

Phone Photos, Honest Rates: The Free Fixes That Win Bookings for South African Rental Property Owners

Free guidance from Cape Town's LekkerOnline shows SA guesthouse owners how phone photos, honest rates and one weekend of work win more direct bookings.

CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA, August 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The

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Your photos are the first viewing, and often the only one that matters. A traveler decides in about two seconds, on a phone, from a thumbnail. Nothing else matters until that thumbnail does its job.”

Daniel

difference between an accommodation listing that books and one that sits empty is rarely the property. According to guidance published by [Cape Town web company LekkerOnline](#), it is usually a handful of free fixes that most owners never make: photographs taken at the right hour, rates shown openly, and a booking button that does not hide.

The company, which builds and manages websites for independent guesthouses, lodges and self-catering properties, has released the guidance as the first in a planned series of [free resources for South African property](#)

[owners](#), arguing that most of what makes a property bookable is a weekend of an owner's own work.

The guidance is direct about equipment: the camera is almost never the problem. A smartphone from the last four or five years will outperform an older mid-range DSLR in daylight, the company says. What separates a strong gallery from a weak one is preparation, and preparation is the step owners consistently rush.

The company's recommendations for a stronger gallery include:

Clear the room completely before shooting. Not tucked behind a door. Out. Then make the bed, step back, and make it again. "A badly made bed is the fastest way to make a lovely room look cheap," the guidance notes.

Avoid the middle of the day. Between roughly 11am and 2pm in summer, hard South African sun creates harsh shadows and blown-out windows. An overcast day is a gift for interior

photography.

Switch ceiling lights off in daylight and leave lamps on. Mixed lighting temperatures are what make amateur interior photographs look orange and strange.

Shoot from the corner of the room, diagonally, at chest height, roughly 1.2 to 1.5 metres. Keep verticals straight, and go easy on ultra-wide lenses, which make rooms look larger than they are. Guests notice on arrival, and mention it in reviews.

Take the twilight shot. About twenty minutes after sunset, with every interior light on and curtains open, is the image most likely to stop a traveller mid-scroll, and the one most properties never take.

Shoot twenty frames per room and keep two. A gallery of twenty to thirty images, covering every room including the bathroom, carries a listing for years.

The same principles apply on an owner's own website or a booking-platform listing, and the photographs, unlike the listing, belong to the owner and travel with them to every channel.

For owners preparing images for their own sites, the guidance adds a technical layer: keep files under roughly 300 kilobytes so pages load on mobile data, name files descriptively, and write alt text for every image as if describing the room to a person. These details improve accessibility and search visibility, and most owners skip them.

The company also points owners to South African specifics international guidance misses: backup power, secure parking and water resilience, precisely the features guests search for.

The photography advice sits inside broader conversion guidance built on what the company calls the five questions every visitor asks, in order: what is this place, what does it cost, can I book right now, can I trust these people, and does this work on my phone.

"The one most properties miss is the price," says Daniel, founder of LekkerOnline. "Hiding the rate does not create curiosity. It creates suspicion, and an email to three other properties at the same time. The visitor goes back to the booking platform, where the price is on the screen in four seconds, and the owner pays commission on a guest who was already on their own website."

The company packages the exercise as a Saturday workflow: prepare rooms on Friday, shoot interiors in morning light, photograph the outside areas including the stoep and braai, and finish with the twilight shot that evening. One weekend of focused effort will carry a listing for two or three years.

The full guides are available free on [the LekkerOnline blog](#), with no sign-up required.

Daniel Nel
LekkerOnline
+27 21 344 4953

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