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JANUARY 2020

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New Decade, New Challenges

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STAYMARQUIS' REFRESH AND RENT PROGRAM DISRUPTS LUXURY VACATION RENTALS

By Karen Amster-Young

StayMarquis, a full-service vacation rental management company, has introduced "Refresh and Rent," a program to help homeowners in the Hamptons increase the appeal of their homes as rental properties and help shorten the time line for a successful sale. StayMarquis will manage and finance the improvements of properties throughout the Hamptons to increase renter demand, simultaneously helping owners sell their properties much quicker and at a greater value than be-

fore. After the enhancements are made, StayMarquis rents the homes to recoup their out-of-pocket costs plus interest.

Through Refresh and Rent, owners can improve their homes without the burden, capital constraint or risk associated with making changes themselves. This creates value for the homeowner while mitigating their risks.

The program expands the growing list of value-add services being introduced by StayMar-

quis. The \$100 billion vacation rental industry continues to grow at a rapid pace. Innovation is vital to stand out in this largely fragmented industry with few, if any, dominant players.

"We have and continue to invest heavily in our proprietary technology that allows us to deliver unequalled rental analysis and concierge services," said Bryan Fedner, co-founder of StayMarquis. "Our continued focus on technological and operational improvements gives us a unique advantage to successfully implement

Refresh and Rent manages properties throughout the Hamptons to increase renter demand.



and execute on the Refresh and Rent program.”

The company, founded in 2014, now has over 500 properties in the Hamptons and continues to scale at 400%-plus year-over-year growth without raising capital — an accomplishment in any industry, but particularly in the vacation rental market.

Brokerages are slowly introducing similar programs, but they rely solely on the sale of the property to recoup their costs, which has greater inherent risk, especially in a slowing sales market. However, programs such as these demonstrate the growing demand for such services and further show an increasingly competitive industry as vacation rental companies vie to dominate.

Many factors are converging that further support the need for a home-improvement program created for property owners.

“Home sales in the Hamptons have continued to struggle due to decreased demand from a new federal tax code that caps the deductibility of state and local property taxes,” added Fedner.

Known as SALT (for state and local tax), this law reduces the amount of state and local taxes a homeowner can deduct from their federal tax returns. While homes sit on the market, the Refresh and Rent program can not only improve the underlying property, making it more desirable to potential renters and buyers, but it can also help monetize their properties to cover carry costs and maximize return. This platform allows StayMarquis to seamlessly carry out the home improvements and all rental management services, according to Fedner.

StayMarquis’ new program will focus largely on cosmetic improvements for each property. The key point of difference with Refresh and Rent is



The program offers cosmetic improvements on participating properties.

that the homeowner does not have to pay out-of-pocket for these improvements.

“Too many properties are sitting on the market for far too long in the Hamptons,” added Alex Goldstein, co-founder of StayMarquis. “This program assesses the home and considers all possible cosmetic improvements — from the bedding to furniture to painting.”

Despite a struggling market, home prices in the Hamptons are rising again, one good sign according to a recent report from Douglas Elliman. Lower mortgage rates have led to price gains that mostly help the lower end of the market, the report said.

But even with this positive news item, owners continue to be cautious in this uncertain market. Home improvement programs without the usual risk and cost associated with improvements are likely to be popular among these owners.

“It’s only when we are successful in renting the property that we get back our investment,” said Fedner. “We present our recommendations and

the costs to homeowners upfront and collectively decide the final scope of work. This is a team approach, which puts owners at ease.”

For the eventual successful sale of the property, this also makes a difference. It makes sense that the more the property is being seen, the more likely it will move.

“StayMarquis’ tenacity in advising property owners and negotiating with guests to bridge the value perception gap between the parties and get deals done is only one of the reasons the firm is a valuable resource for our company,” said Chad Gessin, vice president of Chatham Development Company. “Their approach is not only creative and unique to the industry, but also extremely effective.”

“Refresh and Rent is a carefully designed program,” said Goldstein. “Having a program such as this is almost necessary in today’s market. The endless choices owners have can be overwhelming, and we’re investing in our services to stand out as the only clear choice when it comes to a real estate partner.”



StayMarquis has more than 500 properties in the Hamptons.

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In September 2019, the company introduced the StayMarquisLuxe program, a new standard in travel, offering the highest-end homes for the most discerning travelers. Catering to the 1% of renters and targeting properties valued at \$3 million and up, Luxe provides access to premium homes, top-tier hospitality and an exclusive concierge team that has true local knowledge. Refresh and Rent represents the next step in the company’s evolution and growth.

Photos courtesy of StayMarquis

January 2020

21 | RES