

KURSAAL

Brand Strategy Foundation — Final

Elegant, yet approachable.

Strategic foundation for the Kursaal brand identity and Creative Direction Exploration.

Executive Summary

Kursaal is more than a restaurant. It is an opportunity to give new life to one of Grottammare's most recognisable places and transform an existing landmark into a contemporary meeting place for the town.

The brand brings together live-fire cuisine, cocktails, hospitality, music and contemporary art within a historic seaside setting. Its strongest strategic idea is not any single product, but the experience created when people come together.

Central principle: Elegant, yet approachable.

Brand Context & Heritage

Kursaal takes its name from the historic Kursaal building in which it is located. The name is already deeply connected to Grottammare: the building is a local landmark, the square is Piazza Kursaal, and residents naturally use Kursaal as a point of reference.

Historically, Kursaal comes from the German *Kur* and *Saal*, and was associated with elegant social halls in European seaside and spa towns where people gathered for entertainment, music, culture and social life.

This heritage is unusually aligned with the new vision. Kursaal does not need to invent a story; it needs to continue and reinterpret an existing one for a new generation.

The Founder & Origin

Andrea is 26 and was born and raised in Grottammare. Before Kursaal, he built Il Pineta, a seasonal bar in a nearby pine forest. Rather than becoming known through social status or popularity, he built recognition through work, consistency, hospitality and events.

Kursaal is motivated by three connected ambitions: contributing something meaningful to his hometown, creating year-round continuity for his team, and filling a gap in Grottammare—a genuine meeting place that can welcome different people throughout the day.

This gives the brand a human foundation: Kursaal is being created by a young local owner who wants to build something lasting with his team and for his city.

The Brand Story

For years, Kursaal has been a landmark people knew without necessarily being a place they entered. The previous restaurant never fully unlocked the potential of its location, and many residents perceived it from the outside as too expensive, too formal or not particularly welcoming.

Andrea sees the opportunity differently. The new Kursaal can be even more elegant than before while becoming more approachable, warmer and more inviting.

The transformation is therefore not from ordinary to luxurious. It is from **known to loved**, and from **landmark to meeting place**.

“I want to go inside.” is the emotional response the identity and experience should create.

Brand Purpose, Vision & Promise

Purpose: To create a place where people genuinely enjoy being together.

Vision: To become an icon of Grottammare—not simply a successful restaurant, but a meeting point that future generations recognise as part of the town.

Brand Promise: Kursaal gives people a place to feel welcome, discover something, and spend quality time together without unnecessary formality or judgement.

Emotional Outcome: The strongest success is not simply “the food was excellent.” It is “I had such a great evening.”

Brand Positioning

Kursaal is a contemporary hospitality destination that brings together live-fire cuisine, cocktails, art, music and genuine human connection in one of Grottammare's most iconic seaside locations.

It occupies a distinctive middle ground: **premium but accessible, elegant but relaxed, cultural but social, contemporary but timeless.**

Kursaal should not compete by being the most luxurious, cheapest, loudest or trendiest venue. It should compete by being the place that feels most complete: a place with personality, atmosphere and genuine hospitality.

Target Audience

Kursaal should welcome a broad but values-aligned audience rather than targeting one narrow demographic.

Locals: people who want a new place to meet, eat, drink and spend time in their own town.

Young professionals & creatives: socially curious people who value food, design, music, art and atmosphere.

Couples & groups: guests looking for an elevated but comfortable experience for everyday occasions and celebrations.

Visitors: people discovering Grottammare who want an experience that feels genuinely connected to the place.

The common denominator is not age or income. It is an appreciation for quality, atmosphere, culture and good company.

Brand Personality

If Kursaal were a person, he would be around 35: ambitious, curious, confident, well dressed, creative, attentive and naturally social.

He has personal taste and does not need everyone to approve of it. He notices details, enjoys music and objects made with care, appreciates quality, gives compliments easily and treats people well.

Personality: warm, confident, refined, curious, creative, human and relaxed.

Never: snobbish, intimidating, corporate, loud, cold, overly formal or desperate to impress.

Brand Archetype

Primary Archetype — The Everyman: The foundation of Kursaal is belonging. The Everyman represents accessibility, connection, familiarity and the desire to create a place where people feel they belong. This directly supports the ambition to become a genuine meeting point for Grottammare.

Secondary Archetype — The Lover: The Lover brings pleasure, beauty, sensory experience, food, cocktails, music, atmosphere and human connection. It gives Kursaal warmth and sophistication without requiring formal luxury.

Supporting Archetype — The Creator: The Creator expresses curiosity, craftsmanship and cultural exploration through live-fire experimentation, art, music, local collaborations and attention to detail.

Archetype balance: Everyman keeps the brand welcoming; Lover makes it desirable; Creator makes it distinctive.

In one sentence: Kursaal is the sophisticated friend who knows where to go, what to enjoy and how to make everyone feel welcome.

Core Values

Hospitality without judgement. Every guest should feel welcome, regardless of how they arrive or why they are visiting.

Quality without pretension. High standards should be experienced rather than communicated through exclusivity.

Authenticity over popularity. Kursaal should attract people who genuinely appreciate its character rather than trying to please everyone.

Attention to detail. Food, cocktails, music, art, interiors and service should all feel considered.

People before transactions. The team is part of the experience, not simply the mechanism delivering it.

Local pride. Kursaal should contribute positively to the place that gave it its name and identity.

Value Proposition

Kursaal gives Grottammare a place where food, cocktails, culture, music and hospitality come together naturally across the day.

Unlike a traditional restaurant, it is designed around the whole experience. Unlike a nightclub, it is built around conversation and connection. Unlike a formal luxury venue, it remains approachable.

One place. Different moments. One feeling: you are welcome here.

Customer Experience Principles

Make people want to enter. The first impression should feel inviting, not intimidating.

Make everyone feel welcome. Guests should never feel judged by what they wear, how much they order or why they are visiting.

Make quality visible through details. Care should be felt in food, service, sound, objects and atmosphere.

Create memorable moments. The objective is a great evening, not simply a good meal.

Give people reasons to return. Different moments of the day, changing art, music and events should keep the experience alive.

Brand Pillars

30% — Cocktails: A destination in their own right, with a strong mixology programme and potential fire-led ingredients and tasting experiences.

30% — Live Fire: The culinary philosophy. Fire extends beyond meat to vegetables, fruit, desserts and cocktail ingredients, introducing a new culinary culture to the area.

20% — Meat: An important offering, but never the definition of the brand. Kursaal should never become visually or strategically reduced to a steakhouse.

20% — Art & Music: The cultural layer that makes Kursaal a broader social destination.

Live Fire Philosophy

Live fire is a new world for the team and an opportunity to introduce something genuinely different to Grottammare.

Fire should be understood as a philosophy of transformation, craftsmanship, warmth and discovery—not simply as a symbol for meat.

It can influence meat, vegetables, fruit, desserts and cocktails. The creative identity should therefore avoid reducing fire to a literal flame icon.

Art, Museum & Culture

The contemporary art museum inside the same historic building creates an unusually authentic relationship between hospitality and culture.

Art should feel like part of the environment rather than decoration. The planned feature wall with vinyl records, artworks and creative objects can evolve over time and potentially support local artist collaborations.

The relationship between restaurant and museum should remain natural rather than forced. Over time, Kursaal can become a cultural meeting point as well as a dining destination.

Music & Social Culture

Music will shape the atmosphere throughout the day. Lunch, aperitivo and dinner can each have their own sonic character while remaining comfortable for conversation.

Occasional DJ evenings, particularly during autumn and winter, can create a more social evening culture. The intention is not to become a nightclub; it is to create a refined place to drink, talk, listen and spend time together.

This creates a potential point of difference in Grottammare: a sophisticated social meeting place after dinner.

Tone of Voice

Kursaal should speak like it behaves: confident, warm, intelligent and welcoming.

Use: simple language, confidence, sensory detail, human stories, understated personality and invitations rather than hard selling.

Avoid: exaggerated luxury language, forced sophistication, aggressive promotions, clichés, excessive food jargon, corporate language and anything that suggests social exclusivity.

Voice principle: like a well-dressed person who is comfortable enough not to show off.

Visual Direction Principles

The visual identity should express the brand's balance rather than illustrate every element literally.

Should feel: warm, contemporary, timeless, refined, human, artistic, coastal without becoming stereotypically “beach”, and premium without becoming luxurious.

Should avoid: flames, bull heads, horns, cattle silhouettes, generic steakhouse symbols, overly rustic styling and predictable Mediterranean clichés.

Fire, art, music and the seaside can influence the visual language without becoming obvious icons.

The logo should feel confident enough to represent a destination—not merely a restaurant. The historic façade sign should be treated as heritage context rather than something the new identity must imitate.

Strategic Opportunities

Landmark → Destination: turn existing name recognition into active desire to visit.

Restaurant → Meeting Place: build a brand that works across different occasions and times of day.

Steakhouse Perception → Live-Fire Culture: use fire as a broader culinary philosophy.

Decoration → Culture: develop the relationship between food, art, music and the museum over time.

Owner Reputation → Brand Recognition: use Andrea's story as an authentic foundation while allowing Kursaal to become bigger than any individual.

Seasonal Team → Year-Round Community: use Kursaal to create continuity for the team and a more consistent social rhythm for the town.

Competitive Distinction

Kursaal should not attempt to win by being a better version of an existing restaurant category.

Its distinction comes from the combination of factors that competitors cannot easily reproduce: the historic building, Piazza Kursaal, the seaside location, the museum, Andrea's local story, live fire, cocktails, art, music and a genuinely welcoming philosophy.

The category is not simply “restaurant”. The opportunity is “contemporary meeting place”.

What Kursaal Should Never Become

A traditional steakhouse.

A nightclub.

A formal fine-dining restaurant.

A generic beach bar.

A trend-chasing social-media restaurant.

An overly corporate hospitality brand.

A place that sacrifices personality to appeal to everyone.

A luxury concept that makes local residents feel they are not the intended audience.

Core Strategic Idea

A place people already know. A place they will want to be.

This connects the history of Kursaal, Andrea's motivation, the building, the square, the team, the food, cocktails, music and art.

The strategic opportunity is to move Kursaal from being a geographical reference point to becoming an emotional reference point in Grottammare.

From a place people know, to a place people love.

Brand Narrative

Kursaal has always belonged to the place. The name is on the building, the square carries it, and generations of people have used it as a point of reference.

Now a new generation is giving the name a new role.

Andrea, born and raised in Grottammare, sees the opportunity to transform a familiar landmark into a place where people actually want to spend time. Building on what he learned through Il Pineta, he is bringing his team, his attention to hospitality and his belief in quality into a space designed to live throughout the year.

Food and live fire provide the culinary heart. Cocktails extend the experience. Music creates atmosphere. Art opens a connection with the cultural life of the building. Hospitality brings everything together.

The result should feel new without feeling disconnected from its home: a contemporary Kursaal that respects the past while creating new memories for the future.

Discovery & Finalisation Note

This strategy is now the working strategic foundation for the visual identity. It has been developed from the original briefing and the additional insights shared about Andrea, Il Pineta, Grottammare, the building, museum, hospitality philosophy, food, fire, art and music.

The deeper founder story can continue to develop as the project progresses. Any additional meaningful memories, anecdotes or personal details can be incorporated where they strengthen the brand narrative.

The strategic direction is now sufficiently clear to move into Creative Direction Exploration. The visual phase should test several territories against this foundation before a final route is selected.

Creative Direction Exploration — Next Phase

The next phase will translate the strategy into visual possibilities.

Areas of exploration will include:

- Visual territories and moodboards
- Typography and typographic personality
- Colour directions
- Graphic language and forms
- Symbolic opportunities
- Material and texture references
- Photography and image direction
- Heritage versus contemporary expression
- Logo territories and distinctive brand assets

The objective is not to visually represent every brand pillar. It is to identify a distinctive visual language capable of holding the entire Kursaal experience together.

Final Strategic Foundation

Kursaal's strongest asset is not fire, food, art or cocktails individually. It is the combination of place, people and experience.

The brand should respect the history already attached to the name while giving it a new future.

It should feel elegant enough to become iconic, but approachable enough that anyone can walk in.

It should be rooted in Grottammare without becoming nostalgic, contemporary without chasing trends, and distinctive without relying on clichés.

**Above all, Kursaal should become what Andrea imagines it can be:
a true meeting place for Grottammare.**

Founder Discovery Questionnaire

The strategic foundation is sufficiently clear to begin Creative Direction. These questions are retained as an optional deeper discovery layer for authentic founder storytelling and can be answered without delaying the creative phase.

Andrea's Story

1. What is your earliest memory of Grottammare that still matters to you today?
2. What did hospitality mean to you before you opened Il Pineta?
3. What is the most important thing you learned from running Il Pineta?
4. Is there a particular customer, night or moment at Il Pineta that you will never forget?
5. Was there a moment when you realised Il Pineta had become something bigger than just a business?

The Decision

1. Can you remember the first moment you seriously considered taking over Kursaal?
2. What did you feel when you first imagined putting your own vision inside the building?
3. What was the biggest risk you felt you were taking?
4. What made you believe the opportunity was worth taking?

Grottammare

1. What do you love most about your hometown?
2. What do you think Grottammare is missing today?
3. What would you like to contribute to the town through Kursaal?
4. What would make you proud to see Kursaal become part of Grottammare's identity?

Hospitality

1. What is something you and your team do differently when taking care of guests?
2. What is the best compliment a guest could give you?
3. What is one thing you would never want a guest to feel inside Kursaal?
4. Can you describe a moment when you knew your hospitality had genuinely made someone's day or evening better?

The Future

1. Imagine Kursaal has been open for ten years. What do you hope people say about it?
2. What would you like a 20-year-old from Grottammare to think when they hear "Kursaal"?

3. What would you like someone who grew up in Grottammare to remember about the place when they are much older?
4. Is there a story, memory, person, belief or detail about you, your team or Kursaal that we have not asked about but you feel belongs in the story of the brand?

Process note: Any meaningful answers received after this document is issued can be incorporated into the brand story and supporting strategy where relevant. The current strategic direction is ready to move into Creative Direction Exploration.