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How to search online for vacation rental property

By Henry Schlee

The internet is a marvelous tool for finding vacation properties. But the uninitiated may not realize that there are many types of rental property provider out there, and they don't all offer equal levels of value and service.

The first type is the general vacation rental website. There are many of these available, and they are perhaps most suitable when you haven't decided where you want to go. You can browse these sites for ideas on where to go and the larger sites may well have a reasonable choice of homes in certain destinations, particularly the most popular ones. These homes may be advertised by the individual owner, or by companies who manage multiple rental properties.

However, these sites have their limitations. You will rarely find any information about each destination, since these sites typically cover the globe, albeit with varying levels of inventory available in any one resort or location. Also, the site is really nothing but an advertising venue; it takes no responsibility for the accuracy of any of the information posted by the owners who use it, and you will have no comeback to the operator of the website if it turns out that the property is misrepresented, is not available when you turn up even though you have paid or, in the worst but by no means unknown case, does not even exist.

The second type of site is often advertised as 'by owner'. These sites may be global, or they may be destination-specific. Such sites frequently claim that by dealing directly with owners they are cutting out the middleman and saving you money, and in certain areas owners who market their properties directly can escape some types of tax. However, these sites also have drawbacks. As with global vacation rental sites, 'by owner' sites provide no guarantees about your holiday; they are just a way of putting you in touch with the owner. Furthermore, the owner is not worried about the credibility and reputation of the site as a whole; their main concern is to promote their own property. Finally, if the property becomes unavailable for any reason, the owner may be restricted in their ability to provide an alternative. So be cautious with these sites.

The third type of site belongs to a property manager with an inventory of homes in a individual destination. He does not usually own the homes but rents them out on behalf of the owners. He does

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not mind which home you choose, so his incentive is only to find the property most suitable for your group. If, exceptionally, your property becomes unavailable for your dates, he will be able to find you an alternative from other properties he manages. Finally he will have consistent quality systems in place to ensure that your place is in perfect condition for your stay. So if you want to be sure of the quality of your vacation rental, choose a property management company which specializes in the resort of your choice.

Henry Schlee is the owner of a property management company in

Whistler

, BC. If you want a great

Whistler condo rental

or somewhere to find a choice of

Whistler ski accommodation

, give them a call.

Vacation property owners using web pages to increase visibility.

By Dalvin Rumsey

During the last 5 years the number of vacation rental properties being advertised on the internet directly from owner has exploded to well over 50,000. The reason so many owners are taking on the task of managing their units is simple.

They can make considerably more money since they don't have to give 50% (or more) of the gross rental to a management company. Even if they offer substantial discounts to the renter they still make more money (and the renter can save a significant amount as well). Owners typically advertise their properties on vacation rental sites. Most of these sites require the owner to answer several questions about their property and then the site advertises the property in a cookie cutter style format.

This is OK but it really does not allow an owner to advertise what is unique about his or her property. However, now most ISP (Internet Service Providers) allow their customers free web space for their own home page and the fact that creating attractive web pages requires very little skill these days more and more owners are creating a web page just for their property.

When an owner has their own web page they can design it in a manner which really highlights the key features of their property or the area that the property is in. In addition, an owner can put many photos on their own web page for virtually no cost. Many vacation rental sites limit the number of photos and/or charge an extra fee (which can add up to hundreds of dollars) for extra photos. For example, if

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you own a condo in the Disney World area you might want to have pictures of Disney World, Epcot, and Universal Studios. The same goes for owners whose properties are in the mountains of Colorado (or any resort for that matter).

They could have photos of skiing at the resorts in the area (e.g., Vail, Steamboat, Breckenridge, Keystone, etc.). Of course, if it is summer time, you would be wise to substitute the skiing photos with photos of golf, fishing, biking, and rafting in the mountains. If you really want to do it right, you can reserve a .com name for as little as \$10 a year with the discount domain registrars that are out there.

If you decide to do this be sure to pick a name that describes the location of your condo. Some vacation rental sites allow you to have a link to your property web page from the page that is on their site that describes your property. This is very important and should be one of the criteria you use when selecting a vacation rental listing site.

In addition to allowing you to provide a link to your web page you should count how many clicks it takes to get to your listing from the vacation rental listing site. The FEWER the better. The reason this is so important is that the more links you have to your property AND the closer it is to a site home page (i.e., the fewer number of clicks required to get to it) the more likely search engines will pick it up and have it show up in search queries. Ideally you would like YOUR web page come up when people are searching. If people go directly to your web page then it is more likely they will book the unit.

However, that is just one small piece of how search engines do their job. If you are a property owner of a rental vacation property and don't have your own personal web site you might consider getting one. It is inexpensive and does not require a great deal of effort. You might want to visit some vacation rental

listing sites and compare the calendars of properties who do have a dedicated web page and those who don't. You might be surprised at the results.

Make sure you visit

www.rdfo.com

before your next

Vacation

, this is the only

Rent Directly From Owner

site that is solely a search engine dedicated to vacation rental property.



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