

15 June 2010 – launch of new home exchange service www.SwapMyCityPad.com

SwapMyCityPad.com is a new home exchange website that will bring the concept of swapping homes for holidays bang up to date and to the mainstream.

SwapMyCityPad.com will change the perception of home exchange as a second rate accommodation option, with its chic and vibrant design (£30,000 in the making & drawings by Chris Dent, a London based illustrator known for his intricate pen work in Time Magazine, Wallpaper and American Vogue) sleek functionality (creating a property profile will take under 10 minutes), travel 2.0 member contributed blogs and city recommendations and an ebay-like rating system (to make sure swappers treat homes with respect).

The process of searching for and arranging a home swap is entirely automated; from listing a property, communicating with other members via a secure online messaging system, and drawing up a house book and agreements.

Research carried out by Zoe Hine, founder of SwapMyCityPad.com, in 2009 revealed that 44% of people have planned fewer holidays for 2010, 48% said that was because they had less money to spend on holidays the remaining 32% are saving money.

When the survey asked the 47% of people who said they would consider a home exchange to comment on what appealed to them about home exchange, the overwhelming response was regarding the financial savings associated with house swapping (58%). 54% of these people also stated that they would prefer the opportunity to stay in a home rather than an impersonal hotel, and that a home would be better equipped and more comfortable than a hotel.

SwapMyCityPad.com also asked people to comment on their concerns about home exchange in order to ensure the website counteracted people's apprehensions. A majority of concerns were in relation to trust; having a stranger living in their home (30%), damage to their home and possessions (16%), theft and security of their property (22%).

The challenge for SwapMyCityPad.com was to create an online environment worthy of the most cared-for homes AND then build trust between swappers for a fair, safe and happy swap.

Whilst it is free to create a property profile and to browse homes to swap with, at the point of making contact with a home owner users must become paid members, Silver at £39.99 and Gold membership costs £49.99 a year. All members can take advantage of the ratings system based on the ebay principle of 'play nice and you'll be successful', where both homes and home exchangers are rated by those that have had experience with them and it's this self moderating system that generates the trust. City Swappers can also search for members with similar swapping experience (from a novice to a seasoned swapper) and gold members have the added benefit of joining a network relating to their profession and be able to search for other members in their same network.

SwapMyCityPad.com also offers a travel 2.0 component whereby members can share their experiences via a blog or contribute to the "My City" section and recommend those hidden gems in their city from a funky gallery, secret underground supper club or local babysitting services.

SwapMyCityPad.com is privately owned by Zoe Hine. Zoe explains "House swapping is a fantastic and exciting opportunity in this current climate; taking a holiday in someone else's home means you're saving on hotel bills and able to engage with a city and community in a completely different and unique way."

Membership costs £39.99 and £49.99 which buys access for a year and as many swaps as desired. The service is available worldwide although for the first 12 months the main focus will be London, Paris, New York, Dublin, Barcelona, Rome....

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