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How to Buy a Timeshare

By Dick Conklin

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My way of buying timeshares is a little different. It may take a bit longer, but you'll save money. Start by selecting a favorite vacation spot. That's because if a timeshare exchange request doesn't work out, it's nice to own at a resort that you enjoy staying at. If it isn't far from home, you won't have to spend a lot of time and money getting there. And if it is a popular spot, others will be willing to exchange their weeks to go there.

Going Onsite

Now that you have a location selected, visit the timeshare resorts in the area. Skip the sales presentations. In fact, avoid resorts that are still in their initial selling phase. Their prices are inflated and there are too many restrictions on resales. You'll do better at places that are 100% sold out and owner owned. Walk around the resort, including the common areas. Look for bulletin boards showing owner-to-owner resales. Ask for copies of their newsletter. Does the resort have a Web site?

Talk to other owners. How do they like the place? What is the yearly maintenance fee? Is the board of directors doing a good job? If you can, attend a resort get-together or a board of directors meeting.

Ask which exchange companies they use, including any independent companies in addition to Interval International (II) or Resort Condominiums International (RCI). Which weeks are most popular? Often you can buy bargain off-season weeks that still trade well. In most cases, the larger two-bedroom units are more popular for exchanges.

Meet the resort manager. He or she knows the place better than anyone. Spend some time with this person. Ask for a tour, and visit a couple of units. What rules and restrictions are in place? What amenities are included? How are units sold? If owners are required to sell through the resort, prices will be higher.

Shopping for Deals

How to Buy a Timeshare

The best deals are owner-to-owner sales or better yet, foreclosures. Ask about any bargain weeks they are trying to sell. Remember, in timesharing, a resale unit is the same as a "new" one. Both receive the same upkeep and usage year after year. And shop for weeks that fit into your yearly vacation period, in case your exchange plans fall through.

How much should you spend? Of course, it depends on the resort, the week, and the unit. Shop around — you'll probably find weeks selling for under \$1,000. If you are uncertain, rent for a couple of years before buying. Remember, if you pay the true "going rate" for a unit, based on what owners are willing to sell for and buyers are willing to pay, you'll approach the fair market value. If you buy a timeshare week at a fair market price, your future selling price should be closer to what you paid for it.

How to View Your Timeshare

But no matter how much you pay, don't look at your timeshare as an investment, any more than you would any other form of vacation or recreation. If you take a cruise or fly to Europe you don't look for a return on your investment. With timesharing, you should get some money back if and when you sell, but your main reason for buying should be the quality of vacations you'll have at your home resort or the ones you exchange to.

Happy timesharing!

Dick Conklin is a freelance writer and a timeshare owner since 1980. He has written several articles and created a 40-year timeshare calendar (<http://keysy.com/calendar>) for timeshare owners. He also designed a Web site for his home resort, the Daytona Resort & Club (<http://keysy.com/drc>) and writes reviews of restaurants and night life in the Florida Keys (<http://keysy.com>).

Why Resell Your Timeshare?

By Etoo

Most of us think of timeshares as a lifetime commitment, but many people choose to sell their timeshare property after just a few years. If you're thinking of selling your timeshare, or you'd like to buy second hand, read on.

1. Has the resort changed?

The timeshare boom was a while ago, when many resorts weren't as developed as they are today. Cheap flights and last-minute deals on accommodation mean that most resorts are easily accessible and attract tourists from all over Europe. This in turn can mean that the little resort that you loved when you bought your timeshare has now turned into a full-on 24-hour resort, and you're not comfortable holidaying there.

How to Buy a Timeshare

2. Have your circumstances changed?

If you had a young family when you bought your timeshare, or you bought as a couple and you're now single, then the timeshare may not be the most appropriate way for you to spend your holiday time. Older children require different attractions and activities, or choose not to holiday with you at all, in which case your timeshare apartment may seem too big. If you are single, a timeshare apartment may not be the way you want to holiday any more. Selling your timeshare may enable you to have more freedom in your holiday time.

3. Do you need to release money?

Although you are unlikely to get as much money for your timeshare as you spent when you bought it, selling will still produce some capital that you can use elsewhere. If you need to invest more money in a pension fund, or you want a deposit for another property, or you need to release cash for work on your own home, selling your timeshare might be a solution.

Whatever your reasons for deciding to sell your timeshare property, you will need an experienced agent to help you through, and to ensure that you get the best price and spend the least amount possible in fees.

Etoo is an experienced timeshare resale agent. To contact them, visit their website at



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