



THE 7-DAY VACATION RENTAL JUMPSTART

Build a Profitable Property That
Guests Rave About

*Your Practical Starter Guide to
Creating a Five-Star Guest
Experience Without Burning Out*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a seasoned authority in the hospitality industry, I've logged thousands of nights in properties around the globe, conducting rigorous site inspections for esteemed tour and travel companies. Additionally, I've garnered insights from over 100,000 customers. This wealth of experience grants me an unparalleled understanding of the preferences, needs, and expectations of both individual and group travellers, as well as management and staff.

My mission is to empower and guide vacation rentals in realizing their brand identity and achieving their strategic objectives. I'm dedicated to enhancing bookings and profitability while upholding the highest standards of integrity.

GERRY MACPHERSON

Host of the Vacation Rental Resolutions podcast
Creator of Mastering Vacation Rentals: Start, Manage & Thrive in the Rental Business
vacationrentalresolutions.com

*"Hosting should bring you joy, not just job lists."
Let's make your property feel like a business—with soul.*

 JUL 17

DAY 1: DEFINE YOUR HOSTING VISION

"Your vision is your compass. Don't set prices or fluff pillows until it's clear."

Before guests fall in love with your space, you have to. That starts with knowing exactly what you want from this journey.

Are you building a side hustle, a full-time lifestyle, or an asset to sell one day?

Because your decisions—on branding, pricing, even which welcome gift to offer—flow from your why.

Ask Yourself:

- *Why did I get into vacation rentals in the first place?*
- *Who is my dream guest?*
- *What kind of experience do I want to be known for?*

A beachside cottage that hosts barefoot family barbecues?
A city loft for solo travellers who Instagram their lattes?
A remote cabin built for peace and unplugging?
Be honest. Be specific. Be you.

Quick Exercise: Craft Your Vision Statement

Use this formula:

"I help [type of guest] enjoy [type of stay] by offering [your unique value] in [location/type of property]."

Example:

"I help remote workers find peace and productivity by offering a distraction-free mountain cabin in British Columbia."



DAY 2: KNOW YOUR NUMBERS (WITHOUT CRYING INTO A SPREADSHEET)

“A profitable rental doesn’t run on charm—it runs on clarity.”

Running a vacation rental without knowing your numbers is like hosting a dinner party blindfolded. You might guess your way through, but odds are you’ll spill the soup. Profit doesn’t just appear. It’s planned—room by room, fee by fee, unexpected plumbing issue by uninvited raccoon.



Start With These Core Costs:

- *Startup Costs*
- *Furniture, renovation, permits, photography, supplies.*
- *Operating Costs*
- *Utilities, cleaning, toiletries, laundry, Wi-Fi, guest supplies.*
- *Platform Fees & Taxes*
- *Airbnb, VRBO, Booking.com, merchant fees—and yes, the tax man.*
- *Maintenance & Repairs*
- *Lightbulbs today, roof leak tomorrow. Plan for both.*



Your Financial Quick-Check:

Ask yourself:

- Can I cover 3–6 months of expenses without bookings?
- What is my breakeven point per month?
- Have I built in buffer room for “surprise expenses”

🧠 Gerry's Tip:

If the idea of budgeting makes you want to fake your own death, use this rule:

Set aside 30% of every booking for fixed and surprise costs.

You'll sleep better—and you won't yell at the washing machine.





DAY 3: PICK A LOCATION THAT GUESTS—AND YOU—WILL LOVE

“You can renovate the kitchen. You can’t renovate the neighbourhood.”

In the vacation rental world, location isn’t everything—it’s almost everything. You’re not just choosing a place to rent.

You’re choosing a lifestyle, a guest experience, and your next five years of maintenance calls.



Before You Fall in Love With a Property, Ask:

- ***Is there demand here?***

Are people coming to this area? Are they coming all year?

- ***What’s nearby?***

Beaches, wineries, hiking trails, theatres, hospitals... whatever suits your dream guest.

- ***How’s the competition?***

If the area’s flooded with lookalike rentals, yours needs something fresh—or a better price.

- ***Can I legally operate here?***

Zoning, short-term rental bylaws, permit requirements—they vary by street, not just city.



Look Beyond the Postcard:

That lake view? Beautiful... until winter hits and the road turns into a curling rink.

That quiet rural spot? Charming... but a nightmare if guests can’t get an Uber or find a grocery store.

You’re not just choosing a spot to market—you’re choosing a spot to manage.



DAY 4: DESIGN FOR COMFORT AND PERSONALITY (WITHOUT DRAINING YOUR WALLET)

“Guests book with their eyes. But they return for how it made them feel.”

Design isn't just about Pinterest-worthy décor. It's about crafting a space that whispers, *“You belong here.”* And it doesn't take a five-figure makeover to make that happen.



Start with What Matters Most:

- *Sleep: Invest in a great mattress and blackout curtains.*
- *Function: Is the coffee machine intuitive? Can guests find the cutlery without a map?*
- *Flow: Think about how guests move—from entry to bedroom to balcony.*
- *Vibe: Are you aiming for rustic, luxe, beachy, minimalist? Pick a lane and stay in it.*



Design Smarts:

- *Mix high/low: Ikea frame, vintage art print.*
- *Use local touches: Guests love what they can't get at home.*
- *Lighting = mood. Ditch the harsh overheads. Go warm, layered, and dimmable.*
- *Mirrors make small spaces feel like dance halls. Use them wisely.*



Gerry's Tip:

Don't try to impress. Try to welcome.

Design like your favourite guest is coming to stay for a week—and bringing their camera.



STEP 5: MASTER THE MONEY (WITHOUT BECOMING AN ACCOUNTANT)

“You didn’t start this business to spend your life chasing keys and laundry detergent.”

The secret to scaling your vacation rental without losing your personal touch? Automation.

It’s not about turning into a robot—it’s about letting tech handle the rinse-and-repeat, so you can focus on what matters: guests, growth, and maybe a Saturday off.

Automate These First:

Guest Messaging

Auto-send confirmations, directions, and post-stay thank yous. Bonus points for personalisation.

Check-In/Out Instructions

Digital keypads + a simple guide = fewer midnight “Where’s the lockbox?” texts.

Cleaning Schedules

Use apps like Turno or Breezeway to coordinate your team—without group text chaos.

Smart Home Features

Thermostats, lights, and sensors can save energy and impress guests.



What NOT to Automate:

- *Sincere guest replies*
- *Local recommendations*
- *Human connection*

Automation supports the experience. It doesn’t replace it.



Gerry's Tip:

Think of automation like a good sous-chef. Quiet, consistent, and essential. It lets you run the front of the house, while the back runs itself.





DAY 6: DELIVER MEMORABLE STAYS THAT EARN YOU RAVING REVIEWS

"They might book for the hot tub—but they'll return because of how you made them feel."

In the vacation rental business, you're not just offering a place to sleep—you're hosting an experience. And the difference between 4.2 stars and 5.0? It's not bigger towels. It's better moments.



Start With the First 15 Minutes:

- *Was check-in seamless—or stressful?*
- *Did the welcome message feel personal—or pasted?*
- *Was the home ready, clean, and exactly as pictured?*

Guests form an opinion immediately. That opinion becomes your review.



Add a Dash of Magic:

- *A handwritten welcome note with their names*
- *Local snacks or a bottle of wine*
- *A personalised guide with your favourite coffee spots or sunset views*
- *Spare chargers, umbrellas, and board games (little lifesavers!)*



Real Example:

One host left a Polaroid camera on the table with a note: *"Take a memory. Leave a photo."*

The fridge became a guestbook. The reviews? Glowing.



Gerry's Tip:

You don't need a concierge desk. You need heart, helpfulness, and a touch of delight. Think: *"What would make me feel special right now?"*





DAY 7: PRICE FOR PROFIT. NOT PANIC

“You’re not in a race to the bottom. You’re running a business—price like it.”

Too many hosts start with one question:

“What are others charging?”

That’s not strategy—that’s roulette. And roulette rarely leads to financial freedom.

Your pricing should reflect value, not fear. You’ve designed something wonderful—now charge like it.



Pricing Essentials:

Know Your Floor

What’s your breakeven point? (Hint: It’s not “as low as possible.”)

Track Demand Swings

Raise rates during peak times. Offer incentives during lulls. Don’t be afraid to flex.

Use Dynamic Pricing Tools

Tools like PriceLabs, Wheelhouse, or Beyond Pricing adjust rates based on real data—saving you time and earning you more.

Add Value, Not Discounts

Rather than slashing prices, include extras: early check-in, free local wine, late checkout.



Gerry’s Tip:


Don’t underprice just to fill your calendar. You’re not a bargain bin—you’re a boutique stay. Guests pay for experience, not just square footage.

You're Jumpstarted—Now What?

You've just covered the seven essential foundations of a thriving vacation rental.

What's next?


- ✓ Take one action each day this week.
- ✓ Reflect on your “*why*” and realign your property plans.
- ✓ Dive deeper and go pro and sign up for the


 [“Mastering Vacation Rentals: Start, Manage, & Thrive in the Rental Business” course.](#)

Build a fully booked, beautifully run, and deeply rewarding rental—without burning out.

You'll get:

- 60+ step-by-step training videos
- Templates, cheat sheets, scripts, and systems
- Expert interviews and bonus tools
- Lifetime access + support

 [Click here to learn more and enrol](#)

 Or email Gerry directly:
gerry@vacationrentalresolutions.com