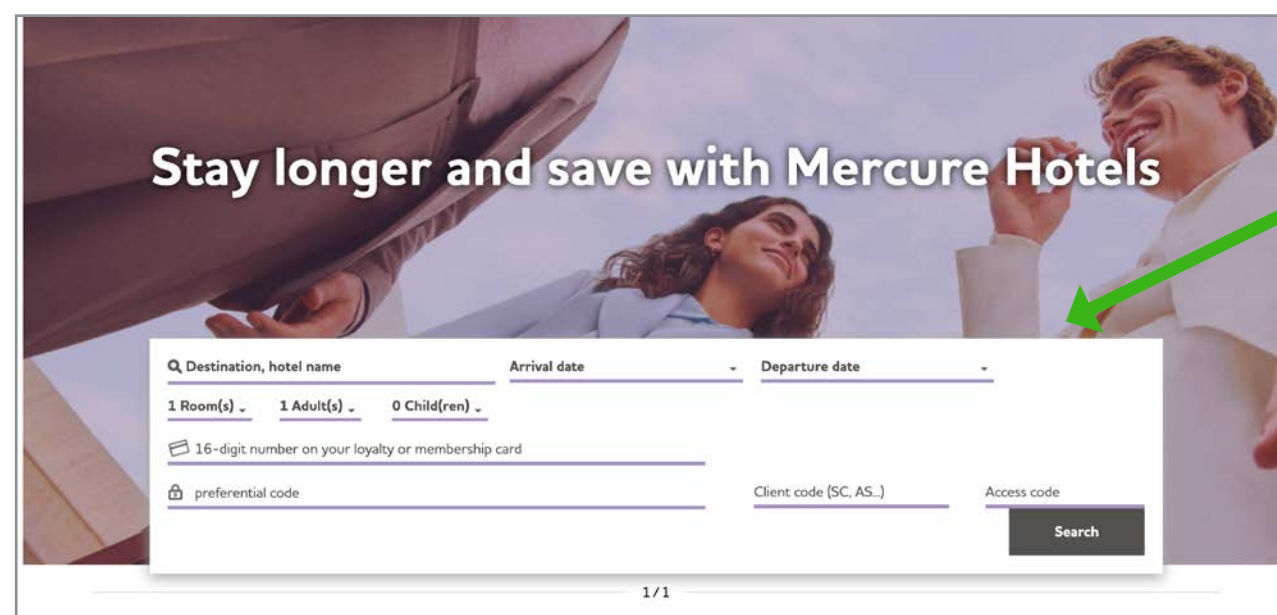
Home Page

| Page Analysis

Home Page

1. Strong message that includes key words like 'stay' and 'save'.
2. Slick imagery of happy people that may appeal to the business customer.
3. Slideshow button does nothing and only confuses the user.
4. Search facility is very tidy and uncluttered. It expands when clicked to reveal more options.
5. Main menu is in the expected position but feels understated and a bit hidden.
6. Account button is in the expected position. The icon provides a nondescript indication that it is a user account based feature.
7. Secondary title is inviting you discover more
8. Feedback button is visible but not intrusive. It could be ignored by many users.

The search drops down to reveal more options

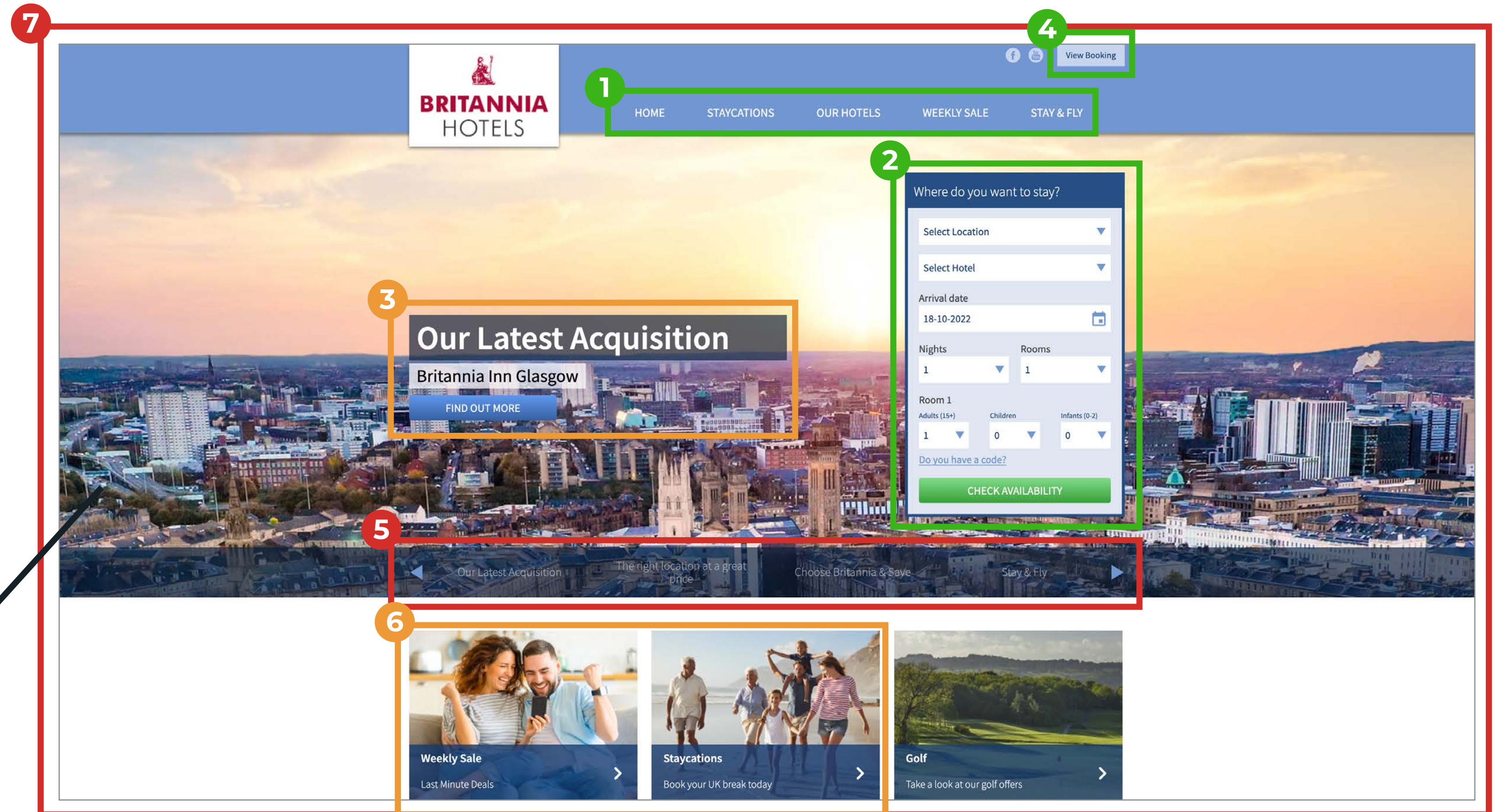


Home Page



1. Main navigation is clear to the user with comfortable contrast in colour and styling.
2. Book panel is above the fold and clear typography and labelling
3. Main message is in the expected position and is clear but not inviting.
4. Direct access to an existing booking. It's good to have but is it essential for users at this stage of their journey?
5. Links on the banner navigation is too muted and becomes lost. There is no indicator to which one you are on.
6. Adverts are uninspiring and are repeated in the main navigation.
7. Bland overall feel to the page.

The sliding banner has alternative imagery

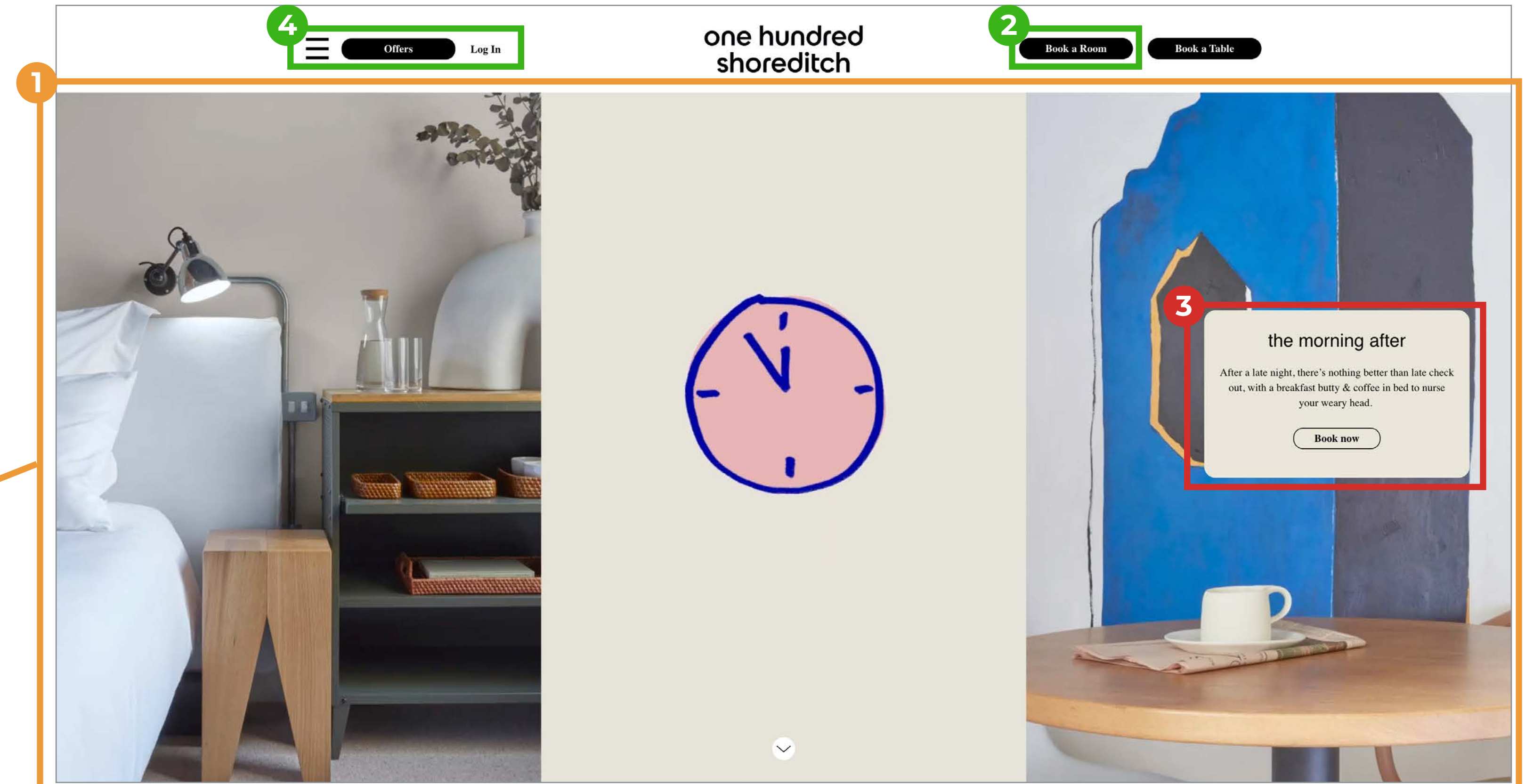


Home Page

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1. Imagery is large but abstract. Image changes every 2 seconds which is jarring for the user watch. It is not immediately apparent what is being offered as there is no booking panel.
2. Button to book a room is simple with a high contrast but is still secondary to the imagery.
3. In the expected place of the booking panel is an advert to a specific offer. It is not obvious that the call to action is that offer or to book any room.
4. Buttons to offers and main navigation have a high contrast and are minimal making it clear to the customer.

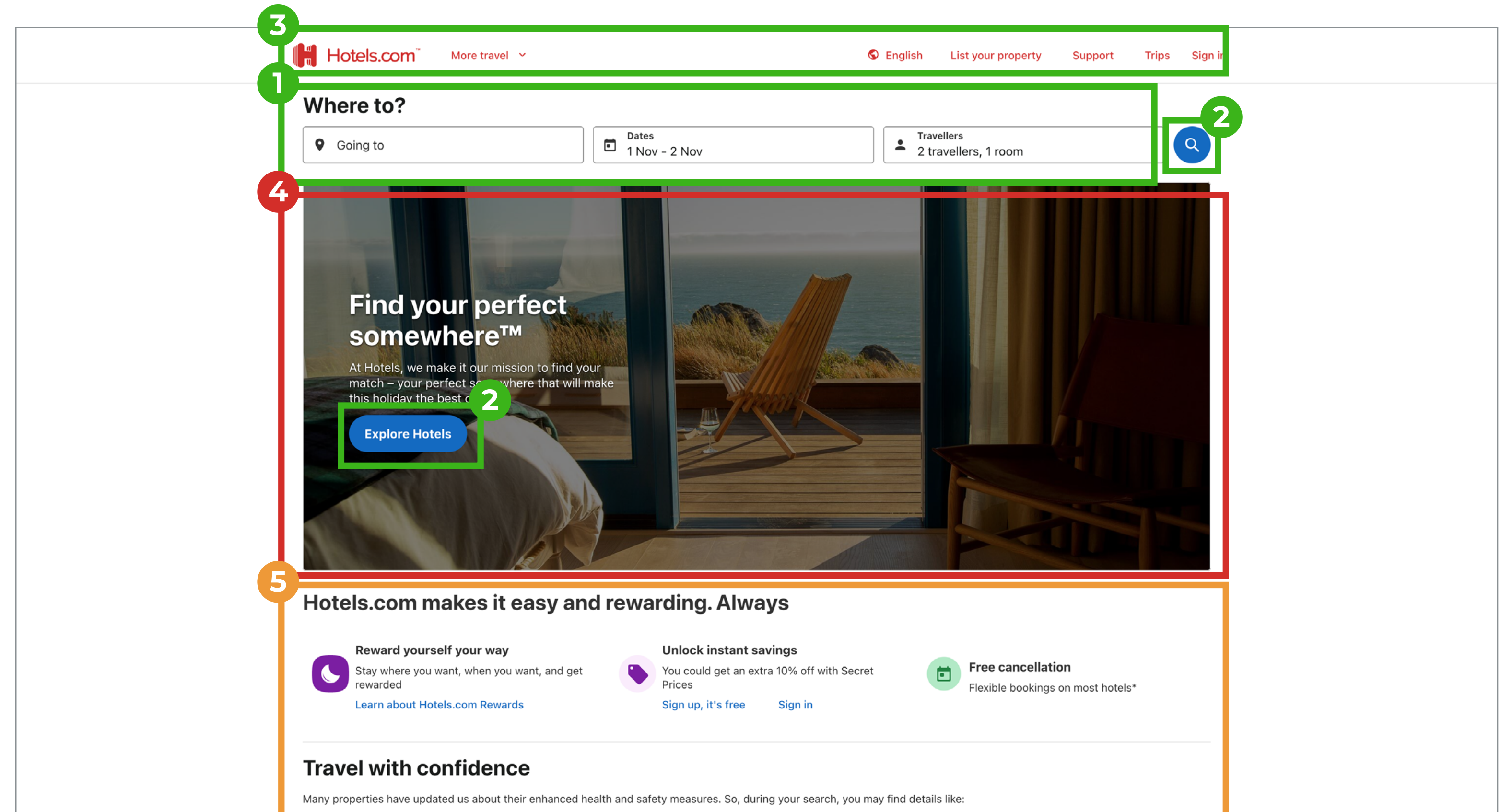
The sliding banner is fast and chaotic



Home Page



1. Immediate access to the booking panel at the top of the page. It is displayed in a simple font with great contrast.
2. With only 2 buttons on the page that are blue this really draws people's eye to them immediately communicating what this site is about and what the buttons' functionality is.
3. The use of red as a corporate colour on the main navigation indicates well that these links are outside of the hotel booking task we are trying to perform.
4. Although the imagery is inviting and comforting it is lost with the dark shading on top of it.
5. Secondary information layer is purely functional and uninspiring.



Home Page Summary

MERCURE HOTELS

- Sleek and professional first impression.
- Strong main message containing key words.
- Well positioned search facility with a bold font made it clear for the user.
- Icons in the main navigation conveys their functionality well but their positioning off to the side can be lost.
- Sliding banner did not work



- The imagery, colour and fonts make for a bland first impression.
- The main functionality of the site conforms to the users conventions.
- Search facility is very familiar and user-friendly.
- Some links and adverts are repeated throughout the page.

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- First impression was confusing as the images were abstract.
- Proportion of imagery to functionality is unbalanced.
- More than one booking button is confusing for user.
- Understated navigation works well but might be too minimal for some users.



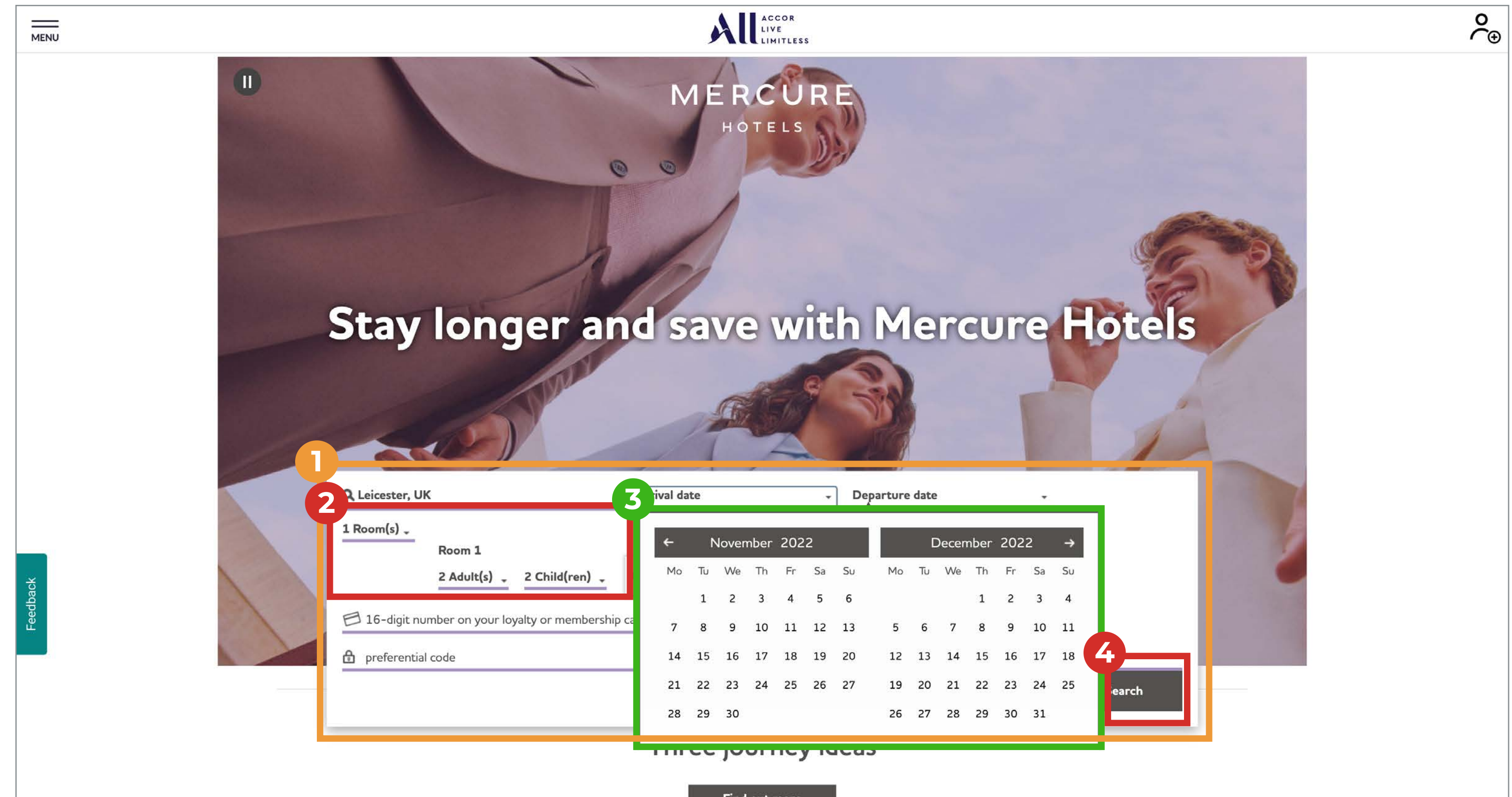
- Familiar but uninspiring first impression.
- Great positioning of the booking facility.
- Great use of contrasting colour to highlight buttons and clearly example functionality.
- Main image loses impact because of dark shading.
- The bland information links gave the site a straight forward utility feel.

Search & Select

| Page Analysis

Search & Select

1. The search panel expands when the user clicks on a field to display more search criteria.
2. Drop-down menus don't line up.
3. The calendar is displayed in a clear fashion and uses the same styling as the rest of the site.
4. The search button didn't always work for me!

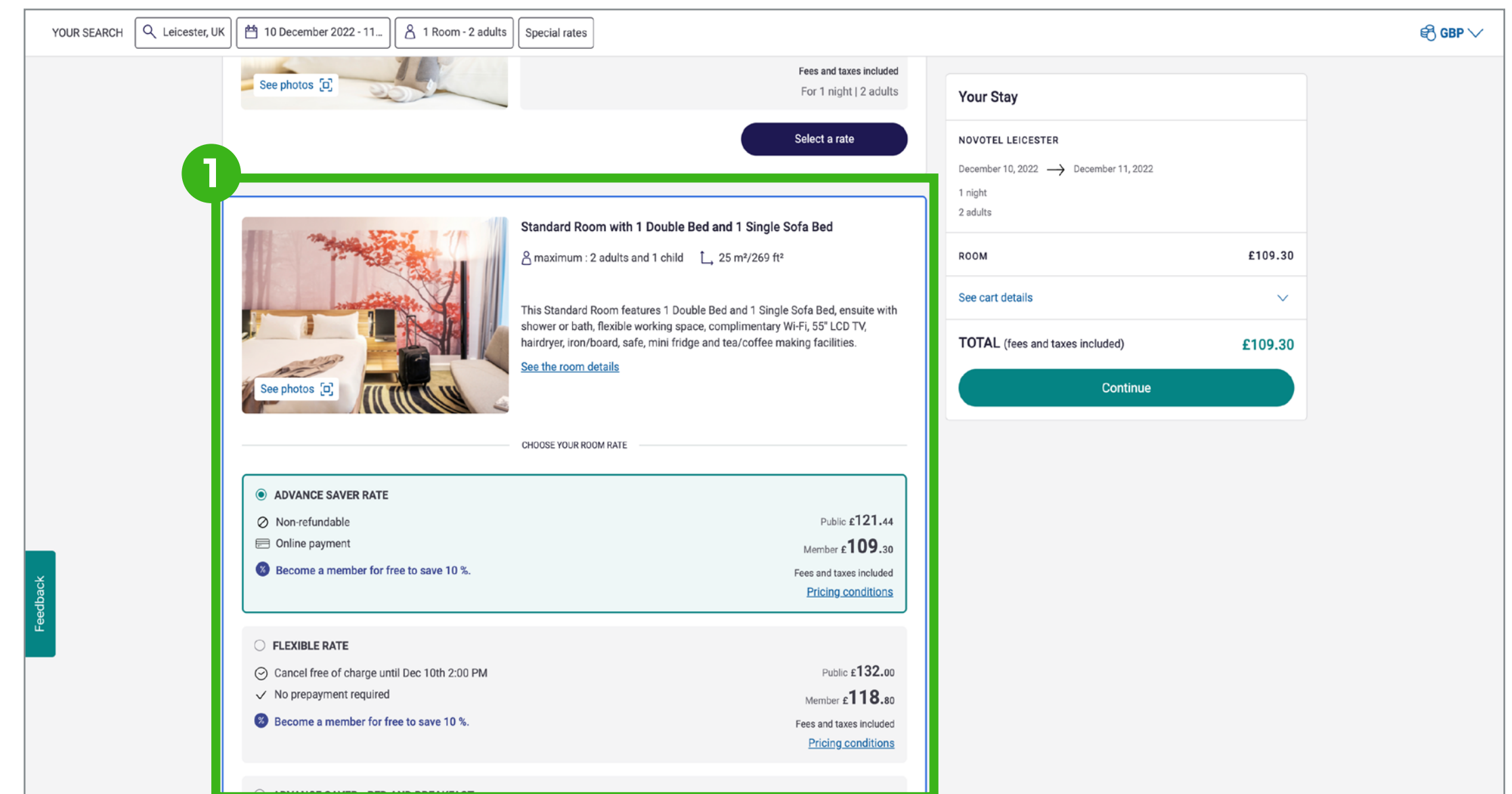
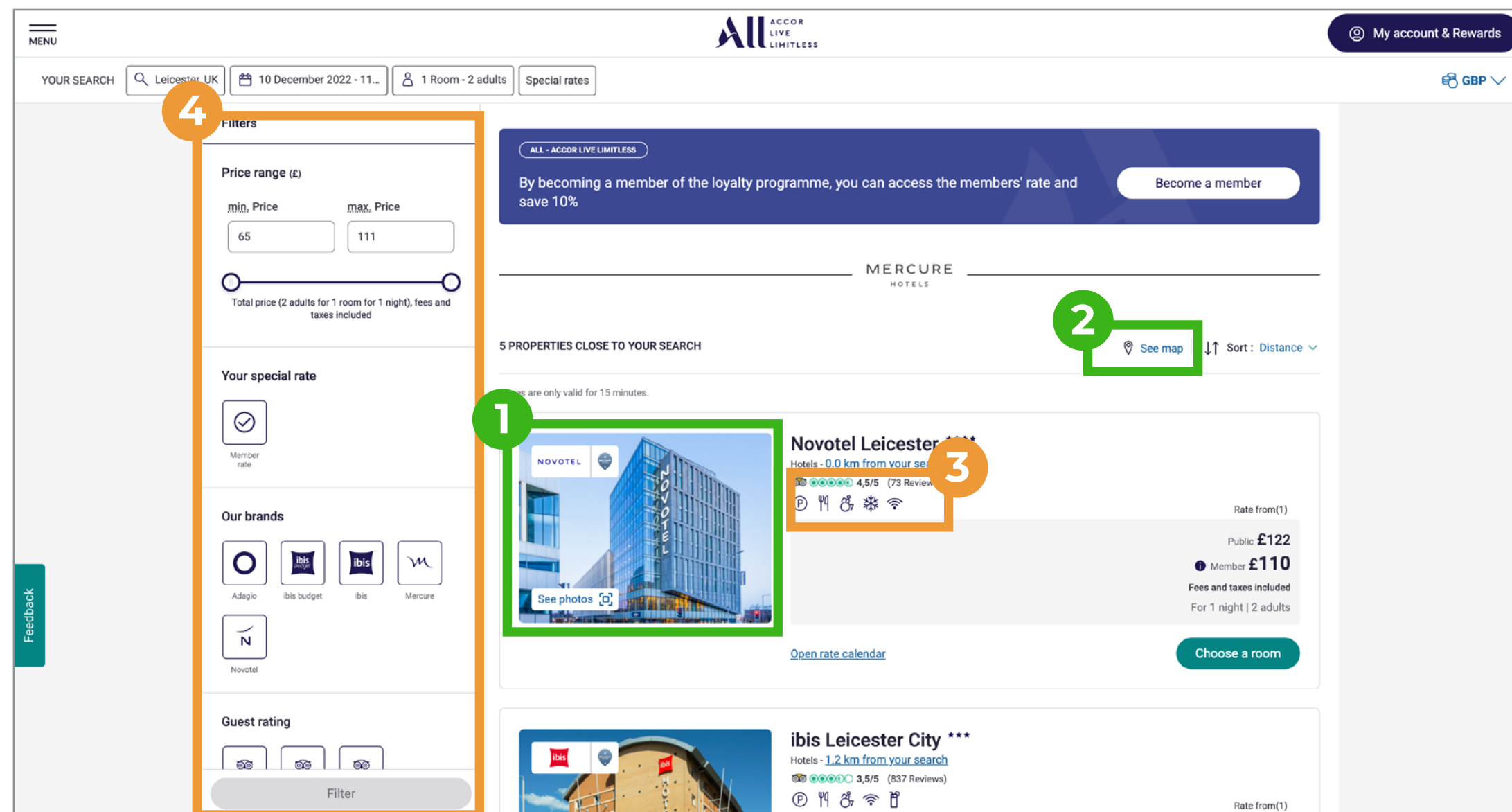


Search & Select

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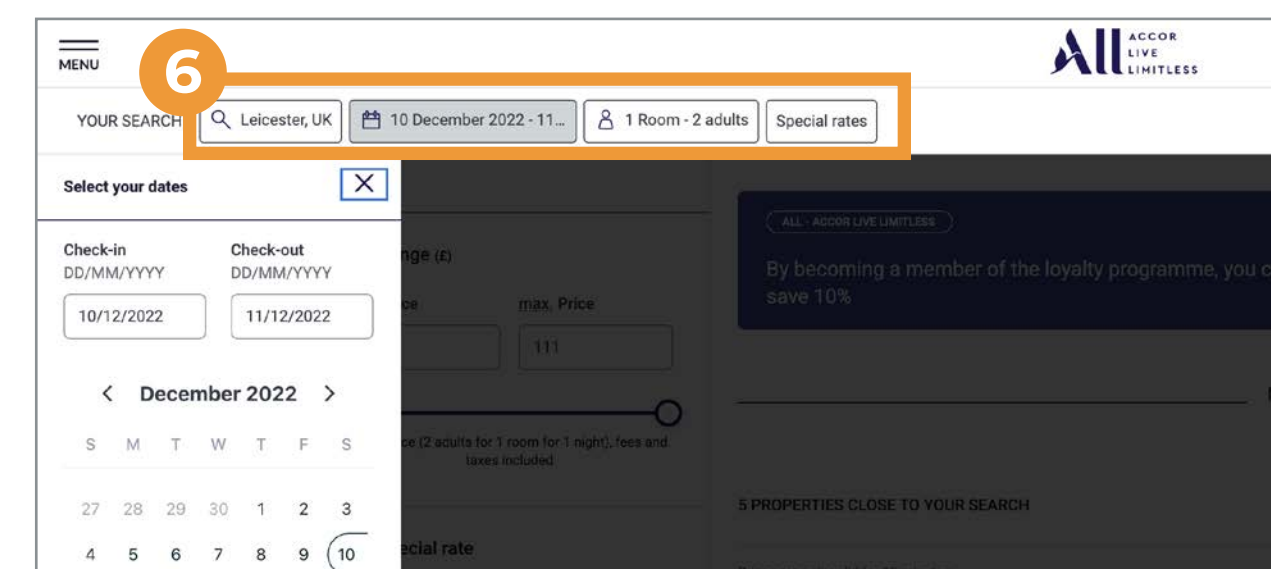
Select a hotel

Select a type of room



1. Search results are displayed with a clear photo gallery of each hotel.
2. Easy access to view the hotels location on a map
3. Icons displaying key amenities of the hotel is helpful, but no key is displayed.
4. A large amount of options to edit your search
5. Selecting a room takes the user to another page which displays the different rates in an easy to digest fashion

Change dates



6. The search criteria gets a bit lost and it's not obvious you need to click on it to change it. The calendar displayed is in a different style to the original calendar.

Search & Select



1. Search panel matches the one on the home page.
2. Your point in the check-out process is clearly indicated.
3. Unavailable hotels are display without their image. It doesn't give a professional look to the site.
4. Amenities are display as icons with information about what they mean.
5. Price displayed in a red colour. It is clear but unrefined.
6. Easy to access map location button.

The screenshot shows the Britannia Hotels website interface. At the top, a navigation bar contains the Britannia Hotels logo and four steps: 1. Hotel & dates, 2. Rooms & rates, 3. Enhance your stays, and 4. Confirm Booking. Below this is a search panel (1) with the following fields: 'Where do you want to stay?' (Leeds), 'Arrival date' (2022-11-12), 'Nights' (2), 'Rooms' (1), and 'Room 1' (Adults: 1, Children: 0, Infants: 0). A 'SEARCH AGAIN' button is at the bottom. To the right, the 'Britannia Hotel Leeds' card (2) shows a 'VIEW ON MAP' button (6) and a red box (3) stating 'This hotel is unavailable for your selected dates'. Below it, the 'Britannia Leeds Bradford Airport Hotel' card (4) shows a price of 'from £129 per room per stay' (5) and a 'BOOK NOW' button. A list of amenities (4) is shown next to the hotel image, including Conference Venue, Parking, Airport Parking, Pool, Wedding Venue, Bar, Pet Friendly Hotel, Wi-Fi, Bar & Restaurant, and Leisure Facilities. At the bottom, the 'Hollins Hall Hotel, Golf & Country Club' is partially visible.

Search & Select



Select a type of purchase

Select a type of room

1. The room selection page looks a bit repetitive and not pleasing to the eye.
2. Further hotel information is accessible if needed.
3. The muted colour palette makes the page feel drab.
4. A clear indicator about your selection is present.

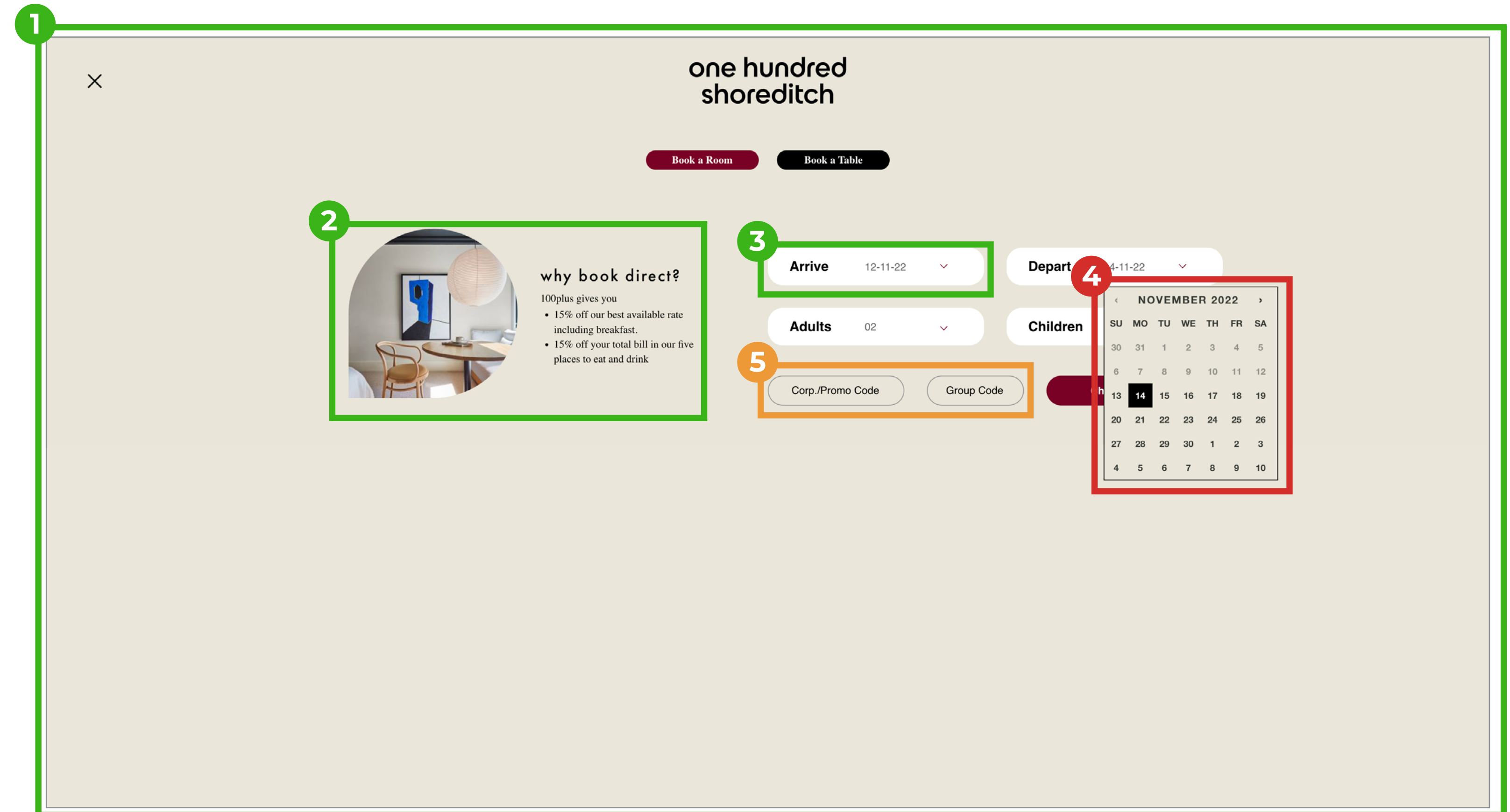
Change dates

5. Editing your booking is easily done by clicking one button.
6. It takes you back to the previous page. This works functionally but it isn't intuitive.

Search & Select

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1. The booking facility is a page in itself. It is presented in an unconventional but simple layout. Helps focus the users on the task in hand.
2. Discount information is shown to add an incentive to book direct with them.
3. Nice use of bold labels indicated the four parameters to be completed.
4. Drop-down calendar doesn't match the button. It appears a bit understated.
5. The ability to add promo codes is present.

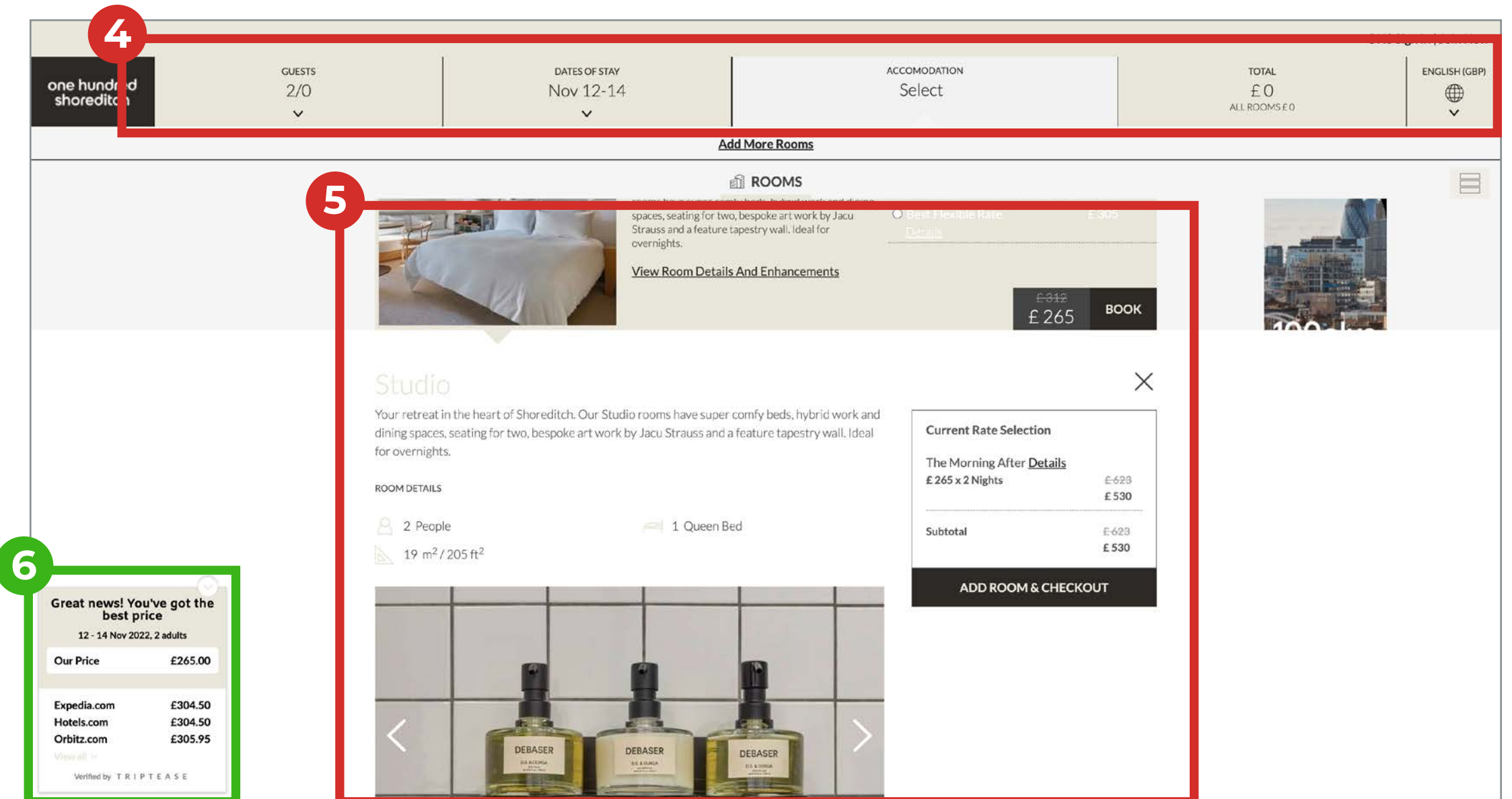
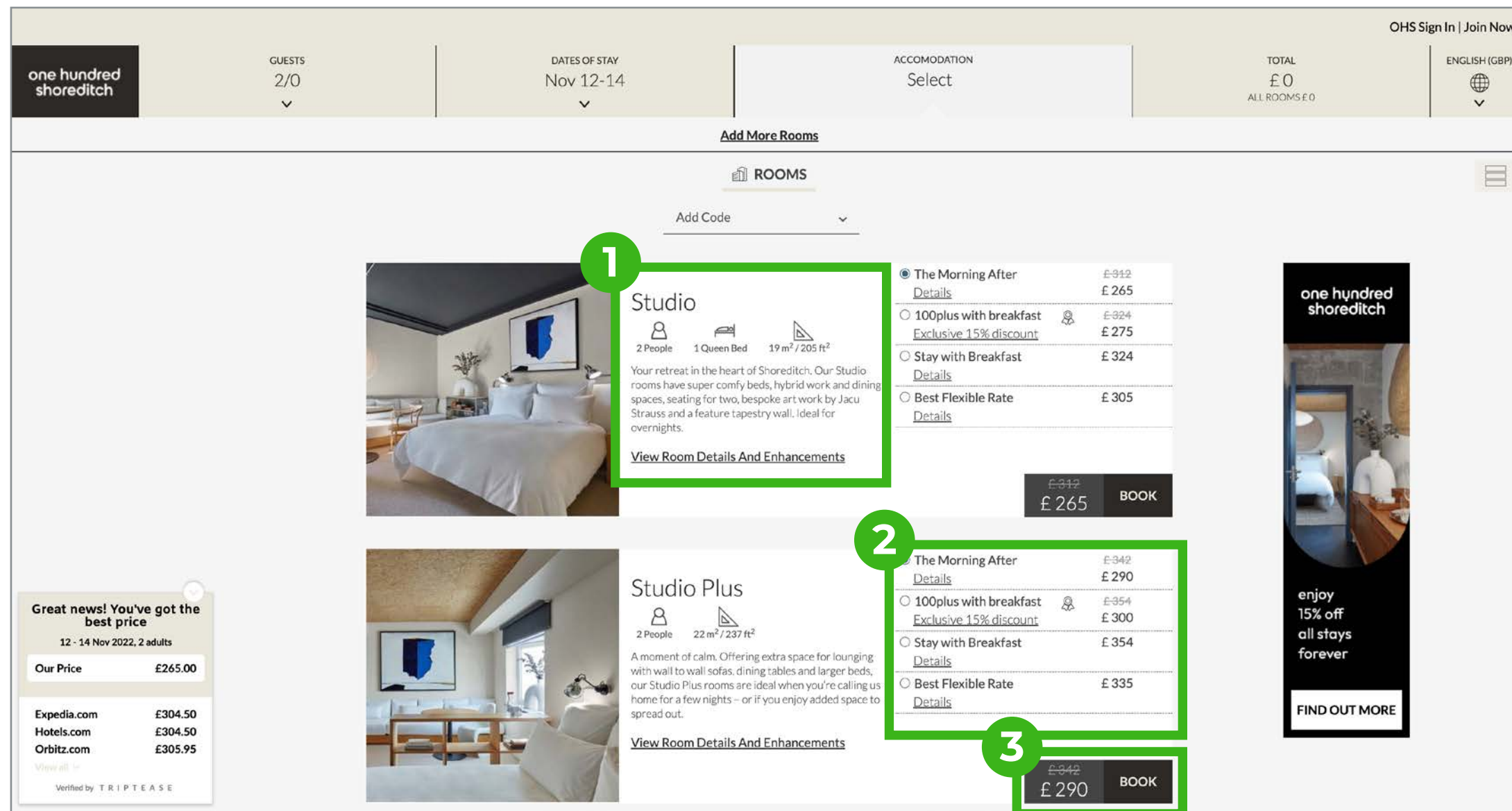


Search & Select

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Select a type of purchase

Select a type of room



1. Room are listed with icons displaying key information about the room.
2. Types of room are displayed as clear options.
3. Discounts are clearly displayed with a line through the price.
4. Refining your search is displayed across the top in an unconventional manage. It isn't that obvious that your can change your search.
5. Clicking on the 'Book' button expands the room information. This moves the page around which can be uncomfortable and confusing to look at.
6. Competitors pricing is displayed. Helps to confirm you've got the best deal!

Change dates



7. The date selector at this point in the process is a vast improvement on the initial one. It is unique and displays check-in and check-out information in greater detail.

Search & Select



1. A large calendar using a simple font on a white background makes using the calendar easy to digest.
2. Using the bold blue button styling clearly displays your selection.

The screenshot shows the Hotels.com search interface. At the top, the Hotels.com logo and navigation links are visible. The main search area is titled "Where to?" and shows the destination "Leicester". Below this is a large banner with the text "Find your perfect somewhere™" and a blue "Explore Hotels" button. A calendar is displayed, showing the dates from Saturday, November 12, to Monday, November 14, 2022. The calendar is styled with a white background and simple font. A green box highlights the selected dates, and a blue circle highlights the "Done" button. Below the calendar, there are three promotional cards: "Reward yourself your way", "Unlock instant savings", and "Free cancellation".

Hotels.com makes it easy and rewarding. Always

- Reward yourself your way**
Stay where you want, when you want, and get rewarded.
[Learn about Hotels.com Rewards](#)
- Unlock instant savings**
You could get an extra 10% off with Secret Prices.
[Sign up, it's free](#) [Sign in](#)
- Free cancellation**
Flexible bookings on most hotels*

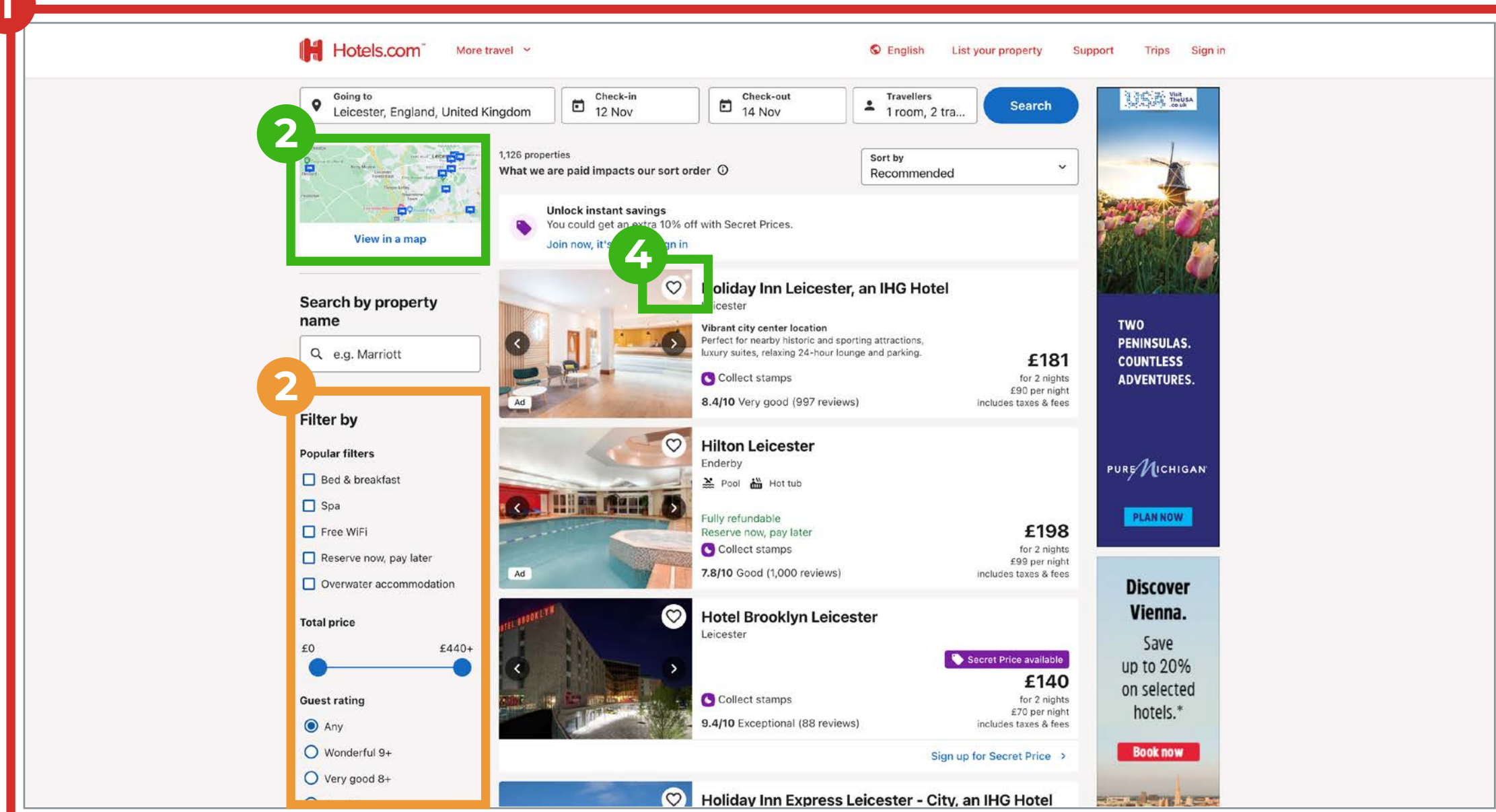
Travel with confidence

Many properties have updated us about their enhanced health and safety measures. So, during your search, you may find details like:

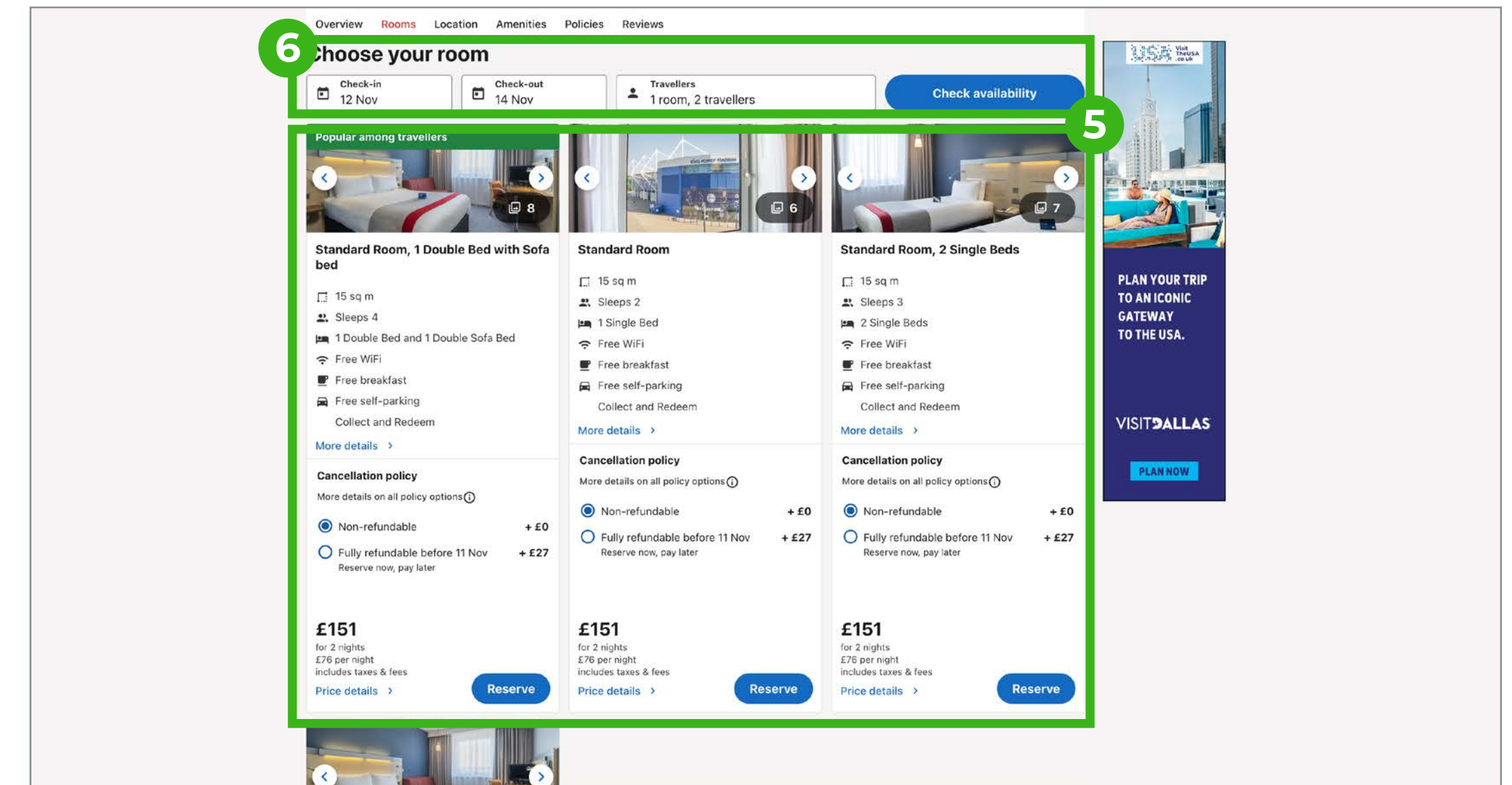
Search & Select



1 Select a hotel

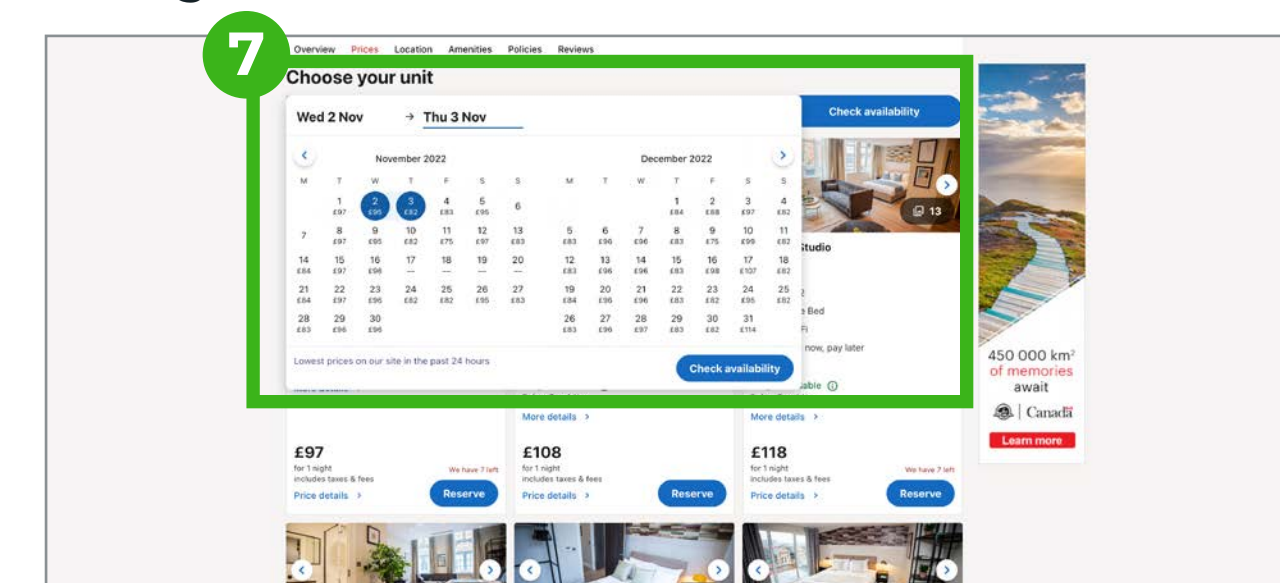


Select a type of room



1. Search results are displayed on a busy page. A lot to take in with very little gap between elements.
2. Map locations are displayed without having to click a button.
3. Although there is too much search criteria the filters check boxes are easy to digest.
4. Hotels have a save to favourites facility.
5. Types of rooms are displayed side by side which makes comparing them easier.

Change dates



6. Changing your search criteria at this stage of the process is easy to do.
7. The same calendar as before drops down and also displays prices as well which is very useful.

Search & Select Summary

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- The search panel expands when the user clicks on a field to display more search criteria.
- An overwhelming amount of options to edit your search
- Selecting a room displays the different rates in an easy to digest fashion.
- The search criteria gets a bit lost and it's not obvious you need to click on it to change it. The calendar displayed is in a different style to the original calendar.



- Search panel is clear and conforms to expected conventions.
- Your point in the check-out process is clearly indicated.
- Amenities are display as icons with information about what they mean.
- The room selection page looks a bit repetitive and not pleasing to the eye.
- The muted colour palette makes the page feel drab.
- Editing your booking is easily done but a bit dated.

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- Booking facility is presented well on one page.
- Discount pricing is displayed in 2 places which makes you confident you have the best deal.
- Your search criteria is displayed unconventionally and isn't obvious you can change them.
- The second calendar facility is very informative.
- The room selection buttons scroll the page up and down which is very confusing for the user.



- Simple use of fonts and colours make the search facility and calendar very easy to use.
- The search results provide very little breathing space between elements.
- It has some great features like save to favourites and instant location display.
- Overall feel of the site is functional but not exciting.

Enter Details

| Page Analysis

Finalising Order

Select a room rate / customise your order

The screenshot shows a hotel booking interface for Novotel Leicester. The search criteria are Leicester, UK, 10 December 2022 - 11 December 2022, 1 Room - 2 adults, and Special rates. The currency is set to GBP. The selected room is a Standard Room with 1 Double Bed and 1 Single Sofa Bed, priced at £109.30. The total price, including fees and taxes, is £109. The interface highlights the selected room and the 'Continue' button. The 'Your Stay' section shows the dates and room details. The 'CHOOSE YOUR ROOM RATE' section offers two options: 'ADVANCE SAVER RATE' (Public: £121.44, Member: £109.30) and 'FLEXIBLE RATE' (Public: £132.00, Member: £118.80). The 'Continue' button is highlighted in blue.

Enter your details

The screenshot shows the 'Complete your booking' form for Novotel Leicester. The form fields are: Title, Last name, First name, Billing address, Zip code, City, and Country or region. The 'Zip code' field is highlighted in red. The 'Continue' button is highlighted in blue. The 'Your Stay' section shows the dates and room details. The 'TOTAL (fees and taxes included)' is £132.00. The 'Confirm' button is highlighted in blue.

1. Calm colours on light backgrounds make the page easy to digest.
2. The selected room expands to display the different rates and a blue lines is added to the edge of the panel to indicate what is selected.
3. The rates are clearly displayed with the one selected highlighted.
4. Bold colour on the call to action buttons lets you know what you need to do next.
5. The site has a button to change the currency but it is a bit lost in the top corner.

5. The prompt to sign-in is conveniently place at the top the form.
6. Form fields are simple and clear.
7. It would be good if some of the fields were worded for the UK market. IE. Zip Code

Finalising Order



Select a room rate / customise your order

1. Strong title that includes key words like 'enhance' and 'stay'.
2. Minimal amount of options to have to choice from.
3. Options are backed up by imagery.
4. Continue button is clear although the green colouring seems out of keeping with the rest of the site.

Enter your details

5. The prompt to sign-in is conveniently place at the top the form.
6. The muted blue colouring leaves the panels looking washout and the price is hard to see.
7. Titles and labelling gets repetitive. Some words are used twice and 'now' is displayed three times.

Finalising Order

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Customise your order

The screenshot shows the 'Customise your order' page. At the top, there is a header with the brand name 'one hundred shoreditch', guest information (2/0), dates of stay (Nov 12-14), accommodation (Studio), and total price (£530). Below this, there are several promotional cards and a 'Current Rate Selection' panel. Annotations 1-5 highlight specific elements: 1. A green box around the 'Breakfast' and 'Pop the cork' cards. 2. A green circle around the 'ADD ENHANCEMENT' buttons. 3. A red box around the 'Raise the stakes' card. 4. A red box around the 'SKIP & CHECKOUT' button. 5. A red box around the 'Current Rate Selection' panel.

1. Minimal amount of options to have to choice from and clear pricing.
2. Options are backed up by imagery.
3. Some title and icons are coloured too light and get lost.
4. Having two buttons asking you to 'Checkout' is confusing.
5. Check out panel only displays price.

Enter your details

The screenshot shows the 'Enter your details' page. It features a summary of the reservation, guest information, and payment method. Annotations 6-9 highlight specific elements: 6. A green box around the 'Your Reservation' summary. 7. A green circle around the '+ Another Request' link. 8. An orange box around the 'Payment Method' section. 9. A red box around the total price (£530) at the top right.

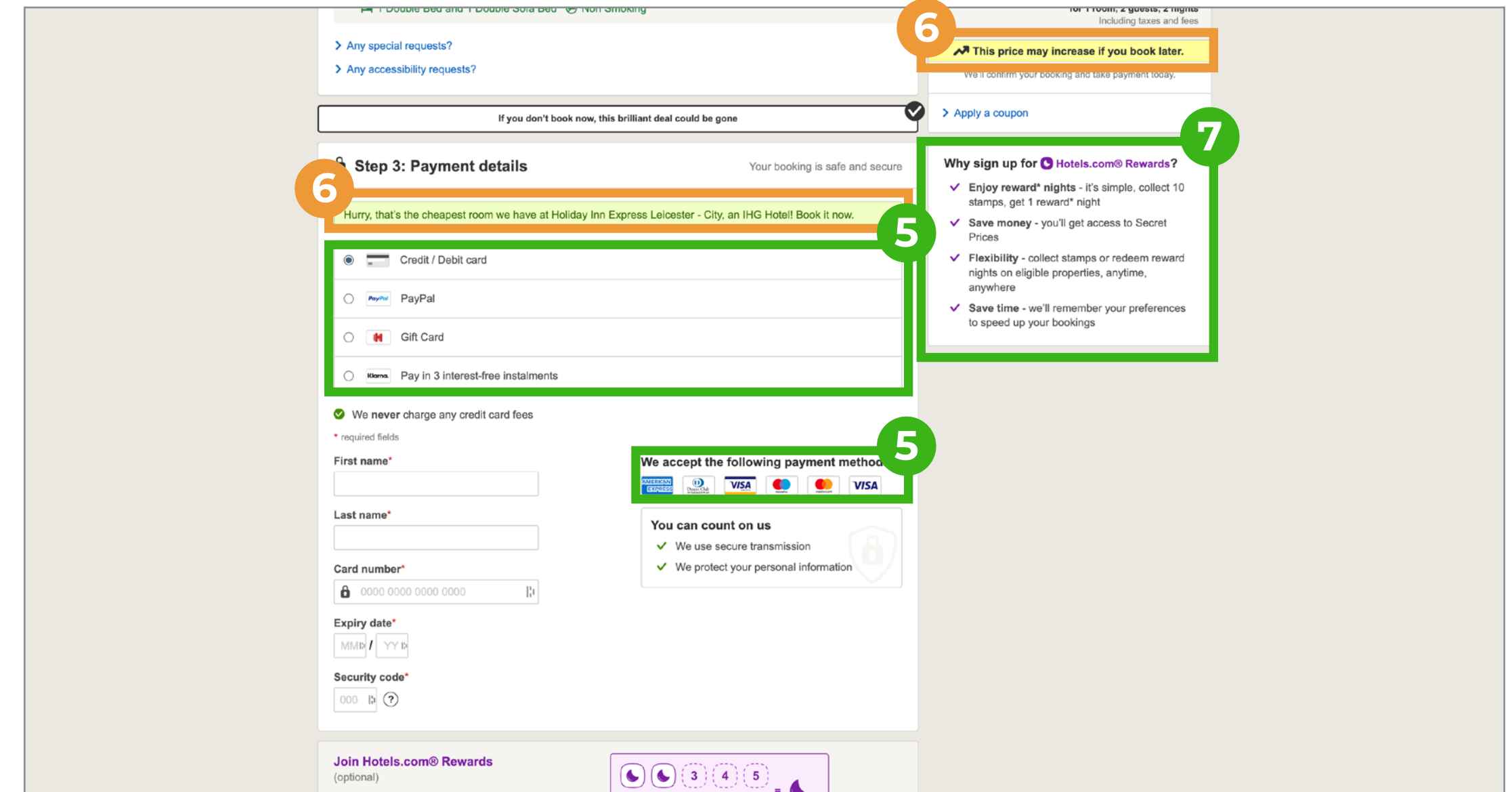
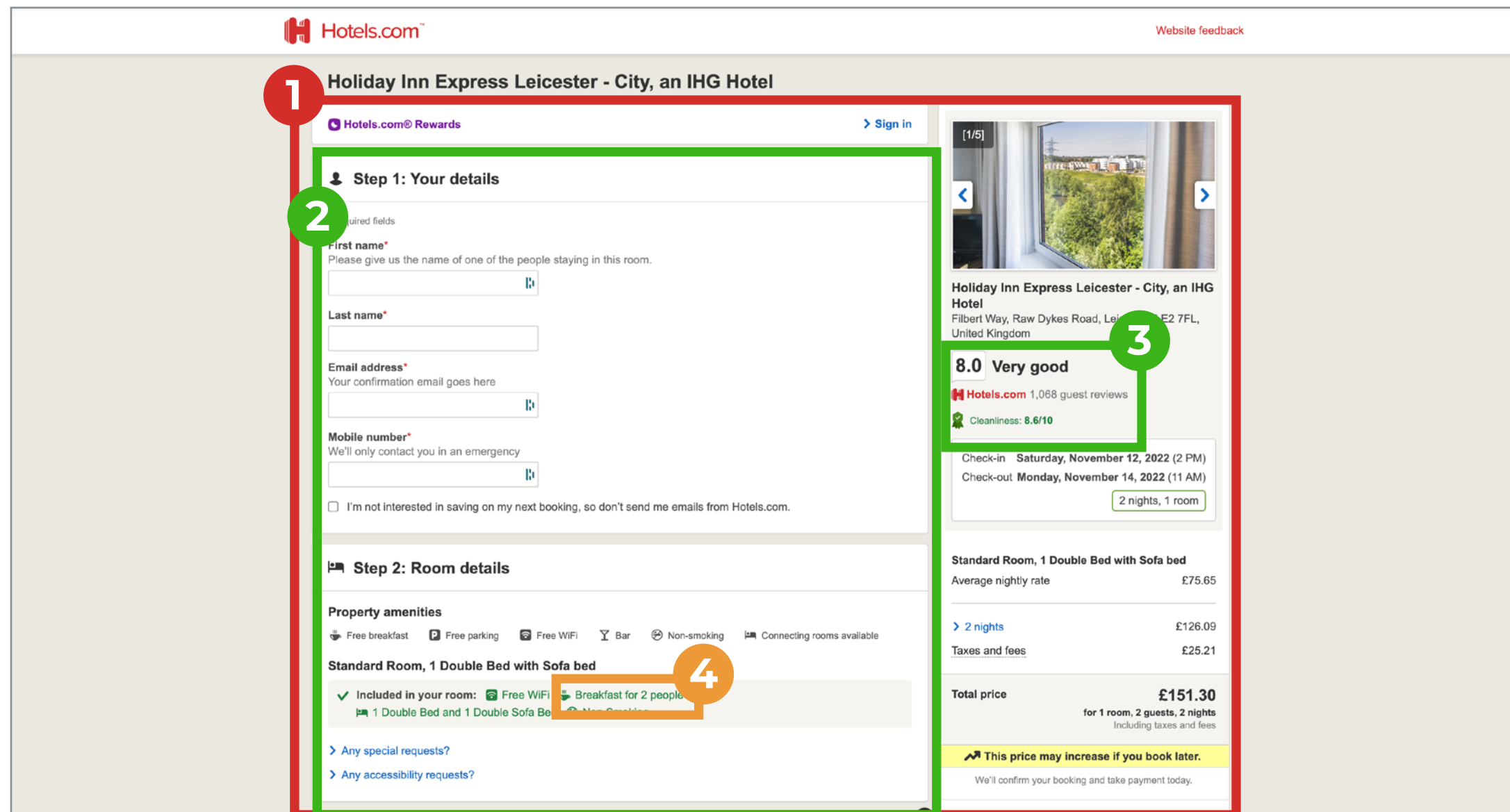
6. Summary, enter details and payment are all displayed neatly in one screen.
7. An option is include to add a special request.
8. Payment fields look unfinished on the white background.
9. Price at the top the page gets lost.

Enter Details



Select a room rate / customise your order

Enter your details



1. A lot of content on the page makes it start to feel a bit cluttered.
2. The checkout is all on one page which makes it easier for the user to complete.
3. Hotels reviews and cleanliness score ratings are displayed.
4. Never saw an option to select breakfast. Unsure if this how the room is sold.

5. Clear indicator of what types of payments are taken.
6. Small prompts are displayed in order to encourage the users to purchase.
7. Adverts to join a rewards scheme are displayed

Enter Details Summary

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- Calm colours on light backgrounds make the page easy to digest.
- Highlighting selected options with coloured borders really helps the user to understand the page.
- Form fields are simple and clear.
- Bold colours on the call to actions.



- Keeping options to a minimal helps keep this clear for the user.
- Options are backed up by imagery works well.
- Try to avoid repetitive labelling.
- Colouring the page tints of the same colour makes a bland visual experience.

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- Minimal amount of options make the check a smoother process
- Some buttons are duplicated which is confusing for the customer
- Some styling is too subtle
- Summary and check out are all displayed without having to scroll down the page which is convenient.



- The check pages are jam with as much useful content as they can confidently squeeze on to the page.
- That said the functional nature of the typography and colour allow the page to still be somewhat digestible.
- Opportunities to join rewards schemes and up-sell are never missed.

Websites Summary

MERCURE HOTELS

- This site is sleek and professional throughout.
- The subtle use of colouring, fonts and layout make the interface very pleasing to the eye.
- Large imagery and titles containing key words support the site.
- The search and select process was very clear and straightforward.
- The whole journey was complete in the minimal amount of clicks.



- The most traditional of all the sites reviewed.
- The sites conforms to many standard user conventions such the placement and styling of the search panel.
- The search and select journey is easy to understand but could be considered old fashioned.
- Colour the site in different shades of blue make the site look bland.
- The site was kept simple without too many options.

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- The site does a lot of unconventional things.
- Some things work well like the one-page search function and the larger calendar on the results page.
- Other aspects don't work well like the abstract imagery on the home page and the confusing room selection page as it moves up and down depending on what button you press.
- The site feels very stylish almost too stylish.



- Because this site was an aggregator platform it was always going to have fit more content on the site. Overall it did this successfully with the use of simple fonts and colouring.
- The feel of the site was functional and not inspirational.
- The layout did feel too tight and cluttered at times with too much on the page.
- The site manage nice use of icons to communicate information.
- Anchor links on long pages work well on this site.

Overall Conclusion

What are the positives and negatives from these findings



- A clear interface helps the user digest the site.
- The user should be able to complete the search the select journey in the least amount of clicks.
- Use of icons to display information but back that up with an appropriate key.
- Show a location map is helpful.
- Display alternatives if your selection is not available.
- Show reviews from a separate platform helps build confidence in the user.
- Have an organised booking summary.
- Have an easy means of refining your search.



- Anchor buttons that take you to sections on long pages
- Displaying acceptable means of payment
- Helpful information about location
- Having filters on the page top refine search
- Showing clear images of the hotel



- Having too many clicks to complete the process.
- No further options given if dates or locations are unavailable.
- Not clearly showing pricing.
- Adding too much to the page such as adverts, rewards schemes or reviews.
- Too many filters.
- Having information displayed too tightly. Not enough space between elements.
- Muted or bland colouring.
- Repetitive titles and labelling.