Mikonboard

CASE STUDY

"Mikonboard guide our technical direction".

Tim Rosenberg, Managing Director

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GREAT BRITISH CHEFS

Citrus-cured salmon with avocado purée and caviar
by Luke Tipping

Starter · Easy · 4 · 30 minutes, plus curing and chilling time

This is a truly beautiful dish and it would create a big impact at a dinner party. Caviar and avocado purée round off the citrus-cured salmon recipe from Luke Tipping. It also doesn't take long to prepare but use the best ingredients.

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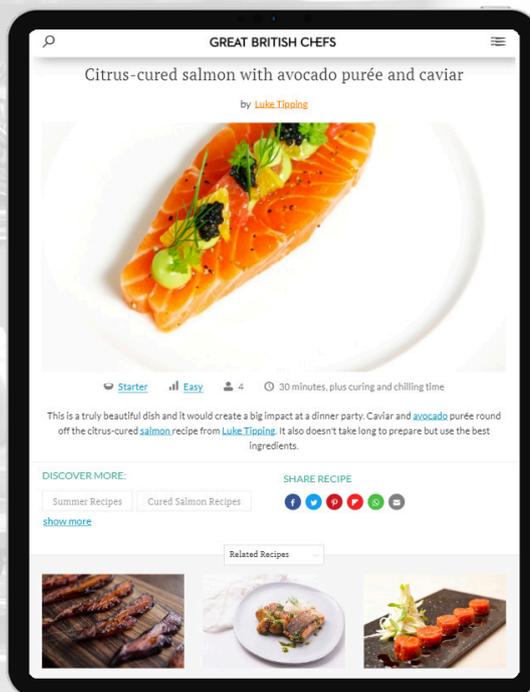
GREAT BRITISH CHEFS

Company Name
Great British Chefs

Location
London, United Kingdom

Services
Great British Chefs is the UK's leading premium food website, and third biggest recipe website in the UK. The site hosts a wide range of recipes, chef and restaurant profiles and operates on a digital publishing model. It experiences approx. 15% growth in users each year, and currently runs at 2M unique monthly visitors.

THE SITUATION

In the earlier stage of their growth, Great British Chefs had established a custom CMS which had served well for it's purpose, but its monolithic architecture and lack of optimization for higher traffic had become a bottleneck for future growth. Great British Chefs reached out to mikonboard with a view to developing an architecture that would scale with them and establishing a faster development pipeline of new features for the website.

In addition they sought to optimize front-end perfomance indicators and improve the site's content delivery speed, particularly on mobile devices.

THE SOLUTION

Mikonboard took over maintenance and further development of the website, and three key business objectives were established:
1. Overhaul the development process and infrastructure to align with frequent feature changes and website improvements.
2. Decrease website load time (with an emphasis on mobile performance)
3. Minimize downtime upon releasing new features

To meet these objectives, we began by introducing an agile development process and a continuous integration pipeline. We stabilised the mission-critical CMS, including establishing TDD for its core modules. We then incrementally improved the pipeline's performance until we reached continuous deployment.

We subsequently identified and mitigated legacy systems struggling to meet higher traffic, and redesigned parts of the stack to separate cacheable content with user-specific dynamic content.

In addition, we completely overhauled existing obsolete front-end libraries with the Vue.JS framework, introducing a mixture of dynamic JS components with CMS generated content. Any changes followed state-of-the-art SEO practices to increase organic traffic.

THE MAJORITY OF PAGES ACHIEVED

43%

FASTER MOBILE LOAD-TIME

Using various caching techniques, deferred loading and state of the art javascript optimizations, we significantly improved website performance.

GLOSSARY

Tech is always changing, which we love. But just so we're all on the same page, we wanted to explain a few technologies and terms we've used:

Content Management System (CMS) - Software to manage creation and modification of digital content (e.g. recipes)
Test Driven Development (TDD) - A software development practice ensuring properly tested, cleaner and more efficient code.
Continuous Deployment - An advanced development practice in which developers can 'live' deploy to the website from their machines, with automated tests ensuring their code's stability and website up-time.

"Tech was always a bottleneck for future growth. Not any more!"

Gemma Marti, Head of Content

RESULTS

As a result of Mikonboard's work and practices established, we managed to significantly decrease time to introduce new features, at times to mere days, and the company was able to introduce updates with no visible downtime to users.

Furthermore, the updated website won Website of the Year in the 2019 theMission Good Web Guide, being sited for usability, performance and mobile optimisation.

"It works well across devices, uses impactful images and video while remaining fast and responsive throughout."
Sam Crocker - theMission Digital Director

Mikonboard continues to work with Great British Chefs to help them create new features (Notifications, PWA and more...), enabling them to create the go-to website for passionate chefs and foodies across the UK.

30%
DECREASE IN RUNTIME COSTS

We completely changed deployment architecture to ensure efficient utilization of allocated resources. Combined with leveraging existing cloud services, we were able to decrease overall server costs, despite actually increasing throughput.

26%
DECREASE IN DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Using Mikonboard's nearshore and offshore capabilites, we managed to significantly cut costs while maintaining close contact and interaction with Great British Chefs at all times.

A dedicated team member would regularly be on site to discuss priorities, suggest further improvements and collect ongoing feedback.

REFERENCE

Tim Rosenberg, GBC Managing Director, has kindly offered to act as a reference for Mikonboard. If you would like to find out more about his experience collaborating with us, please feel free to get in touch at tim@greatbritishchefs.com.

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