



The CottageCorner | November 2018



A Word From | The CottageCrew

A Word from Our CEO...

Holiday Times and 2018 Reflections

I hope you are all having a happy holiday season and reflecting on the great times and wonderful experiences in 2018!! It's had its ups and downs, but together we've stuck it out and overall we have made some great strides in reservations and sales against all odds. I wanted to share with you an enlightening article



regarding the real impact of red tide on our Suncoast. Based on accommodations taxes collected for September, the Sarasota Herald Tribune reported that the hotel industry suffered a crash in occupancy and the tourist development tax collections had hit an all time low for the past 4 years. With the reported numbers to compare, The Cottages on the Key has done better than previously thought and should remain something of which to be proud. We also decided to take the time to compare our Fall Season numbers from 2017 to 2018 and we can report that our occupancy rate only dropped 11%. Interestingly enough, our revenue rose by 10% over last year's numbers. You may be also questioning if our portfolio grew in proportion, however with additions and deletions of homes on our portfolio over the year, we remain only 1-2 homes different from one fall season to the next in total number of units offered. This tells us that we fared the stormy weather much better than expected overall! Below, you will hear from Matthew, our Reservations Manager, the many different strides we took and how we plan to change our protocol even more so to protect you and our company from these not so favorable natural occurrences. If you want to learn more from the article first hand, feel free to [click here](#) and it will guide you to the posting on Herald Tribune. Now that the winter season is upon us, we have seen a change of pace, and the market is booming again with vacation rental activity! This will be a great season due to it's longevity. Easter is late this year (April 21st) which extends our winter season by a few more weeks. This means extra revenue in our pockets! Thanks everyone! Happy Thanksgiving! Please stay safe and enjoy this wonderful holiday with your friends and family!



Heather Flanagan
The Cottages CEO



A Word from Operations...

The Guest Experience

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. I have enjoyed seeing and catching up with all of you that have been staying at your homes the last few months. I appreciate all your patience and cooperation as we partner to make the experience

of having a vacation rental the best it can be for all parties involved. As the holidays approach, we have been preparing for our incoming guests while also anticipating their needs. Usually guests during these times tend to be "higher maintenance" than usual due to the pressure of hosting their families away from home. During the holidays, guests will utilize their kitchens more than a typical guest, so we have been proactive in making sure kitchens are stocked well. Have you ever had to cook a meal for someone in an unfamiliar kitchen? It can be a little nerve racking to be in an unfamiliar place with a lot of mouths to feed, so we have done our best to be proactive in all areas in which guests will need assistance! After attempting to cook Thanksgiving away from home, we have found that most returning guests elect to simplify things and go with other options. Who wants to spend hours slaving in the kitchen while on vacation, right? Therefore, our marketing team sent out a newsletter last week with recommendations for all our families that don't plan on cooking on Thursday. There were catering options, as well as recommended restaurants that would be providing a Thanksgiving service. Excellent job by Amanda at putting together some amazing alternatives for our guests! On Wednesday, November 21st, The CottageCrew will be hand delivering locally made Key Lime Pies to every guest that will be staying with us over the holiday. We will be at max capacity (with 6 Thanksgiving Day arrivals), so there will be a lot of pies and hopefully a lot of happy guests!

Once again, from all of us, I would like to wish you a happy Thanksgiving! I truly appreciate all of you as individuals and I thank you for entrusting us with your homes.



A Word from Administration...

'Tis the Season!

The season of longer lines, heavy traffic, and the time for all of your homes to host an immense amount of traveling families. As we embrace what we call "Season," you may notice and increase in activity due to the high volume of turnovers in your homes. This means you might see an increase of insurance Claims, repairs, and general maintenance as well. Know that we have strategic operations in place to ensure your homes are performing at exceptional capacity.

I am currently getting caught up on the happenings around the Key and our CottageCorner as I am freshly returning from maternity leave. In my new developing role as "Mom" and going into our most Thankful month, I am reminded that each day and each month we should show our appreciation and thanks to those around us. What are you thankful for? I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday!

A Word from Marketing...

Sea Sun's Greetings!

Hello Owners! We are VERY excited for the upcoming holiday season and we will be rolling out tons of holiday-inspired campaigns, blog posts and treats once December starts. I just wanted to mention for any owners who will be in town for Thanksgiving and don't feel like cooking, I have added one of our blog posts below which tells you what restaurants are open that day. We've also included catering pick-up in case you wanted to eat at home. As you may have noticed, our website is currently in transition to a completely new and updated website! The CottageCrew is very excited to share this and we hope you will be too! Until next time, #CottageOn!



And from our Cottage to Yours, Happy Thanksgiving!

[Thanksgiving Dinner Blog Post](#)

A Word from Reservations...

Success Through Rough Seas



Happy Thanksgiving to all! This time of year always makes us as a company reflect on things that occurred throughout the year, how we could do better next year, and who inside the company really impacted us in a great way! We remain thankful for every experience, whether good or bad, because it simply gives us the opportunity to grow and become better. It is also a time that I must reach out and recognize my staff, who dedicated themselves to becoming Red Tide Crisis aficionados... informants and ambassadors of Siesta Key, if you will. As a follow up to what Heather writes about regarding the tough

season we endured, I would like to share my thoughts on why we feel we had the upper hand as one company in comparison to the entire county regarding the Red Tide crisis. A couple of factors have helped us through the rough seas:

- Last year, we implemented a retention program for our incoming guests and the results of that program now confirms that over 25% of our clientele base are ALL return guests. This is significant, because 25% of our guests are well versed on "all things Siesta Key," they know what to expect, and they are knowledgeable enough on the topic of Red Tide so as not to feel threatened by it.
- We pick up the phone and call. Unlike many companies that now rely heavily on online bookings with a "steer clear" attitude towards guests, we have and always will maintain a personalized approach to our sales and booking processes. By picking up the phone, we are able to reach guests on a more human level ("I'm a human, I live on Siesta Key, Red Tide is....") and explain to them what to expect if they do book with a no frills attitude that promotes awareness and trust.
- When a guest called to cancel, we made it as difficult as possible by adding benefits to their stay, sharing with them other great areas and things to do in Sarasota, providing them options. In many cases, the incoming guests were not even aware of some of things they could experience outside of the beach and it was insightful for them. We even went so far as to going directly to the beach to video chat with incoming guests to provide them the true depiction of what to expect.
- When a cancellation was imminent, we suggested for the guests to use their booking as a credit on their account for a future stay. This worked 9 out of 10 times, so while you as an owner may have experienced the loss of the bookings in this season, there are many guests that have up to one year of credits to rebook in your home again. The money is still there, just deferred.
- What did we learn to do better for next time? More added benefits, upgrading properties, and changing more cancellations into deferred revenue for future bookings. But most importantly, we educated ourselves so that we could educate the public. We provided credible resources, and we humanized the booking process even more so to capture their hearts (and not just their wallets.)

The true measure of how GREAT a company is not only seeing success in revenue month after month, but how a company as a

whole weathers a storm. In this storm, The CottageCrew has not only survived but outperformed the county standards and for that we should be grateful and thankful. With the mid-term elections finally over and snowy weather returning, we will certainly see an increase in sales and gaps for winter are being filled quickly. I would like to thank all of the owners for your understanding and trust in us during these times. I wish you all a happy holiday season and look forward to 2019 and all it has to offer! If any of you ever need anything please do not hesitate to give me a call at 941-444-6025 or email me.

CottageConcierge | CottageCare

Did you know that we offer our wonderful concierge grocery service to owners as well? Imagine arriving to your home and opening your refrigerator and seeing it fully stocked with any item available at Publix or Publix liquors! If you are interested in this service, please email send me an email directly to nick@thecottagesonthekey.com and I will assist in handling your order as well as ensuring it's delivery by one of our team members. We charge a minimum of at least \$40 for the purchase and delivery or a 25% charge of the total bill, whichever is greater! You can pay either by cash or check during your stay.



CottageCalendar | . . . *we the locals*





Upcoming Events

- **12.01:** *Sarasota Holiday Parade* - **7pm** - Main Street Downtown
- **12.01:** *Siesta Beach Seafood & Music Festival* - **11am - 6pm** - Siesta Beach
- **12.01:** *Sarasota Art & Homemade Home Show* - **10am - 4pm** - Robarts Arena
- **12.02:** *Siesta Beach Seafood & Music Festival* - **11am - 6pm** - Siesta Beach
- **12.02:** *Sarasota Art & Homemade Home Show* - **10am - 4pm** - Robarts Arena
- **12.04:** *Brunch & Bubbly* - **10am - 12pm** - The Cottages On The Key Office
- **12.05:** *Phillippi Farmhouse Market* - **9am - 2pm** - Phillippi Estate Park
- **12.06:** *Holiday Splendor* - **7pm** - Ringling Museum
- **12.07:** *Holiday Night of Lights* - **5:30 - 9pm** - St. Armand's Circle
- **12.08:** *Downtown Sarasota Farmer's Market* - **7am - 1pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **12.09:** *Siesta Key Farmer's Market* - **9am - 1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **12.11:** *Brunch & Bubbly* - **10am - 12pm** - The Cottages On The Key Office
- **12.13:** *Sarasota Deck The Halls at Ca d'Zan* - **5 - 8pm** - Ringling Museum
- **12.15:** *Downtown Sarasota Farmer's Market* - **7am - 1pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **12.16:** *Siesta Key Farmer's Market* - **9am - 1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **12.18:** *Brunch & Bubbly* - **10am - 12pm** - The Cottages On The Key Office
- **12.22:** *Downtown Sarasota Farmer's Market* - **7am - 1pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **12.23:** *Siesta Key Farmer's Market* - **9am - 1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **12.29:** *Downtown Sarasota Farmer's Market* - **7am - 1pm** - Downtown Sarasota
- **12.30:** *Siesta Key Farmer's Market* - **9am - 1pm** - Siesta Key Village
- **12.31:** *Annual Pineapple Drop* - **1pm - 1:30am** - Downtown Sarasota

CottageCohort | . . . *we the indulgers*

**Morton's Gourmet
Market**

Did you know that Morton's makes pizza? Not only do they make it, but it is DELICIOUS! I'm a little boring and only got cheese, but honestly I do not regret it one bit! I'm usually that person that always throws away their crust, but not with this pizza. I ate every last bite (and maybe some of my boyfriend's too).

~ Amanda



TheCottages.co ...we the foodies

Recommendations

- **TIP:** The pizza takes about 25 minutes to make, so if you're on a time crunch make sure to get there a little early.

[Learn More/See Menu](#)



TheCottages.co ...we the indulgers

Siesta Key Wine Bar

Whatever the season, Siesta Key Wine Bar has a massive selection of local & specialty wines in pretty much every flavor you can think of! This month I am LOVING their Green Apple Riesling! I know living in Florida it's hard to get into the fall spirit, but this wine will absolutely help with that! Check out their selection below & don't forget to stop by the next time you're in town! And don't forget to wear your Teal Cottage Band to receive their Happy Hour special all day any day!

~ Amanda

Recommendation

- Green Apple Riesling Wine - will instantly put you in the holiday spirit!

[Learn More](#)

CottageCreations | . . . *we the crafters*

Materials

- 5 Craft Starfish
- Patina Chalky Paint
- Watercolor Dual Tip Marker in aquamarine (I use Artist's Loft)
- Foam Brushes
- Rope
- Hot Glue Gun
- Hot Glue Sticks

Instructions

- Paint 2 of the starfish with the patina paint
- Set aside to dry
- Cut 4 pieces of rope into equal lengths
- Using glue gun, attach rope to bottom of starfish
- Tie together last starfish to the top, make rope into hook for hanging
- Enjoy!



CottageConnoisseur | . . . *we the foodies*



Cranberry Chili Meatballs

Ingredients

- 26 oz fully-cooked frozen meatballs (I use Italian homestyle)
- 1 can (14 oz) jellied cranberry sauce
- 12 oz Heinz Chili Sauce
- Crockpot

Instructions

- Combine cranberry and chili sauce in bowl
- Add meatballs to crockpot
- Stir in cranberry/chili sauce mixture
- Heat on high for 2 hours or low for 4 hours
- Enjoy!

Featured Reviews | . . . *we the grateful*

Isla Amor - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This beach home is exquisitely decorated. You feel very much at home. It was sparkling clean with a modern beach decore. It has a spacious kitchen, dining and great room on the first floor. All open with high ceilings for great gathering and relaxing. The back yard is on the canal with a small heated pool, just perfect for cooling off or relaxing. There is also a big screened in porch. It is only three blocks from the beach, just a 5-8 minute walk. It is also just less than a 1/2 mile to the Village, also an easy walk. We had a fabulous family reunion, way beyond our expectations. The five bedrooms

Casita Bayou - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

We loved the house! There was everything that we needed. Plenty of towels. The kitchen was exceptionally well-equipped for a vacation rental. And there was all the beach gear ready for us: chairs, body boards, coolbox etc. The location is excellent: very close to the beach and some nice restaurants all within walking distance. I loved going for a morning run on the beach at sunrise and watching dolphins. However, we were not prepared for the amount of mosquitoes by the canal. For anyone coming to the house, it would be a good idea to use

can easily accommodate the biggest family. I would give it six stars if I could.

mosquito stuff. Even the screened porch does not stop them. Also we saw snakes in the garden, so please watch your step when going outside.

Casa Eulimia - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Property is clean, high end. plenty of outside toys for the kids and adults. so close to beach, shops & dining.

Villa Brisa Marina- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The owners are very thoughtful and even had cupcakes waiting for us. Everything you need for a beach day is included and it's a quick walk to beach access. Would love to visit again soon!

Seaside Cottage - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This house is so cozy and very comfortable - felt like home! We had 8 adults and one 16 month old and had plenty of room for everyone! The bedrooms were large and spacious as well as the 3 full bathrooms. The kitchen, dining and living room area was the perfect place for everyone to gather. We enjoyed the pool, bikes and really appreciated the shed full of every item you could possibly need for a fun day at the beach. I would definitely recommend this home to anyone, in fact, one of our guests is considering renting it for a family vacation! Enjoy!!

Serenity Cottage - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This house is absolutely stunning! It was very clean, spacious, and had beautiful simple beach decor. Everything is up to date, and the pool area was perfect. It was private and quiet with beach access at the end of the street. All the "extras" were there too - many pool towels, a high chair, and beach gear - a cart, toys, chairs, and umbrellas. We were an extended family traveling, and this place provided enough space for everyone. We had a wonderful stay and highly recommend this "cottage" (it's more of a house!)

Siesta Dream House - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The house and location are perfect! Would suggest for families and individuals that are comfortable with quiet hours.

Villa Vista Mare - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Beautiful! Very clean, great view, great location.

Villa Cascada - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

From the music when we entered, to the cupcakes in the fridge, it all was very comfortable and welcoming! Highly recommended with family or friends! Well done.

Casa Ohana - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Located centrally in Siesta Key Village so we walked everywhere. The house is sited for wonderful sun on the pool in the afternoon. TV on the patio allows you to choose music by the pool to suit your mood. Management was more than responsive to every need and so friendly. We loved staying here and plan to return!

Luna Nueva - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

When we had a leak with water damage and mold, we had to move out of our house and found this fabulous cottage to stay in. It was SUCH a wonderful place to relax and enjoy while our house was being rebuilt!

Casita Morning Star - ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This place is amazing! 3 bedrooms AND 3 full bathrooms makes a trip with all ladies a breeze. No waiting to get ready and plenty of space to spread out! The pool is fantastic - it feels very private and provides a great atmosphere to relax. We loved staying here!



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