

Vancouver to increase penalties against three luxury short-term rental operators

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Vancouver developer Onni has been penalized by the city for listing furnished apartments in a Yaletown building on sites like Booking.com, a practice that has been conducted since at least 2013. Gerry Kahrman / PNG

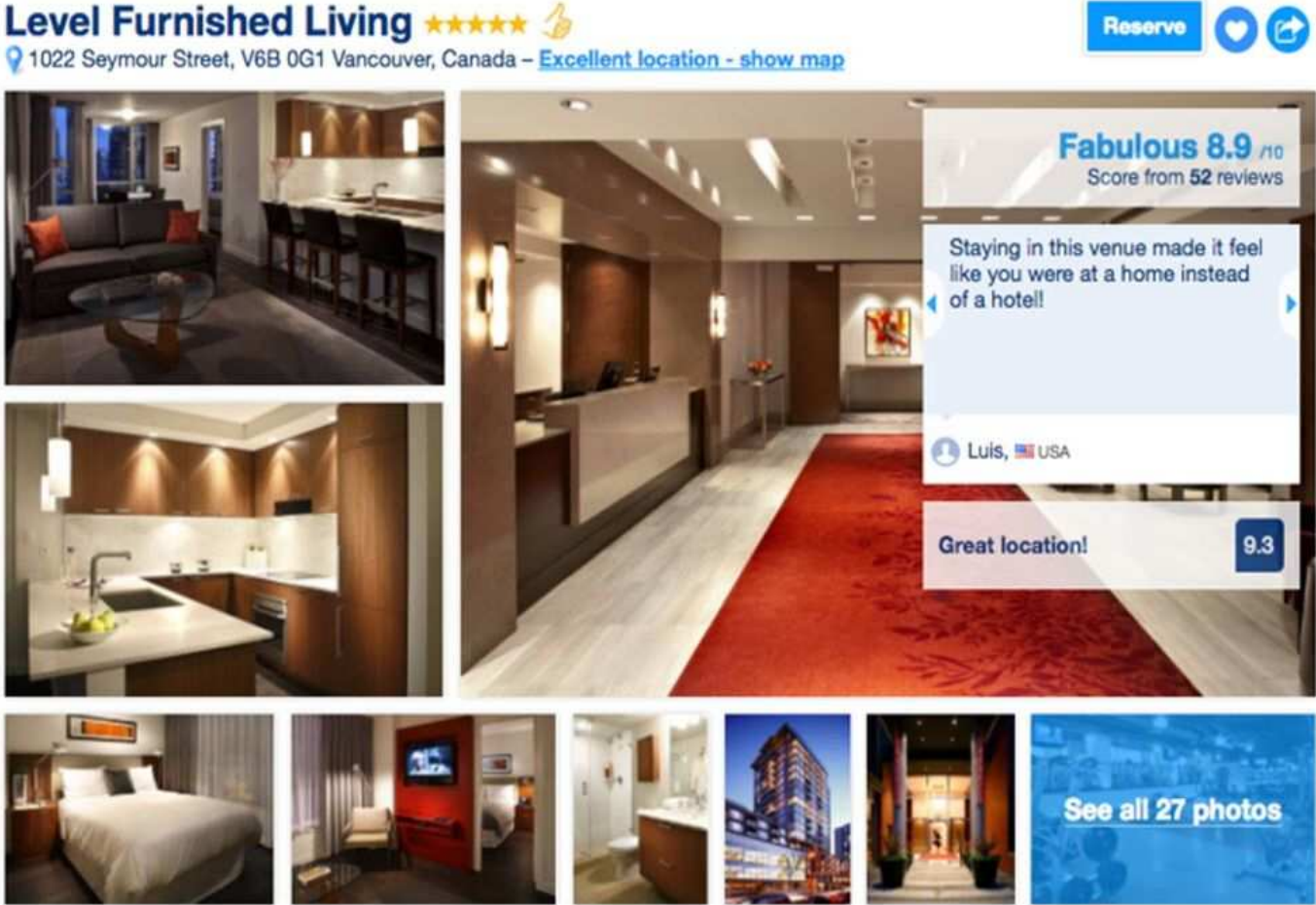
Vancouver is raising the penalties being levelled against three high-profile residential operators that have been illegally running short-term rentals.

In April, [CKNW reported](#) on Carmana Plaza and The Level, two luxury

properties in downtown Vancouver that had been advertising residential suites online for stays shorter than one month without a hotel or a bed-and-breakfast licence.

Residential rentals shorter than 30 days are illegal in Vancouver. Only those operating under a business licence for a hotel or bed and breakfast are allowed short-term rentals.

In response, the city vowed to investigate and had announced it would consider legal action against the properties. On Friday, the city announced “escalated enforcement” against three rental operators across four properties, with plans to take two of the operators to court.



Vancouver developer Onni has been penalized by the city for listing furnished apartments in a Yaletown building on sites like Booking.com, a practice that has been conducted since at least 2013. BOOKING.COM SCREEN CAPTURE / PNG

The Level, located at 1022 Seymour St., is operated by Onni Development, whose parent company RPMG Holdings donated to Mayor Gregor Robertson's Vision Vancouver party during the last election. According to a media release, Onni has agreed to immediately halt short-term rentals and has paid \$24,000 in fines. The fines relate to rental activity over the last six months. Six months is the statute of limitations for those types of offences.

Vancouver Extended Stay and Carmana Plaza are both subject to legal action launched by the city.

Vancouver Extended Stay is a property management company serving owners at 1288 West Georgia St. and 1200 Alberni St. That firm has also stopped all short-term rentals, but is still required to obtain business licences in order to comply with city orders.

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Carmana Plaza, at 1128 Alberni St., has been re-zoned and will be converting 96 of its suites for hotel use. Occupancy permits and a business licence are still needed and the process to obtain those two items has begun, but in the meantime, all short-term rentals at the property remain illegal.

“Carmana Plaza has agreed to stop accepting new short-term rental reservations, but the company is not willing to cancel existing future short-term rental reservations,” the city said in its statement. The building's website has been taken down and now reads “under construction.”

Short-term rentals, such as those found on Airbnb, have come under fire in recent years, particularly in Vancouver where such rentals eat into rental housing stock and housing prices are already sky-high.

“The city is working on a policy framework to legalize some short-term rentals, with the goal of enabling people who want to live and work in Vancouver to rent their principal residence in the short term, while also

putting measures in place to protect the long-term rental stock,” read Friday’s statement.

The city has maintained its efforts to crack down on short-term rentals are focused on commercial and large-scale operators, and short-term rentals that are unsafe. Vancouver has not yet set out a timeline as to when a formal policy and regulatory framework could be expected.

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