

Short Term Rental Owner  
Benson Ho & Nicholas Lee  
160 4th St W, Owen Sound

Dear Mayor, Members of council and city staff,

I hope my letter finds you well. First and foremost, I would like to say I 100% support a licensing regime for short term rentals. However, I would like to present to staff my data that I have collected from the last year of renting my home in Owen Sound. I filled out the survey that staff launched last month. An obvious error with that, is that the same person can fill out that survey 500 times without even having to put in their name or address.

I myself have asked every guest who booked our home to fill out a quick survey with 6 questions. I would like to present that data here. I do not believe any of the results can be seen as a surprise

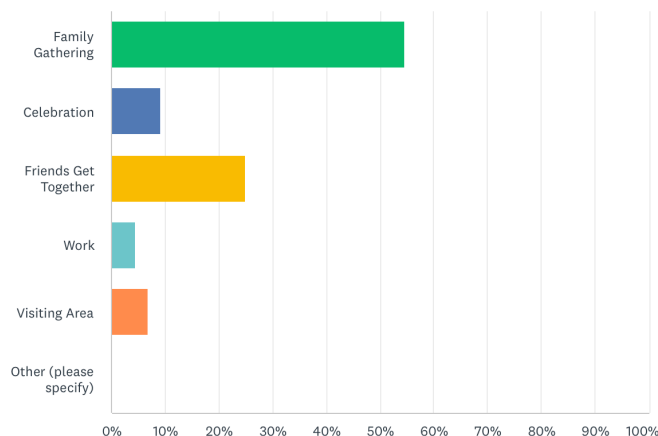
I would also like to share some quick facts.

- Since moving to Owen Sound since May of 2022, I have rented my home 57 times for a total of 141 nights
- Those 57 bookings account for 618 guest
- The shortest rental was 2 days and the longest was 3 weeks
- Of the 57 bookings, I got feedback from 44 of them (23 of them agreed to share their contact info should someone from the town want to reach out directly).
- We have never gotten any infractions from police or from the town
- bylaw enforcement has only come by once since a pool gate was left open (which is now locked)

### Question 1:

What was the purpose of the stay

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

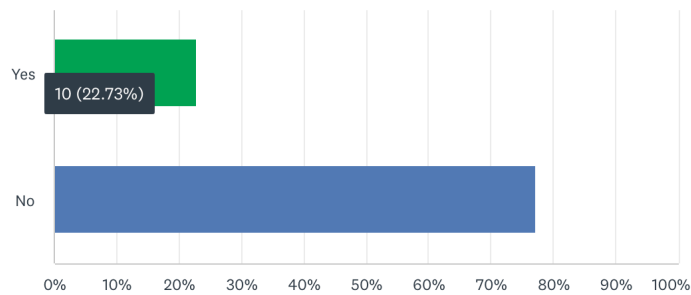


\*You can see the various reasons that people chose to book our home and it is predominantly for Family gatherings. I would like to also note that we don't rent our home to anyone under 25 to avoid obvious disruptive parties that is more common with younger people\*

## Question 2:

Prior to your stay. Have you been to Owen Sound before?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

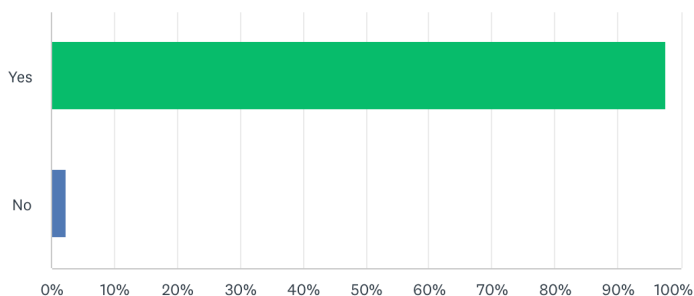


\*Almost 80% of our guest have never been to Owen Sound prior to their stay at our home\*

## Question 3:

Based on your experience, would you come back to Owen Sound?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

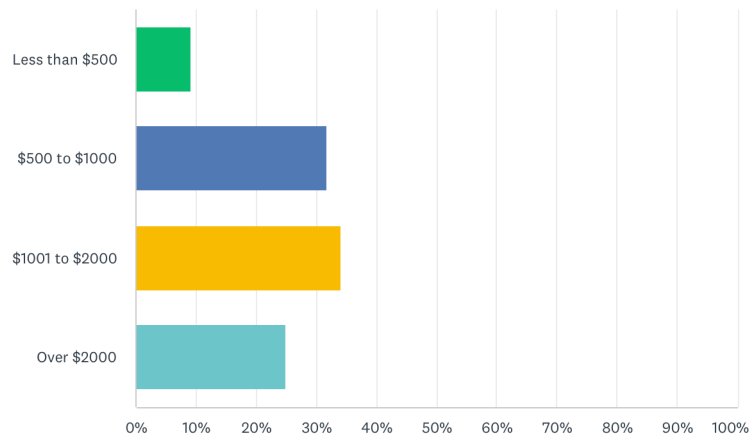


\*Virtually everyone that came through our home and though this town, had a good experience and would come again\*

#### Question 4:

Not including travel and accommodation cost, how much money would you estimate your group spent in town? (Restaurants, Bars, Groceries, Activities, Ecetera)

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0

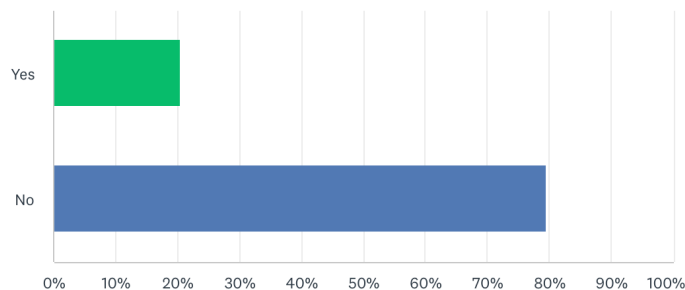


\*This was a fairly diverse answer. Over 90% of people spent over \$500 within town and over 25% spent over \$2000 during their short stays\*

#### Question 5:

Would you or your friends/family consider staying in Owen Sound at accommodations that were not short term rental homes (i.e. Motels, Hotels, etcetera)

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0



\*Almost 80% of respondents who came through our home would not stay in accommodations that were not “home-like” STRs.

## Question 6:

\*Optional\* In one or two sentences. Why did you book our home in Owen Sound

Answered: 22 Skipped: 22

It was a beautiful place with enough space for my friends and I. Convenient and trustworthy to book through airbnb.

It had a nice view and was a wonder retreat to get away and spend time together with family and friends

The space was large enough for our family gathering. Each of the kids and adults could have their own room we could swim and fish during the day. We were looking for a quiet, family place to gather that was within a reasonable driving time from our home.

It was in a great area on a beautiful property!

\*shared a few of the answers we received. But the general tread was that all these people who were coming to Owen Sound, were initially attracted by our property\*

There are numerous benefits of STRs that I encourage council to look at. I would just like to briefly mention two.

### **1, Financial impact of STRs in Owen Sound**

I think its important to go over some financial benefits that STRs can bring. As I stated before I support a fair licensing regime that allows good and proactive host to continue to rent out their home while removing host that flaunt bylaws and allow disruptive rentals to go on.

I also support the 4% MAT that comes with licensing. Based on the last 365 days I can estimate that our home alone would bring in between \$3000-\$4000 in tax. Of the other 75-115 STRs in Owen Sound we are likely on the upper end of what the MAT would be given the value and size of our home. However you can see the total MAT would easily be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The much larger financial impact we should be considering can be seen from question 4 of our survey. Guest are often driving from hours away to come to our home. A majority of which are spending thousands of dollars within the town that supports the local businesses and economy. This can easily be estimate in the millions of dollars.

Additionally, we provide numerous locals with income (Cleaners, maintenance staff, property managers, lawn/pool care, catering, local tour guides, etcetera)

## 2. Tourism impact of STRs in Owen Sound

I don't think much needs to be said of the fact that Owen Sound has struggled with bringing in new residents and tourism to town. STRs like ours have completely changed that. It is common sense that families with kids would not drive hours to see what Owen Sound has to offer, while staying in local hotels or motels. It is simply not practical or appealing. Guest would much rather come to the town while staying in a place that feels like home

We alone have Brought over 600 guest to the town and almost 80% have never been here before, yet almost 100% would return. There are only 2 cities in Ontario that do not permit STRs in residential areas. One of those is the town of blue mountain. The town of blue mountain has an entire village of accommodations and tourist zones that allows families to gather. That cannot be compared to Owen Sound

### Lastly: How other cities are tackling STRs

Im sure staff will also be doing their own research into how local towns and municipalities approach short term rentals. I would like to provide a quick overview

	STR permitted	Licensing	Zoning	Max Occupancy	Max days per yr	Notes
<b>Small towns</b>						
Northern Bruce Peninsula	Yes	Yes	Residential	2 per bedroom	No limit	
South Bruce Peninsula	Yes	Yes	Residential	Based on Septic	No limit	
Grey Highlands	Yes	Yes	Residential	2 per bedroom	No limit	
Meaford	Yes	No				
Owen Sound	Yes	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
Lambton Shores	Yes	Yes	Residential	2 per bedroom	No limit	
Kincardine	Yes	No				
Bluewater	Yes	Yes	Residential	TBD	TBD	
Clearview	Yes	TBD				On Feb 17, 2023 - Council moved forward to Ease regulations to promote tourism
Shelburne	Yes	No				
New Tecumseth	Yes	No				
Collingwood	No					Staff report #C2023-15 is opening consultation to allow STR
Goderich	No					

You can see here, that almost every nearby town and communities permits short term rentals. They have a common sense approach to max occupancy, zoning, and licensing.

I also gathered data on every major city in central Ontario. The data is also obvious in regards to the direction they chose

<b>Major cities</b>						
Barrie	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Milton	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Guelph	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Waterloo	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Kitchener	Yes	No	Residential	None	180	
Brampton	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Mississauga	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Toronto	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Oakville	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Burlington	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Hamilton	Yes	Yes	Residential	None	180	
Grimsby	Yes	No	Residential	None	180	
Lincoln	Yes	No	Residential	None	180	Bylaw Currently under review to license
St. Catharines	Yes	Yes	Residential	2 Guest Per park	180	
Niagara Falls	Yes	Yes	Residential**	3 bedrooms	180	Previously restricted to tourist commercial. On June 1, 2023, council directed staff to aend to allow in all zoning

Thank you for taking the time to consider my letter. I hope council takes a fair and balance approach to STRs. As per staff report “in the last two years, By-law Enforcement has responded to 12 complaints at four different properties that relate to STRs. Of the 12 complaints, seven were not found to be a violation”

This statement alone is a clear indicator that STRs are not a major problem in this town and there is no reason we cannot continue to allow them moving forward

Please reach out if there is any other information I can provide. Below is some publicly displayed info

Benson Ho & Nicholas Lee  
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1604thst@gmail.com

#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews

Cleanliness	4.8
Accuracy	4.9
Communication	4.9
Location	4.9
Check-in	4.9
Value	4.8



Yatin  
June 2023

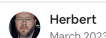
Great host...



Sierra  
June 2023

Nicholas' Mansion on the Water exceeded all expectations. The house was gorgeous, the view was beautiful and the area was quiet. We were a large group of adults that were all able to sleep comfortably. The photos do not do enough justice for how great the place is. The interior design is actually very cool. All amenities were accessible and clean. The Pool and Hot Tub added onto the great experience. We were all able to Kayak and have lunch on the very large deck. Anytime I had a question, I was able to contact and get a response from Nick right away. For anyone that is looking for a

#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews



Herbert  
March 2023

Beautiful, well appointed stately home. Absolutely perfect place for a reunion or family and friends getaway for couples. highly recommended



Carrie  
March 2023

What a wonderful place to stay with our oldest friends for the weekend. We enjoyed ourselves very much at Nick's place. Lots of room for everyone and the house had everything you could need. Highly recommend!



Victoria  
February 2023

Spacious cottage with wonderful amenities - jacuzzi, pool table, 2 TVs. Walking distance to shops, restaurants and parks. Wonderful, responsive host.

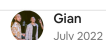


Jannies  
February 2023

Was amazing starting at Nicks for a staff retreat for 8 of us. Absolutely a mansion with a lot of space for group and individual activities.

The beds were super comfy and there were 7 bedrooms. Good time exploring the different

#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews



Gian  
July 2022

Great place! Nick is very responsive and answers all concerns. I had a wonderful experience



Richa  
June 2022

We had a great time at Nicks home. Very spacious. The pool and hot tub was great. A few minor improvements would be ideal, a more equipped kitchen and a sound system. Overall, definitely would recommend. Nick was easy to reach as well. Thank you!



Amit  
June 2022

Staying on this property was amazing! The owner was very responsive and ensured we had a great time. The spot is amazing and we'd love to come back some day!



Victor  
June 2022

Great place! The pics don't do it justice. Would visit again for sure if I was in the area. The host was very reachable and responded quick to any questions that arose.

#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews



Lauren  
September 2022

Nick property is simply put: stunning, peaceful and exquisite - we felt instantly right at home and felt the love that has been put into the design/decor and care of the property. It's so peaceful, cozy and brilliant and perfect location. Amenities 10/10. Nick is also a fantastic and delightful host. Nick's communication & instructions are superb and he was accommodating to our requests. Would highly recommend - a memorable experience that anyone can book with confidence.

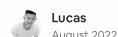


Maria  
September 2022

The space and the amount of bedrooms was so nice. It never felt too cramped. It was great for people to have their own room.

Nick was great to communicate with.

The backyard with the pool and deck and hot tub was amazing. Highly recommend this house for large groups of people.



Lucas  
August 2022

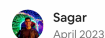
#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews

Amazing stay  
Very responsive host



Jessie  
May 2023

nice experience! will come back again! very clean and warm house



Sagar  
April 2023

The house is very beautiful and large. It easily fit our large group without feeling congested. The hot tub and sauna were a great addition to the house.



Lisa  
April 2023

We had a fantastic family reunion weekend here. The kids had a blast exploring the mansion, very family friendly spot. We enjoyed the hot tub, ping pong & pool tables and river views. Any issues we may have had were promptly addressed. The only items we wish we had packed were sleep masks as some rooms do get bright in the morning. Would definitely return!



Artur  
April 2023

I want to thank Nick because he is a super host

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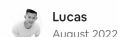


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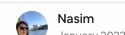
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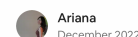
Nasim  
January 2023

A great stay at this spacious house. We had plenty of room, a well-equipped home, and everything we needed. The self-check-in/out process was easy and convenient.



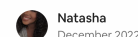
Gadi  
January 2023

The house is huge with all that you need for kids and adults, we had a great family time



Ariana  
December 2022

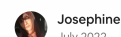
Beautiful home and responsive host. Would stay again!! :)



Natasha  
December 2022

This has to be the BEST home I've stayed at! As much as the travel to the home was a pain during a winter storm, it was 110% worth the journey. The description does no justice to the spacious rooms, views, and location. Let's not get into how accommodating and caring the host, Nick, is. 100% recommend and will be booking in the near future. The home was more than what was described,

#### ★ 4.94 · 51 reviews



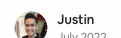
Josephine  
July 2022

This is a beautiful home and we enjoyed the pool! The cleaning team is amazing! The beds were comfortable and the home was well appointed. We had an unforeseen matter with the electrical and the previous guests and the host handled it very professionally.



Asim  
July 2022

Had a great family gathering at this mansion. This is very large cottage with perfect water front. This mansion offer everything that pretty much all family members enjoyed. Awesome experience with Nick, prompt response and easy communication. Pool has open access, family with younger kids need to be cautious.



Justin  
July 2022

Nick's mansion is definitely an amazing place to be experienced. Has everything you could possibly need to enjoy a stay comfortably there. Hot tub, pool, and sauna were large and spacious, plenty of room for everyone to enjoy. Everyone got their own bed in our large party, so no shortage of sleeping space. Nick was a great host too, providing clear