

RELEASE DOCUMENTATION

Phoenix Visual Designer

Simple How to Use Guide

V1.0 RELEASE

For CE Phoenix Cart 1.1.0.6 and PHP 8.2
Admin-side visual layout and appearance editing with no Phoenix
core-file changes.

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The screen at a glance

Open Visual Designer from Phoenix admin. The page is arranged around a few controls that stay the same whichever store area you edit.

Control	What it does
Global Store Overrides	Changes store-wide colours, fonts, type sizes, shape, maximum width and optional wallpaper.
Edit page or section	Chooses the store page, site-wide section or supported optional integration to edit.
Desktop / Tablet / Mobile	Chooses the responsive view and the device-specific value currently being edited.
Save Draft	Keeps the work in admin without changing the public store.
Publish	Applies the current area to the public store after saving a rollback restore point.
Reset Draft	Returns the current draft to its published settings.
Real Storefront Preview	Shows the actual store page with supported draft changes applied inside admin.

A safe way to start

Work in Desktop first, then check Tablet and Mobile. Save a Draft as often as you like. Publish only after the preview looks right in all three views.

Your first small change

1	Choose Global Store Overrides.
2	Keep Desktop selected and alter one setting, such as Main heading size.
3	Check the Real Storefront Preview.
4	Select Tablet, check the result and adjust the Tablet value if needed.
5	Select Mobile and repeat.
6	Choose Save Draft. The public store is still unchanged.
7	When satisfied, choose Publish and confirm the real storefront.

A simple design routine

Use the same short routine for each page or section. This keeps changes easy to inspect and restore.

1	Choose one area. Use Edit page or section, or choose Global Store Overrides.
2	Edit in Desktop. Arrange modules and change appearance while the largest view is selected.
3	Inspect the preview. Hover a card to see which storefront element it controls.
4	Check Tablet and Mobile. Adjust widths, positioning, type size or spacing only where needed.
5	Save Draft. Leave the work safely in admin if more checking is needed.
6	Publish that area. A restore point is made automatically before the live design changes.
7	Check the public page. Confirm normal links, forms, cart and checkout outside the preview.

Action	Public store changes?	Creates restore point?
Change a control	No	No
Save Draft	No	No
Reset Draft	No	No
Publish	Yes	Yes - saves the previous live design
Restore	Yes	Yes - saves the current live design first

Work area by area

A draft, published layout and restore points belong to the selected area. Publishing Footer does not publish an unfinished Product Page draft.

Moving, hiding and sizing boxes

Most normal Phoenix content modules appear as cards. A card represents the module customers see on the selected page.

Move a module

- Use the blue Drag to move handle. The rest of the card is not a drag handle.
- Drag upward or downward to change the order.
- In a modular layout, drag between A-I slots to move the module to another part of the layout.
- Empty slots remain compact and open while a module is being dragged.

Show or hide a module

Use the Visible switch. A hidden module remains installed in Phoenix but is not shown in that Designer area after publishing.

Choose a width

Width	Typical result
12 / 12	Full available row width.
8 / 12	Two-thirds of the row.
6 / 12	Half of the row.
4 / 12	One-third of the row.
3 / 12	One-quarter of the row.

Position a narrower box

Open Appearance and use Box alignment to place a module left, centre or right inside its available row. The result is visible only when the module is narrower than 12 / 12.

Device values are separate

A module may be 6 / 12 and right-aligned on Desktop but 12 / 12 on Mobile. Select the device button before changing its width or alignment.

A-I slots

Each slot has its own responsive width and Position in row. This moves the complete slot. Module widths inside the slot remain separate.

Changing the appearance of one box

Open the Appearance row inside a module card. The badge shows whether the card follows the Global style or has an Individual override.

Control	What it changes
Font / Font weight	Typeface and strength for text inside the selected module.
Custom text colour	Text and normal nested content such as labels and alerts.
Custom background	The module and common visible surfaces inside it.
Text alignment	Left, centre or right alignment of text.
Border colour / width / radius	Outline strength and corner shape. A colour alone creates a visible 1 px border.
Font size	Separate Desktop, Tablet and Mobile text size.
Box alignment	Position of the complete box when space is available.
Module padding	Space between the module edge and everything inside it.
Spacing below	Gap after the module before the next item.
Control density	Height and inner padding of selects, inputs and buttons in suitable modules.

Padding or control density?

Module padding adds room around the contents of the whole box. Control density makes form controls themselves Compact, Standard or Spacious.

Product image controls

- Gallery has a responsive slider for the main product image.
- Gallery Images has a separate responsive slider for additional thumbnails.
- Both update the draft preview immediately and do not change the full lightbox image.

Return to inherited styling

Choose Use store defaults inside the Appearance drawer to remove every individual override from that module. The module then follows Global Store Overrides and Phoenix native styling.

Using the real storefront preview

The preview is the actual store page shown inside admin. Supported unsaved changes are applied only to this preview until Publish is used.

Hover to identify an element

Move the pointer over a module card, slot or supported settings panel. A bright outline appears around the corresponding storefront element. If necessary, the preview scrolls it into view.

Pick from preview

1	Choose Pick from preview.
2	Move over the storefront preview until the wanted element is outlined.
3	Click the element.
4	The Designer scrolls to the matching card and opens its Appearance controls.
5	Press Esc or choose Cancel picking if you change your mind.

Expand preview

Choose Expand preview when the fitted preview is too small to inspect. The preview fills the available admin window. Collapse it to continue editing without losing the selected page or scroll position.

Previewing another real page

Use the Previewing list above the storefront frame when more than one useful example page is available, such as a particular product, category or information page.

Forms are protected

Checkout and other form submissions are blocked inside the preview. Same-site links may browse within it. Always check live forms and purchase buttons on the real storefront.

Why a preview may be missing

- My Account and Customer GDPR need a signed-in storefront customer.
- Checkout Payment needs a customer, a product in the cart and completed delivery steps.
- Checkout Confirmation needs payment selection; Checkout Success needs a completed-order session.
- Conditional messages, product options, reviews or Discount Code fields appear only when the real page has them.
- An enabled draft module that is currently disabled in Phoenix may need one Publish before it exists in preview HTML.

Global Store Overrides

Use this top-level area for the basic look of the whole store. Individual module overrides take priority only where you set them.

Section	Main controls
Colours and shape	Primary, secondary, page background, body text, links, button radius, card radius and maximum container width.
Typography	Body and heading fonts, weights, line height and responsive sizes for body, headings, product names, prices, navigation, footer and controls.
Outside-store Wallpaper	Optional image behind the centred store, with sizing, position, repeat, movement and device visibility.

Fonts

Choose a system font, Arial, Times New Roman or one of ten bundled local open-source fonts. The bundled fonts make no remote font request. Only selected font files are requested by the storefront.

Responsive type sizes

Select Desktop, Tablet or Mobile at the top before changing a responsive size. This keeps the panel uncluttered and makes it clear which device value is being edited.

Maximum container width

This controls the maximum width of normal Phoenix page containers on Desktop. The layout remains constrained to the available browser width on smaller screens.

Wallpaper

- Use JPG, PNG or WebP up to 5 MB.
- A compressed WebP around 1920 px wide is a sensible starting point.
- The wallpaper sits outside and behind the centred store. It does not consume any 12 / 12 slot.
- Mobile starts disabled because narrow screens usually have no outer margin.
- Original, Cover and Custom displayed width modes are available.

Keep performance in mind

A large wallpaper or many font families can increase page downloads. Compress the wallpaper and select only the font families actually used.

Special areas and optional add-ons

Some pages are built differently by Phoenix. The Designer presents the safest controls for each one.

Area	How it behaves
Product Page - Outer Sections	Moves complete outer product sections. Use Edit individual product elements for Gallery, Price, Buy controls and descriptions.
Product Page - Individual Product Elements	Edits installed Pi product modules and A-I slots. Main and Long Description are separate when the optional description add-on is detected.
Checkout Payment / Confirmation	Fixed purchase screens use Appearance only cards. They cannot be hidden, reordered or resized in ways that could break checkout.
Discount Code	Appears on Checkout Payment when Discount Codes 6.3/6.4 is detected. Its field group can be positioned and styled.
Footer / Footer Suffix	Canvas width and position affect the complete coloured section. Modules within canvas controls how spare row space is used.
Low Stock Contact	Appearance only. It does not change the trigger level or purchase protection.
Sidebar Flyout Menu	Appears only when Sidebar Flyout Menu V2 is installed. Appearance previews immediately; placement and similar structural settings appear after Publish/refresh.
Create Account	Appearance only controls avoid changing shared customer-data module settings used by other forms.

Why some cards are locked

Appearance only cards deliberately prevent hiding, dragging or structural width changes where those actions could affect customer registration, payment or order confirmation.

Long product descriptions

When Phoenix Main and Long Product Descriptions V1.0 is installed, Main Product Description and Long Product Description - More details are discovered separately. The preview prefers a product that contains a long description.

Discount Code alignment on Mobile

Phoenix normally gives the field group the full row on Mobile. Left, centre or right alignment becomes visible only when a responsive width leaves unused horizontal space.

Drafts, publishing and Restore Points

The Designer keeps unsaved work separate from the public storefront and provides a rollback route for every published area.

Save Draft

Stores the current area in admin. Use it freely while working. It does not change the public store.

Publish

Saves the previous live design as a Restore Point, validates the draft, updates the applicable Phoenix configuration and regenerates the public CSS.

Reset Draft

Discards unsaved work for the selected area and reloads its currently published settings.

Restore Points

- Restore Points are kept separately for each page, section and Global Store Overrides.
- They do not expire automatically.
- Restoring an older design first saves the current live design.
- The newest Restore Point for an area is protected.
- Older entries can be deleted one at a time or with Delete older restore points.

Restore is area-specific

Restoring Product Page does not restore Global Store Overrides, Footer or another page. Select the area whose live design you want to change.

Pre-Uninstall

The separate Pre-Uninstall card is not a normal design tool. Use Revert All Designer Changes only immediately before permanently removing Visual Designer. It restores the protected baseline across all areas, clears Designer CSS, drafts and Restore Points, and removes uploaded wallpapers.

Destructive action

After Revert All Designer Changes, the removed Designer data cannot be recovered from Restore Points. Follow the Installation guide for the complete removal sequence.

Quick answers

Question	Answer
Where are changes stored?	Drafts, layouts, Restore Points and generated CSS are stored in the database. Uploaded wallpaper images are stored in the Designer wallpaper directory.
Does Save Draft change the shop?	No. Only Publish or Restore changes the public storefront.
Do Restore Points expire?	No. Older entries are deleted only when an administrator chooses to delete them.
Does the Designer edit user.css?	No. It generates validated CSS in Phoenix configuration records and prints it through its storefront hook.
Does it change Phoenix core files?	No. It uses add-on files, configuration records and hooks.
Can every preview element be picked?	Supported mapped modules and sections can. Custom third-party markup may need its surrounding module or Global Store Overrides.
Why is a box still full width?	A 12 / 12 module fills its row. Reduce its device width before Box alignment can visibly move it.
Why is an empty slot shown?	It is an available modular drop position. Empty slots stay compact and do not publish visible blank content.
Why does checkout redirect?	The real preview needs the correct signed-in customer, cart and checkout stage.
Will uninstall restore Phoenix automatically?	Only if Pre-Uninstall - Revert All Designer Changes is used before removing files and running uninstall.sql.

Best practice

Make one area look right, check all three devices, Save Draft, Publish, and check the real storefront before moving to the next area.