



The CottageCorner | January 2019



A Word From | The CottageCrew



A Word from Our CEO...

Hindsight is 20/20, but foresight is better.

As always, The CottageCrew takes the first of each new year to reflect on how we did last year and what we could do better in the next year. 2018 was surprising in many ways, and it certainly threw us some curve balls at the very end to test our abilities and determination. Amazing what we can learn in the face of adversity. In fact, can a company truly grow in any other

environment? We spent much more time this year analyzing our revenue goals in terms of occupancy versus average nightly rates and throughout each season, we finally found in many cases what we like to refer to as the "sweet spot." It was unfortunate that with some uncontrollable and unforeseen issues, we couldn't see the booking trend until it had passed, but what we took away for next year is extremely enlightening. We learned from many mistakes in many different areas, and we implemented new protocols in every department to prepare us for the future. Our website was also a factor in our learning curve as we rolled out the new branding and site. Unfortunately, we had to revert back to the old website due to some issues we experienced between our reservation system and the site server. Yet, we remain diligently working hard on it in the background so that soon we will be able to switch again to a newer and better website than before. I want to thank each of you for being so patient and understanding while we experienced glitches in our listing details. If there is one thing I can assure you, we will always fight to become better for you! We are forever in search for perfection!

Heather Flange
The Cottages CEO



A Word from Operations...

Cleaning & Inspection Programs

Happy New Year to everyone!

I wanted to take some time and go over our cleaning and quality control process. We take great pride in our commitment to this department. All of us here at The Cottages on the Key love to travel and while we travel, we love staying at AirBnB-style vacation rentals. We truly believe that our approach and intensity to cleanliness and organization are avenues that separate us from our competitors. This doesn't happen magically. We look at it as a program through training and process. Below I will highlight some elements to how this process works.



Nick

[CONTACT ME](#)

Cleaning Program

When we hire a cleaning company we go through an intensive interview and training process. This includes an on-boarding program where we teach them how to use our CRM (client relationship management) system, teach protocols (insurance processing, identifying damage, excess cleaning fees, pet interim cleanings, and how to properly organize a linen closet) and our overall expectations. We tend to target smaller companies that are fellow small business owners. I genuinely enjoy watching people grow their businesses into something that is successful with upward momentum. We want them to know and believe that if they perform well, we will continue to add houses to their own portfolio. This allows us to reward positive actions and to dangle the proverbial carrot for the results we are looking to achieve. We target owners of companies that possess a strong entrepreneurial tendency and that are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done!

Inspection Process

Prior to each guest or owner arrival, we do a 50-point inspection on the entire home. This covers multiple facets but focuses on cleanings. If we are finding silverware that hasn't been cleaned to our standard, the cleaning company comes back. If we find that the floors haven't been mopped well enough- the cleaning company comes back to fix that as well. This helps us create our level of expectation and set a consequence for anything that falls below our standard. We will also "freshen up" a home if it has been sitting for a week or two as well as call in any work orders for maintenance to perform prior to a guest arrival. One of the brilliant aspects of our inspection process is that the guest pays for the inspection itself as part of the cleaning fee!

Dog Interim Cleanings

Allowing dogs at your property is a key component to driving revenue for any long-term guest. I am a dog lover myself and an owner of a chocolate lab named Kai- but in the past I would always despise seeing a dog at one of our rental homes. It made for some difficult cleanings, especially on days when we would have to turn a house over. We had some passionate discussions between the sales department and operations and as a result decided to have a company wide summit meeting on how to handle dealing with dogs and upholding the standard from guest to guest while maximizing rental revenue. We came up with an excellent idea which requires guests to pay for "interim pet cleanings" which is a fee that is on top of their \$250 pet

cleaning fee. This allowed for us to get into a house and not only clean and maintain it prior to the turnover, but also assess it. For example, during an interim cleaning, if the cleaning crew notices a guest is allowing their dog on the bed and/or there is a dog hair everywhere, the company contacts us and we reach out to the guest prior to their departure. As a part of the pet addendum they are not allowed to have pets in the bed or furniture. This process goes back to why we train our cleaning crews so diligently!



A Word from Administration...

New Year Reflection

Before kick-starting the planning process for a new year and a new quarter, it's important to first reflect. In retrospect, what worked and what did not? How efficient are our current processes? How can we increase communication and promote more transparency?

I want to invite you all to take a look into your Lodgix folders. This is a great tool for our owners to stay connected to the day to day and feel as involved as you like. I feel that it is important to familiarize yourselves with the log in process and the look of Lodgix. Inside your Lodgix Dashboards, you are able to view your properties and see how well they are booking by viewing the Calendar Tape. You can see month to month transactions such as maintenance and insurance claims in the Documents tab. I implore you all to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or comments.

I mentioned last month that you would be well informed if any unforeseen challenges presented themselves to our new processes. We are still currently working diligently to update some of your folders for end of the year details and officially commence the new insurance claims process. Lastly, in connection with the new quarter and insurance claims - be on the look out for your Claims Reimbursement payments which will be processed by February 1st.

A Word from Marketing...

Marketing Re-Vamped

Hello & Happy New Year!

You will start to notice new branding for our social media and I am very excited to say that we have completely re-vamped our templates and how we are advertising with our social media. The look is cleaner and it will become our standard throughout all media platforms. You will also notice different colors in our templates. These colors reflect the location of homes as well as experiences/feelings and they are a lot brighter and bolder than our brand colors in the past. This is a way to let our guests know that when they rent with us, they don't just get a home, but also an experience. This all correlates to the new website as well, which is currently under construction as we have reverted back to the old site. But soon you will notice the same color alignment and verbiage throughout the new website as well. You will also notice a new template for your owner newsletter that will be coming out soon, so be on the look out for that!

We will also be starting new email blasts for guests which include weekly flash sales based on a particular month. This sale will be offered exclusively to our subscribers, and the first one will be coming out this Friday. We are very excited for the New Year and all of the changes that it brings!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly!



A Word from Reservations...

2019/2020 Rentals

Hello everyone,

Well it is January and The Cottages on the Key is in full swing with getting homes rented for 2019 and 2020!

You may begin to see a large influx of reservations coming in for 2020 and on some of these reservation they will still be marked in red (as if a deposit has not been made yet). Fear not!!! This is for guest that have stayed with us before and are part of the Guest Loyalty Program.

What is the Guest Loyalty Program, you ask? Well, it is a program we have created that incentivizes our guests to make future bookings sooner with a 5% loyalty discount along with a refundable deposit of only \$99 down. An additional benefit to being part of the program is that their first deposit is due 6 months from the time of booking.

I know this can be a little scary for some owners but for the last 2 years since we have started this program, we have noticed a dramatic increase in guest loyalty. More than 25% of our current guest list is now comprised of repeat guests! And more importantly, the percentage of cancellations has been reduced drastically in that category of guests as you can imagine. Guests who care about their vacation "home away from home," treat the houses respectfully, and those that return year after year are the best kinds of guests to maintain!

As always please give me a call or email if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,
Matthew

CottageCalendar | . . . *we the locals*



Upcoming Events

- **02.02:** Sarasota Farmer's Market - **7am-2pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **02.03:** Siesta Key Farmer's Market - **9am-1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.05:** Brunch & Bubbly - **10am-12pm** - The Cottages on the Key, Inc.
- **02.09:** Sarasota Farmer's Market - **7am-2pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **02.10:** Siesta Key Farmer's Market - **9am-1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.12:** Brunch & Bubbly - **10am-12pm** - The Cottages on the Key, Inc.
- **02.14:** Village Valentine Stroll - **5pm-8pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.16:** Sarasota Farmer's Market - **7am-2pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **02.16:** Siesta Key Craft Festival - **10am-5pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.17:** Siesta Key Farmer's Market - **9am-1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.17:** Siesta Key Craft Festival - **10am-5pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.19:** Brunch & Bubbly - **10am-12pm** - The Cottages on the Key, Inc.
- **02.23:** Sarasota Farmer's Market - **7am-2pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **02.24:** Siesta Key Farmer's Market - **9am-1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **02.26:** Brunch & Bubbly - **10am-12pm** - The Cottages on the Key, Inc.

CottageCohort | . . . *we the indulgers*

Bonjour French Cafe

This restaurant is my new favorite for breakfast and brunch! The crepes & omelettes are to die for, and the mimosas are fantastic! I've never really tried french food before this, but I can honestly say I am hooked!

~ Amanda



Recommendations

- Crepes
- Omelette
- Croque Monsieur

[Learn More/See Menu](#)

CottageCreations | . . . *we the crafters*

Materials

- Wood Pallet (25" x 13" x 7")
- Folk Art Home Decor Chalk Paint in Salmon Coral
- Folk Art Home Decor Chalk Paint in Adirondack
- White Wooden Letters (4.75") - BEACH
- Foam Paint Brushes
- Hot Glue Gun
- Glue Sticks

Instructions

- Starting at the top of pallet, paint every other section with the coral paint
- Paint remaining sections with the Adirondack paint
- Set aside to dry
- Once dry, using glue gun, glue letters in a diagonal line (starting in the top left corner)
- Let dry
- Hang
- Enjoy!





Slow Cooker Beef Ragu with Pappardelle

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves, smashed slightly
- 1 1/2 pounds flank steak, cut against the grain into 4 pieces
- salt and pepper
- 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1/4 cup beef broth
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 16 ounces pappardelle pasta
- Parmesan, ricotta, and parsley for topping

Instructions

- In a small skillet, heat the oil over medium high heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until golden and lightly browned, about 2 minutes.
- Season the beef with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Pour the tomatoes and broth over the beef and add the garlic from step one, carrots, bay leaves, and thyme.
- Cover and cook on high for 6 hours or on low for 8 to 10 hours. Discard the herbs and shred the beef in the pot using 2 forks.
- Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain, return to the pot, and add the sauce from the slow cooker. Increase the heat to high and cook, stirring, until the pasta and sauce are combined, about 1 minute.
- Top with Parmesan, ricotta, and parsley.
- Enjoy!

Peacock Villa - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Property was beautiful; pool, bikes and grill were all great to have, loved that home was right across the street from public access to beach, short walk to restaurants and bars, short drive to Sarasota but mostly stayed on island because they had everything we needed! Friends staying in other rentals were envious of our rental because it was so great!

CocoBayou Cottage - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Our second time here. Loved every minute. For two families with older teenage kids. Loved all the amenities. Kayaking on the beach was great. On the free trolley route so going to siesta key town was easy. Definitely will come back again.

Casa De Mariposa - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Casa De Mariposa was perfect for our family. Everyone loved the location. The pool area was very nice (except the furniture was very uncomfortable). Whatever we needed was furnished. Upon arrival the elevator was not working in one side but the repairman came immediately and fixed it. We would have loved having a door between the two units because the up and down the stairs to be together got a little old. But all in all it was a great place for a large group and met all our expectations and more. May return again next year.

Casa Tegula - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We had the best family mini vacation here! The house is super clean and looks new. The welcome with lights and music on were a nice touch although we thought at first we had walked in while the cleaning crew was still there - haha. It's close to everything but on a quiet street just a short walk from a white sand beach. The bikes and chairs were great to have on hand and in great shape. The layout is great too. We are the parents of two young married couples and one 19 year old son. There was plenty of room to be together or to have our space. But probably the best part of all was the beds were perfect! We all commented on how comfortable they were and my daughter even looked them up to see about getting some for herself and her husband. We would definitely stay here again.

The Big Kahuna - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★**Monarch Villa - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★**

Perfect place for our ladies group of 20. Siesta Key is now our favorite destination.

We had a great time. We would highly recommend. We loved everything about the place.

Seagrape Cottage - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Seagrape cottage is amazing! Beautiful home with all the amenities. Pool, spa, indoor/outdoor kitchen, comfy beds. We had 3 families on vacation. More than enough room. Everything you need is there even toys and games for the kids. We hope to return!!

Crescent Cottage - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This property far exceeded our expectations! The cottage was very clean and the rooms were perfect for our family. A very close 5 minute walk to the beach was a real bonus. The neighborhood was quiet and the backyard pool area was wonderful. We would definitely stay here again on our next visit to Siesta Key.



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