

LOWDOWN ON LISTINGS .COM

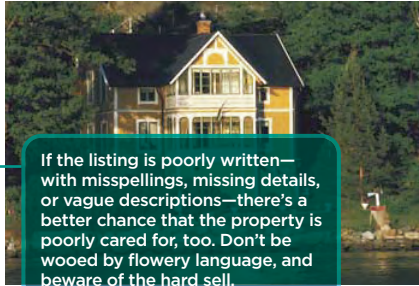
BT'S GUIDE TO DEMYSTIFYING VACATION-RENTAL WEBSITES

You should peruse listings closely for facts and details, but also know how to read between the lines. Watch how we do it on this fake website.

Victorian Lake House ROCKY COAST, USA

ACCOMMODATIONS:

- 6 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- Sleeps 16



If details are curious or inconsistent—the deck faces both east and west?—jot each one down and clarify it with the owner.

Strategic location! We are in the very center of many attraction. This beautiful town is located right on the lake's edge and is just 30 minutes from town. Feel the gentle breeze of fresh air and relax on the slow side. This is a very relaxing getaway from the hectic life. You can watch the sunrise and sunset from the deck.

If the listing is poorly written—with misspellings, missing details, or vague descriptions—there's a better chance that the property is poorly cared for, too. Don't be wooed by flowery language, and beware of the hard sell.

AMENITIES: Air-Conditioning, Washer/Dryer, Linens, Garage

ENTERTAINMENT: TV with VCR

KITCHEN: Full Dishwasher, Microwave

OUTDOORS: Hot Tub, Croquet

Amenities can be listed in a chart or in the written description. Scan what's mentioned, and also think about what's not there. If you see a VCR but not a DVD player, there probably isn't one. Don't assume anything is standard—and when in doubt, ask. Does a full kitchen include a microwave?

Two bedrooms have double beds. One bedroom has a queen bed and a king-sized mattress, and the other has a queen bed and a full-sized mattress. The four upstairs bedrooms can each sleep two people. There is also plenty of space for a group of 16 for a party.

Do the sleeping capacity and the number of bedrooms jibe? Sure, the house could technically accommodate up to 16, but do you really want to sleep on mattresses on the floor, much less share two bathrooms?

ACTIVITIES: Swimming, Fishing, Golfing, Hiking Trails

RATES (in U.S. dollars)
 (minimum 2-night stay)
 PEAK SEASON: Mar.-Sept. \$450/night
 OFF-PEAK SEASON: Oct.-Feb. \$350/night
 MAJOR HOLIDAY WEEKENDS: \$500/night

PAYMENT DETAILS
 Click here for payment and cancellation policy.

Rates and policies should be clearly defined. Not sure what constitutes "major"? Ask.

NOVEMBER 2008

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30						

An updated calendar and lots of bookings are good signs.

RATINGS: ★ ★ ★ ★

GUEST COMMENTS
 Click here for reviews from previous guests.

Owners often edit or delete comments, but reviews can still give you a good feel for the rental and provide tips on activities in the area.

CONTACT
 Click here to contact the owner.

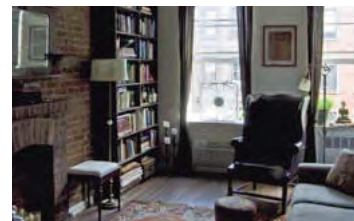
Each listing should have at least four photos showing the main rooms and exterior. Be wary if you see only one room, one angle, or just outside shots. Images should be interpreted, too. Shall we?



Was the picture taken with a fish-eye lens? The room's probably tiny.



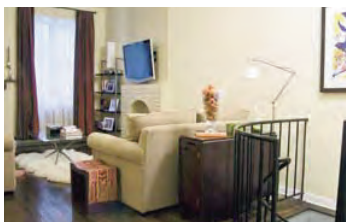
Is it awkwardly cropped? There could be a construction site next door.



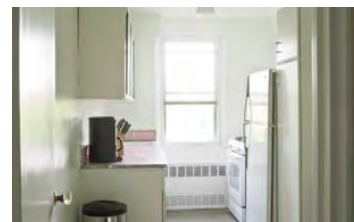
Is a box fan or a ceiling fan visible? The A/C doesn't suffice or doesn't exist.



Faded? Looks outdated? The photo might have been taken years ago.



Tons of knickknacks? Spiral staircase? It'll be a nightmare if you have kids.



Take a good look at the kitchen. If you can't imagine using it, move on.

Top: Johner/Getty. Clockwise from middle left: Michael Mohr (5); Amy Eckert/Getty