The Guest Touchpoint Map

From Contemplation to Re-contemplation — the Ideal, the Miasma, and the operator's read at every touchpoint.

Guest Touchpoint	Ideal	The Miasma	Your Experience: Elevated or Static?
1. Contemplation The Guest is thinking about going out. No decision made. They are scanning their mental map — restaurants, memories, moods, needs.	The operation has already made itself known to this Guest. Through consistent signal, memorable identity, and earned recall, the operation is on the Guest's mental map before the decision moment opens. The Guest does not have to search for it.	Operator is absent from this touchpoint entirely. Assumes presence equals consideration. Waits passively to be chosen. Nothing has been built to occupy mental real estate before the decision moment arrives.	Elevated ○ Static ○
2. Decision The Guest is actively choosing. Comparing the operation against alternatives, including the alternative of not going out at all.	The Guest has a specific reason to choose this operation that only this operation can deliver. The decision is not between restaurants. It is between this experience and everything else the Guest could do with the night.	Operator competes on menu, price, proximity. Sameness against the restaurant next door. The Guest has no reason to pick this operation over the mirror across the street.	Elevated ○ Static ○
3. Pre-arrival The Guest is coming. Reservation confirmed. Directions, parking, menu glance, expectation setting are all in motion.	The pre-arrival window is used to warm the Guest before they walk in. Personal touches, useful information, signals that tell the Guest this visit will not be ordinary. The operation is already hosting before the Guest arrives.	Reservation is treated as a data entry task. Confirmation email and nothing else. The Guest arrives cold, with generic expectations, and the operation's window to shape the experience shrinks before the door opens.	Elevated ○ Static ○
4. Arrival The Guest is physically at or approaching the building. Parking, walking up, exterior impression, front door.	The exterior is treated as the opening line of the experience. Lit well, clean, intentional. Landscaping, signage, curb all read as on-purpose. The Guest's first operating opinion is shaped by design, not accident.	The outside of the building is not treated as the operator's problem. Landscaping, lighting, signage, curb left static. The Guest forms a first operating opinion before anyone has said a word.	Elevated ○ Static ○
5. Entry The Guest crosses the threshold. First three seconds inside. Sight, smell, sound, temperature, energy.	Every sense calibrated in the first three seconds to tell the Guest they chose correctly. Light level, sound level, scent, temperature, and the energy of the room are engineered — not accidental.	Entry is left to chance. Whoever happens to be near the door handles it. Background music is whatever was on yesterday. The Guest reads the room in three seconds and most of what they read is unplanned.	Elevated ○ Static ○

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6. Greeting First contact with a human who works for the operation. Host, hostess, manager, whoever is closest to the door.	The greeting is welcome, not intake. Eye contact, name if known, presence. The Guest is seen as a person before they are sorted into a table count.	"Welcome to [restaurant]. How many?" Scripted, transactional, processing. The Guest learns in eight seconds that they are a reservation, not a person.	Elevated ○ Static ○
7. Seating Host walks the Guest to a table. The walk itself and the placement.	The walk and the table are staged. The Guest gets the best seat available, best angle, best first impression of the room. The seating decision is the operation's statement about who this Guest is to the house.	Nearest open table that fits the party. Efficiency over experience. The Guest ends up near the service station, in the high-traffic lane, or facing a wall.	Elevated ○ Static ○
8. Order The Guest is given the menu, considers it, asks questions, decides. Server interaction begins.	The server is a guide, not a note-taker. Steers with confidence. Knows the menu. Makes the Guest feel smart for the choices they make. The order is a conversation the Guest wins.	"Can I start you with drinks?" Transactional rhythm. Server is order-taking. The Guest makes buying decisions with no guide, surrounded by choices they do not know how to rank.	Elevated ○ Static ○
9. Service Ongoing presence of the staff throughout the meal. Refills, check-ins, pace, attentiveness.	Service is invisible when it is right. Staff reads the table — when to appear, when to stay away, when to speed up, when to slow down. The Guest is never waiting and never watched.	Service is presence and scripts. "How is everything?" delivered in the middle of a bite. The Guest is managed, not served. Staff performs attentiveness without reading the table.	Elevated ○ Static ○
10. Meal The food and drink itself. What is on the plate and in the glass.	At least one moment on the plate or in the glass the Guest will repeat to someone tomorrow. The meal earns the story. Temperature, accuracy, pace, and craft all land as intended.	The kitchen executes what the menu promises at the level the brand has trained the Guest to expect. Sameness wins. The Guest remembers the meal as "fine." Nothing to say about it later.	Elevated ○ Static ○
11. Resolution The close of the experience from the table side. Check delivery, payment, tip, final words.	The close is a memory-making moment. Splits handled cleanly. Thanks delivered specifically. The table feels cared for right up to the last second. The last impression is made on purpose.	The check is treated as a billing problem. One check, run the card, move the table. Twenty minutes of fumbling overwrites two hours of goodwill.	Elevated ○ Static ○
12. Departure The Guest leaves. Walking out, last contact, exterior exit, car, goodbye.	Someone is by the door. Real goodbye. Name if known. The last human contact is as warm as the first. The Guest exits held, not released.	Nobody notices the Guest is leaving. No farewell. Staff is already flipping the table. The Guest exits the building feeling transacted, not hosted.	Elevated ○ Static ○

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13. Post-visit After the Guest leaves. Follow-up, review window, social mention, a text to a friend.	Post-visit is owned. Thank-you where appropriate. Earned ask for a review, not a demanded one. A reason to come back is lodged before the memory dims.	Post-visit is not a touchpoint to the operator. The Guest is gone; attention resets to the next cover. The experience fades inside 48 hours. Review prompts get ignored because the moment to ask has already passed.	Elevated ○ Static ○
14. Re-contemplation The next time this Guest thinks about going out. Loops back to Row 1, but with this experience now on their mental map.	Every touchpoint upstream was built to earn this moment. The Guest comes back because the experience left a specific, repeatable reason to return. The loop is the system.	The operator assumes last time was enough. Hopes the Guest remembers. The Guest does not automatically return. The operation is now one of many options, and the question at Contemplation restarts from zero.	Elevated ○ Static ○