

Fill the room, lift the number.

A Search and AI strategy for Sunfire, Queenstown

NEW ZEALAND · AUSTRALIA | PREPARED FOR LOU · JULY 2026

1. Executive summary

The short version. Sunfire is a genuinely good all-day restaurant doing roughly \$6.2M a year, and it is close to invisible in search: about 128 organic visits a month and three top-three rankings. When a visitor lands in Queenstown and asks Google or ChatGPT "where's the best breakfast", "where should we eat" or "somewhere for lunch with a view", the answer is being written for other venues. That matters more than usual here because four in five diners come from out of town and decide where to eat on a phone before they arrive. This is a focused, six-month push to lift Sunfire's searchability and its booking numbers so the trajectory is clear and climbing, exactly the upward line an incoming buyer wants to see ahead of a sale. Flame is already doing a great job, full at dinner every night, so we are not spending your money there.

Three things to know

- **Sunfire has the room, it just is not being found.** Your dinner peak is slammed from 7:00 to 8:30 and quiet either side, breakfast is lumpy and weather-dependent, and lunch and the afternoon have a lot of open capacity. Every one of those gaps is a booking that a "where to eat in Queenstown" search could fill, and today almost none of that search reaches you. **YOU**
- **Your dayparts are the least contested terms in town.** Breakfast, best breakfast, lunch and brunch in Queenstown sit at keyword difficulty 0 to 2, real demand at unclaimed positions rather than hard ones. Almost no local venue does proper search, content or AI work, so the layer that decides bookings is sitting open. **TRIANGULATED**
- **The AI answers are being set right now.** Google already fires AI answers on "things to do in Queenstown", and travellers increasingly ask ChatGPT and Perplexity where to eat. There is no clear AI-preferred all-day or breakfast spot in Queenstown yet. Whoever builds the reviews, readable content and citations over the next six months becomes the default answer, and that is hard to unseat once it sets. **AHREFS**

**\$150K-
\$300K**

the 5 to 10x return on the \$30k build over 12 to 18 months, all from search and AI discovery (Sunfire)

~\$6.2M

Sunfire's annual sales, so even a single-digit lift is a large number

128

organic visits a month today, and only 3 top-3 rankings, nearly invisible

40 / 100

AEO readiness today, Certified is 80

Where you focus, at a glance

Lunch & the afternoon

~9,000-12,000 SEARCHES / MO

THE OPEN CAPACITY

Your biggest gaps by your own read, and the daypart terms sit at difficulty 0 to 2. Lunch, brunch and afternoon demand is real and almost entirely unclaimed.

Breakfast & brunch

~3,300 NZ SEARCHES / MO

YOUR LANE

All-day dining is exactly your positioning, and "breakfast queenstown" and "best breakfast queenstown" both sit at difficulty 0. The most winnable territory you have.

Discovery & the AI answer

~12,000-16,000 SEARCHES / MO

THE MOAT

"Where should we eat in Queenstown" and the AI answers underneath it. No venue owns this yet, and the reviews and readable content that win it also lift every daypart.

Triangulated NZ + AU search demand, July 2026. The full keyword, prompt and cluster research behind every number here lives in [The data](#) tab. **GKP + AHREFS + SEMRUSH**

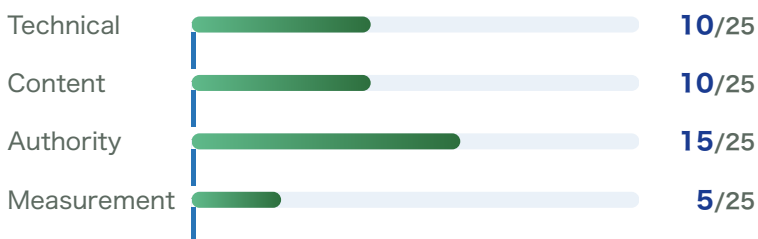
2. How AI-ready you are today: the AEO scorecard

We score every venue out of 100 against our AEO Maturity Model: four pillars (Technical, Content, Authority, Measurement), each out of 25. **Certified is 80 out of 100**, Professional on all four, the standard we build clients to. Sunfire sits at 40 today, an Emerging score with one real strength and three clear, buildable gaps.

Sunfire

EMERGING · REAL REPUTATION, CONTENT AN AI CANNOT READ

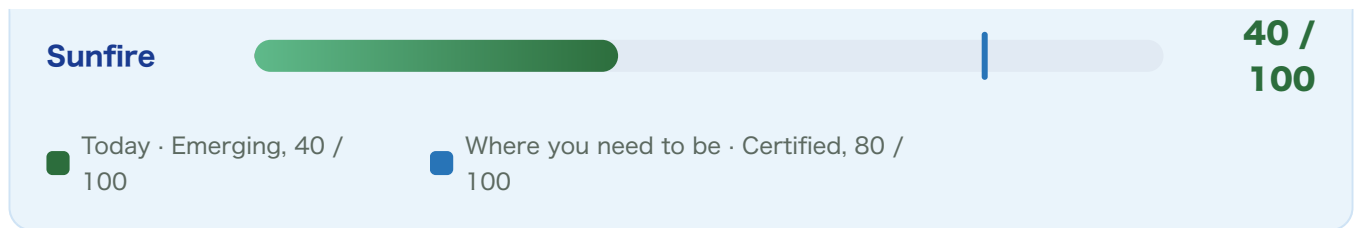
40/100



+40

points to Certified. You already hold genuine authority through reviews and reputation. The climb is a technical fix (a slow load and no schema), content an AI can actually read, and measurement, not a rebuild.

WHERE YOU ARE · WHERE YOU NEED TO BE



Flame sits at 50 / 100 on the same model and is in good shape, full at dinner every night, so this document is about Sunfire. Flame gets a light touch as part of the work, described in section 5.

LIVE CRAWL + LIGHTHOUSE + AHREFS

The detailed findings, how the scoring works, and where every number comes from are in the [appendix](#).

3. The market you are missing: search and AI

In a tourist town, where to eat is a researched decision made on a phone before arrival, in Google Maps, a "best restaurants Queenstown" search, and increasingly an AI answer. The demand is real and it skews straight into Sunfire's dayparts: breakfast, brunch, lunch and the all-day discovery searches. The pattern is the whole story: strong monthly demand, unusually low difficulty, and Sunfire almost nowhere.

Validated demand, weighted to your dayparts

These are the real monthly search volumes for the terms that map onto Sunfire's trade, triangulated across three tools for New Zealand and Australia. Steakhouse and dinner-only terms are Flame's territory and are deliberately left out of this table.

What visitors search	NZ / mo	AU / mo	Your rank	Difficulty	Maps pack
best restaurants queenstown	5,400	1,000	Not ranking	4–7	Yes
queenstown food	3,600	590	Not ranking	3–7	Yes
queenstown restaurants	2,600	1,900	~#8	6	Yes
breakfast queenstown	2,400	210	Not ranking	0	Yes
dinner queenstown	2,400	260	~#9	4–5	Yes
lunch / brunch queenstown	1,700	150	Not ranking	0–2	Yes
places to eat queenstown	1,300	110	Not ranking	1–6	Yes
best breakfast queenstown	900	210	Not ranking	0	–

Search volume triangulated across Google Keyword Planner, Ahrefs and SEMrush (median of three), New Zealand and Australia. Ahrefs alone read these local terms low, "breakfast queenstown" sat far below Keyword Planner and SEMrush, which is exactly why we triangulate. Rank is Sunfire's Ahrefs position (sunfire.co.nz is not in our Search Console), so "Not ranking" means outside the top 20. The pattern is the whole story: **real demand, difficulty often at 0 to 2, and Sunfire absent or bottom of page one** on the two terms it ranks for at all, because the non-branded engine has never been switched on. The full triangulation with all three sources is in [The data](#) tab. **GKP + AHREFS + SEMRUSH** **AHREFS RANK**

Across New Zealand and Australia the Queenstown dining basket runs to roughly **27,000 high-intent searches a month** once triangulated, before international visitors and Maps-native searches, which means the real number is higher. About **90% of the core dining searches show a Google Maps local pack**, where the choice is actually made. On top of that sit the AI questions: we mined a **31-prompt library** from real sources, and the daypart, discovery and practical clusters are Sunfire's. The full library, the cluster maths and the market breakdown live in the [appendix](#) and [The data](#) tab.

The market map, weighted to Sunfire

Territory	Lead	What it captures	Est. demand / mo	AI live?
Breakfast & daypart ★	Sunfire	breakfast, best breakfast, brunch, lunch, all-day dining (difficulty ~0)	~9,000–12,000	PAA + forums
Discovery · "where to eat" ★	Both	best restaurants, places to eat, queenstown food, "where should we eat"	~12,000–16,000	Yes
Practical & planning	Both	family-friendly, budget, dietary (GF / vegan), book-ahead, waterfront	~3,500–5,000	PAA
Views & occasion	Both	restaurants with a view, romantic, special occasion, afternoon drinks	~3,000–4,000	Yes (AU)
Local vs visitor	Both	where locals eat, tourist traps to avoid	~1,000–2,000	Forums

Demand is keyword-anchored with a conservative AI fan-out uplift, directional plus or minus 50%, so treat it as a floor. The two biggest lanes, breakfast-and-daypart and discovery, are exactly where Sunfire has room to fill. **MODELLED, AI-OVERVIEW VERIFIED IN AHREFS**

Why this is winnable. Three facts make the Queenstown daypart yours to take. First, the terms are **unclaimed, not hard**: your breakfast and lunch keywords sit at difficulty 0 to 2. Second, **almost no competitor does proper search, content or AI work**, so the layer that decides bookings is open. Third, you already carry **genuine reputation and reviews**, the exact trust signal Google Maps and AI engines lean on when they choose who to recommend. The work is making that reputation readable and findable.

4. The opportunity, in dollars

Restaurant search converts as incremental bookings, valued at your real spend per head. Sunfire's room to fill is specific and you named it: a **second dinner seating** either side of the 7:00 to 8:30 peak, plus **weekday breakfast and lunch** and the **cocktail and afternoon** trade. Here is what each of those is worth per booking, at a party of around three.

Daypart	Where the room is	Spend / head	Value / booking (party ~3)
Dinner, second seating	Slammed 7:00–8:30 only; a second sitting per table is the biggest unlock	\$82	~\$246
Lunch	A lot of open capacity by your own read	\$50	~\$150
Cocktail & afternoon	A lot of open capacity by your own read	~\$40–60	~\$120–180
Breakfast	Lumpy and weather-dependent, room to smooth out	\$35	~\$105

Spend per head is yours; value per booking is spend per head times a party of about three. Flame already runs three seatings a night; Sunfire runs about one, so a second seating is where most of the upside sits. **YOUR FIGURES**

The trajectory to a sale, over 12 to 18 months



One curve, the mid case: the new bookings arriving as an **annualised run-rate**, drawn as an S-curve. Almost all of Sunfire's demand today is unmet, so the baseline is near zero and the curve is the new revenue coming on. The shape is deliberate: **slow to month 3** while foundations and content go in, **steep months 3 to 9** as authority and momentum turn into rankings, reviews and AI citations, then **tapering to month 18** as it saturates. The six-month engagement ends at month 6, where you **own the system**, and it keeps compounding to the sale. By month 18 the line is at roughly a **\$200K annualised run-rate**, the upward trajectory an incoming buyer wants to see. Hover any point to see the maths. **MODELLED, DIRECTIONAL**

Three honest cases, 12 to 18 months to a sale

Case	Blended new bookings / week	Annualised run-rate by month 18	Return on the \$30k
Conservative	~+17	~\$150,000	~5x
Mid	~+23	~\$200,000	~7x
Push	~+34	~\$300,000	~10x

Chain: blended new bookings per week times 52 times a blended value of about **\$170** per booking (weighted across the four dayparts above). The mid case is roughly **+23 bookings a week across the dayparts**, a handful a day. Return is that annualised run-rate against the **\$30k** six-month build, a 5 to 10x range over the 12-to-18-month sale horizon. All figures are NZD, directional at plus or minus 40%, and they annualise the booking run-rate reached by month 18, not a full-year total. **MODELLED, PLUS OR MINUS 40%**

What the six months buys. A Sunfire that is **found** when a visitor searches where to eat, a fuller lunch and afternoon, a second dinner seating starting to turn over, and a booking line that is **visibly climbing month on month**. That climbing line is the asset: it is what an incoming buyer values when a sale is priced on earnings, and unlike paid ads it keeps working after the push, with no media bill attached.

5. The six-month push

This is a focused, hard-and-fast six months, not a long-tail SEO project. The offer is the same four-pillar engine we build for every client, sequenced to create momentum you can show, and it is done for you: you approve, we build and run it.

Phase	What we do
Months 1–3 · Foundations + content	Fix the technical drag (the slow mobile load and the missing schema), then build the website content an AI can read: service, menu and daypart pages, answer-first FAQs for what visitors actually ask ("where for breakfast", "somewhere for lunch", "good for groups", "views", "dietary"), and menu and restaurant schema so Google and AI read your offer, prices and hours.
Months 3–6 · Authority + momentum	The immediate-momentum work, not long-horizon domain authority: digital PR and editorial placements (the "best breakfast" and "best brunch in Queenstown" roundups AI trusts), Reddit and social mentions, and the foundational business-directory links that make you findable. This is what turns the content into bookings inside the sale window.
Throughout · Reviews + local offers	Your team hammers reviews and local offers, we make Sunfire findable. Google weights review recency in the last 90 days, so recent reviews plus readable content is the local-growth flywheel, and it moves fast.
Throughout · Measurement	One live scoreboard for AI and organic visibility, rankings, reviews and bookings, so the trajectory is visible month to month, on your numbers, from a baseline taken before we touch anything.

The AI map software, set up and run for you. The map software runs **one account per Google Business Profile**, so you sign up for **two accounts, one for Sunfire and one for Flame**, at about **USD \$100 a month each**. You sign up directly and **own both accounts**. We set them up, optimise each profile, and run them for you, automated review replies, photos and videos, posts and Q&A, for the engagement, then teach your team to keep them going. Flame is already humming at dinner, so its profile is a managed bonus: we set it up and keep it ticking, and otherwise leave it alone.

The full breakdown, deliverables and pricing live in [The offer tab](#).

Search volumes triangulated across Google Keyword Planner, SEMrush and Ahrefs (NZ + AU), July 2026; they exclude international visitors and Maps-native searches, so they understate true demand. Footprints from Ahrefs Site Explorer. AEO score from our AEO Maturity Model against a live crawl, Lighthouse and Ahrefs. Booking values use your own spend per head and party size. Revenue figures are directional, modelled from those inputs. Pricing is set out separately.

Appendix A: Sunfire's current position

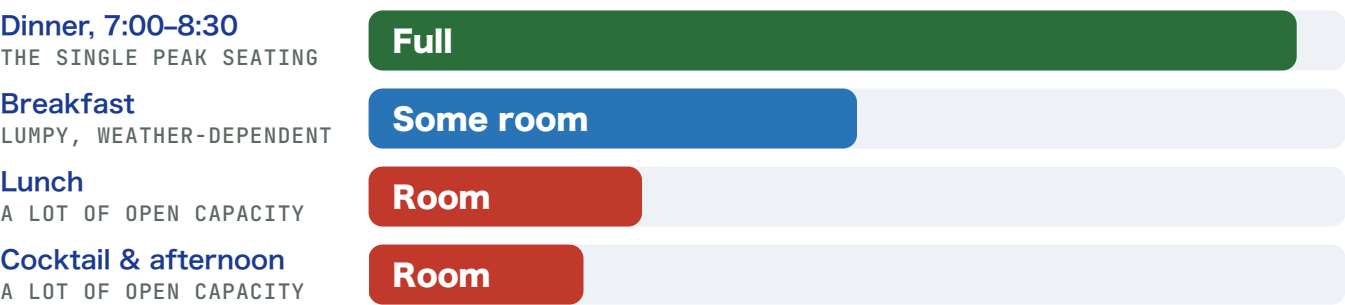
Sunfire is a two-year-old all-day dining restaurant in Queenstown doing roughly \$6.2M a year. The reputation is real, the food is good, and the trade is lumpy: a slammed dinner peak from 7:00 to 8:30 and quiet either side, breakfast that swings with the weather, and lunch and the afternoon with a lot of open capacity. This is growth on a good business, not a rescue. The one thing it is not doing is being found.

Two very different search positions

Venue	Annual sales	Organic visits / mo	Top-3 rankings	Read
Flame Grill (19 yrs, rib & steakhouse)	\$9.5M	1,294	19	Strong for a restaurant, and full at dinner
Sunfire (2 yrs, all-day dining)	\$6.2M	128	3	Nearly invisible in search

Flame's 19 years of reviews and awards show up in search; Sunfire has barely any footprint, which lines up with the lumpy trade. The consistency Flame enjoys is partly a search and reputation effect, and it is buildable for Sunfire. [AHREFS SITE EXPLORER, NZ](#)

The shape of Sunfire's day, and where the room is



Illustrative of the trade you described, not a measured chart: the dinner peak is full, and breakfast, lunch and the afternoon have room to fill. Every empty seat in those windows is a booking a "where to eat in Queenstown" search could bring, and today almost none of that search reaches you. The second dinner seating, either side of the peak, is the single biggest unlock. [YOU](#)

Appendix B: the scorecard in detail

Here is what sits behind the 40, and who fixes each piece. Your one real strength is authority, the reviews and reputation most venues never build; the work is a technical fix, content an AI can read, and measurement.

Finding	Status	Fix
Reviews, TripAdvisor, real reputation (DR 31 on the shared domain)	Genuine authority	Turn it into review velocity
Mobile load ~21 seconds	Failing	The single fastest fix, high priority
No structured data (zero schema)	Missing	Menu + restaurant schema
Menus locked in PDFs an AI cannot read	Invisible to AI	Answer-first menu + daypart pages
No FAQ content for what visitors ask	Missing	The core content work
No organic or AI-visibility measurement	None yet	Baseline + monthly scoreboard

Pillar	Score	What we found
Technical	10 / 25	Level 2 Emerging. A slow mobile load (around 21 seconds) and no structured data at all. The single fastest lift on the board.
Content	10 / 25	Level 2 Emerging. Menus are locked in PDFs an AI cannot read and there are no FAQ or daypart pages, so the content captures almost none of the non-branded demand.
Authority	15 / 25	Level 3 Structured. Genuine reputation already: reviews, TripAdvisor presence and NZ editorial on the shared domain (DR 31). This is the pillar most venues lack, and Sunfire has it.
Measurement	5 / 25	Level 1. No organic or AI-visibility baseline, no share-of-voice framework, and no reporting cadence. Analytics may not even be installed cleanly, so we score this conservatively and build it from the ground up.
Total	40 / 100	Emerging. Real authority, let down by content an AI cannot read, a heavy technical drag and no measurement in place. Certified = 80 / 100, Professional on all four pillars.

The path to Certified (80). Four clear moves: **Technical 2 to 4**, kill the slow load and add menu and restaurant schema. **Content 2 to 4**, get the menus out of PDFs and build the daypart and FAQ pages on the real demand. **Authority 3 to 4**, convert reputation into review velocity and the "best breakfast Queenstown" roundups. **Measurement 1 to 4**, stand up an organic and AI baseline on a reporting cadence so the trajectory is visible.

Appendix C: the demand detail

The AI questions, and who owns the answer

We mined a library of 31 real questions visitors ask AI engines and search about Queenstown dining across both venues, from Google's People Also Ask, Reddit, review language and forums. The daypart, discovery, views, practical and local clusters are Sunfire's, and they are what we carry into the plan. Here is a sample.

Real question	Cluster	Est. monthly volume
Where's the best breakfast in Queenstown?	Breakfast & daypart	~900
Where can you get brunch in Queenstown?	Breakfast & daypart	~1,700
Best places for lunch in Queenstown	Breakfast & daypart	~1,700
Where should we eat in Queenstown?	Discovery	~5,400
Good all-day dining in Queenstown	Discovery	~1,300
Where do locals eat in Queenstown?	Local vs visitor	~1,000
Family-friendly restaurants in Queenstown	Practical & planning	~900
Queenstown restaurants with a view	Views & occasion	~300

A sample of the Sunfire-relevant library, all of it in [The data](#) tab with per-question cluster, intent and journey stage. Volumes are keyword-anchored directional floors with a conservative AI fan-out uplift, plus or minus 50%. **DIRECTIONAL**

And here is who the answers name today, cluster by cluster, versus where Sunfire shows up.

Cluster	Cited today	Sunfire?
Your brand + "sunfire queenstown"	Sunfire	Wins
Breakfast & brunch (best breakfast, where for brunch)	Other cafes, TripAdvisor, blogs	Absent
Lunch & all-day (somewhere for lunch, all-day dining)	Review sites, forums	Absent
Discovery (best restaurants, where to eat)	Roundup sites, TripAdvisor, Reddit	Absent
Views & afternoon (view, afternoon drinks)	Waterfront venues, bars	Absent
Best all-day / breakfast spot in Queenstown	No clear owner	Open lane

Appendix D: where to play, your daypart territories

The same demand, grouped into the territories a plan executes against, each scored on how much of it Sunfire can realistically own. Priority weighs demand, whether AI is live, and whether you can win it uniquely as an all-day restaurant.

Territory	Coverage today	Demand / mo	AI	Priority /5	What we build
Breakfast & daypart ★	Menu PDF only	~9,000–12,000	PAA + forums	5	Your natural lane and the least contested. Best-breakfast, brunch and lunch pages plus FAQs on the questions visitors actually ask, at difficulty 0 to 2.
Discovery · where to eat ★	Thin	~12,000–16,000	Yes	5	The biggest question set, and where the AI answer already fires. Readable, reviewed, answer-first content is what gets Sunfire into "where should we eat in Queenstown".

Territory	Coverage today	Demand / mo	AI	Priority /5	What we build
Views & occasion	Product only	~3,000–4,000	Yes (AU)	4	Restaurants-with-a-view and afternoon-drinks answers, a natural fit for the venue and the cocktail-and-afternoon room you want to fill.
Practical & planning	Thin	~3,500–5,000	PAA	4	Family-friendly, dietary (GF / vegan), book-ahead and waterfront answers that decide a booking once a visitor is comparing options.
Local vs visitor	None	~1,000–2,000	Forums	3	"Where do locals eat" and "tourist traps to avoid", the Reddit and forum questions that a genuine reputation and real reviews win.

Priority is a 1 to 5 score, where 5 means lead with it now; it is not a count of pieces. The full cluster maths is in [The data](#) tab. **CLUSTER MODEL**

Lead with two. Breakfast and daypart, your natural lane and the least contested set of terms in town, at difficulty 0. **Discovery**, the biggest question set, where the AI answer already fires and no venue owns the recommendation yet. Win those two and the lunch, afternoon and second-dinner-seating bookings follow.

Appendix E: the field, and the Australia and visitor angle

The striking part of Queenstown dining search is how open it is. Almost no local venue does proper search, content or AI work, difficulty across the core dining terms sits at 0 to 7, and there is no clear AI-preferred all-day or breakfast spot yet. This is unclaimed ground, not a hard climb.

Diners from out of town

THE SEARCH-FIRST
AUDIENCE

~4 in 5

Core dining searches with a Maps local pack

WHERE THE CHOICE IS MADE

~90%

Four in five diners come from out of town and decide where to eat on a phone before arrival, and about 90% of the core dining searches show a Google Maps local pack. That is why the Google Business Profile and reviews work is the biggest single lever, and why being readable and reviewed decides bookings. **AHREFS** **YOU**

Australia is pure upside on the same content. The Queenstown dining basket spans New Zealand and Australia, and a large share of visitors fly in from across the Tasman. The pages you build to win the New Zealand answer win the Australian one too, with no second content engine to run. "Best restaurants Queenstown" alone carries about 1,000 AU searches a month on top of 5,400 in NZ, and "queenstown restaurants" another 1,900 AU.

Appendix F: where the numbers come from

Source	What it provides
Keyword volumes, triangulated	Google Keyword Planner, SEMrush and Ahrefs, taken as the median of three, plus keyword difficulty. Single tools undercount local New Zealand demand badly (Ahrefs sat low across this basket), so we never rely on one source.
Head-term anchors	Every AI prompt is anchored to the real, measurable keyword volumes of the search terms that sit underneath it. The anchor is the floor of what the prompt is worth, so nothing in the model rests on a guess.
Query fan-out uplift	One AI prompt triggers many hidden sub-searches inside the engine, and most carry zero traditional keyword volume. We apply a conservative uplift to the anchor rather than guessing top-down, which is why our estimates are floors, not inflation.
AI answer verification	Which questions already trigger a Google AI answer, verified in the live results (they fire on "things to do in Queenstown" across NZ + AU and "restaurants with a view" in AU), and which venues get named. Every "AI live" flag is observed, not predicted.
Booking values	Your own spend per head by daypart (dinner \$82, lunch \$50, breakfast \$35, cocktail and afternoon ~\$40 to 60) and a party of about three, so the money model uses your real numbers, not assumptions.
Footprints and authority	Ahrefs Site Explorer for organic visits, rankings, referring domains and domain rating; a live crawl and Lighthouse for the technical and content scores.
Citation tracking	A fixed panel of your priority dining questions, run monthly across ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews, logging exactly which venues get named. The panel is confirmed with you at kick-off and the baseline is taken in week one, so every month is measured against day zero.

Measurement runs in our own platform, so the dashboard, the data and the method are yours to keep, not rented from a third-party tool. The full research behind every table here is in [The data](#) tab. **METHOD**

Team Empathy

Search & AI for local & hospitality

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