



kate&tom's

state of the market

POSITIONING YOUR PROPERTY

February 2020



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welcome

With 2020 in full swing, we've not only entered a new year but a new decade. However, some things never change; and January was as hectic as ever, but this year we've been extra busy and experienced a record number of enquiries! Whether that's as a result of the growing popularity of staycations, or a degree of political certainty following the election results – we welcome it!

In our last report, we focused on pricing strategies. We shared some best practices that we observe in the properties we own and also suggested some date markers that we use to help time our offers – we hope you found it helpful. In this edition, we discuss how to **position** your property to your chosen audience – ensuring you've got the right photos and features in place.

It's crucial to understand the different requirements and features that different holiday types demand – so we've written a handy guide on **page 6**. Plus, on **page 7** we look to dismiss the myth that hen party bookings are perhaps more trouble than they're worth – it might even be worth positioning your property to accept this booking type!



Andy Brooker

kate & tom's Digital Marketing and Guest Services Manager

Penpol,
Cornwall.



Sky Tower,
Suffolk.



Church Cottage,
Cotswolds.



the importance of your photography

They say a picture paints a thousand words and nowhere is this truer than when selling holidays. When a guest starts their search for a dream holiday house it will be the pictures that capture their hearts. In this age of swipe technology, it is important that your photographs have as much punch as possible so that they stop someone scrolling, grab their interest and make them start believing that the house they see is the one for them and their group.

What to shoot

The best holiday photographs paint a scene and let guests' imaginations run wild picturing themselves dining on a huge table, relaxing in front of a log fire, or taking a dip in a swimming pool! You must also think hard about who you are trying to attract to your house. If you want party groups then they are on the lookout for photos of large dining tables, a games room and maybe a bar area. If you want groups with children then ensure there are shots of things children can do e.g. swings, slide, toys and games etc.

About the shoot

If necessity means you have to shoot in the winter months then you will need to add summer shots to the page as soon as the gardens start to turn green. If you can wait until the gardens look lush and the flowers are out then do so. Summery garden shots are better than leafless trees and then you can make the most of garden shots by staging an alfresco dining scene. If you have a swimming pool or hot tub it is essential to get a good shot of this on to the page as soon as possible – these are high-value items that our guests' demand.



Roseyard, Kent.

Video and virtual reality

Recent developments in virtual reality (VR) now mean you can have your property brought to life and allow guests to take a virtual online tour. This is a great way for people to get a sense of the space and the bedroom layout and is a particularly helpful tool if your property has an unusual layout. If you decide to use VR then try to dress the house in a similar way that you dressed it for the photos. If the VR is loaded next to the photos and it hasn't been dressed then the house can look a little bare in comparison to the staged photos.

Video is also proving to be a big hit and is an excellent way of grabbing the attention of potential guests – particularly on social media sites such as Instagram and Facebook. In fact, both Google and social media sites like video content and it tends to improve where you place in the search algorithm; which means more people get to see it. As such kate & tom's are more than happy to add any video content that owners may already have to our pages.

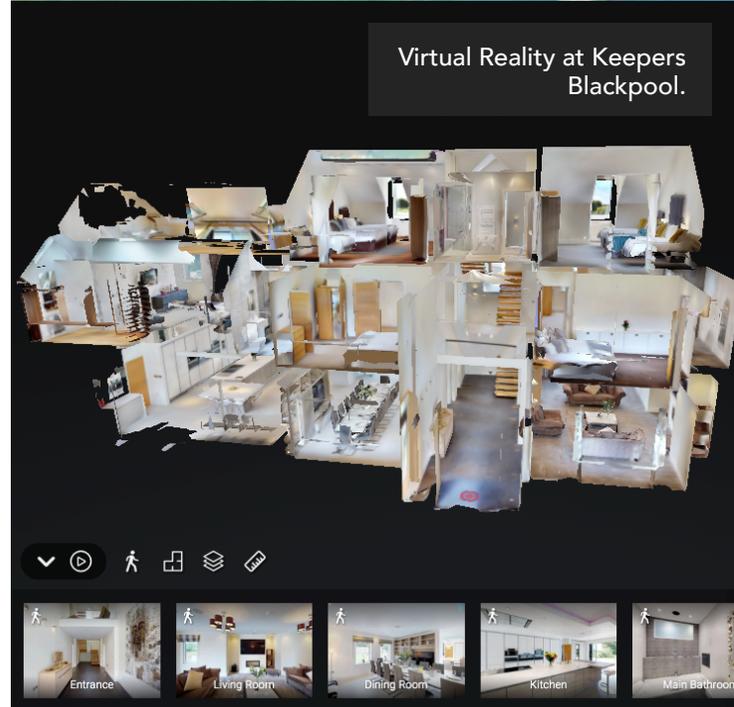
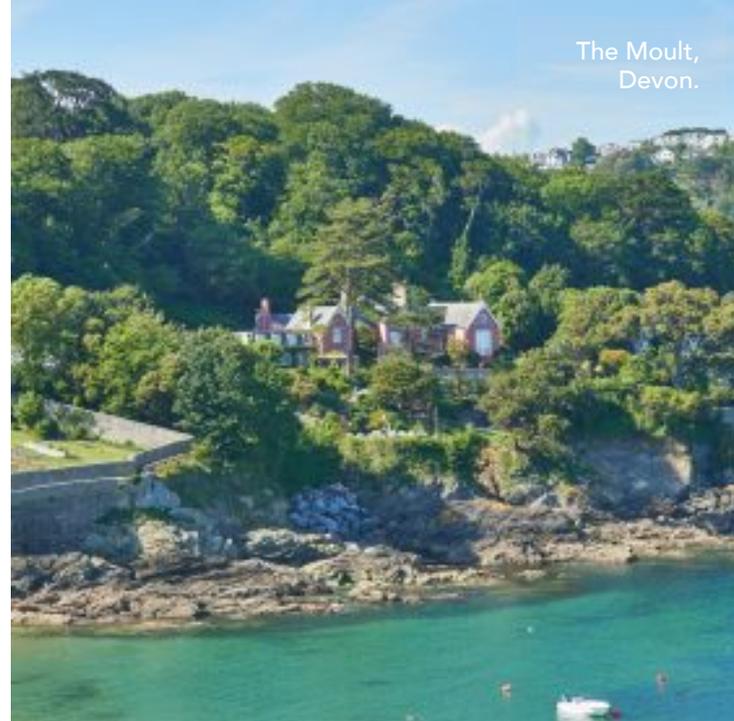
If you believe your photos may need to be updated then we suggested looking for a local professional interiors photographer – taking photos of an interior is a very different skill set to taking photos of people. When you find a suitable photographer ask them to show you their portfolio, you will be looking for them to have completed work that is similar. Or, if you want to add VR or video then we're happy to provide recommendations. We can also provide advice on staging and props for a photoshoot and pass on any contacts we already have for video and VR.

If you'd like to discuss how you can improve your website listing, please contact Hayley, our Commercial Manager.

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know what your audience wants

From party houses to three-generational-family bookings; as owners, an important decision that you'll have to make is deciding what booking groups you want to accept at your property. And once you've made that decision it's imperative to gear your property up with features that these different audiences demand. To help you out we've written you a guide of some essential features that we know kate & tom's guests would expect to see.

Family houses

If you decide to only accept family bookings it's important that your property provides enough entertainment to keep *all* members of the group entertained. From Grandma to the kids – we'd suggest you ensure you have the following features available:

- Games room with pool table, football table or table tennis.
- An outdoor play area with swings, a slide or Wendy house.
- A cot(s) and highchair(s).
- Accept dogs
- A dishwasher - and if your house sleeps more than 14 we'd recommend two!

Party houses

The types of party groups that kate & tom's attract come in all shapes and sizes. However, there is a common list of features that we know they all request time and again:

- Hot tub
- Bluetooth speaker
- A dining table to seat all occupants at once
- BBQ with fuel provided



Keepers,
Blackpool.



Osborne House,
Cotswolds.

hen parties: dispelling the myth...

At kate & tom's we welcome all group types – from birthday celebrations to stag and hen parties, corporate events to wedding accommodation. However, we understand that some owners might not be comfortable hosting all of these booking types. When we onboard new properties we often find that owners are happy to accept party groups for birthdays, anniversaries, friends gatherings but are less positive about accepting hen parties. Owners are often concerned about the damage they'll cause; but is this apprehension justified? We've delved into our booking system and cinched the numbers to find out!

Hen parties: the numbers

From January to November 2019 over 1,700 weekend bookings took place at a kate & tom's property. Of that number, hen parties made up almost a quarter of our weekend stays and they continue to grow as a booking type as we enter 2020. However, contrary to many owners' beliefs, hen parties represented just 12% of the total damage claims made by owners from weekend bookings between January and November 2019. As highlighted by the graph to the right, the average damage claim value for a hen party is less than half that of all other stay types such as birthdays and family get-togethers.

Conclusion

Hen parties represent a growing booking type for kate & tom's and the perception that they'll cause more damage than other booking types is unfounded based on this analysis. Indeed, if you're not accepting hen parties because you feel they'll cause damage to your property you might be leaving money on the table by not accepting this booking group.

k&t insight...

The average value of a damage claim for a hen party is less than half the value compared to other stay types!

Average damage value from weekend bookings:



Robins End,
Newnham Bridge.

about us...

kate & tom's is a close knit team based in the heart of the Cotswolds with one big wish: for our guests to enjoy an extraordinary holiday celebration or adventure. Whatever the occasion, whatever the backdrop we have an incredible house for you.

We're proud to support other British businesses and that will always remain our focus. Since we launched in 2005 we've grown to become one of the country's finest holiday letting agencies. However, we don't just list any house in our portfolio. We personally review each prospective property to ensure it has all of the luxury characteristics and friendly features that we know our guests demand.

From swimming pools to billiard tables to marble drenched breakfast bars. From ocean views to private woodlands and everything in-between – kate & tom's portfolio is unrivalled.

kate & tom's

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