



Perfect Lodging

Finding Your Perfect Weekend and Vacation Lodging, or Even Buying that Vacation Home, May Be A Lot Easier Than You Think!

Say you want to go skiing at a resort you have never visited before. Maybe you read about a place in SnowEast and now you're anxious to try it out yourself. But since you have never been there before, you don't know where to stay. You don't want to chance driving to the area and looking for lodging when you get there because, chances are, there will be no vacancies. Besides, if you want to stay in a nice condominium or guesthouse, you will need to make reservations in advance. So, what's the best way to do that?



The Internet is the easiest place to start your search. Type the name of the resort into your search engine, then click on the website for the ski area. Most ski area websites include a link to lodging, with a variety of hotels, chalets and condominiums. You can look through the choices at your own pace, learn about each property's features and click on photos to see the views from the living room. You will find package deals that include lift tickets and other activities.



The downside of relying on a resort's website, however, is that you may only find information about the properties that the resort manages. Most likely, there are many other lodging options including beds-and-breakfasts, apartments and townhouses. Thus, you will find more of what you are looking for by doing a search for the ski resort plus 'VRBO' – that's Vacation Rentals By Owner – or ski resort plus 'cyberrentals.' This type of search will give you direct links to the websites of privately managed vacation properties. You can browse the sites and then contact the owner directly to get detailed information and negotiate a rate without paying a middle-man.

"You can get a lot of great deals by going to owner direct websites. Homeowners will do their own rentals, and most of them take a lot of really good care of their renters," said Louise Harrison, a realtor with Louise Harrison Real Estate in Mendon, Vermont. Harrison helps clients find vacation property in and around the Killington and Pico ski resorts.

Harrison recommends talking with the owners directly to make sure they are credible, as well as to find out important details and get a more accurate picture of what you will

continued on page 2



continued from page 1

find when you arrive. For example, you can ask if the kitchen is stocked with condiments or if you should bring your own sugar and olive oil.

As a “middle man” herself, Harrison points out that realtors provide special services that you won’t receive if you rent directly from an owner. This is especially helpful for people with special needs. For example, if you have a large group and need a conference room or caterer, a realtor can set that up for you. She can help find a babysitter or make sure the refrigerator is stocked when you arrive. A good realtor will help schedule alternate activities for the non-skiers in the group and make any necessary reservations.



Without the help of a realtor, renters with pets will have difficulty finding property owners that allow animals. Harrison offers to “certify” pets so that owners have a guarantee that their furniture won’t be chewed or scratched and their carpets will remain urine-free. “I ask that the pet be crated while the renters are out, and I can arrange for someone to come and let the dog out during the day,” she said. “And I take a huge deposit” for those accidents that do happen.



After visiting a ski area several times, you might decide that it would be more cost-effective for you to buy a condominium or house near the resort, which you could rent out to others seeking temporary lodging. The major advantages of owning over renting is, of course, that you won’t have to pay rent to use the place, and that you build equity rather than spend it. But owning vacation property can also be quite profitable.

Then you can create a website that vacation-minded renters find on their Internet search, and you can

work with a rental agent who will market your property and screen potential renters for you. You can also hire a property manager to coordinate with the rental agent to help maintain the place for you.

“We have people who will plow your driveway and maintain your yard and turn the temperature up to prevent the pipes from freezing,” said Harrison.

Again, the fastest way to find property for sale is through the Internet. If you type in your search engine ‘Vermont properties for sale’ and then put in the name of the ski resort or town, you will immediately see a list of every property in the area that is on the market along with realty services for the area. As another option, the website www.realtor.com allows you to search for properties by price range and sort for the features you desire, including number of bedrooms and bathrooms, lot size, whether there is access to golf courses and swimming pools or if there are facilities for horses. Your vacation dream home is just a click away! ❄️

Learn more about the advantages of buying, renting and leasing Eastern resort properties in forthcoming issues of SNOWEAST.

Photography courtesy of Stratton Mountain and Jim Harrison Photography

