

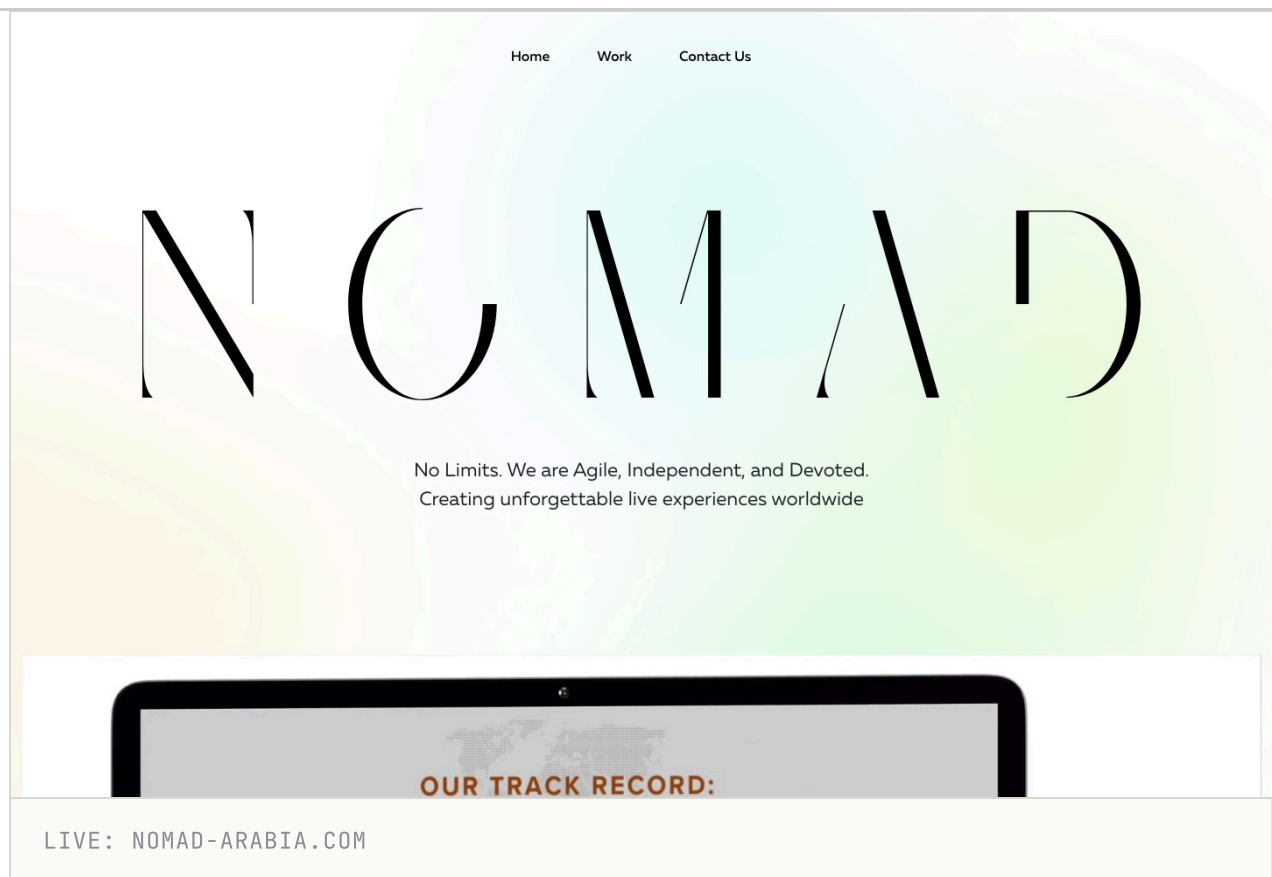
Nomad Arabia: moving a live-events agency off WordPress without anyone noticing

Nomad Arabia is the live-events agency in the group of companies I run technology for: capital-markets forums in Riyadh and Hong Kong, the Tadawul ring-the-bell ceremony, Mercedes-Benz and BMW launches and activations across the...

Role: Group CTO; sole developer of the rebuild

Stack: Next.js 14 (App Router), React 18, the agency's original theme CSS and brand fonts served verbatim, jQuery, slick, GSAP ScrollSmoother, AOS and Fancybox ported for the animations, deployed on Vercel

Live: nomad-arabia.com



Context

Nomad Arabia is the live-events agency in the group of companies I run technology for: capital-markets forums in Riyadh and Hong Kong, the Tadawul ring-the-bell ceremony, Mercedes-Benz and BMW launches and activations across the GCC, the X-CAT World Series. Its public site was a WordPress theme with a heavy plugin stack, and it had become the odd one out: every other property in the group was on Next.js with a shared deployment and security posture, and the WordPress install was one more thing to patch, back up and defend.

The brief I set myself was strict: move it to the same stack as the rest of the group, keep every URL, and make the result visually indistinguishable from the original. A marketing site for an agency that sells visual experiences cannot come back looking "migrated".

What I built

A faithful reconstruction, not a redesign

The theme's stylesheets are served unchanged from `public/assets/css` in their original load order, and the asset folders mirror the theme's layout so every relative `url(../fonts/...)` and `url(../images/...)` reference resolves without editing a line of CSS. The brand fonts (Muller, Future Flow) were missing from the saved pages, so I recovered them from the live theme. Plain `<img>` and `<video>` tags reproduce the original markup exactly rather than routing through `next/image`.

The animation layer, ported

The original relied on jQuery, slick sliders, GSAP with ScrollSmoother, AOS reveals and a Fancybox gallery. A single `SiteScripts` component loads those libraries in order and ports the theme's initialisation logic: hero text reveal, sponsor marquees, the event slider, sticky header, scroll-to-top, lightbox and smooth scrolling. Initialisation is idempotent and re-runs on client-side navigation, which is the detail that makes an App Router site with jQuery-era plugins behave.

Twelve event pages from one data module

`src/data/events.js` holds the portfolio: twelve events with the slugs the WordPress site used, so every existing link, share and search result keeps working. Each renders through a dynamic `[slug]` route with copy, showcase video and gallery.

Assets brought home, selectively

Images, fonts and theme files were localised into the repository. Videos were first self-hosted, then the large event showcase clips were moved to a CDN and dropped from the repo to keep clones and deploys fast. The homepage hero video was later swapped for a Nomad Hospitality clip as the group's positioning shifted, and the footer gained a Group of Companies section linking the sister brands.

Decisions worth noting

- ◆ **Fidelity over cleverness.** Rewriting the theme in Tailwind would have been more elegant and would have changed the site. Serving the original CSS verbatim was the fastest route to a pixel-faithful result and made the migration reviewable by anyone: open both sites side by side.
- ◆ **Same URLs, same slugs.** Preserving the event slugs cost nothing and protected years of inbound links.
- ◆ **One stack for the group.** After this move every public property in the group runs on Next.js, which means one deployment model, one set of security headers and one place to look when something breaks.

Why it is in the portfolio

It is a small, complete example of the unglamorous CTO work that keeps a group of companies coherent: retiring a platform, preserving everything the business cares about, and doing it quietly. It is presented at its true scale, a marketing-site migration, alongside the platform builds it sits next to in the group.