

Vacation property owners using web pages to increase visibility.

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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 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

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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.

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before your next

Vacation

, this is the only

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

## **The Pros And Cons Of Timeshare Property Ownership**

**By Connie Barker**

Just like any other purchase, timeshares are not for everyone; however for the vast majority of people interested in buying a timeshare, it can be an extremely beneficial way to enjoy great accommodations each year in your favorite vacation spot. Here are some pros and cons on timeshare property ownership.

If you and your family take a vacation each year in the same location you can easily benefit from a timeshare property. Timeshare properties make it easy to enjoy luxury accommodations year after year without having to spend time at expensive hotels or sub par motels with no amenities. Timeshare properties are the best way to spend a vacation with your family or friends, timeshares come in many sizes such as one bedroom apartments, perfect for just you and your spouse, or three bedroom homes

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with a patio, lounge area and many bathrooms. Timeshares are the perfect way to lodge when away from home at your favorite vacation destination.

If you don't take a vacation each year or if you vacation some where different year after year, timeshares are probably not for you. There are timeshares that allow you to swap with another family, but if you don't take a regular vacation or stay close to home for your vacation, timeshares are probably not practical for your situation.

Timeshares are also a good way to save money on your lodging expenses. Why pay hundreds of dollars a day for you and your family to spend a night in a hotel or even a motel when you can spend less with a timeshare property and have much more space and all be under one roof. Motels and hotels are impersonal and do not have the amenities that larger families need. With a timeshare, you can choose a property size that is right for you as well as have access to leisure activities on the site in most cases.

It is also important to note that timeshare properties are self catered. Meaning if you like traveling for the sole reason of room service, you will not have that service at a timeshare property. For people with large families or for people that enjoy home cooking, having a kitchen in your timeshare property will not only save money but allow you to eat the food that you like instead of fast food or at a restaurant.

Just like every other purchase, it is important to do your research and make sure the accommodations, amenities and property cost and yearly fee is right for you. While the vast majority of time share property owners are extremely satisfied, some timeshare owners that buy a timeshare without doing research on the area or value of the property can become dissatisfied.

If you are interested in timeshare property ownership, make sure you do your research and weigh the pros and cons to make sure you will be happy with your property.

Connie Barker is the owner of

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