

SUCCESS STORY

freetobook and The Laurels



Overview

Phil and Helen Tester purchased The Laurels B&B in 2013. Based in Staffordshire, they primarily cater for Alton Towers and Peak District guests.

The Laurels has seven rooms - a mix of doubles, triples and family rooms.

Soon to be heading into their tenth season, they have embraced automation to improve the efficiency and revenue of their business.



“When we bought the business, the booking software was an ongoing concern – it had previously been ran as a small hotel using Eviivo so we carried on using them our first season. But we started to think they weren’t really doing it for us”

Phil Tester, Owner of the Laurels



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Challenges

Phil and Helen had inherited Eviivo as their booking software when they bought the business and continued with them for the first season, but decided to make a change for season two.

Trying to manage everything was a challenge, especially double bookings.

With price also being a consideration, when someone in their hospitality rich area recommended freetobook, they decided to switch.



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Solutions

Since switching to freetobook, Phil and Helen have never looked back.

- ✓ Their business is completely electronic now – if someone calls up when they are out and about, the booking can be taken via phone or tablet then and there.
- ✓ The diary works perfectly, with recent changes to simplify the view making it even better.
- ✓ After being involved in early trials of Dynamic Pricing, Phil and Helen have now adopted this into their business.
- ✓ The Laurels also now use the Channel Manager, Messaging, Google Free Ads and the Reputation Suite, all of which have been seamless, with many customers mentioning that the volume of good reviews is what sealed the deal when it came to booking.
- ✓ The price point is perfect for The Laurels, spot on for what they need.

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Dynamic Pricing



"I used to play about with the pricing, which is quite time consuming. You can't have the fidelity of daily pricing for seven rooms, seven nights a week - you're never going to do that manually.

I think a lot of people worry that the system is going to sell the rooms too cheap or make them sky high, but once you get the idea that you're still in control of price limits it's a no brainer. I set a relatively conservative higher rate, I think 20% higher than we would ever normally charge and people are more than happy to pay that.

Looking at the figures, I think we've had recommendations of up to 30-40% more in peak periods. I haven't gone with those, but I'm sure we could have sold them at that rate. And similarly with the lower rates, people are going to worry about selling rooms too cheap but the reason that the system is setting a lower rate is that you were probably going to be empty or have very few bookings anyway. Again, I've just set hard lower limits so it's never going to go too low. I probably go in once a week now and make sure nothing obvious pings up, and it's all good."

Phil Tester, Owner of the Laurels



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Results

- ✓ Saves time
- ✓ More bookings
- ✓ Peace of mind
- ✓ Sensible price point



“Only having one diary is a no brainer – it’s saved us time and we know that it’s going to work. We have no issues, we have never spoken to the support team. We’ve only ever really interacted with regards to new product trials and feedback – we’ve never had a problem to raise.”

Phil Tester, Owner of the Laurels

