
NAVIGATOR'S LOG R&D; · CREATIVE PROPERTIES

The Fresno Palate

Site Architecture · Content Brief · Launch Plan

A comprehensive guide and dining publication covering every restaurant in Fresno — built on a complete indexed database and driven by sensory, culturally informed long-form writing. This document covers the site identity, domain options, complete architecture, the content brief template for the editorial format, and a phased launch plan.

Owner: Christopher Blake Head / Navigator's Log R&D; · This is an NLR creative asset, separate from Steve Richardson's properties.

THE NAME

The Fresno Palate — fresnoPalate.com

"Palate" carries two meanings simultaneously and both are intentional. The physical palate — the organ of taste — grounds the name in the body and sensation. The cultivated palate — discernment, earned knowledge — positions the publication as serious without being precious.

WHAT THIS IS

A dining publication and restaurant database covering every food establishment in Fresno that appears on Google Maps. The database layer makes it a genuine resource. The editorial layer makes it worth reading. The combination makes it something that does not currently exist in this market.

The editorial identity in one sentence

"The Valley is weirder, more delicious, and more culturally complex than you think. Here is the evidence." Every piece either reveals something surprising, gives the reader language for an experience they have had but could not describe, or traces an ingredient back to a place and a people the Fresno food conversation has never acknowledged.

WHAT THIS IS NOT

A review site. No star ratings from the publication. The writing describes. It does not judge.

A listicle site. No "Top 10" framing anywhere. A piece about birria is a piece about birria — not "The 8 Best Birria Spots in Fresno."

A Steve Richardson property. This site belongs to Navigator's Log R&D.; It can cross-link with fresnobusinesses.com where relevant, but ownership, hosting, and brand are separate.

TWO LAYERS — ONE SITE

Layer	What It Is	Who Reads It	SEO Value
Layer 1: The Index	Complete database of every Fresno restaurant on Google Maps. Name, address, phone, hours, category, neighborhood. Clean, accurate, fully indexed.	Anyone searching for a specific restaurant by name or browsing by category.	Very high. Hundreds of individual indexed pages capturing brand-name searches.
Layer 2: The Editorial	Sensory essays, ingredient studies, cultural profiles, cross-cultural examinations. Long-form. Voice-driven. Christopher's writing.	Food-curious readers. Sharing audience. Long-tail search traffic from ingredient and cultural queries.	High for long-tail and topical authority. Builds over 12–18 months.

Page Type	URL Pattern	Content	SEO Target
Homepage	fresnoPalate.com/	Featured essay. Recent pieces. Index search bar. Category tiles. About blurb.	Brand + "Fresno dining"
Restaurant Index	/restaurants/	Searchable, filterable full list.	Fresno restaurants list
Individual Restaurant	/restaurant/[slug]/	Name, address, hours, phone, cuisine, GBP link, Google Maps embed.	Restaurant name + Fresno
Cuisine Category	/cuisine/[type]/	All restaurants in that cuisine. Editorial intro paragraph.	[cuisine] restaurants Fresno
Neighborhood Guide	/neighborhood/[name]/	All restaurants in that neighborhood. Short editorial intro.	[neighborhood] restaurants Fresno
The Essays	/essays/	Index of all long-form editorial pieces.	Long-tail cultural queries
Ingredient Profiles	/ingredient/[name]/	Deep single-ingredient study. Origin, flavor, cultural context, Fresno uses.	[ingredient] history, what is [ingredient]
Events Calendar	/events/	Taco Truck Throwdown, farmers markets, food festivals.	Fresno food events
About / Contact	/about/	Christopher's voice. The editorial philosophy.	Brand trust signal

Every editorial piece on The Fresno Palate follows this template. The brief is also the research checklist. Every field answered before a word is written means the writing flows from knowledge rather than searching for the next thing to say.

OPENING SENSORY MOMENT

The first thing the reader encounters. Not a description of the restaurant — a specific sensory detail that places them in a moment. Smell, sound, temperature, texture before taste.

Example: "The fat comes first — you smell it before you hear it, a deep animal bloom that rises from the comal and sits in the air of the parking lot like it has always been there."

THE STAKES — WHY THIS PIECE EXISTS

What does this piece reveal that the reader would not otherwise know? This is the purpose of the piece as a research note — it does not appear verbatim in the writing.

Example: "Most Fresno diners have never considered that quesabirria is a modern dish — invented in Tijuana in the 1980s, not a centuries-old tradition."

ORIGIN OF THE DISH OR INGREDIENT

Where does this come from? Not the restaurant — the food itself. Country, region, climate, agricultural context. What economic or historical conditions produced this combination of flavors.

Example: "Birria originates in Jalisco. The goat was the animal available to subsistence farmers in the Pacific Coast highlands — too tough to eat except slow-braised with dried chiles."

THE MIGRATION STORY

How did this food get to Fresno? Trace the path: from origin country or region, through immigration waves, through the specific community that brought it to the Central Valley.

Example: "The Laotian community arrived in Fresno beginning in 1978–1979 as refugees. Sticky rice arrived with them — not as a preference but as an identity marker."

THE MENU TRANSLATION

What does the name mean? What are the component words? What is being described — technique, ingredient, region, texture, color? This is the cross-cultural examination field.

Example: "Khao soi: khao = rice (in this context, noodle), soi = cut or slash — referring to the hand-cut noodles."

THE FIRST BITE

Temperature. Texture sequence. The initial flavor and what comes after. Be precise about where in the mouth the flavor lands.

Example: "The tortilla gives first — soft, pliable, made this morning. Then the fat hits the front of the tongue before the acid of the consommé catches up."

WHERE TO FIND IT IN FRESNO — THE SPECIFIC ADDRESS

Not a list of options. The specific place this piece is about. Full name as it appears on the GBP listing. Neighborhood. What to order.

Example: "Tacos Don Chicho. Belmont and DeWitt. Thursday through Sunday, 5PM until sold out. Order the quesabirria. Ask for extra consommé. Bring cash."

THE FRESNO-SPECIFIC DETAIL

What makes this version of the dish specific to Fresno — its climate, its community, its agricultural context, its particular immigrant wave?

Example: "The chiles in this birria — ancho, guajillo, pasilla — were grown within 200 miles of where the goat was raised. Fresno County grows all three at commercial scale."

THE EDITORIAL CALENDAR PHILOSOPHY

Two categories: time-sensitive and evergreen. Time-sensitive content runs before its peak demand. The summer heat piece runs in April. The Taco Truck Throwdown piece runs two weeks before the event. Evergreen content builds the archive that generates traffic for years.

Month	Time-Sensitive Piece	Evergreen Piece
Jan / Feb	Lunar New Year dining guide — Vietnamese and Chinese New Year events in Fresno.	Ingredient study: Five-spice powder. The chemistry of warming and the Silk Road spice route.
Feb / Mar	Blossom Trail food companion — farm stands that open as the orchards bloom.	Ingredient study: Stone fruit. What happens inside a peach in the three weeks before it peaks.
Mar / Apr	Nowruz table — Persian New Year foods available in Fresno.	Cross-cultural: The herb plate across Persian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, and Hmong cooking.
Apr / May	Lao Pi Mai and Khmer New Year — Southeast Asian spring celebrations in Fresno.	Ingredient study: Sticky rice. Why it is a crop, a politics, and an identity marker.
May / Jun	The taquero season opens. Outdoor vendors who return when the heat settles in.	Ingredient study: The dried chile. Ancho, guajillo, pasilla, mulato, cascabel explained by smell.
Jul / Aug	Summer heat and cold things — raspados, agua fresca, Vietnamese iced coffee.	Cross-cultural: Ice and sweetness. How cultures that never had refrigeration developed the best cold desserts.
Sep	Taco Truck Throwdown preview — contestants, dishes, history, what to order.	Ingredient study: Birria. The Jalisco origin, the Tijuana reinvention, why the consommé is the point.
Oct / Nov	Hmong New Year preview — Fairgrounds event, vendors, what to eat.	Cross-cultural: Fermentation across Hmong, Korean, and Central American traditions.
Nov / Dec	Armenian holiday table — dolma, khorovats, manti, Fresno Armenian character.	Ingredient study: The pomegranate. Persian poetry, Armenian identity, Fresno County grows 95% of US crop.

FIRST FIVE PIECES — LAUNCH CONTENT

1

Tacos Don Chicho

The Taco Truck Throwdown event is a cultural depth, and the

2

What Quesabirria Actually Is

Birria's Jalisco origin is a Fresno County. Evergreen

3	A Fresno Hmong New Year Eating Guide
4	The Pomegranate and the Fresno Palate
5	Reading Zaatar Bistro's Menu

The Fairgrounds eve
papaya salad is alwa

Fresno County grow
Lebanese cooking. A

The Lebanese menu
to someone who has

TECHNICAL STACK

Component	Technology	Notes
Hosting	Christopher's Netlify Pro account	Separate from Steve's free account. Justified by existing subscription.
Domain	fresnoPalate.com (verify availability)	Register at Namecheap or Porkbun. ~\$12–15/yr.
Build method	Eleventy (11ty) static site generator	Handles restaurant database as JSON data files. Generates individual pages for each restaurant automatically.
Content management	Markdown files in GitHub	Christopher writes essays as .md files. Eleventy converts to HTML. No CMS needed.
Search	Lunr.js (client-side, free)	Instant restaurant search without a server or database query.
Analytics	Plausible Analytics (\$9/mo) or GA4 (free)	Privacy-first option recommended for editorial sites.
Email	Buttndown or MailerLite (free to 1,000 subs)	Newsletter is the long-game audience-ownership play.

PHASE
1

Domain, Setup & Data Foundation

Weeks 1–2 · Christopher

- Register fresnoPalate.com
- Set up Netlify site under NLR account
- Set up GitHub repository
- Pull initial restaurant data (Google Maps or manual)
- Build Eleventy site structure
- Configure Lunr.js search

COST

\$15–20
(domain)

DELIVER
S

Site live on Netlify URL with 50+ restaurant records. Search working.

**PHASE
2**

Index Build & First Content

Weeks 3–4 · Christopher

- Expand restaurant database to 200+ entries
- Build category and neighborhood pages
- Write and publish essay #1 (Tacos Don Chicho)
- Write and publish essay #2 (What Quesabirria Actually Is)
- Set up Instagram — first 5 posts before launch
- Configure Google Search Console

COST

\$0

**DELIVER
S**

200+ restaurants indexed. Two essays live. Instagram active.

**PHASE
3**

Soft Launch & Voice Establishment

Month 2 · Christopher

- Announce site publicly — social, Fresno Facebook groups
- Write and publish essays #3, #4, #5
- Reach out to 3–5 restaurants featured in essays
- Add submission form for missing restaurants
- Begin tracking which pages generate most search traffic

COST

\$0

**DELIVER
S**

Five essays live. Site publicly announced. First organic search traffic arriving.

**PHASE
4**

Growth & GBP Connection

Months 3–6 · Christopher

- 500+ restaurants in the index
- Publish 2 editorial pieces per month on seasonal calendar
- Add enhanced listing feature for NLR-managed GBP clients
- Build the newsletter
- Pitch one piece to a larger publication for backlink

COST

\$0–18/mo

**DELIVER
S**

Consistent organic traffic. NLR clients featured. Newsletter started.

- Offer enhanced listings to non-NLR restaurants (\$50–75/mo)
- Event sponsorship for Taco Truck Throwdown coverage
- GBP service pipeline: listings drive managed profile inquiries

COST	\$0 to implement	DELIVER S	First direct revenue from enhanced listings. GBP service leads from food sector.
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Item	One-Time	Monthly	Annual
Domain (fresnoPalate.com)	\$15	—	\$12–15/yr renewal
Netlify hosting	\$0	\$0	\$0 (existing NLR Pro account)
Analytics (Plausible)	\$0	\$0–9	\$0–108 (GA4 is free alternative)
Newsletter (Buttontdown)	\$0	\$0–9	\$0–108 (free to 100 subs)
TOTAL — LAUNCH YEAR	~\$15	\$0–18	\$120–231

The honest number

The Fresno Palate can be launched and run for its first year for under \$250 total. The primary cost is time. The primary risk is not finishing the first five pieces. If the first five pieces are published with genuine craft and the index has 200+ restaurants, the site has the foundation it needs.