Auto rental competitive benchmark

Task: For this project, I've reviewed four websites or four mobile apps to gain some insights on how best to design my own website or app.

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Goals

My Goals of this comparison are as follows:

• I focus on the rental process, starting at the homepage all the way to the checkout.

• I aim to see which parts are working, to be inspired by them, or what's not working, that I can avoid.

• Each comment and slide will be accompanied by photos and videos.

• At the end of each site/app there be a sum-up marking my impressions.

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What is competitive benchmarking?

Competitive benchmarking analysis seeks to understand your brand's success against others within your industry. You might evaluate their business strategy, their practices, or the products and services they offer to see whether you compare favourably or unfavourably. Using key performance indicators, you can create a set of benchmarks for yourself to match up to others in your sector and understand where the gaps are.

Source: qualtrics https://www.qualtrics.com/uk/experience-management/research/competitive-benchmarking/?rid=ip&prevsite=en&newsite=uk&geo=DE&geomatch=uk

Executive Summary

Objective

The purpose of engaging in this specific competitive benchmarking is to learn as much as we can about our competitors, who are operating in the same field as we are.

I chose to focus on the rental process starting at the homepage and ending in the checkout and to learn how they solved the problem of getting the user as quickly as possible to close their order.

Value

By conducting this process we can learn how our competitors solved the rental process; how quickly they got me to the checkout; what are their pain points so we can learn from the; where did they preformed well, so we can appropriate it to our design.

Terms

Above the fold: the visible area on top of the homepage.

User: the person who interacts with our product.

Pop up: a screen that jumps on top of the screen which is open

Conclusions

There are definitely recurring patterns that probably the rental companies concluded that are essential for the user and getting her to close the deal and to answer the business requirements.

Examples for that, that stood out are:

- + giving the user the option to upgrade her rental plan with accessories as GPS or child seat, or with protection plans.
- + Using a location finder to find a rental station near me.

- + Allowing to choose from a variety of car models.
- ⁺ A clear and easily accessible calendar and time picker.
- ⁺ The checkout needs to provide confidence.
- + Be polite and transparent.
- Too many screens are frustrating
- Pay attention to unnecessary pop ups and vague messages.
- Don't overload with too much graphic information.

In one sentence: making sure that the user will encounter as less road blocks as possible during the rental process, and being polite and honest with her, will benefit her in closing the deal with no exhaustion and with confident and will guarantee us another satisfied customer.

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The Brands

AVIS.

Avis Car Rental and its subsidiaries operate one of the world's best-known car rental brands with approximately 5,500 locations in more than 165 countries. Avis has a long history of innovation in the car rental industry and is one of the world's top brands for customer loyalty. Avis is owned by Avis Budget Group, Inc. (NASDAQ: CAR), which operates and licenses the brand throughout the world.

Europcar

Founded in 1949, Europear is part of the europear mobility group which offers car, vans and truck rental in more then 140 countries around the world, they offer more then 256,000 vehicles for rental purposes and more then 8000 employees worldwide.

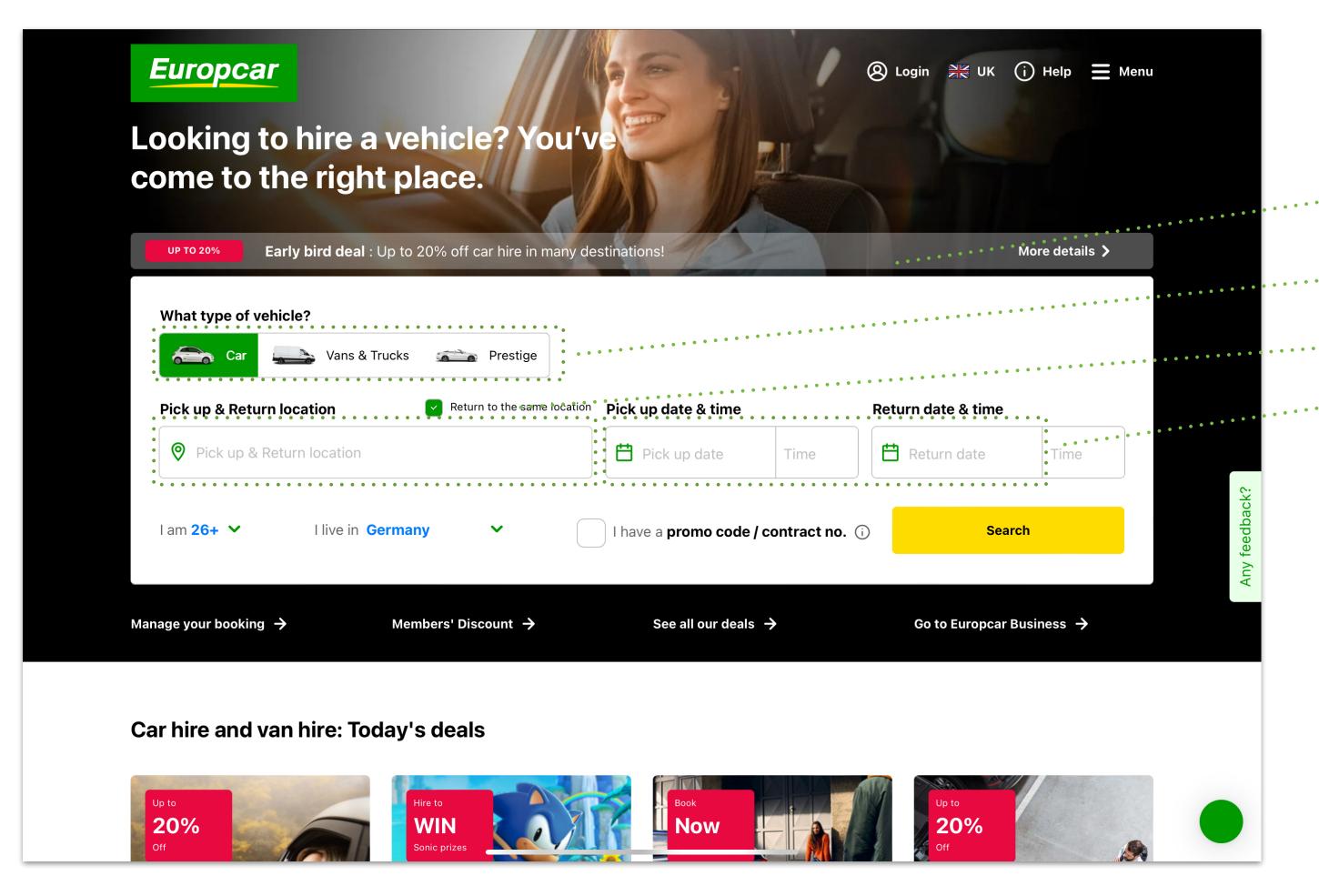


throughout North America, Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. The Hertz Corporation is one of the largest worldwide vehicle rental companies, and the Hertz brand is one of the most recognized globally...Additionally, The Hertz Corporation operates... Hertz 24/7 car sharing business in international markets and sells vehicles through Hertz Car Sales."



"Our worldwide car rental is the heart of SIXT: With SIXT rent, our customers can rent SIXT vehicles at more than 2,000 SIXT branches in over 100 countries. From city runabouts to convertibles, from SUVs to limousines. Our fleet of 240,000 vehicles worldwide leaves nothing to be desired."

Car rental for small to medium sized vehicles. To short and long distance travel.



The first page I landed on, after a Google search, was the homepage.

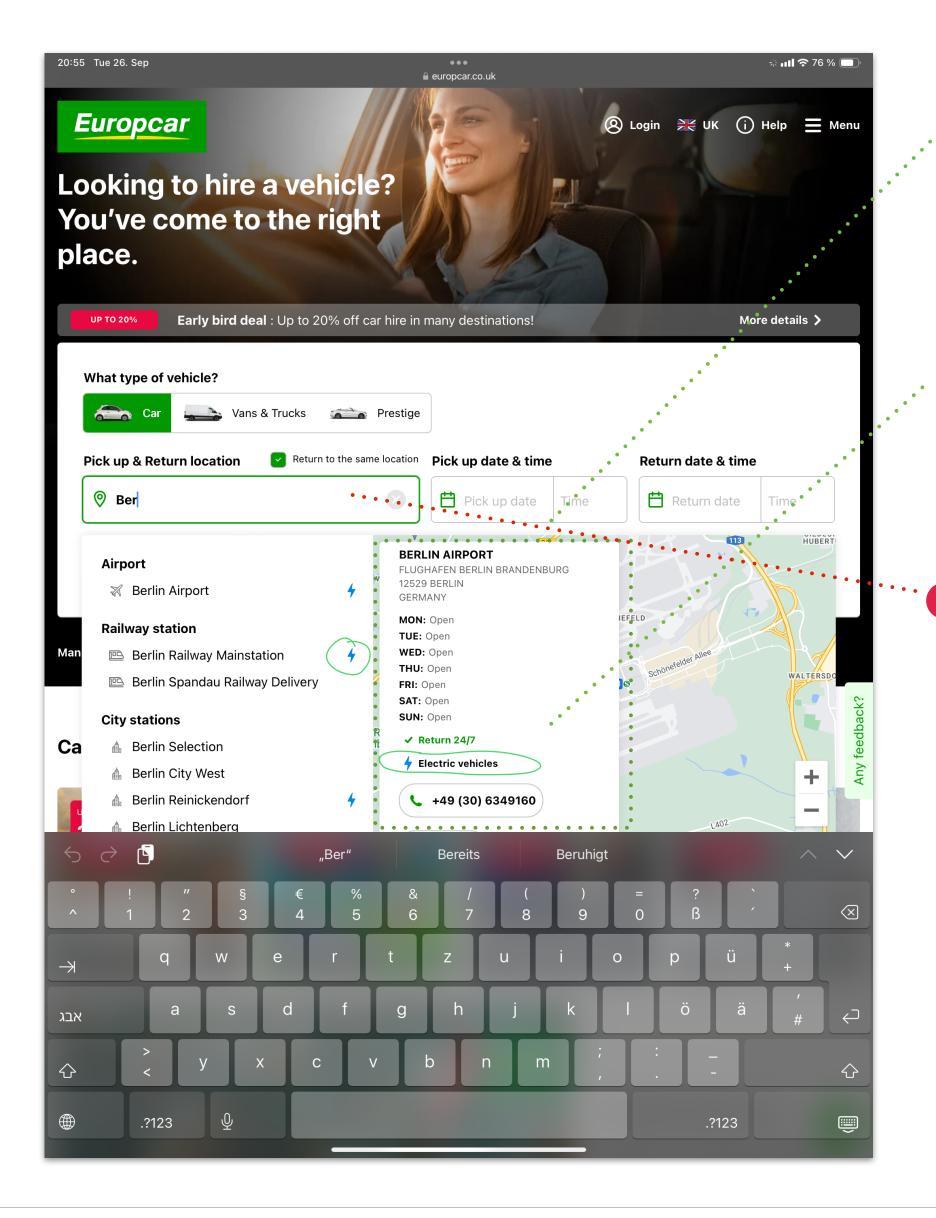
- Above the fold I immediately saw the car rental search fields, which included:
 - 1. Which type of car?
- 2. Where to pick up and return it?
- 3. When to pick up? And when to return it?

I had to declare my age and place of residence.

The call to action is very clear and straightforward.

I came to the site looking to rent a car and that's exactly what I get.

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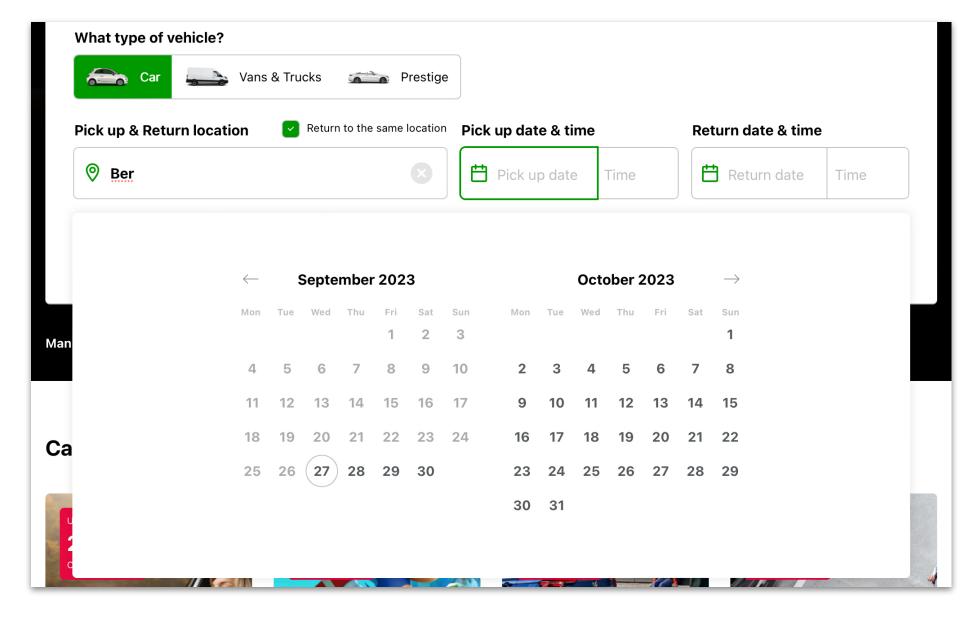


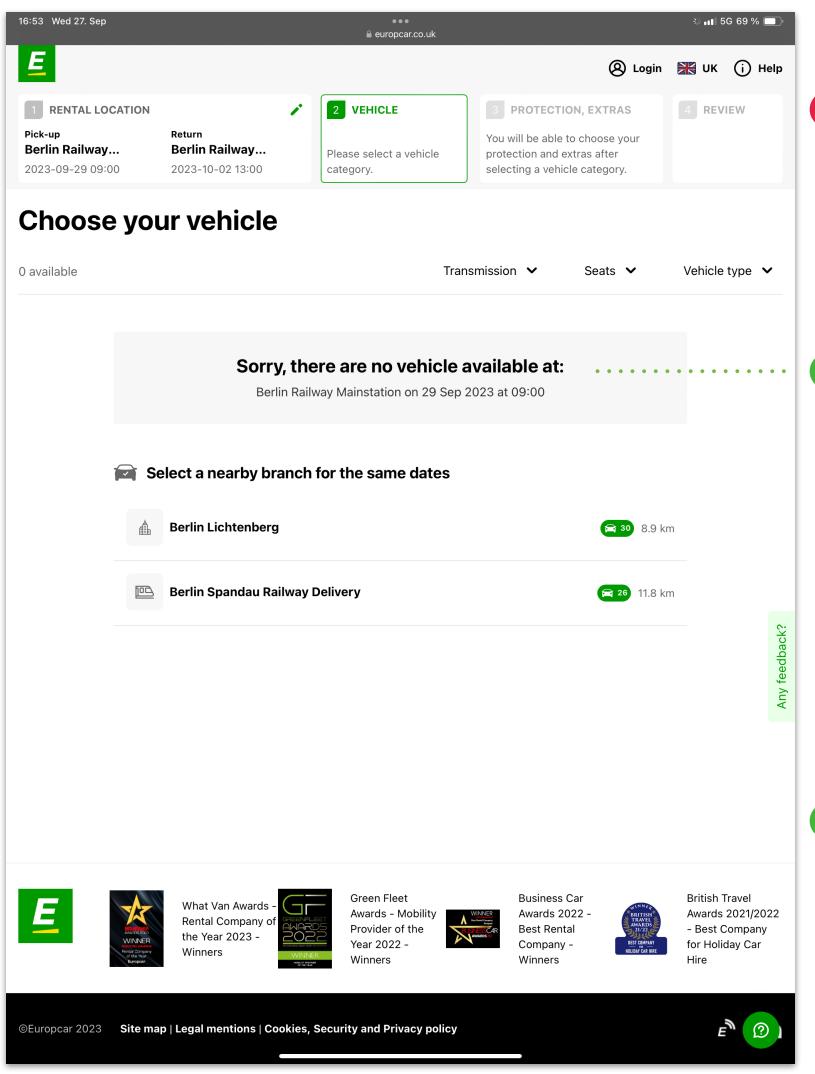
When you click to add a location, then you are given
The options to check all the drop-off stations in my city.
Each station is shown on the mini map, and for each Station
You can see the opening hours, phone number and if they
Provide eAutos, which I though was a nice touch.

Each station that has an eAuto option is marked with " \neq "

I would have preferred to have a location finder in order to find the station nearest to me instead of typing, because sometimes you don't know the area, especially when you're new in the town.

When choosing the dates and the times, then I got a very Clear calendar and times picker.



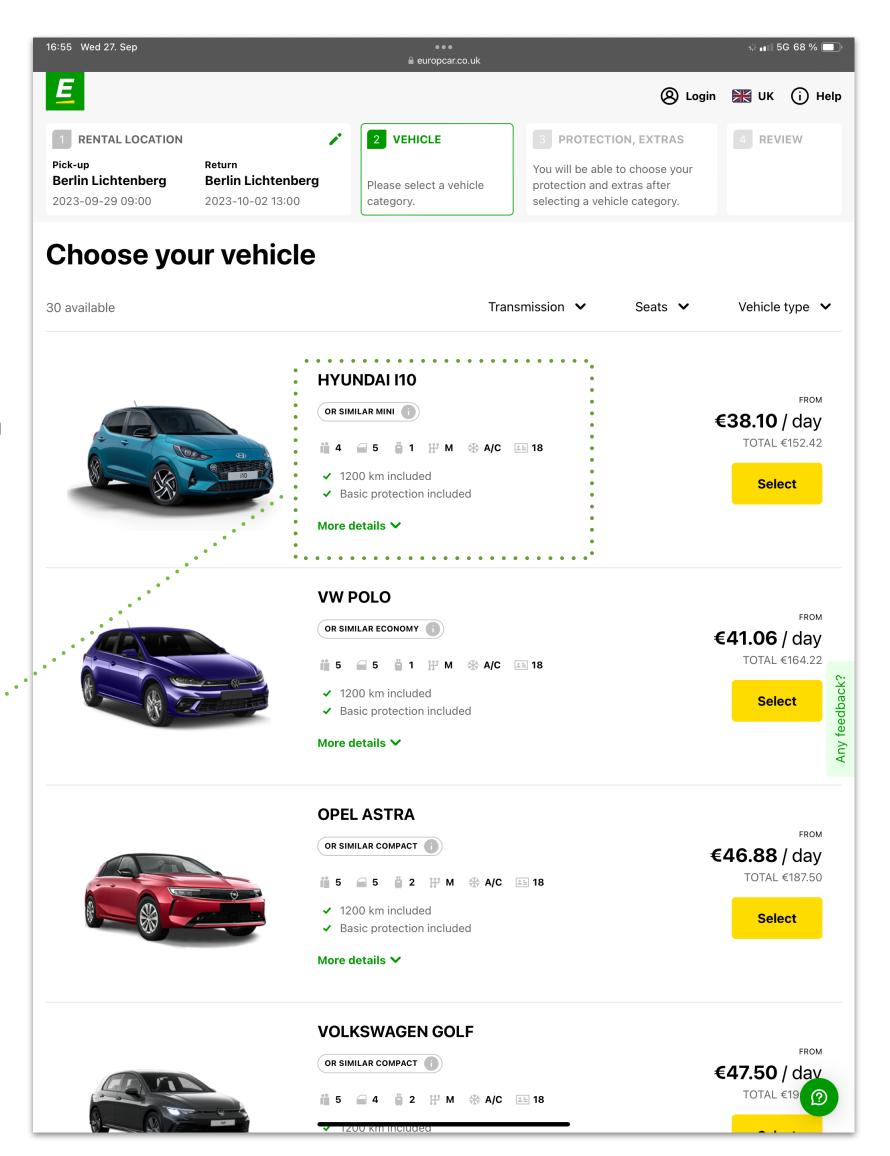


- After I chose the time and place of the rental car, in the next Screen i am told that there're no available vehicles in the Location that I chose, which I felt like they could spare me This info at the previous screen.
- Despite the brakes on the process, the system was very polite

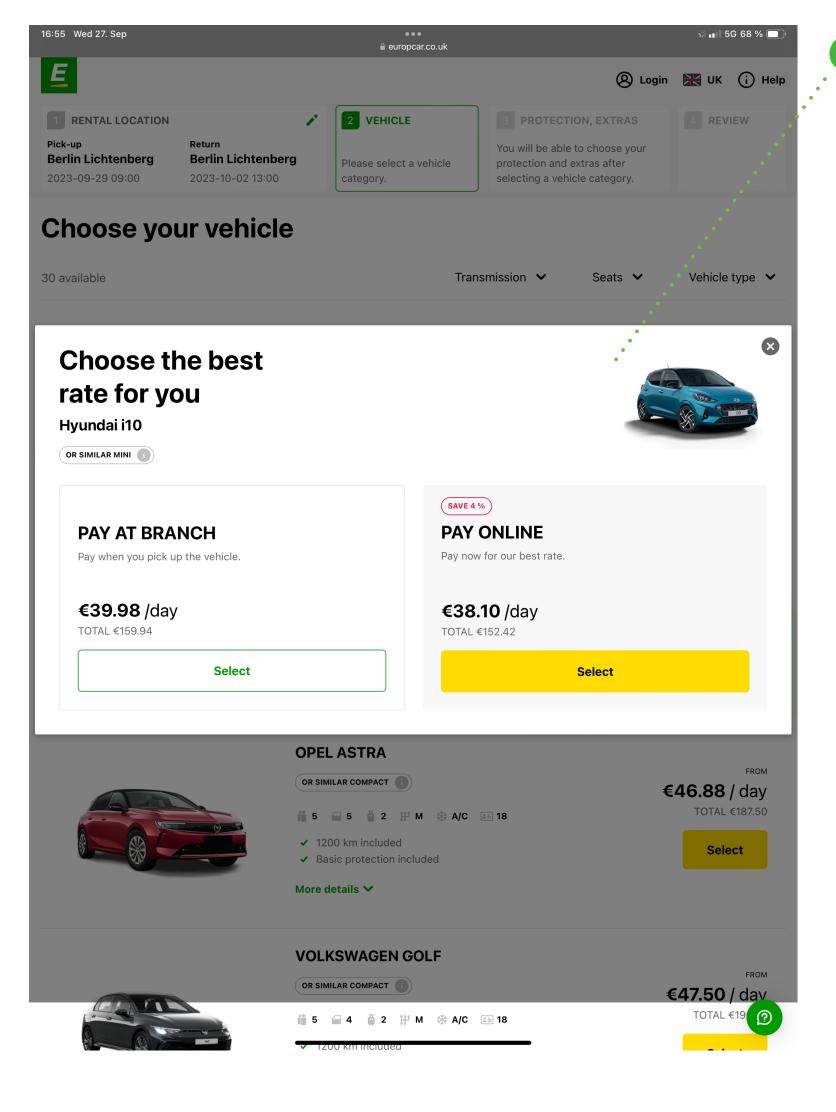
And the message that I was given was very pleasant.

I was immediately provided with 2 alternative stations to to my unavailable choice.

On the next screen I was requested to choose A car model. Each model is provided with a short Description of the features that the car has to Offer. The info is very clear and presented with Icons and short sentences. All the information That I need. If I wish to have more info, then I can click on "More details"



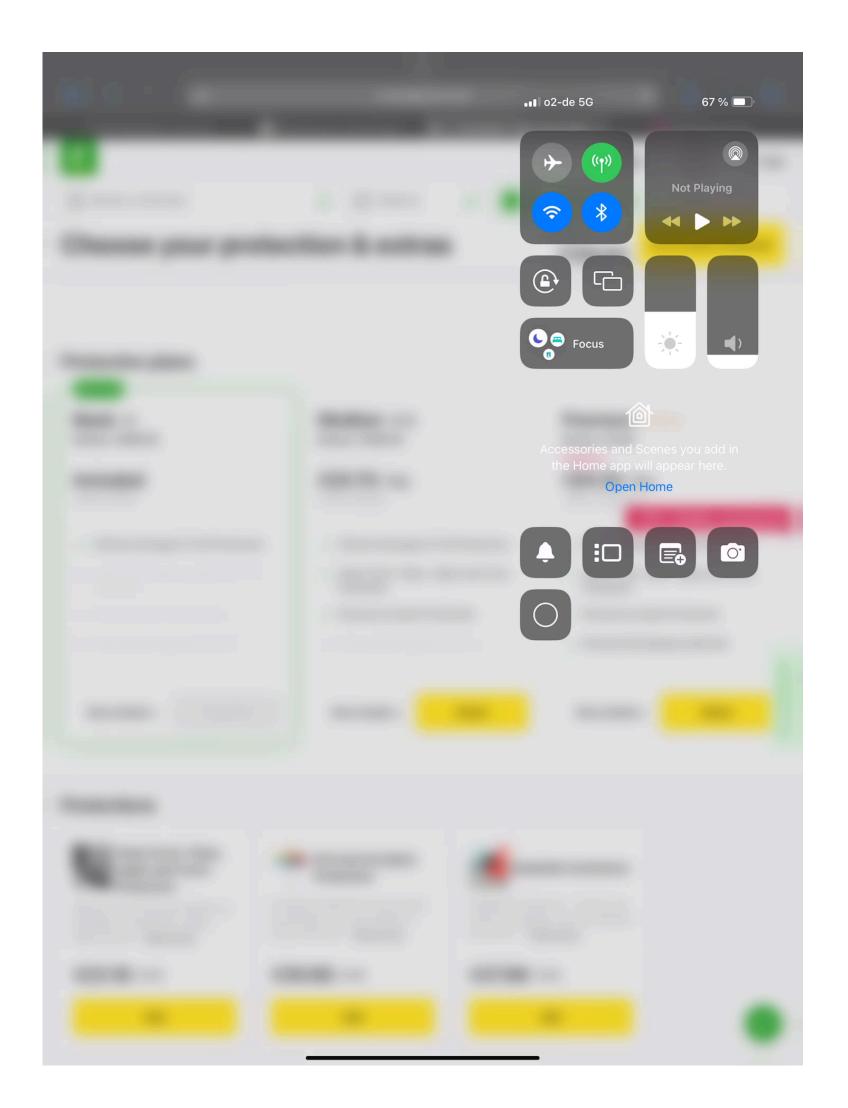
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After I chose a car model, I got a pop up asking me if I want to pay online, and get a discount or pay at the branch, which is nice because it speeds up the booking process.

The next screen after the car model page, I am given many options, as I scroll down, to upgrade my car according to my driving needs. Such upgrades are winter wheels, baby seat or additional driver.

On top of the page europear offer me different insurance packages, which is categorized into 3 levels, from basic to premium.



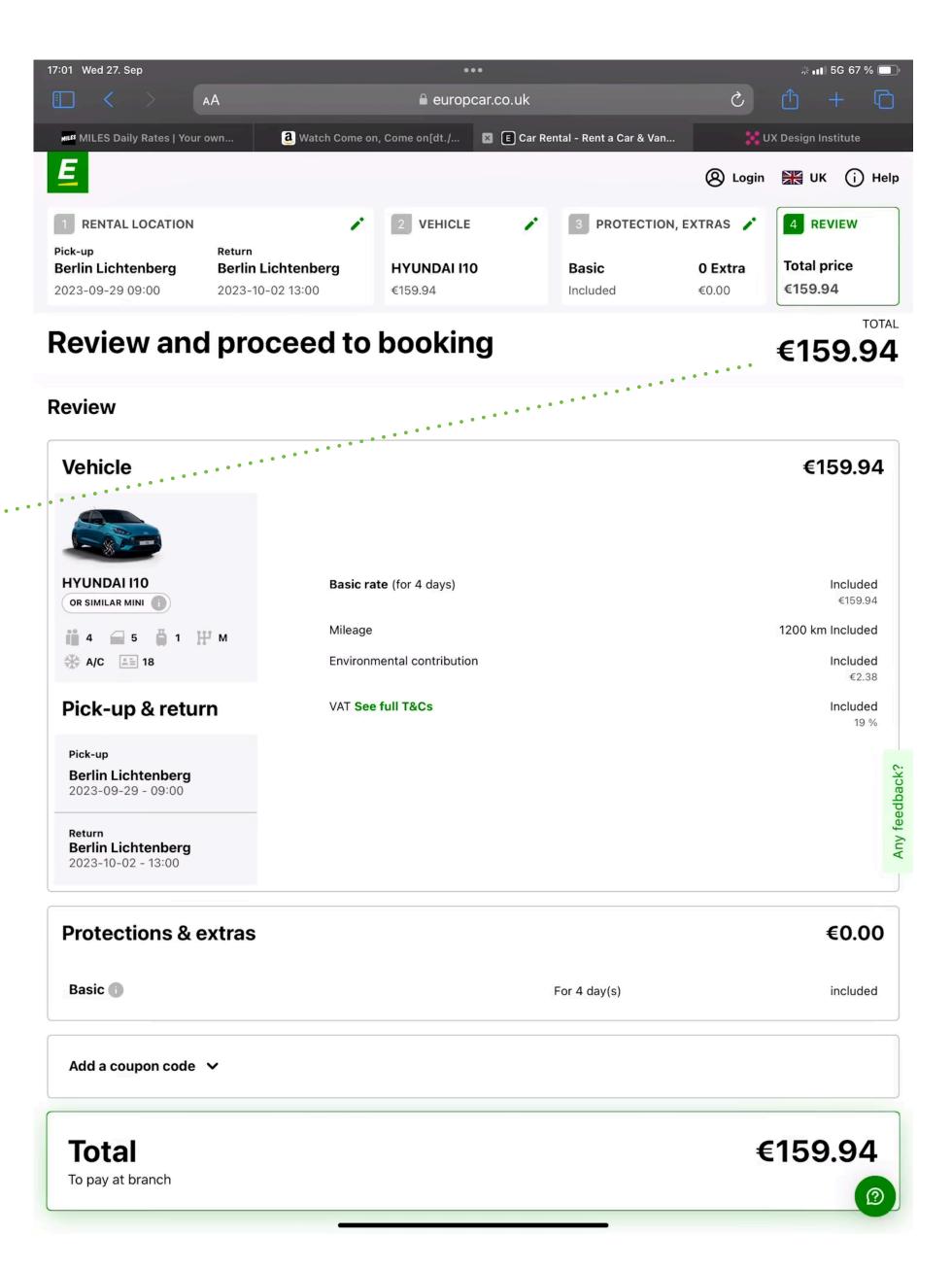
In the last page, which is the checkout page, I am asked to give my personal and payment informations.

The page is very clear and offers me a very clear path from top to bottom. The most important information to fill up, such as payment, is marked in a green box, thus highlighting for me more easily the boxes that I need to double check my information and to quicken the checkout process.

The total is always following you around as you scroll down, which showtransparency.

On the top of the screen, the header, you can always return to a previous step in the process and still <u>change you order</u>.

If I wish to have further info about my car, or the T&Cs, the everything is easily revealed and can be unfolded. Thus I am not distracted by anything other than my order.



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Sum-up

From the first page, the homepage, I get a clear and upfront box of options upon which I can make first quick decisions regarding my rental; which car I want; when I need it; where to drop it off etc.

Even if I just want to quickly gather my info in order to compare it with other providers, I can do it in a short time.

Following the design heuristics, the system is a kind one that reacts to my needs as I progress through the rental process. Some examples are:

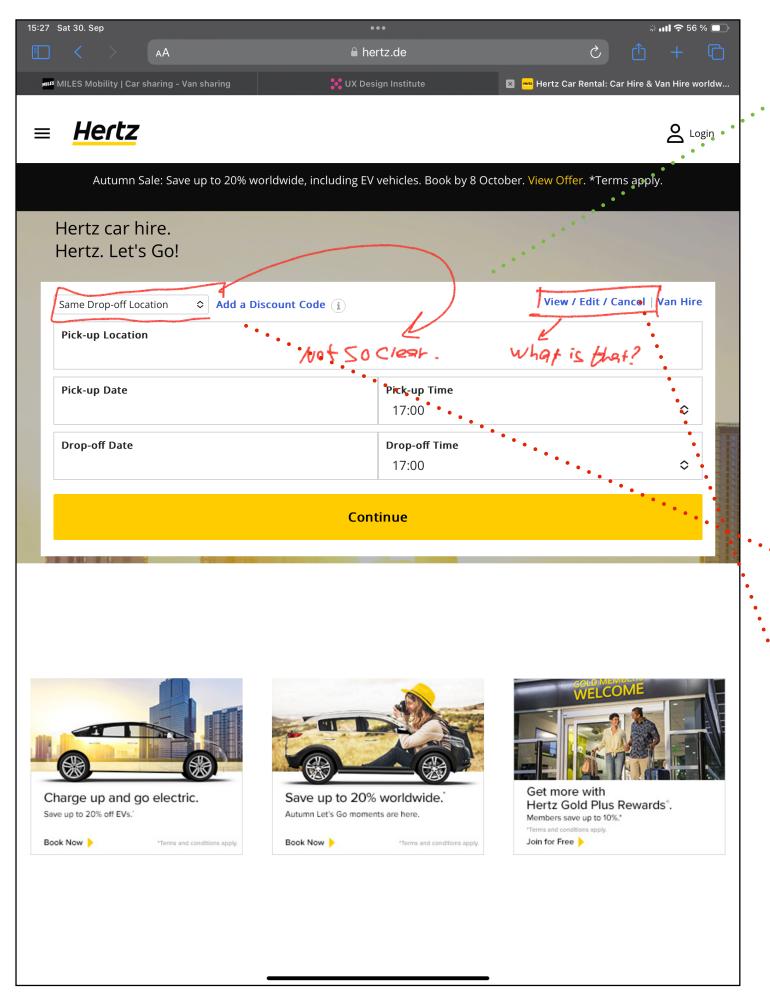
- + Offering me other options, when what I chose was n/a.
- + Giving me options to upgrade according to my driving needs i.e. winter wheels or a child seat.
- + allowing me to go back in the process.

On the down side:

- even though I was offered another option, for when mine wasn't available, i feel like they could spare me that part and just tell me in advance that it's n/a.
- I feel like they could spare me "the payment pop-up" and present it to me at the end during checkout, thus saving me a screen.

All-and-all the rental ran fairly smoothly. I was given a lot of options to upgrade which will match my driving needs. The UI is very minimal and without added noise and distractions. When I need to learn more, then I have the option to do it.

S-M sized cars, Vans & e-Autos rental. From short to long distance travel.

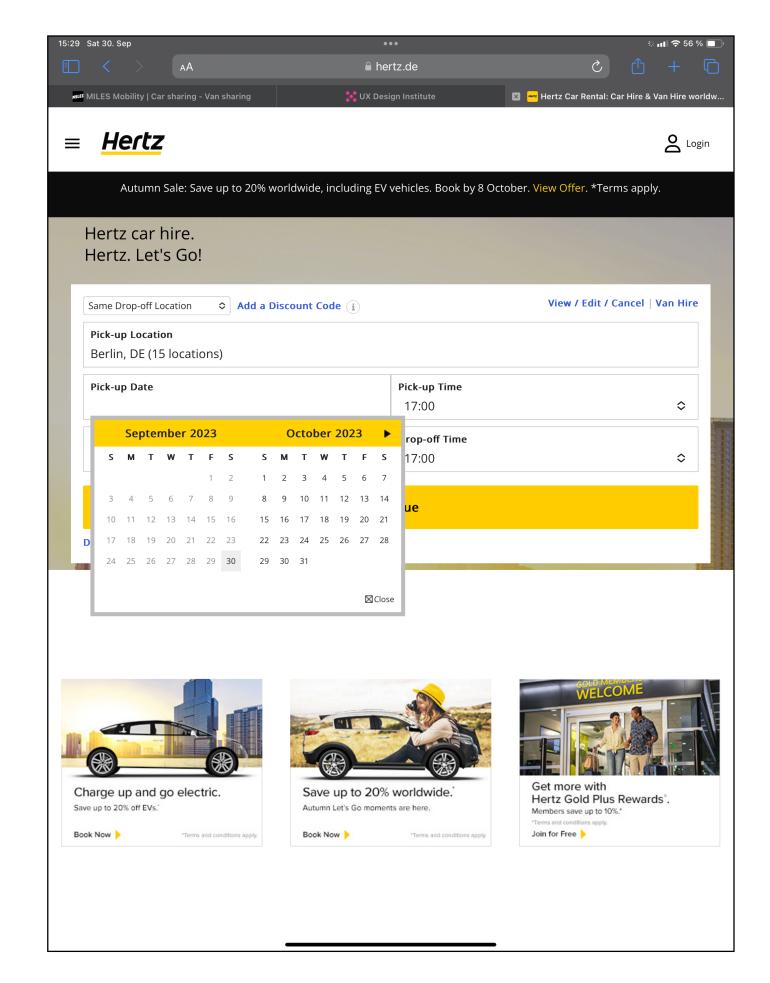


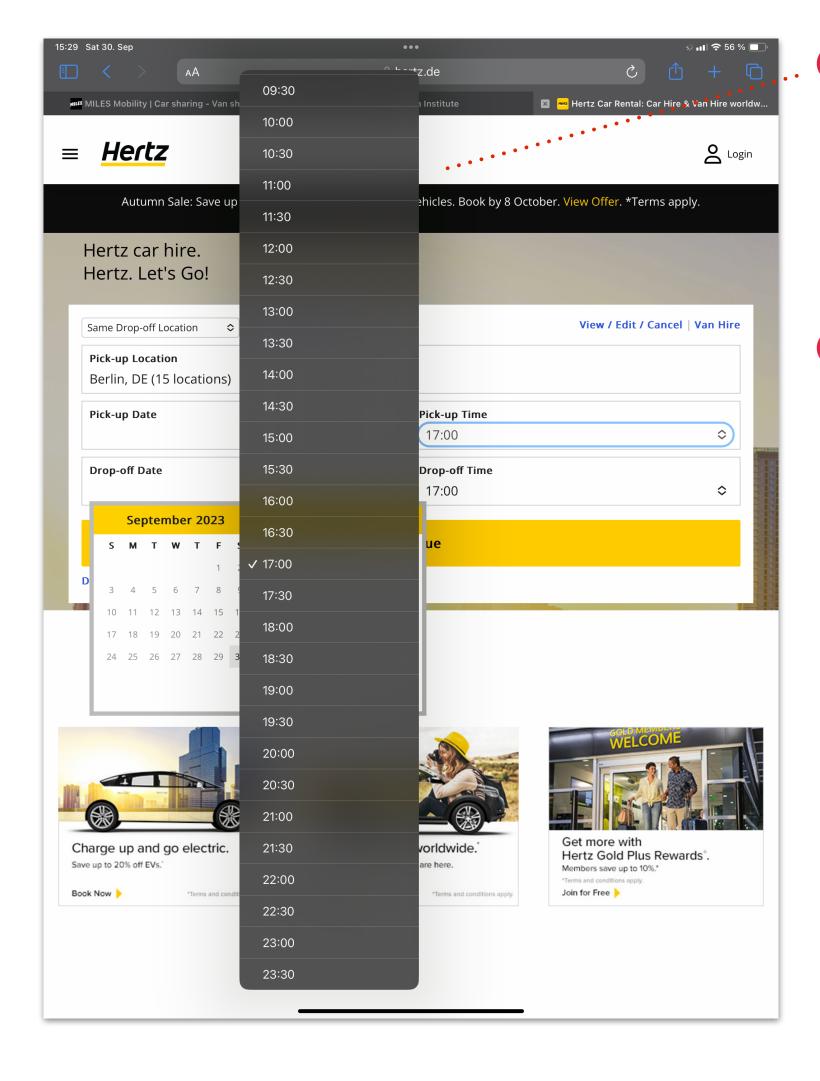
On the first screen, the homepage, above the fold, the search option is very visible, it's taking pretty much half of the screen, which is good because it keeps you focused on the search tool and nothing else.

In the search bar, as with the competitors, you are given the options to:

- 1. Choose a pick-up & drop off stations.
- 2. Choose a date & time.
- I can also choose a different drop-off station, but it's not so visible. It's located above the search box, and it's not so obvious.
- On the top right of the search box, I am given some vague options such as; edit; view; cancel. What am I to edit or cancel?

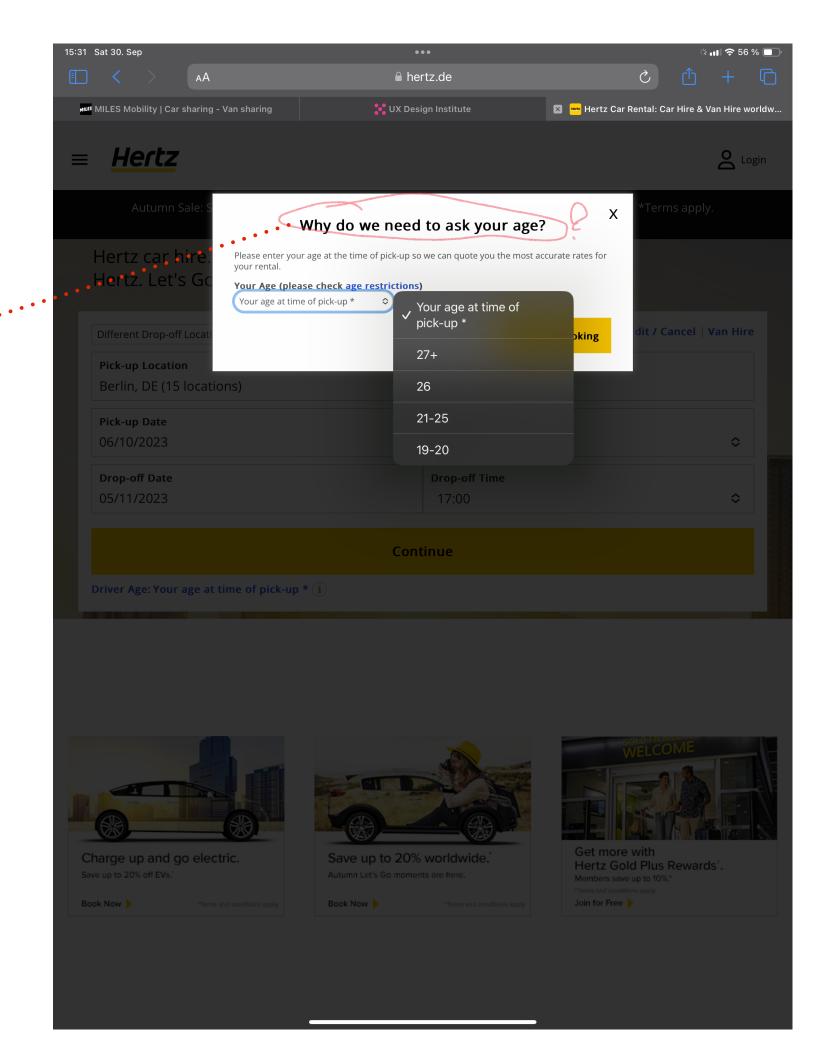
When choosing the date, then the caleder pops up. There're different calendars; one for the pickup and one for the drop off.

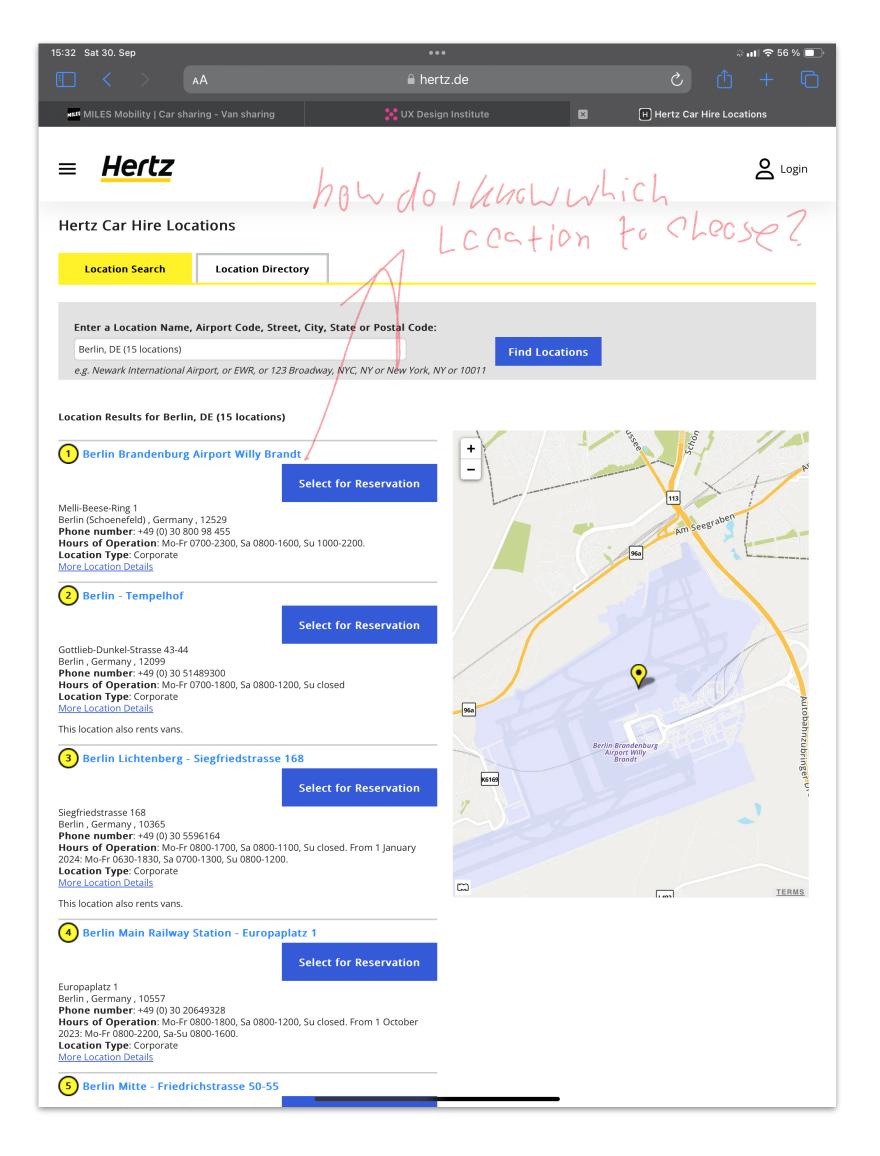




- Still on the first screen when I wish to choose the time of my pickup/drop off I then I am confronted with a time selection box which is very obtrusive and takes up the whole screen. I wished they would have a more elegant solution here.
- After I chose my my time and place of the pickup/drop off, I received a pop up asking me to declare my age.

I thought the title was very confusing. For once, It was asking me a question as a title, and secondly it was not really answering that question aside a short description.





- In the next screen I have the option to choose my pick up station, which to be honest was quite confusing as well. It made me question two things (in order of importance):
 - 1. Why couldn't they avoid this extra screen and just present me with the option to choose my specific station of choice in the first search box on the homepage?
 - 2. How would I know which station is near me if I don't know where I am?*
 - * I felt like they could add a location finder that will assist me with the station near me.

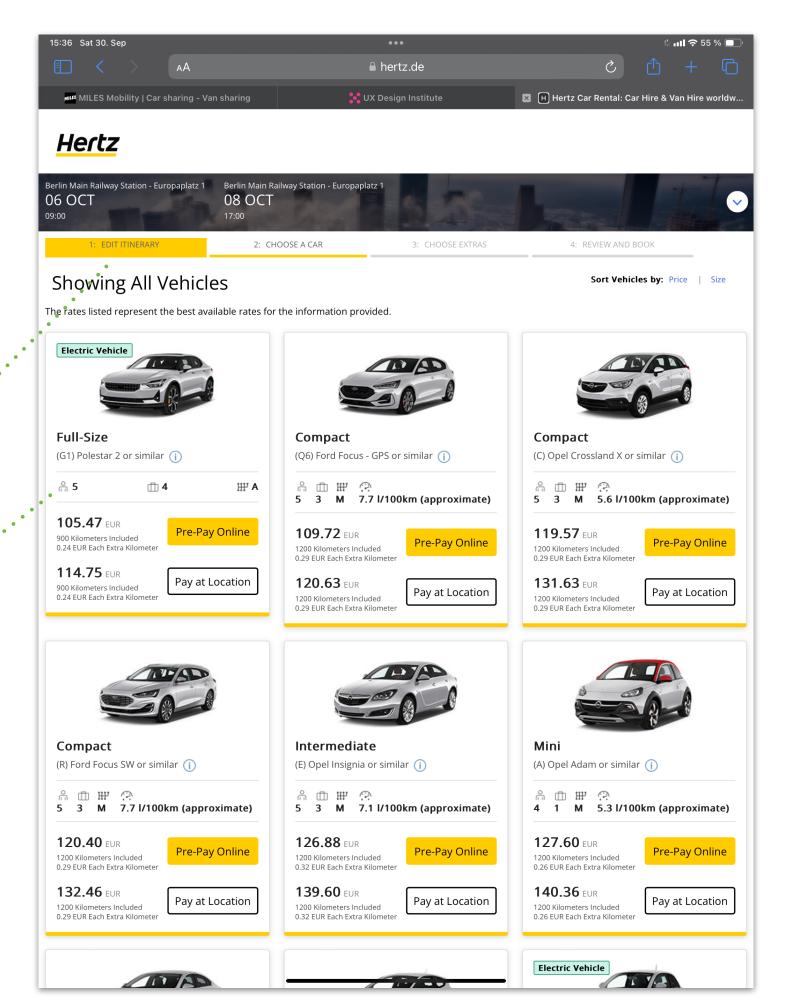
After I chose a pick up station, in the next screen I need to choose a car model.

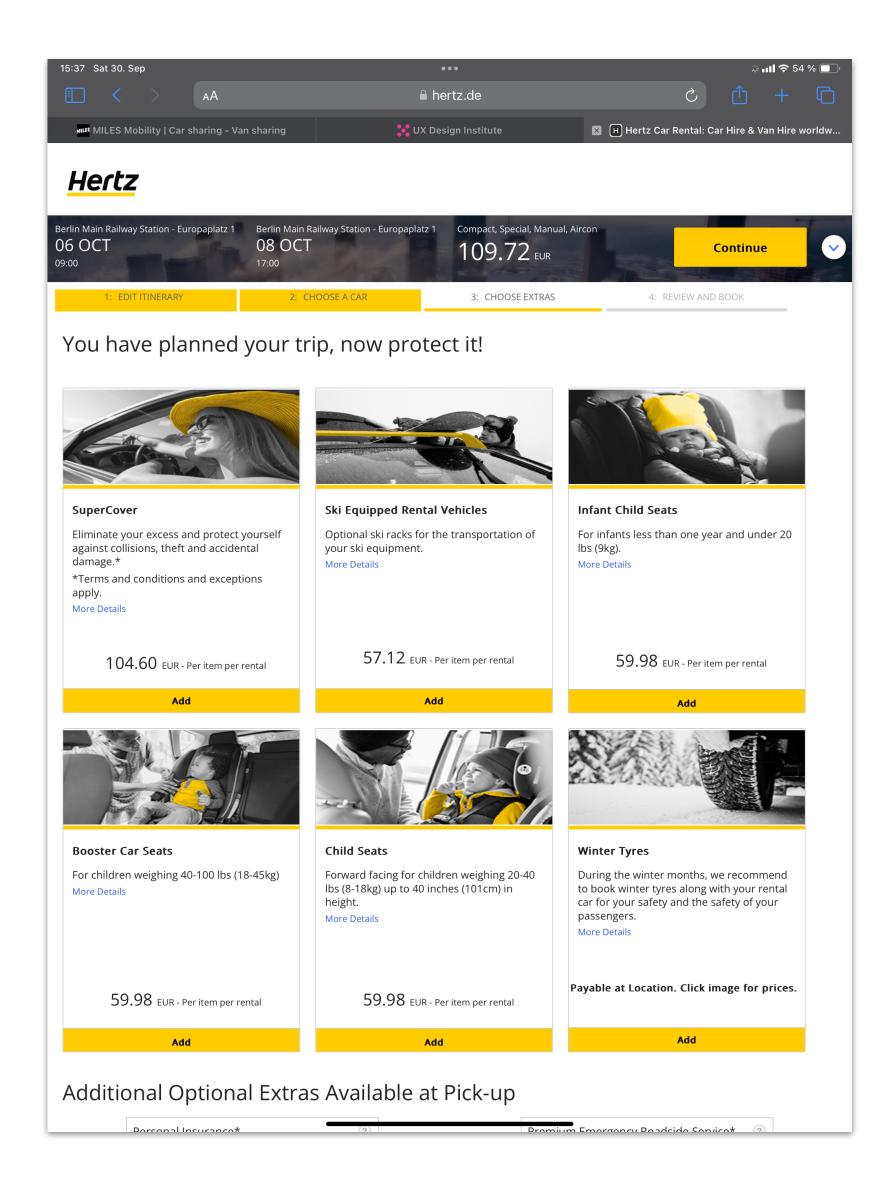
- The is a progress bar on top, which shows where I am in the order process, and a quick summary of my order, above the progress bar.
- Each car model is presented with short description about the car; Auto./manual; speed; baggage room and for how many passengers.

It also shows me if the car is electric or Benzin.

If I wish to have more info, then I can click on the "i".

I have the option to pay online, thus receiving and small discount, or to pay full price at the station.





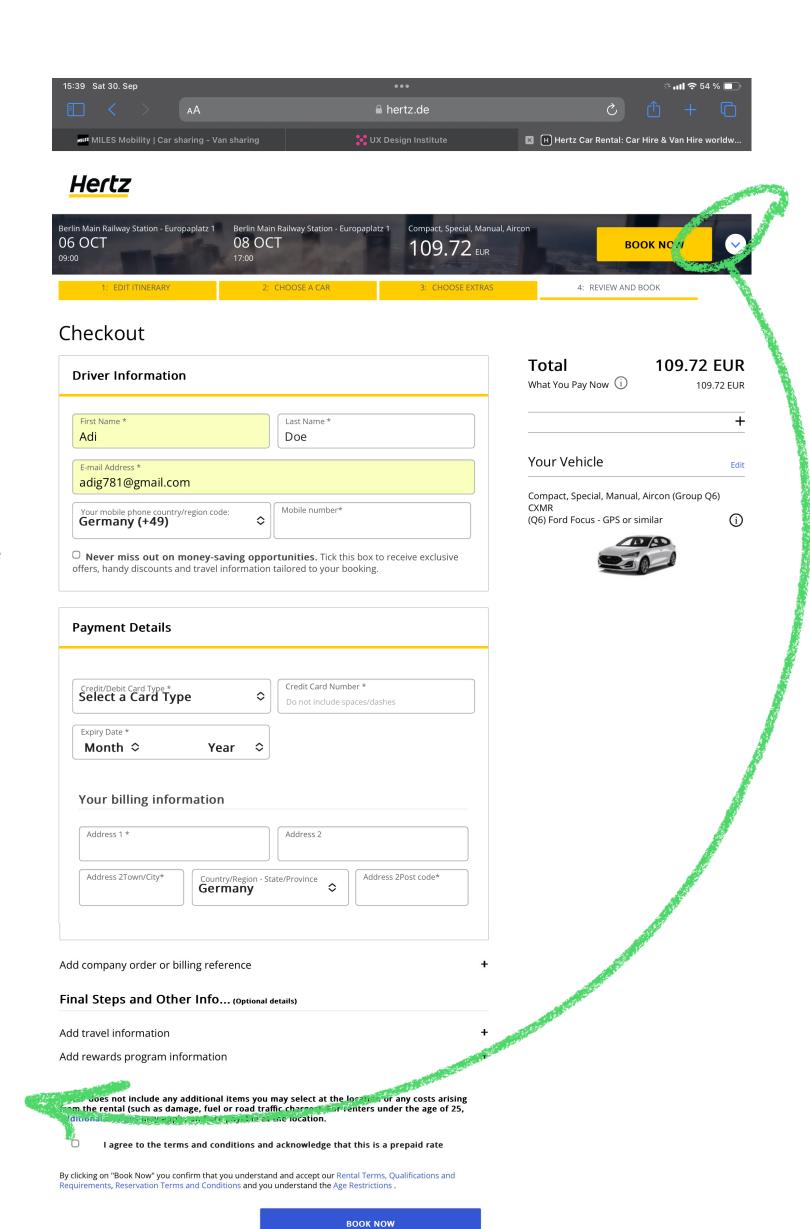
After choosing a location, time and car model, on the next screen I have the option to upgrade my car package according to my driving needs. Such upgrades are: child seat, winter tires, insurance upgrade or ski equipped vehicles.

After the upgrade page, I am transferred to the final page before confirmation, which is the checkout page.

In the checkout page I am asked to fill up of my personal information, and my payment information.

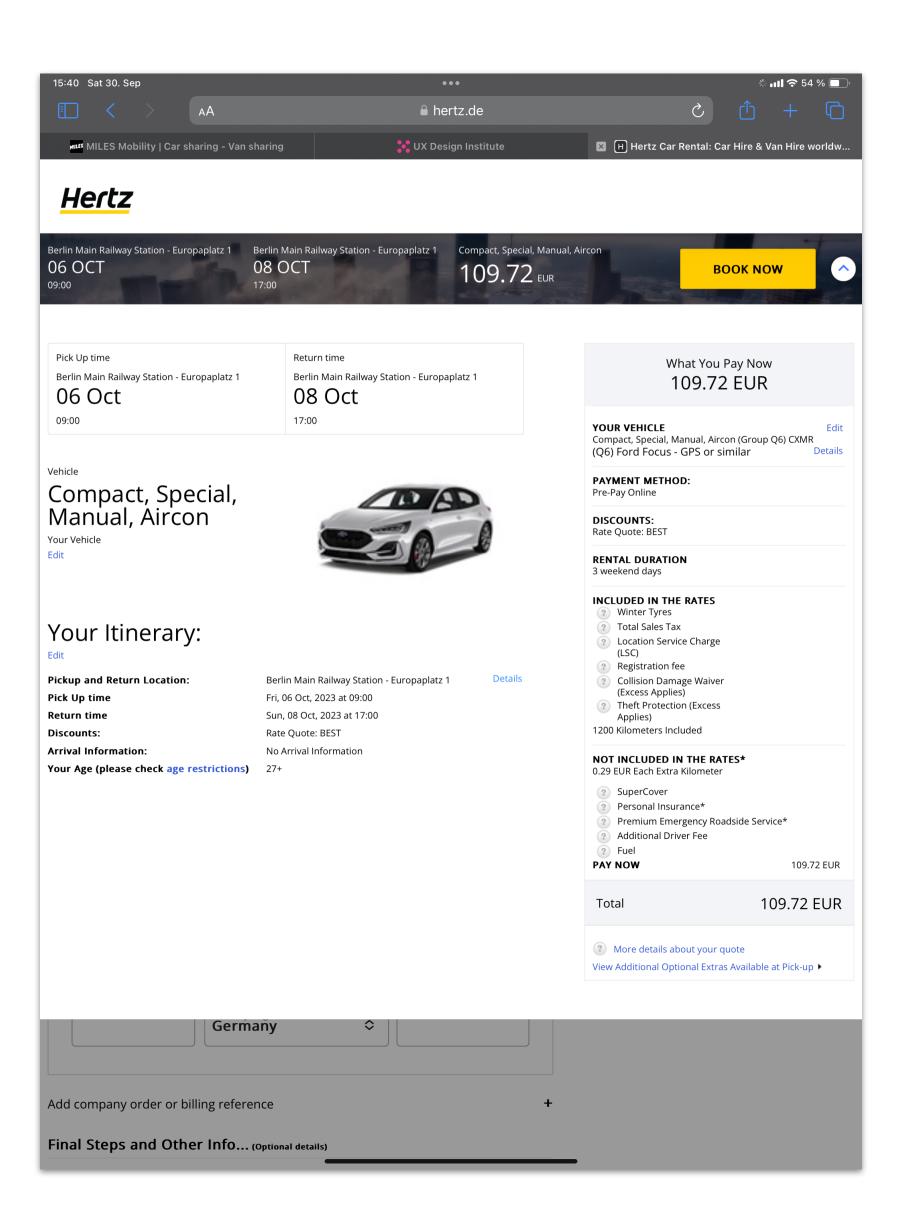
The page is pretty flat, with very minimal graphic information, which I guess is good, because it's not distracting, but something feels off to me.

If I wish to have more detailed info regarding my order, I can click on the arrow next the "book now" button (next slide)



Important Information

▶ Rental Terms, Qualifications and Requirements



In this slide I wanted to show what happens when you click on the arrow in order to get more info, which opens as a drop down in the checkout page and describe a very detailed information regarding my order. What's included in my package, and what is left out, in case I still wish to upgrade.

Beside that I shows clearly how much I will have to pay and in what dates and times I will pick up the car, and also it shows a mini image of the car I will get, or something similar.

Sum-up

Same as with Europear, I am confronted immediately with the search option, although different from Europear- it was not as smooth to go through the process.

I would say steps-wise - it took me quite longer to reach the checkout, because I have to stop and think more then once during the process, which distracted me from it.

Following the design heuristics, the system is not so kind and design wise is quite archaic.

On the upside:

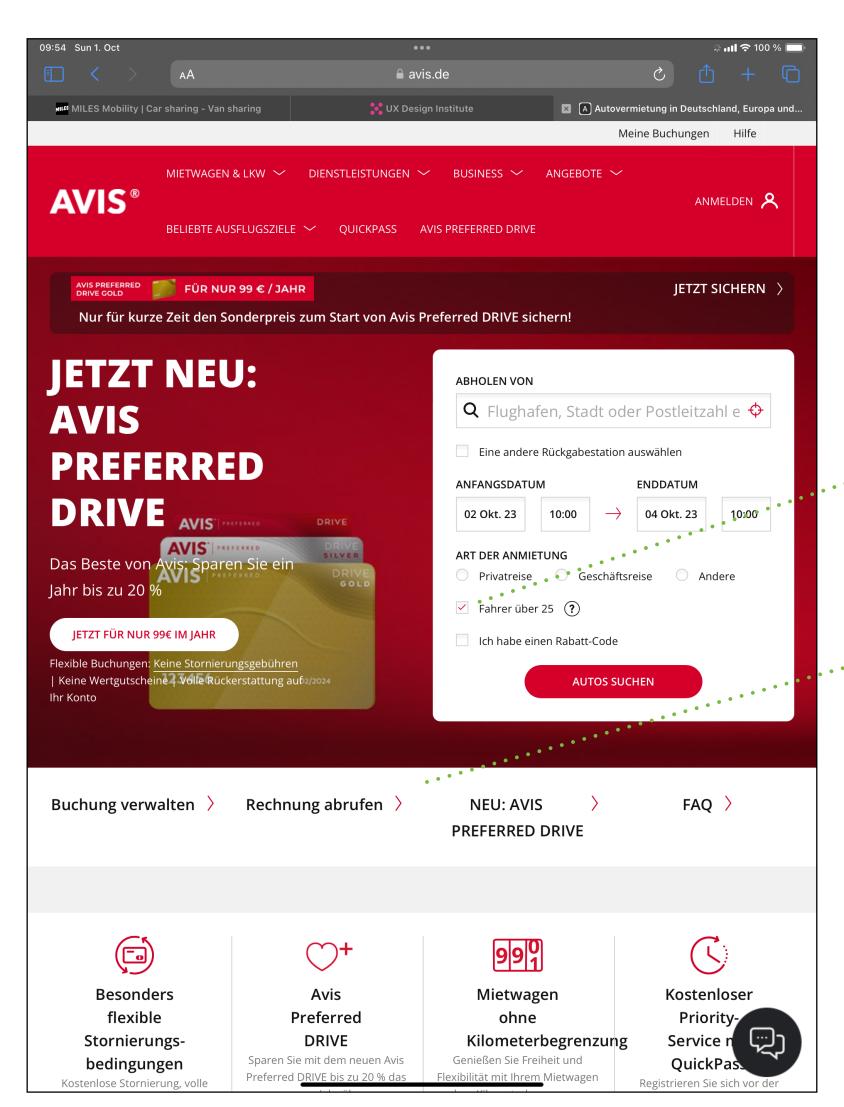
- + Basic graphics and not so overwhelming.
- + Very clear info in the checkout regarding my order.

On the down side:

- Confusing information on the search option on the homepage.
- I feel like they could use the "location finder" option and help me find a pick up station next to me.

To summarise, the rental process was not as smooth as Europear. I was confronted with a lot of confusing information which would probably disappoint Steve Krug and his heuristics.

World wide Car rental for S-M sized vehicles and vans. For short and long distance travel.



In the first page, as always, is the homepage.

Above the fold you can find the search box.

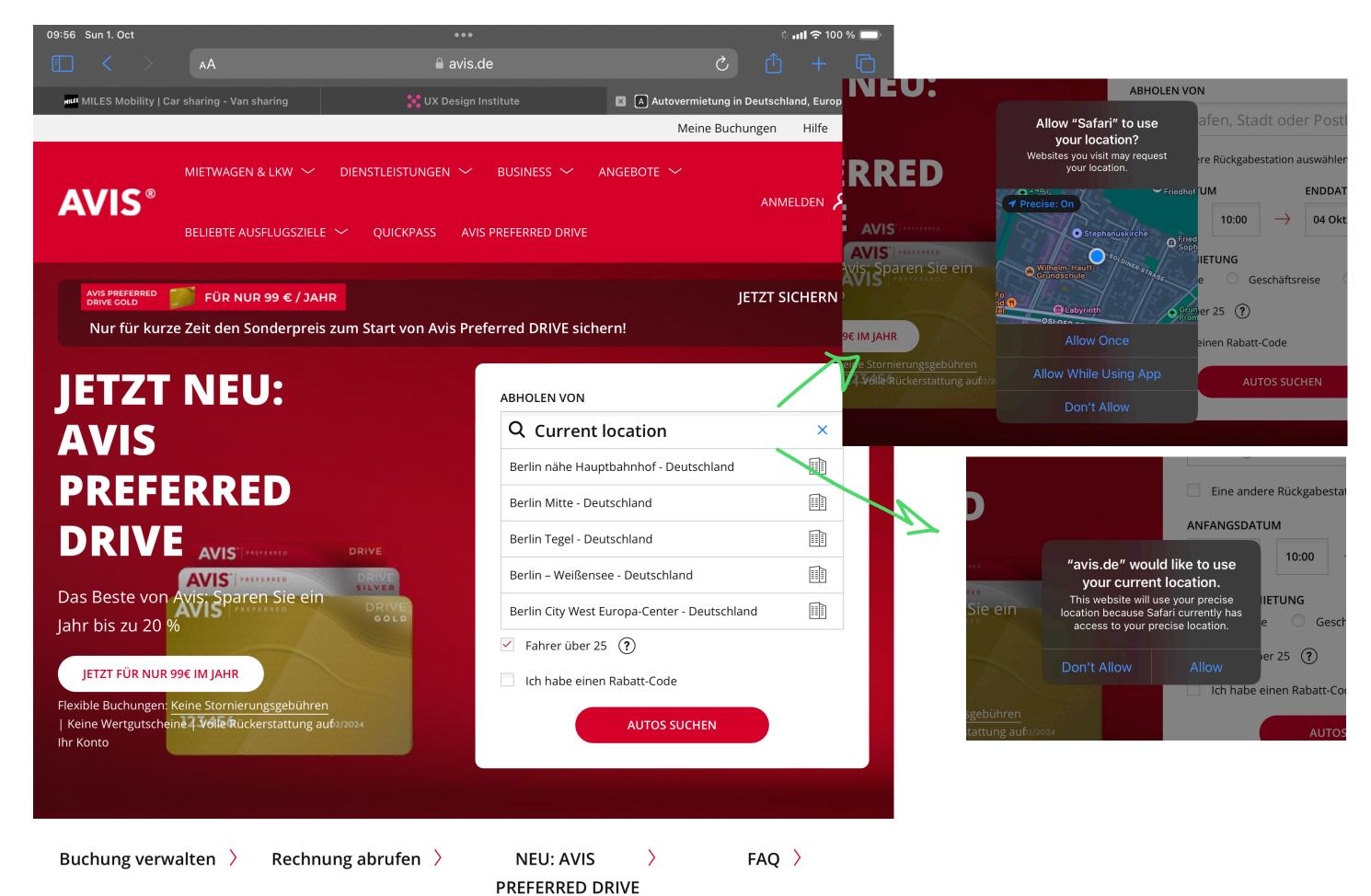
The search box is not necessarily the first thing that catches my my eye. There is basically a lot of noise around it, such as the special members card from Avis.

In the search box I could choose the pickup and drop off stations of the vehicle, the date and the time.

In this site, the age restriction is easily fixed by ticking a box with a **()**, which I thought was an elegant, quick and smooth solution.

Compared to the 2 other competitors so far, there is an option to tick a box for *business* or *private* customer.

Still above the fold, you can see some services that Avis offer, such as: FAQs, producing invoices and mange a booking.



- Compared to the other two competitors, in Avis I am given the option to have my location found via GPS, thus enabling me to find a station near me. This is especially helpful if I don't know which station to choose.
- I am being asked for permission to share my location, which I find very kind.



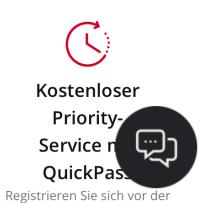
Besonders flexible Stornierungsbedingungen Kostenlose Stornierung, volle

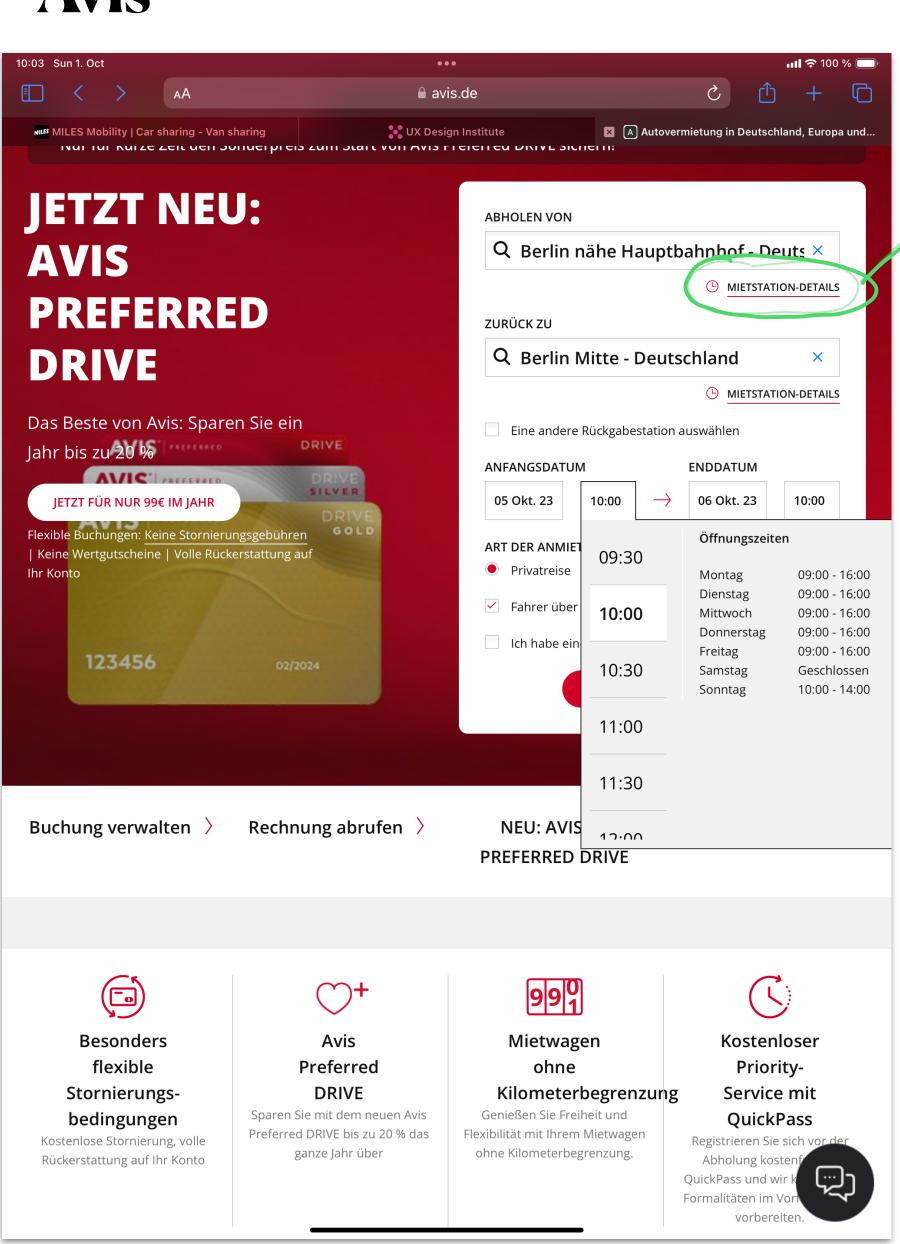
Avis

Preferred DRIVE Sparen Sie mit dem neuen Avis Preferred DRIVE bis zu 20 % das

Mietwagen ohne

Kilometerbegrenzung Genießen Sie Freiheit und Flexibilität mit Ihrem Mietwagen

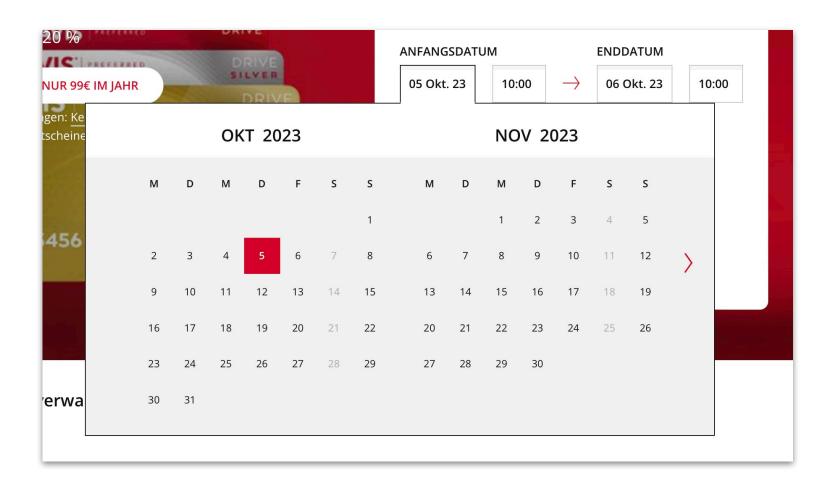


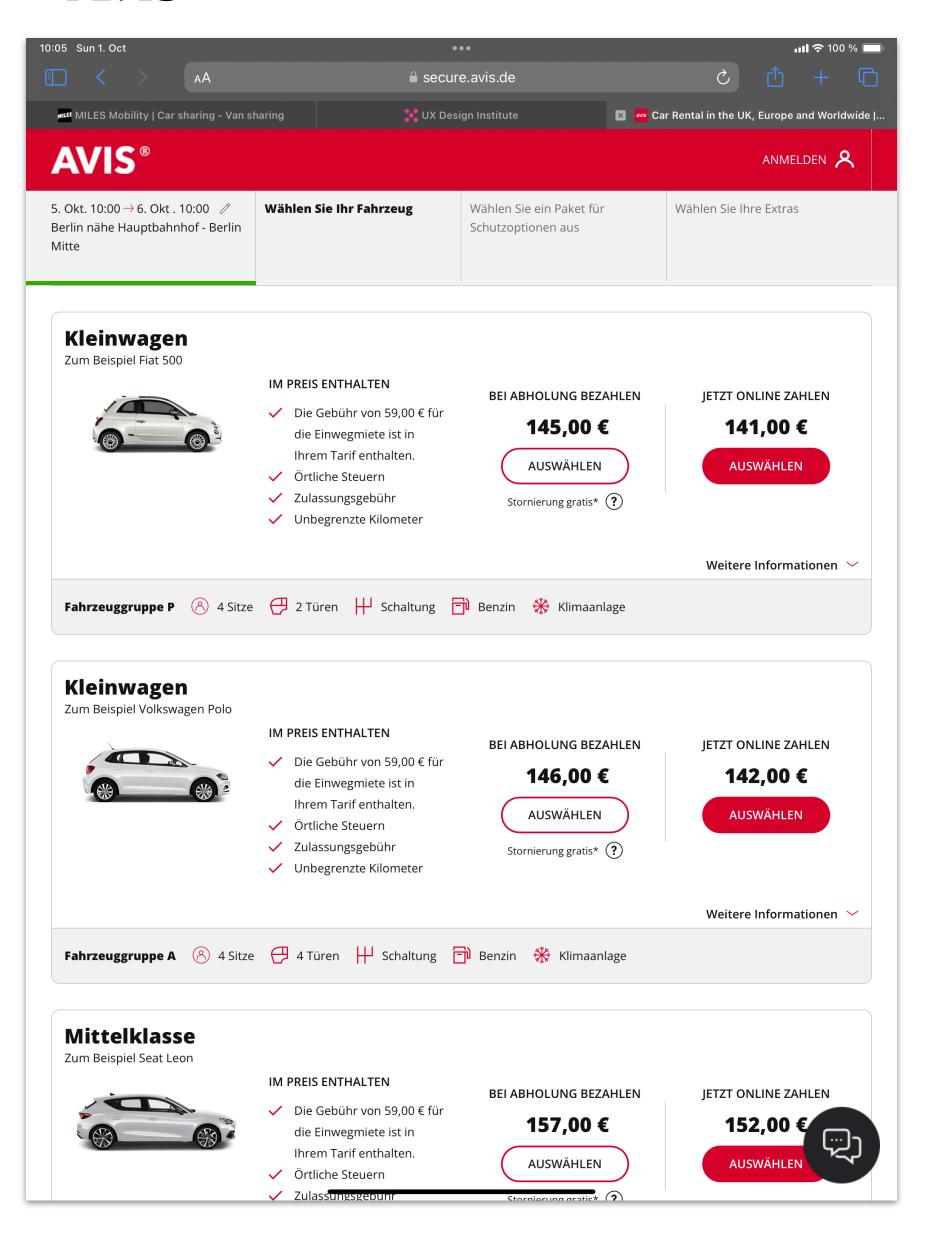




Clicking on the "rental station details" I get detailed information about the pickup station including business hours and address.

- Choosing the time of my pickup, I can see the available opening hours in my chosen station. I found it to be good service.
 - The calendar has a very clear design and it's connected directly to the calendar button.



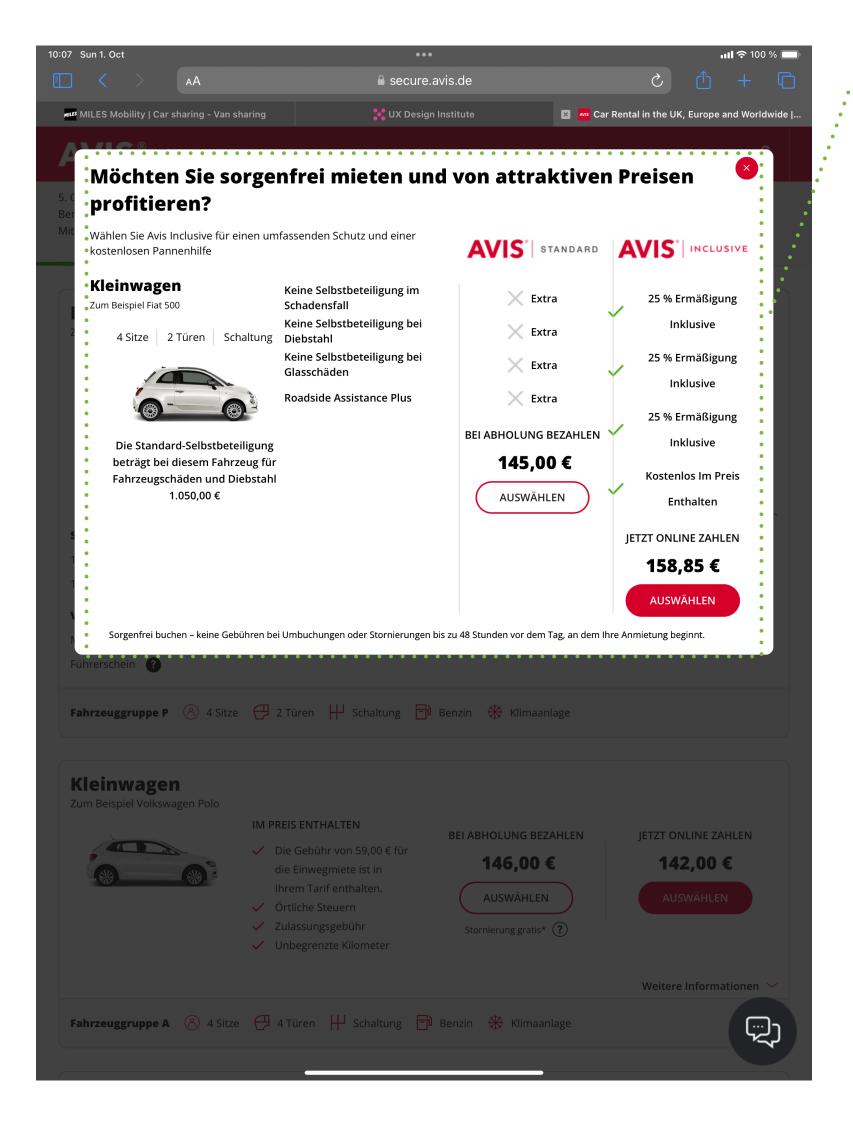


On the next screen, after choosing the time, date and pickup station, I am asked to choose a car model.

The information presented is very clear with bulletpoints showing what's included with the car and the plan.

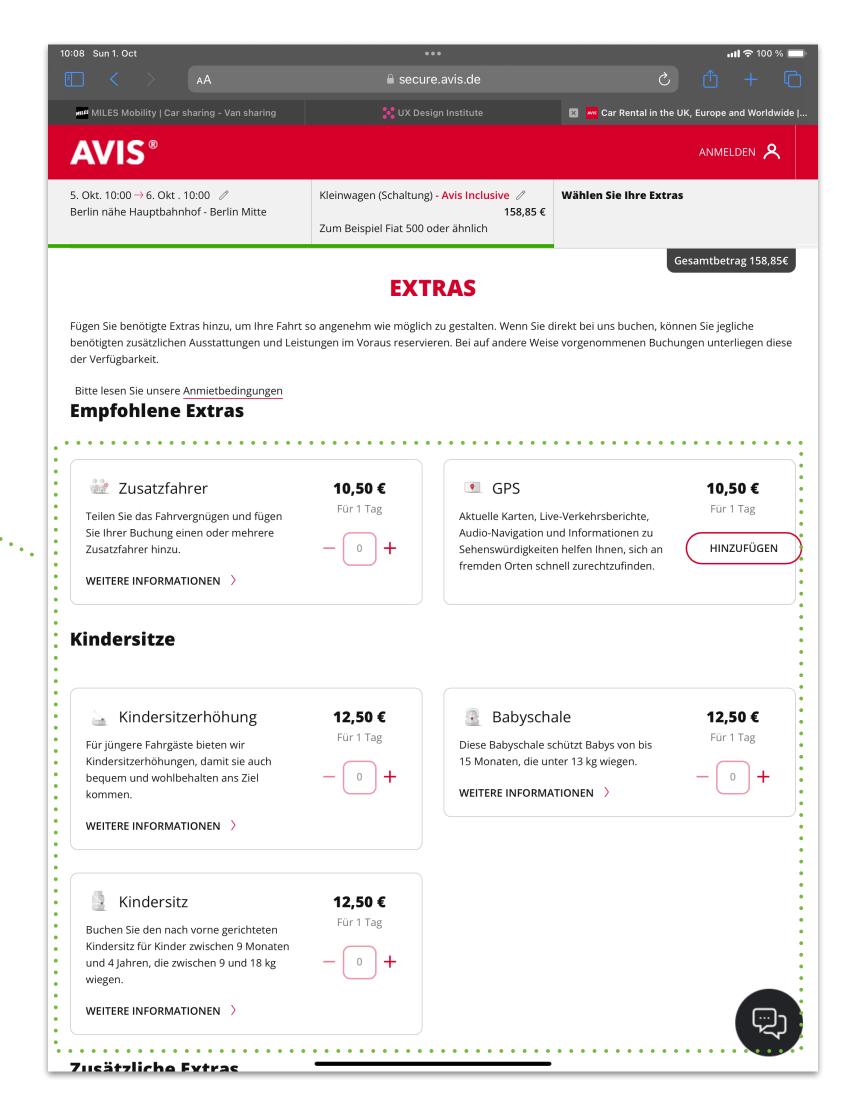
I can choose to pay online, thus getting a discount, or to pay full price upon pickup.

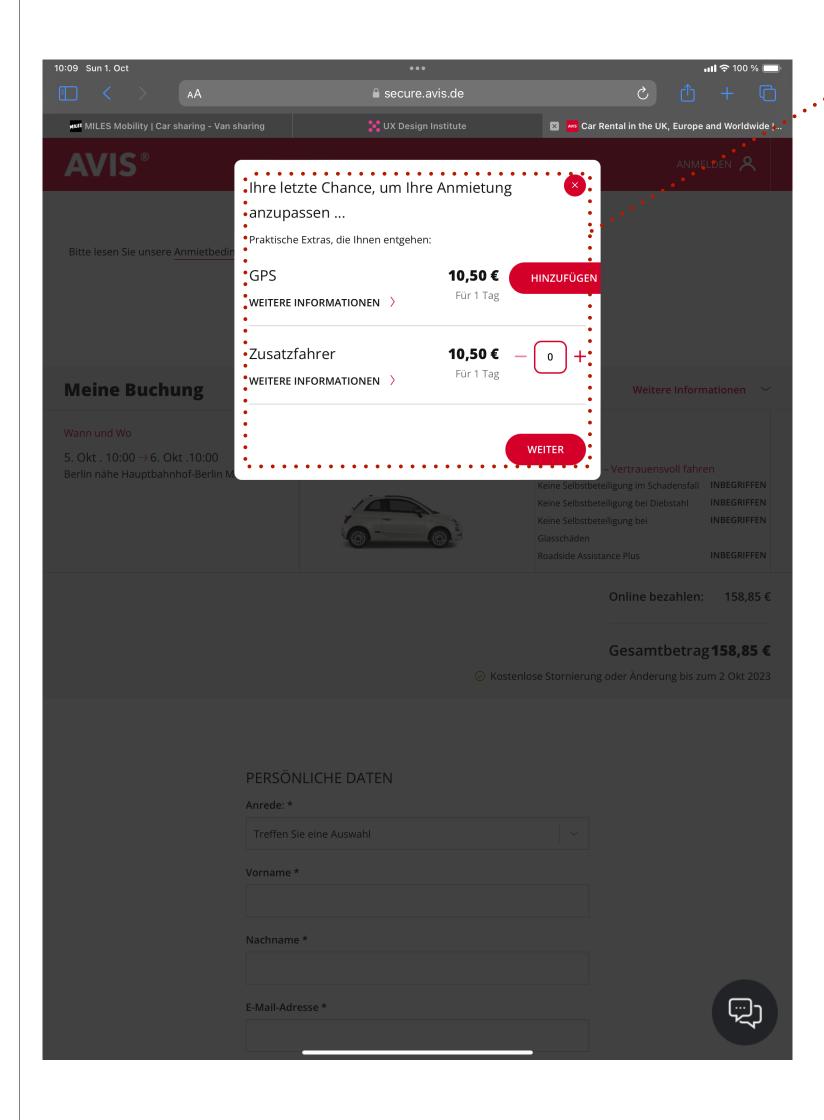
On the left side of the payment buttons, you can see a detailed list of what's included in the price that I'll pay.



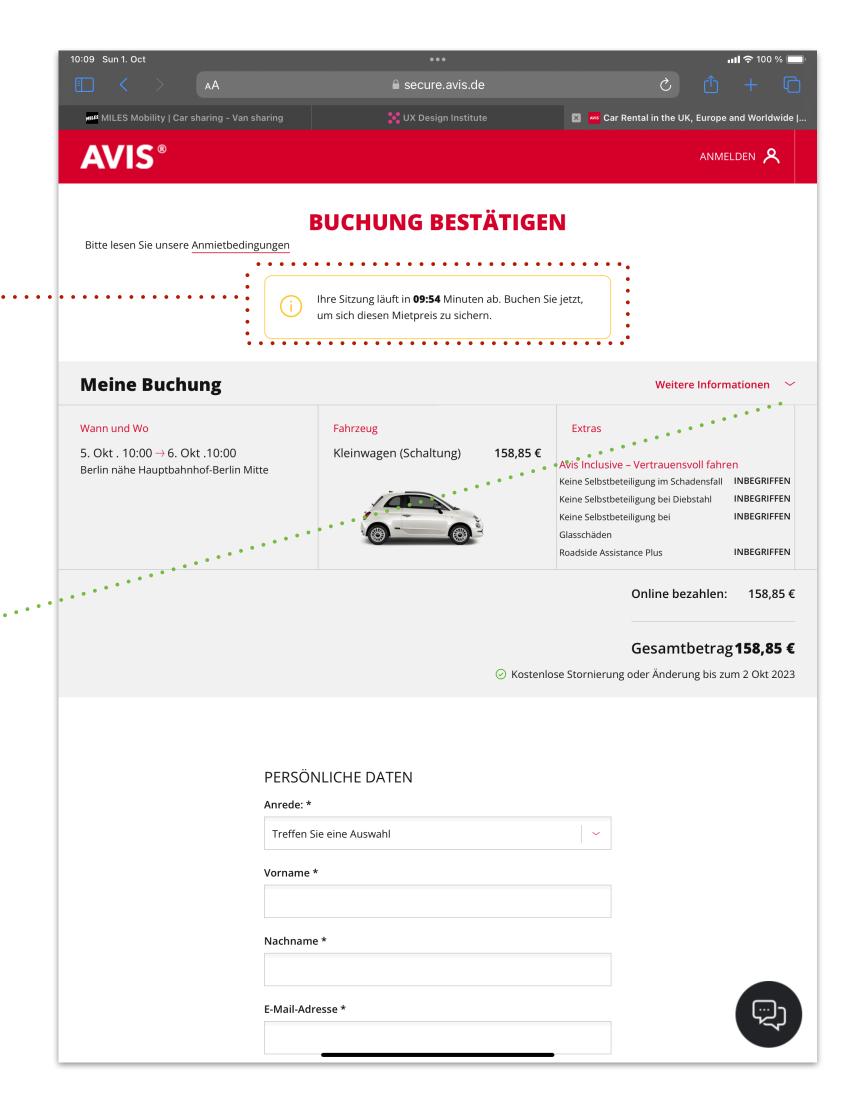
When I chose to pay at the pickup station, I receive a pop-up showing me the benefits of paying online which includes upgrading my insurance plan and thief protection.

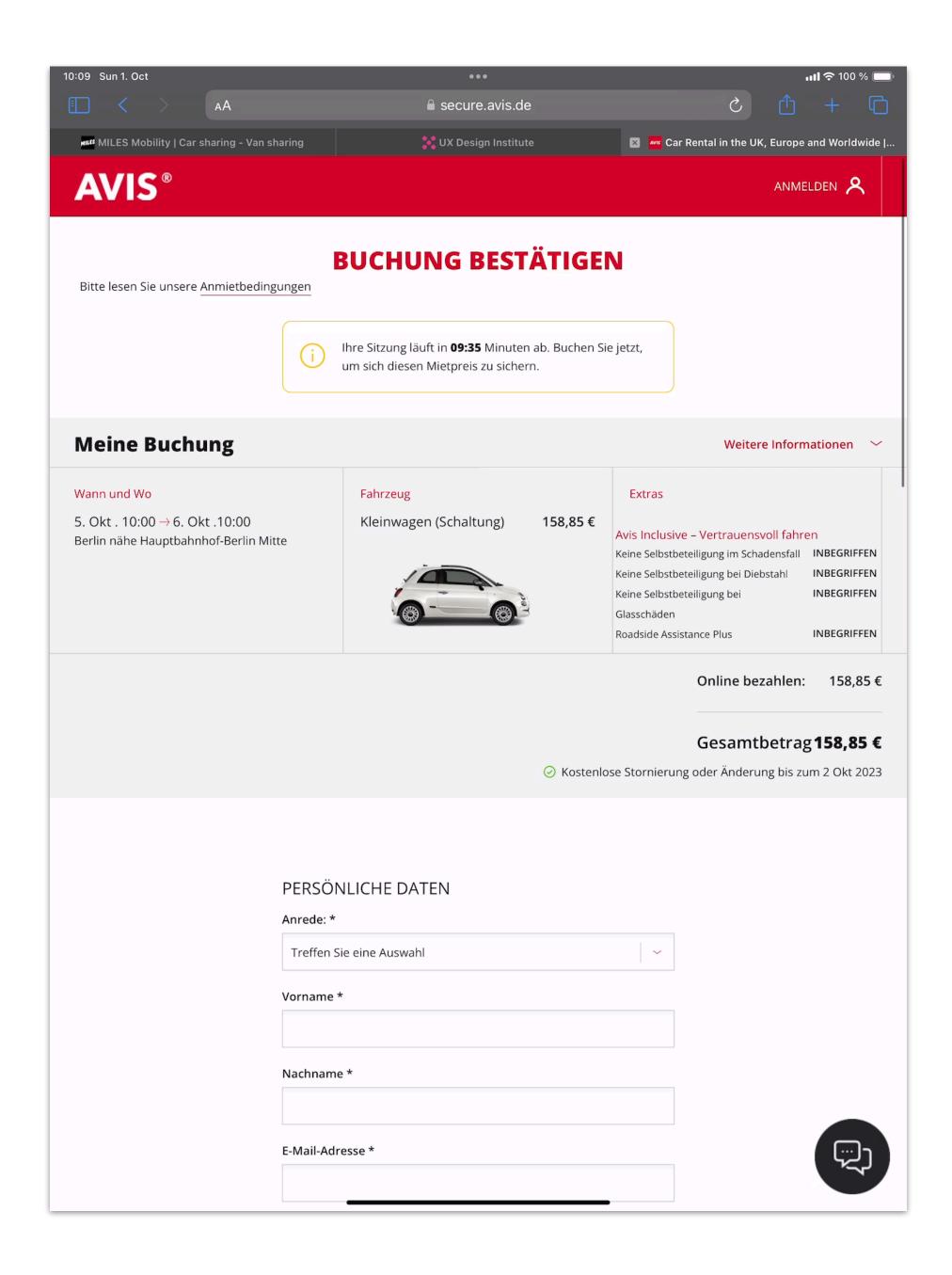
After choosing a car model and paying online, I am moved to a page in which I have many options to upgrade my rental plan which variates from child seat, to winter wheels and GPS.





- Before moving to the last checkout page, I am given a second chance to upgrade my rental plan, which I though was quite excessive and pretty annoying. The system should trust my decision to skip on an upgrade option.
- In the last page, the checkout page, the first thing I see is the timer that is located on the top of the page, which is a first, compared to the competitors. The timer is basically telling me that my reservation is reserved for 10 minutes, and so I have limited time to make my decision. Which I though was quite stressful and honestly felt like a cheap marketing trick.
- If I wish to have more information regarding my order, the. I can click on the arrow on the the upper right side of my arrow box, and I have an accordion box opens up with full details.







In this video that I took of the checkout page, you can see as I scroll down, that the page is pretty clear and does not contain too much visual information and distractions, which I though was good because it keeps you focused while you need to provide sensitive information regarding your payment option and you personal information.

From the general feel of the page, I could conclude that it's trustworthy and honest page.

As I mentioned before, the only thing that bothered me is the timer, which is pretty stressful and if one my goals is to compare between competitors' prices, then the Latimer is very limiting.

Sum-up

The rental process on the Avis website was relatively quick compared to the other websites. Even though I am confronted with multiple pop-ups (2 to be exact), it still felt very quick and with no unnecessary distractions.

I felt like the UI is very clear and non obtrusive. They follow their design line throughout the whole thing.

There're some things I appreciated more and some less:

On the upside:

- + Quick delivery to the checkout.
- + clear design throughout the whole process.
- + Giving me options to reconsider my upgrades.

On the downside:

- The timer at the checkout felt stressful for me.
- The pop up asking me if I'm sure about my upgrades
- A lot of visual noise on the homepage.

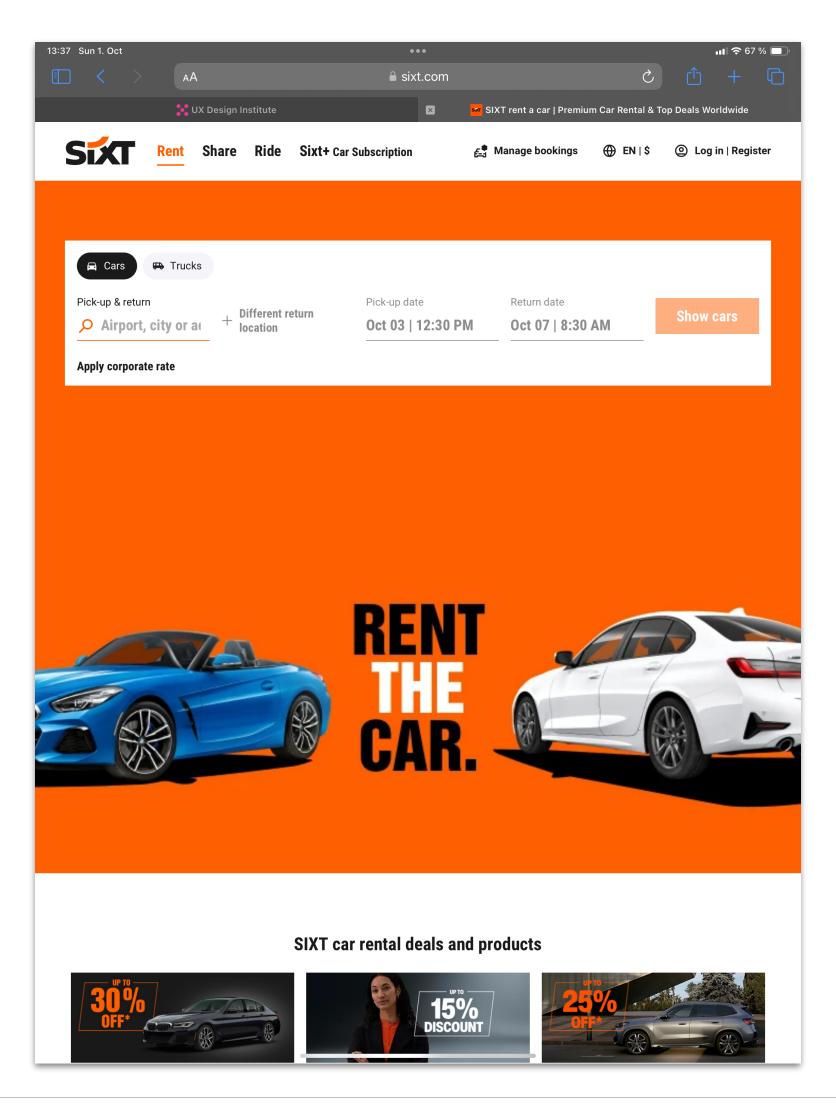
To summarise, the rental process felt to me very smooth and quick, in comparison with the others. I wasn't confronted with too many setbacks and distractions. I felt like the system was pretty nice, but somewhat also pushy.



Car rental for S-M sized vehicles and trucks. For short and long distance travel.

I can choose between a small vehicle or a truck / Van.

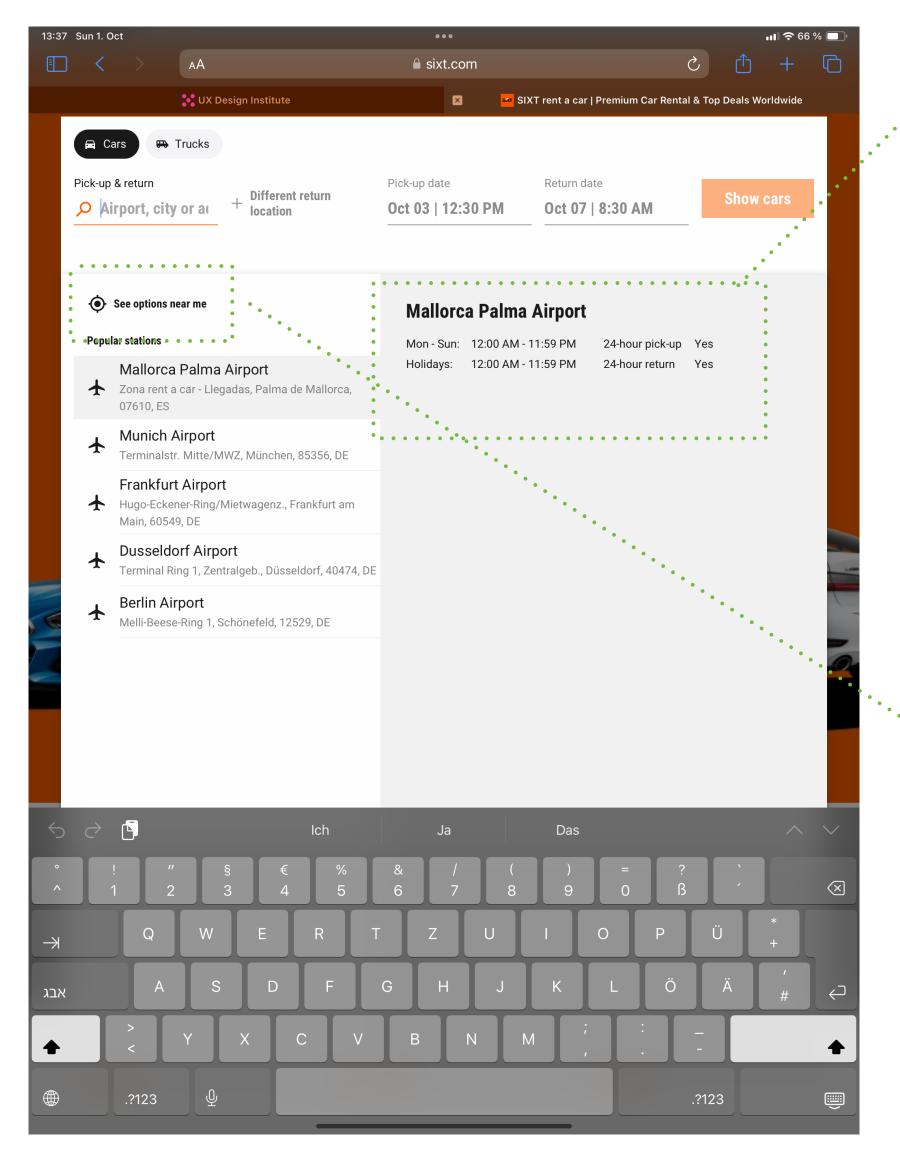
Weirdly enough I don't see any option to verify / confirm my age, which I guess I kinda got used to it from the competitors, so I don't really know how I feel about it.



The first screen is the homepage.

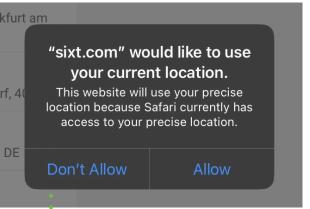
Above the fold you can see the search block, an advertisement and some deals at the bottom of the page.

The search box is not so obvious. It's pretty flat. The graphics takes a lot of attention.

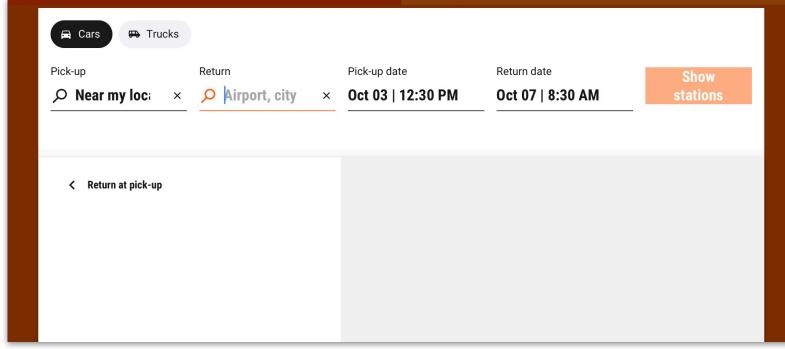


On the same screen, the homepage, I clicked on the pickup location, and got a pop-up with "popular stations" and right above it the option to to find my location and match a station near me.

Each location had it's own card which presents the opening hours and the address and if it's available for 24hrs pickup.



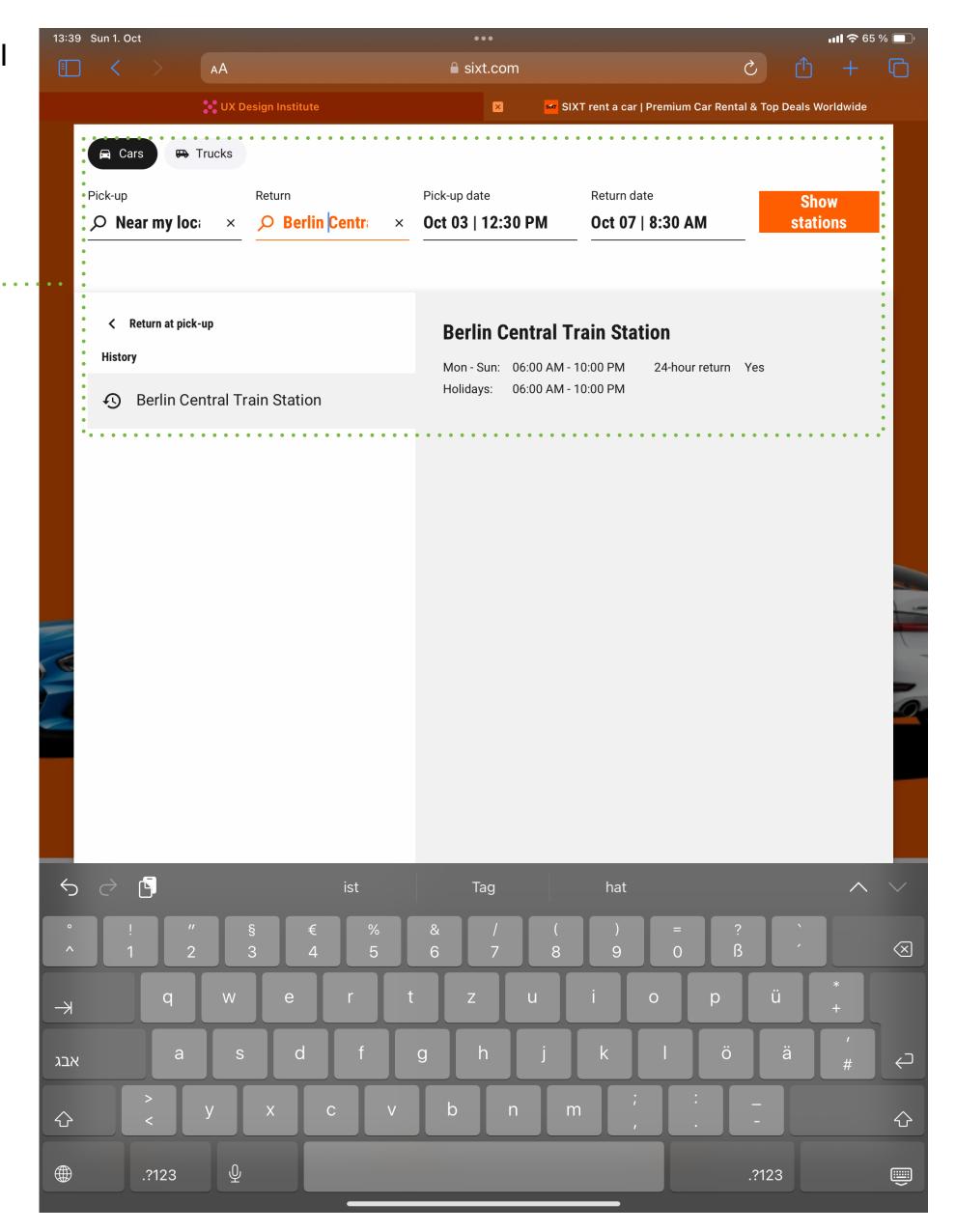
Before giving my location, the system asks for my permission first to use my location, which I thought was very polite and transparent.

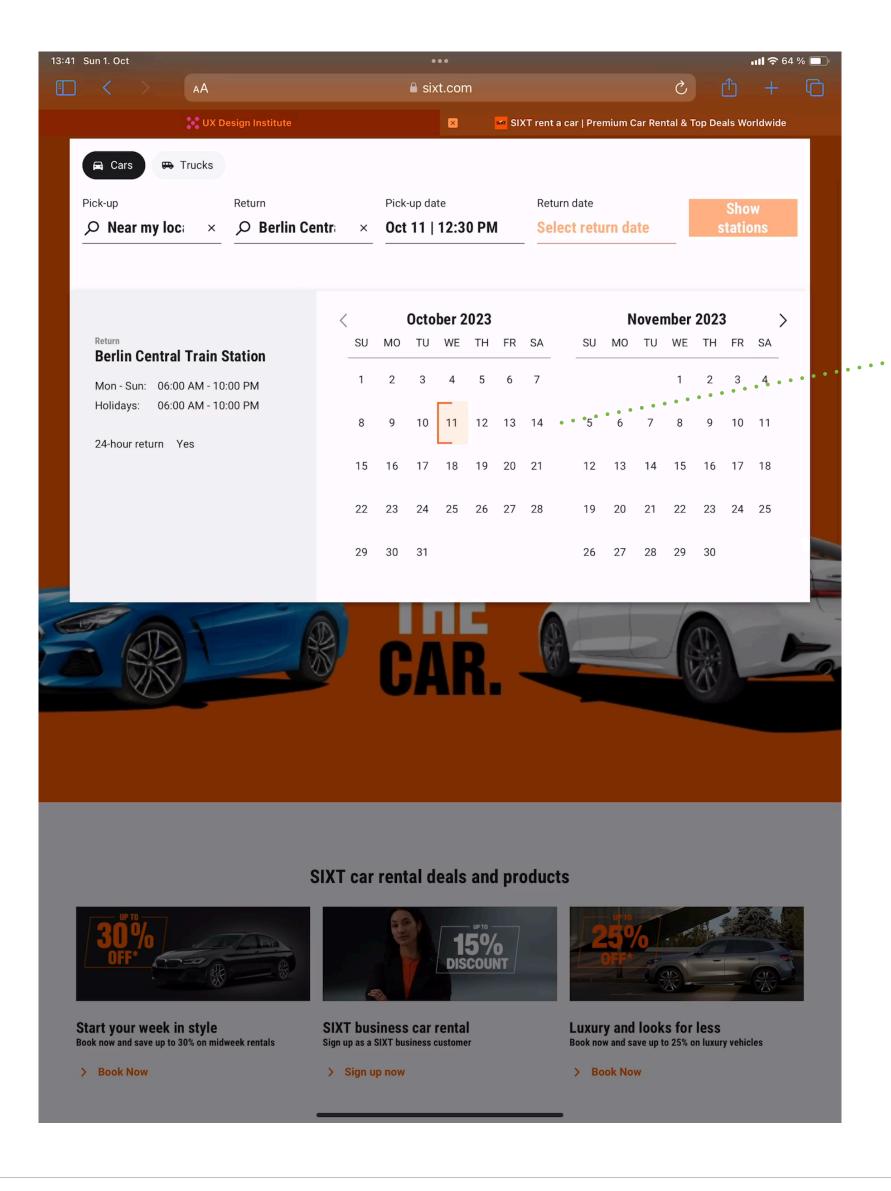


When I choose a different drop-off location, then I don't get the option to have my location found, which in retrospect it kinda make sense, if I drop off the car at a different location.

I need to type the name of the city or address.

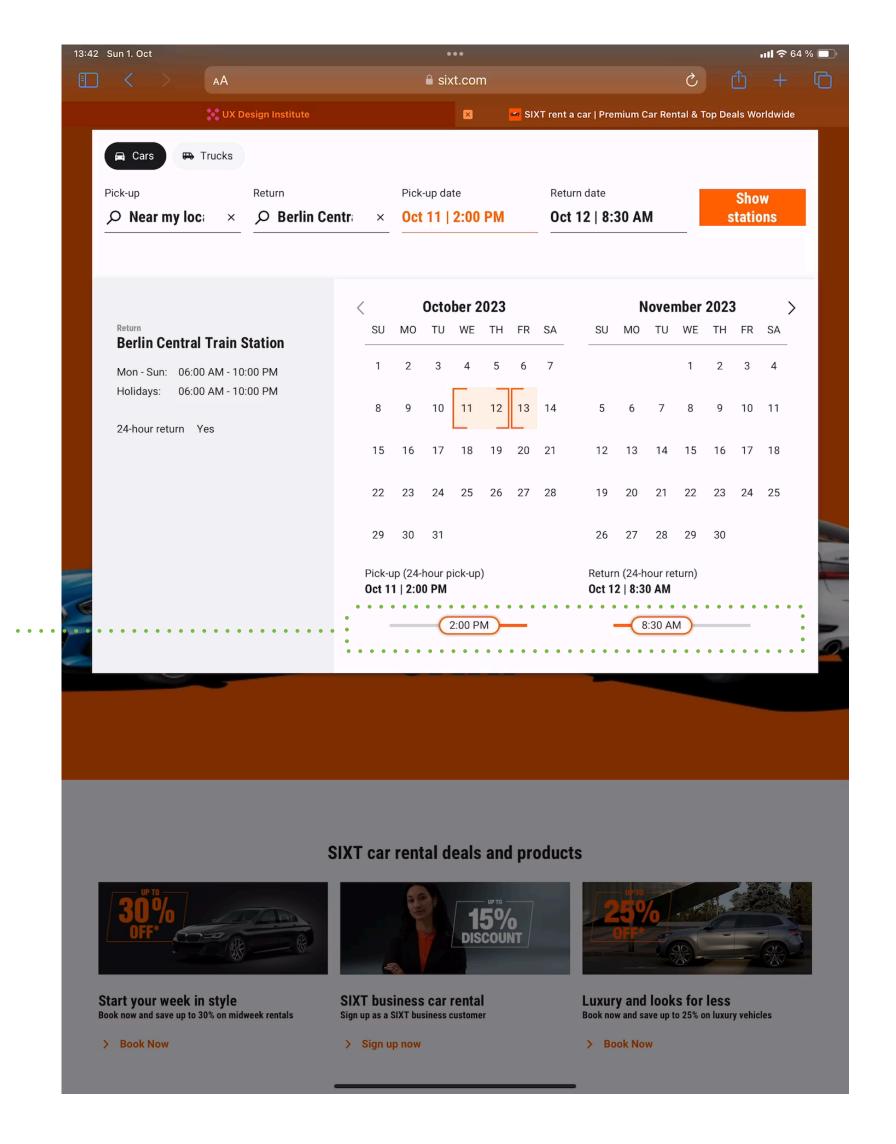
After I type in my return station, then I get the same info regarding the opening hours and address.

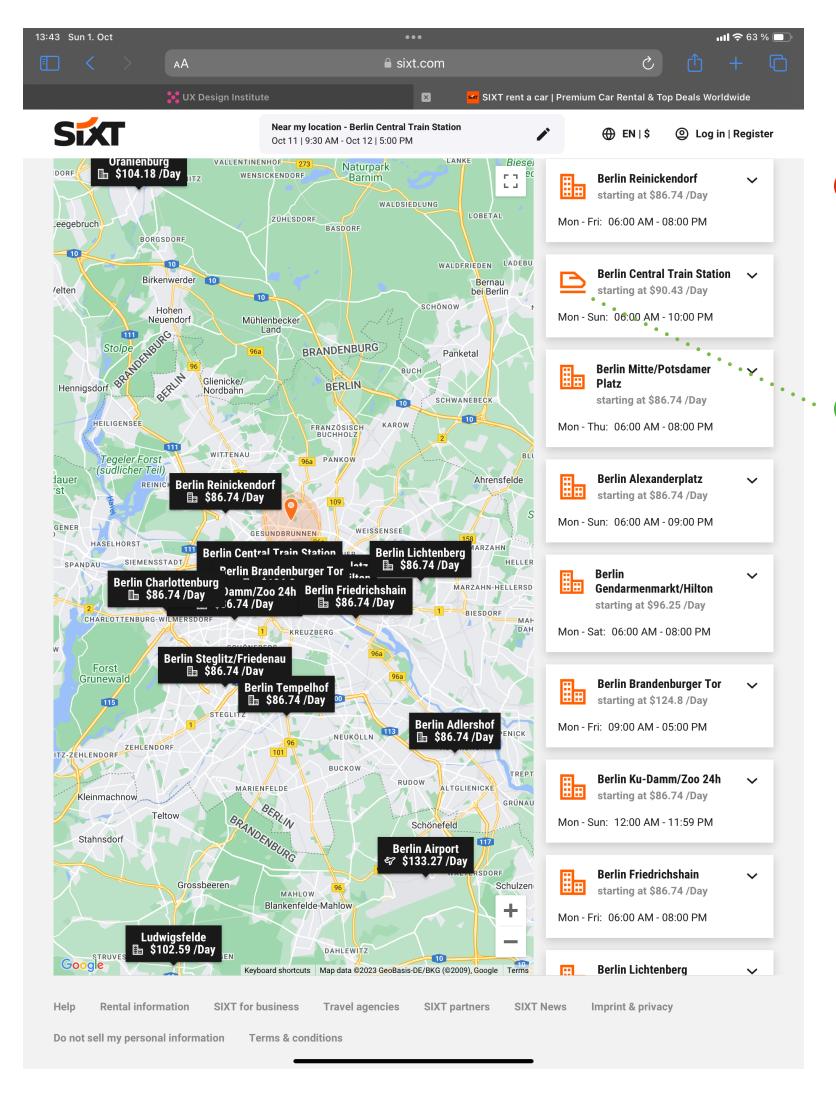




Still on the homepage, in the search box, I got the option to choose the dates and times of the pickup and drop off stations.

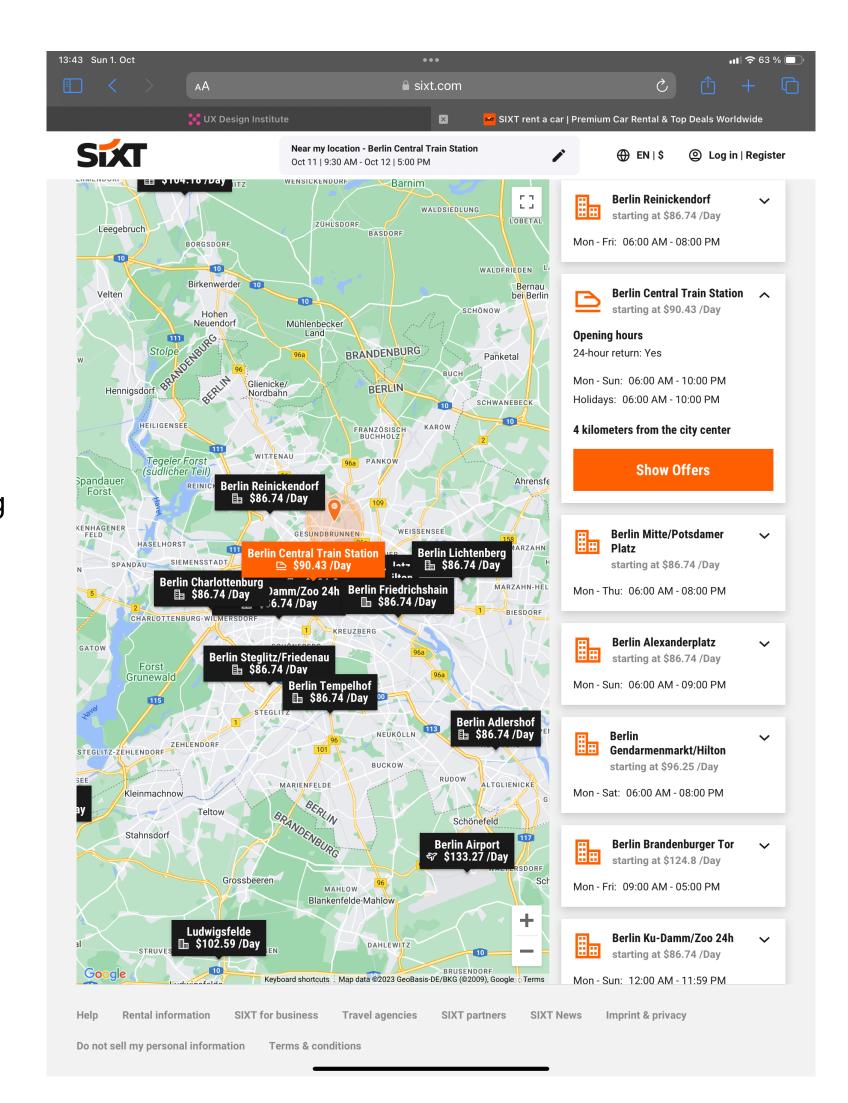
- The interface is very smooth and well designed
- Compared to the other sites, the interface reacts very well to my Apple Pencil on my iPad, which I didn't really tested with other sites, but it just popped up when choosing dates. Using the pencil the brackets slide very smoothly. (Video on the left)
- On the video on the right, you can how smooth choosing the pickup times can be.

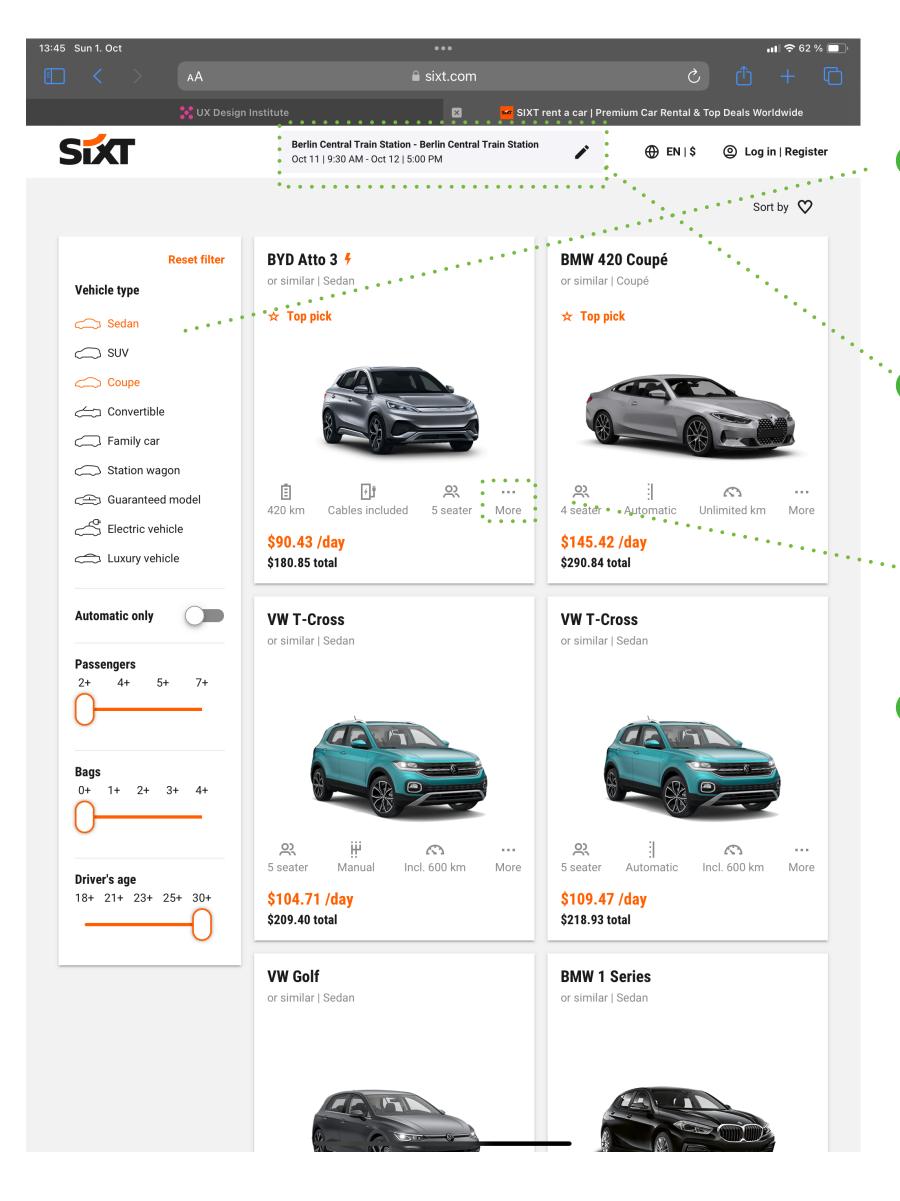




On the next screen after I chose my the location, time and date of my pickup, I am transferred to the next screen.

- The next screen is yet another page in which I need to choose my location, which was very confusing to me, because I already chose a location on the homepage, so why should I choose it again?
- Beside that, the information that I receive is very clear and detailed, and I liked the use of the icons to show the type of location (train station, building etc.)

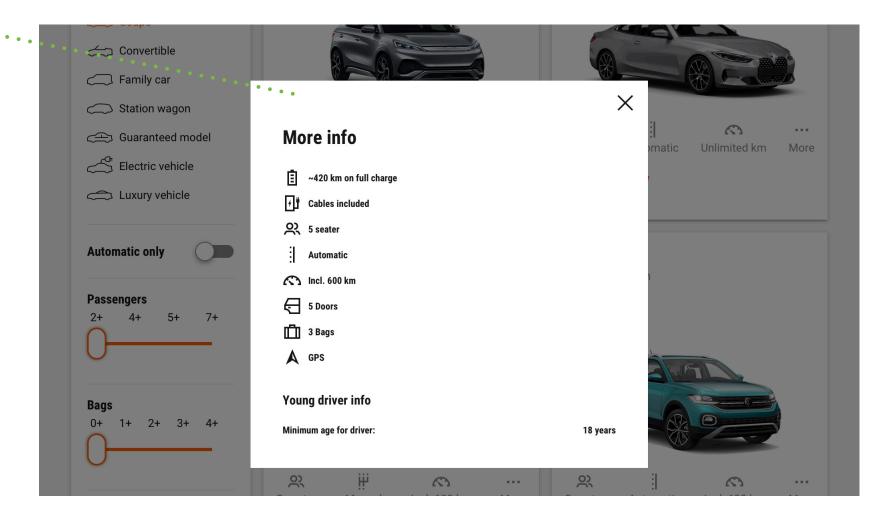


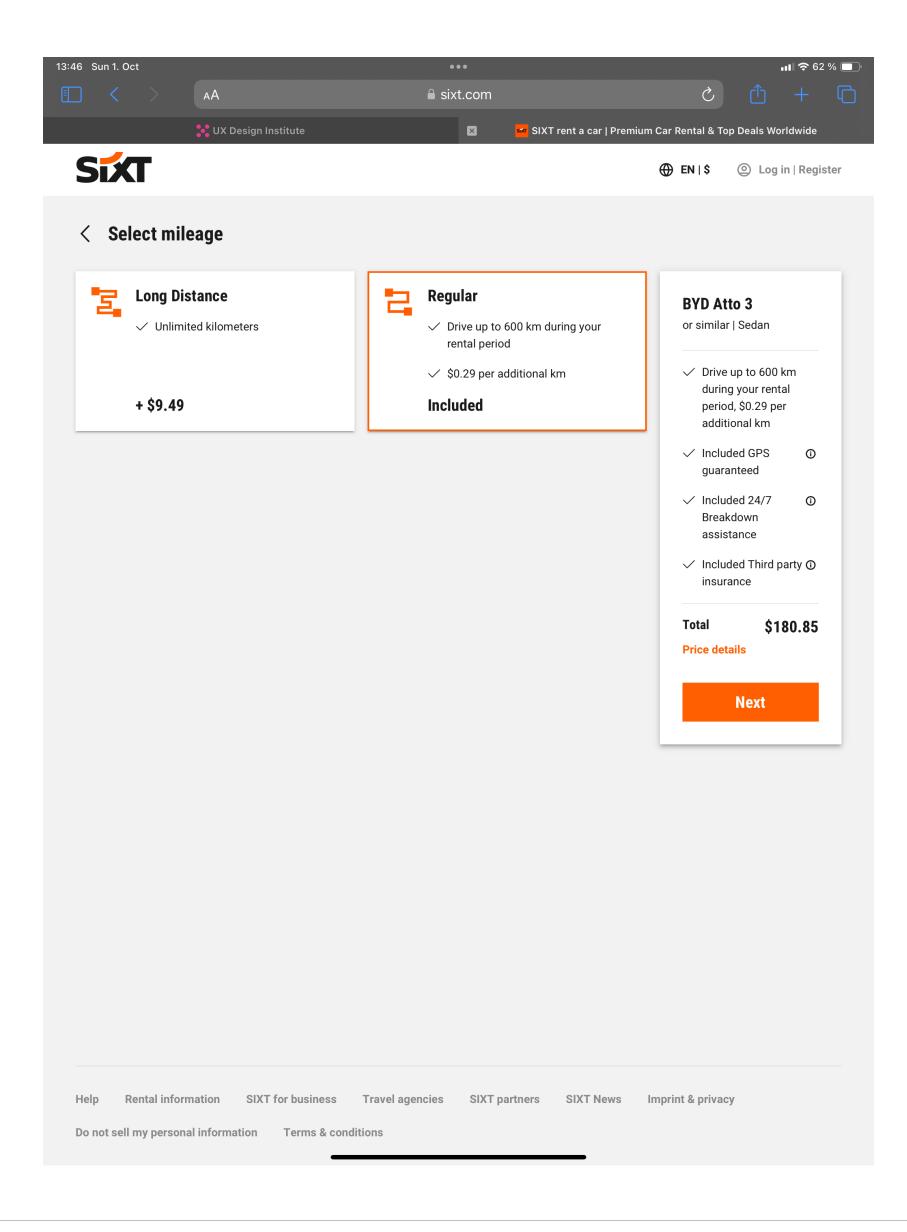


In the next screen I get to choose the car model.

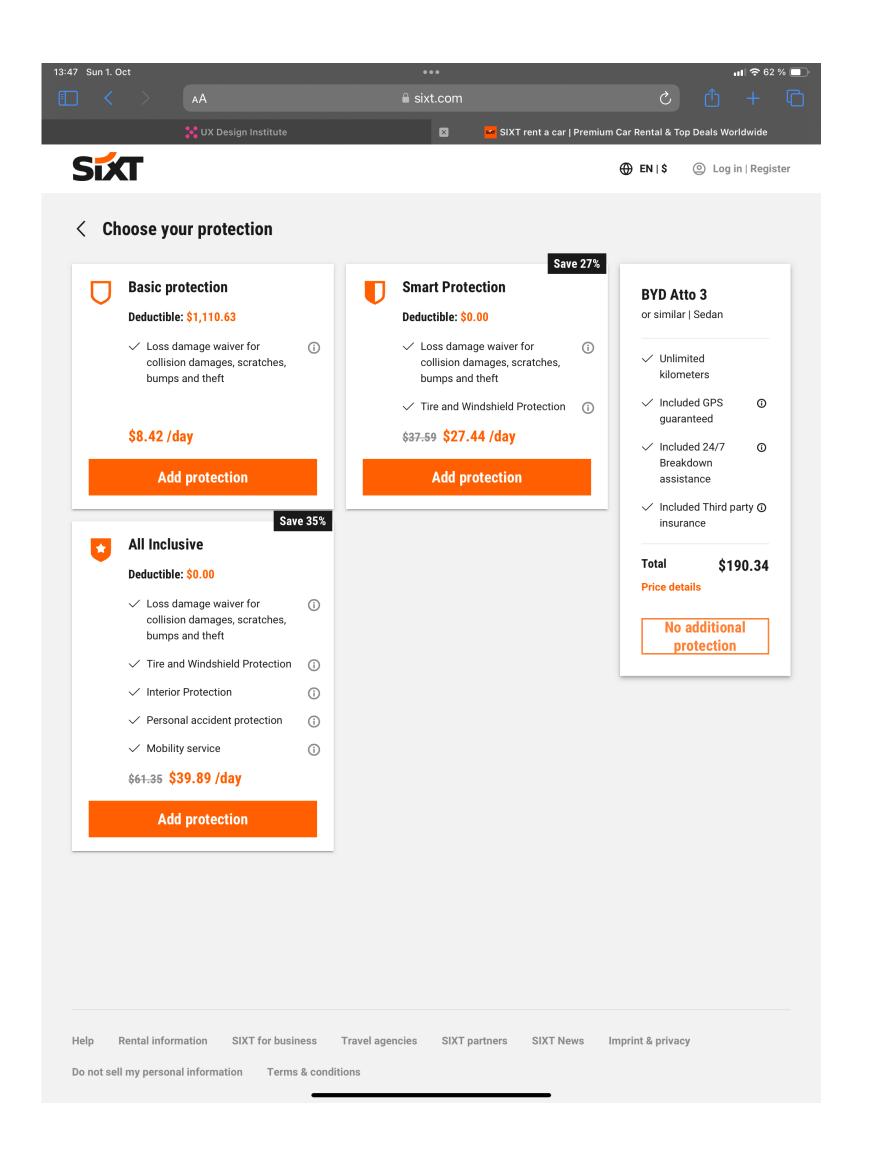
- The filter option caught my attention, which I haven't gave it much attention by the competitors. The car icons are very clear and the filter options are very minimal.
- At every moment I can edit my order at the top of the page, when I click on the pencil icon next to the short information about my order.

- Under his car model there is a short description about the features of the car (passengers, electric, manuel/ automatic etc.)
- If I wish to have more information that I can just click on the "more" icon ...



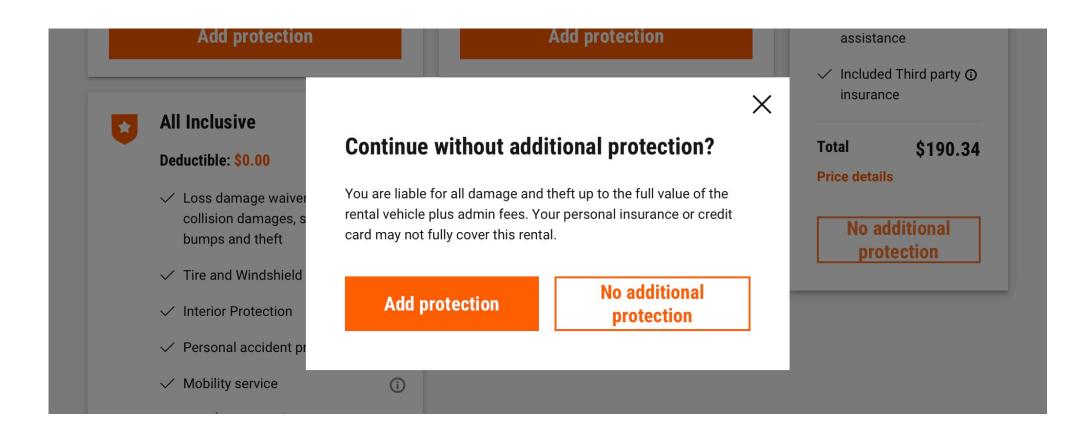


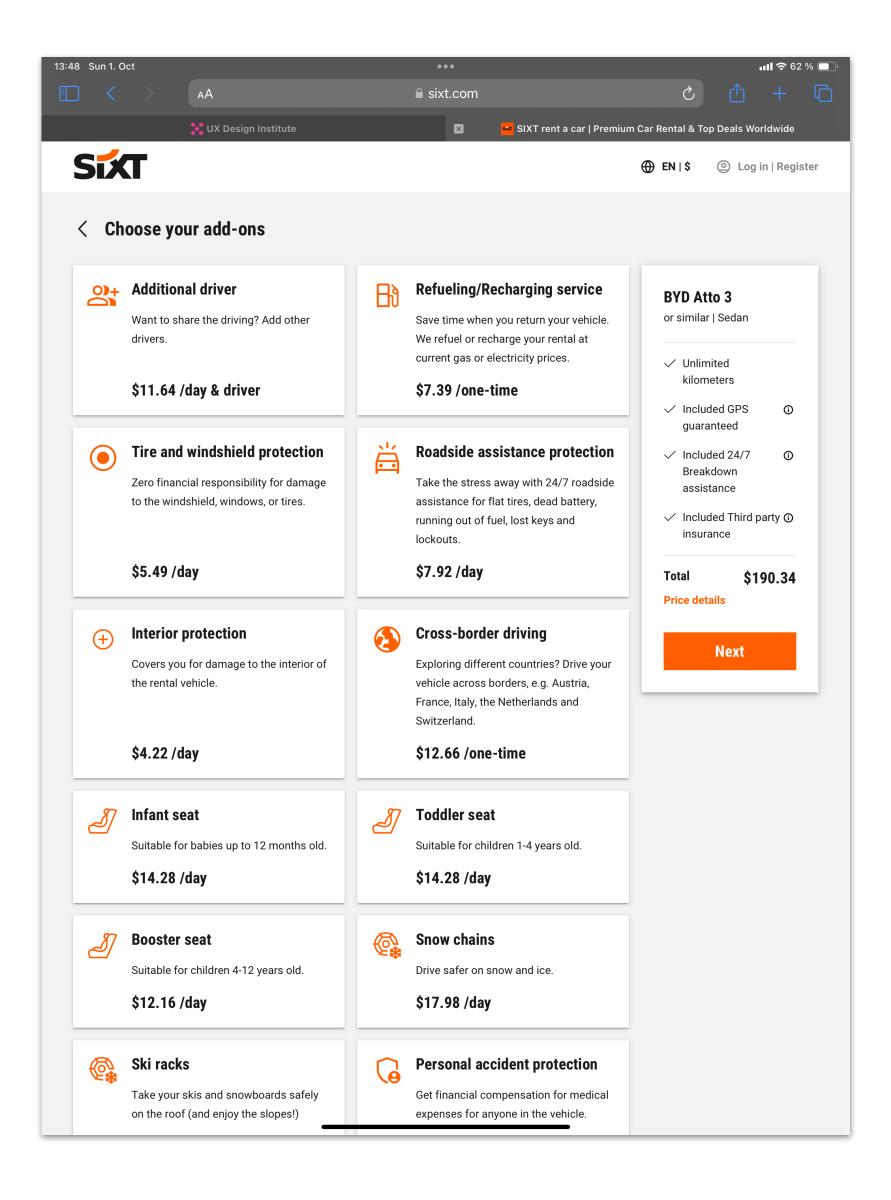
After choosing the the car model, I am sent to yet another screen, in which I can choose if I wish to drive short or long distance, which in concept is not a bad thing, because it fills the need of people to travel long distances, thus upgrading their package, and makes the company some more money, but I felt like they could include this option in the previous screens, thus saving another screen in the process.



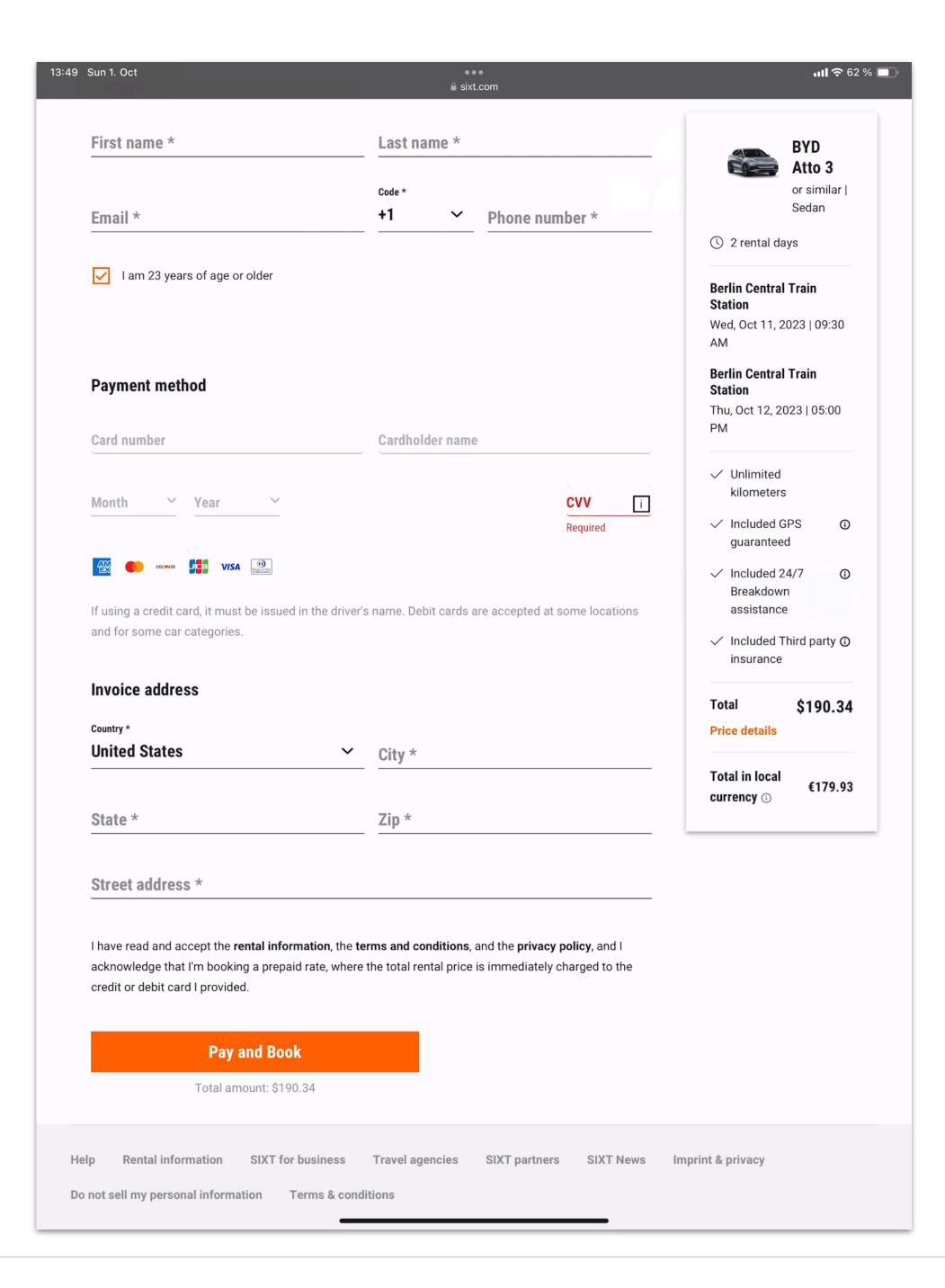
After the screen in which I chose to travel short or long distance, I am sent to yet another screen. In this screen I have to option to upgrade my protection plan.

After I choose to decline the protection upgrade, then I get a pop up asking if sure that I wish to continue without a plan, which at this point I was already quite annoyed.





After the protection plan and declining the pop up, to my surprise I received yet another screen. The next screen is the upgrade page, which was pretty expected as with the competitors. I just couldn't understand why they didn't combine the protection page with the upgrade page, which could have saved me a page.





The last screen, as with the other sites, is the checkout page.

On the top of the page, I get another shot to upgrade my protection plan (which is basically the 3rd time I'm confronted with that).

The credentials and empty boxes somewhat pleasantly designed. It gave a sense of confidence in giving personal and payment informations.

All of the info regarding my plan and the car I chose is presented clearly on the right side of the screen.

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Sum-up

The Sixt website has a very good UI system, and they carry their design line very professionally and consistent. The thing that stood out most for me was the car model selection page, which didn't give me any unnecessary information on top of what I needed.

I wasn't totally impressed by the amount of screens I had to go through in order to reach the checkout.

To sum up - There're some things I appreciated more and some less:

On the upside:

- + clear crisp UI throughout the whole process.
- + A lot of information regarding my car and the pick up station.
- + Clean checkout that builds confidence.

On the downside:

- too many screens.
- Auto location finder only on the pick up station.
- Constant asking me if I'm sure about my plan choices.

To summarise, the rental process felt to me very smooth but not as quick, in comparison with the others. I was confronted with too many screens and questions regarding my order. I felt like the system was pretty nice, but somewhat also pushy and insecure.

Conclusions

- There are repetitive features that are basic and are a must-have such as: search box and what it entails,
- Looking from a user perspective, there were some roadblocks that I experienced along the rental process.
 These point should be taken into account while working on my design.
- As contrast to the last comment, the positive features such as the location finder and fewer screens, as well as a calm and clear design, should be adopted in my design.