



## The MyCottageHoliday.co.uk Guide - How To Get More Reviews

*Self-Catering Property owners share their tips for getting more reviews without hassling their guests.*

As an owner of a self-catering holiday property you know that the very best publicity is word of mouth and recommendation. No matter how many nice guest comments you add to your own site, holidaymakers considering renting your cottage know that you will naturally have chosen the best reviews.

The power of MyCottageHoliday is that holidaymakers know that you have not cherry picked the comments – they know that reviews about your property on our site are impartial.

Research shows that holidaymakers trust the comments and are far more likely to act on them. Read more about this in our article "[Self-Catering Holiday Research Starts With Reviews](#)".

*"Reviews are no longer just part of the research process, they are the first port of call with one in three people searching for independent advice". Mintel*

### Tips & Advice from other Owners

We know that if you're on MyCottageHoliday you understand the value of reviews. But reviews are hard to come by. You don't want to hassle your guests and you have a thousand jobs to do each week. But some people manage to get reviews – they get them regularly and without having to pester their guests. We've asked a few of them to share their tips and secrets so that we can share them with you. One owner told us "*I think your site is such a valuable tool for reassuring visitors - I am very happy to help*".

#### **1. Asking for reviews isn't always easy.**

Get into the habit and it gets easier. SH says "*I don't find it easy to ask for reviews and I get out of the habit in the winter when there are fewer guests, but the more I do it the better I get at it!*".

And sometimes it just feels natural to mention it. K told us "*We live on site so offer a personal service to our guests. We meet them on arrival and try and make sure they are ok throughout their stay without being pushy! They see us around and often ask us about the history of the house, area etc so it's all down to contact really. If they make favourable comments, I explain that we are trying to grow our business and about your site and ask them if they would mind writing a review*".

RV suggests "*be committed to it. Don't pick and mix and only selectively ask those where you expect the best feedback. You are kidding yourself and future guests. This is not to say that every so often you cannot exclude the odd person from this process. As much as we try, every now and then a guest just doesn't want to enjoy themselves, and you soon recognise these. By all means keep them out of your sample, as long as really it is in exceptional cases*".

Don't be scared about what people might say. "*Most people are very favourable in their public reviews, and they will tell you any 'constructive feedback' in private*".

#### **2. It's sometimes easier to ask when they've got home.**

"*After guests have left, I always contact them by email to thank them for leaving the cottage so tidy etc.*" Says JW. "*I ask them in the same email if they would be willing to add a review. That's all! Some do, some don't. I never press it as this would be pushy*".

VC told us "*After guests have gone home, I send a 'Welcome Home' email, in which I ask if they would mind writing a review. I guess this one works the best - people are already at their desk and on their PC, so it's easy just to access your site straight away*". SB agrees, "*I write an email to thank every visitor who stays. Adding the link to our page, so it is easy for them to write a review*".

SH shared the contents of her post-holiday email with us. *"If I haven't seen people to say goodbye or have forgotten about the Review Reminders, I send an email a day or two after people leave. I personalise the email and then say 'Our accommodation is listed on a website called My Cottage Holiday. It's a review site for people to check out self catering. I don't know if you have ever used Trip Advisor, but it doesn't deal with UK self catering very well. If, but only if, you feel like adding a review this is the link (property)'."*

RV also told us what he says to guests *"We hope your stay offered everything you wished for, but please do let us know if there is anything you feel we can improve on. If you have had a good time, needless to say we would be delighted if you shared your experiences with family and friends, or indeed, If you have a spare 5 minutes, we would really appreciate if you could add a brief review on the independent review site [www.mycottageholiday.co.uk](http://www.mycottageholiday.co.uk) (page URL)".*

C has only had a cottage for two years. She told us *"I always email guests when they return home thanking them for staying at the cottage and asking them if they get the time could they leave a review for the cottage on your site. I also leave the reminder leaflet in the cottage but not everyone takes one of these. In my email I always put down the website address for the cottage so it makes it easy for guests to find".* She goes on to tell guests why their opinions are important to her *"I also say that I think their opinion is better than someone who ticks boxes on a form to determine a star rating!"*

### **3. The Review Reminder leaflets really do work.**

As well as politely asking for a review, SH also uses the Review Reminder leaflets we provide. *"I find the Review Reminders really useful as I can hand them to someone without having to say very much. I have usually had several conversations with guests during the week so know how they are feeling about their holiday - mostly good!"*.

Many owners leave a Review Reminder in the cottage for guests. *"I print out the leaflets you designed for each of our cottages prompting them to 'do' a review"* says VC. CA does much the same, *"I place your leaflets in the visitors book to ask guests to put a review of the cottage on your site if they are happy to do so"*.

SB lives on site, so she doesn't feel the need to use the reminders, but she told us *"I don't use your leaflet. But in other circumstances where owners aren't able to make contact in person, or are hesitant about mentioning reviews, I think they are a great idea"*.

### **4. Don't ask for reviews – ask guests to share their experiences.**

I think SB hits the nail on the head when she says *"I don't really ask them to write about us - more about the area and what they have done. It is so wonderful here and that is as important for me in enlightening potential visitors"*.

### **5. Make the reviews work for you – add Review Snippets to your site.**

If you are getting some reviews then make them work for you by adding the Review Snippets on your own site. This shows a clip from your most recent reviews and updates automatically as new reviews are added. The other benefit is that if guests see the reviews, they may be reminded or prompted to add a comment themselves.

JW can see that the snippets have a role to play. *"I don't yet use the snippet on our own website as it would require some re-design and input from our web designer, but it will probably happen next year when we update or re-do our website. Meanwhile I have put a link on our links page"*.

Here's how one owner is using the snippets on their own website - <http://www.yethouse.co.uk/reviews/reviews.php>

### **6. Add a link to your property's page at the bottom of your emails.**

The main benefit of adding a link to the footer of your emails is, of course, to help reassure prospective guests about your property every time you contact them. But an added benefit is that it will also remind guests to add a review themselves.

VC does exactly this. *"All emails I send out to prospective customers are sent with an email signature, the one at the end of this email. This suggests that people can read reviews of our cottages - if they read them, they may be prompted to write one"*.

## **7. Link to your reviews from your own site.**

*"I have a link at the foot of each page of our web site".* This reassures holidaymakers and makes it easy for former guests to find the page on MyCottageHoliday.

A final thought. RV was adamant that feedback is essential. *"We know that most guests we welcome have looked at such feedback, and in fact, we actively encourage people visiting our website to visit and read our reviews. So effectively, our guests do a major part of the marketing we could never do ourselves (and it is for free!)"*.

### **So what are the top tips?**

1. Don't just ask for reviews, ask guests to describe their experiences and tips for other guests.
2. Get into the habit of asking - it's worth the effort, reviews are an essential marketing tool these days.
3. Make it easy for guests to find your reviews with links from your own site..
4. Ask for comments when you send your guests a 'Thank You' email.
5. Use the Review Reminders – you could just put one in the Guest Book.
6. Snippets reassure new guests and remind former guests to comment.
7. Mention your reviews in your email footer.
8. If you speak to your guests, remember to just mention the site

Here's another reason to ask guests for reviews. One of our owners told us *"when we picked up two nominations, and one award, at the 2009/10 SW Tourism Awards, we were told that our extensive guest feedback process played a major part"*.

### **How can MyCottageHoliday help?**

Don't forget about the tools we provide in the Owner Admin area – these can help you generate more reviews. And if you need help – just ask, we really will try to help.

### **It's worth asking for reviews – The Excellence Awards**

This year we have launched [MyCottageHoliday Excellence Awards 2010](#). You'll need at least five reviews added by your guests to be considered for any category, so it's really worth putting some of the tips into action.