VACATION OWNERSHIP CONSULTANTS

RESEARCH & ADVISORY BRIEF

2026 TIMESHARE IMPACT REPORT

FOR FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS

Maintenance fee trends, owner demographics, timeshare inheritance exposure, and exit pathways every CPA, estate planner, financial advisor, and debt counselor should understand when a client's balance sheet includes a timeshare.

Prepared by Vacation Ownership Consultants (VOC)

Data compiled from the Ernst & Young LLP / ARDA “State of the Vacation Timeshare Industry: United States Study” series and VOC client case data.

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About This Report

This brief is published by Vacation Ownership Consultants (VOC), a timeshare exit consulting firm operating since 2014, as a resource for professionals whose clients own — or are considering how to handle — a timeshare interest. It is intended for CPAs, estate planners, financial advisors, and consumer debt or money-management practitioners who need a quick, sourced reference on where the vacation ownership industry stands today and how that affects client planning conversations.

Figures throughout are drawn primarily from the Ernst & Young LLP "State of the Vacation Timeshare Industry: United States Study," 2026 edition, covering 2025 performance data, prepared on behalf of the American Resort Development Association (ARDA) from a survey of 610 responding resorts (a 43% response rate against 1,434 identified U.S. timeshare resorts). Where noted, figures are supplemented with VOC's own client case data (anonymized) and third-party market research, clearly labeled as such. VOC is not a law firm, does not provide legal or tax advice, and is not affiliated with Ernst & Young or ARDA; all industry statistics are attributed to their original source and reported here as published, without independent verification by VOC.

A note on use: this report is intended as a general planning reference, not individualized financial, tax, or legal advice. Client-specific decisions should be reviewed against the client's actual contract and a qualified attorney or advisor.

Executive Summary

Vacation ownership remains a large, stable industry on paper — and an increasingly common source of unplanned liability on client balance sheets and estates. Four trends matter most for financial professionals advising owners:

- **Carrying costs are outpacing inflation.** The average billed maintenance fee rose from $1,090 in 2020 to $1,550 in 2025 — a 42% increase in five years — even as the underlying interval has no liquid resale market.
- **A meaningful share of the owner base holds legacy inventory.** 43% of resorts opened in 1985 or before, and these older, no-longer-selling properties are disproportionately where VOC sees long-tenured owners — often retirees — seeking a timeshare exit.
- **Timeshares are increasingly an estate-planning consideration.** 94% of resorts use a deeded or fee-simple structure, which can pass through probate and continue accruing fees after the owner's death, frequently surprising heirs.
- **Timeshare exit options exist but are structure-dependent and easy to get wrong.** Resale is rarely viable at scale for legacy inventory; "rescue" and upfront-fee resale schemes remain a common source of secondary financial loss for clients who try to solve this alone.

The sections below walk through the underlying data, then translate it into discussion points advisors can use directly with clients.

1. Industry Snapshot: 2025 at a Glance

The U.S. timeshare industry recorded $10.7 billion in sales volume in 2025 across roughly 1,434 identified resorts (188,700 units), per the EY/ARDA 2026 study. The topline numbers look healthy; the composition of those numbers is what matters for a client conversation.

Metric	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Yr Change
Avg. billed maintenance fee	$1,090	$1,120	$1,170	$1,260	$1,480	$1,550	+42%
Avg. transaction price	$17,460	$19,590	$23,940	$24,170	$23,160	$24,740	+42%

Metric	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-Yr Change
Industry-wide occupancy rate	49.2%	73.1%	77.6%	76.8%	80.0%	79.9%	+30.7 pts *
Industry-wide rental revenue	$1.3B	$2.2B	$2.7B	$3.0B	$3.2B	$3.3B	+154%
Total sales volume	$4.9B	$8.1B	$10.5B	$10.6B	$10.5B	$10.7B	+118% *

*Source: EY/ARDA, "State of the Vacation Timeshare Industry: United States Study," 2026 edition (2025 data); 2020 figure per the corresponding prior-year EY/ARDA edition. * 2020 occupancy and sales volume were depressed by COVID-19 travel disruption, so the 5-year change overstates organic growth; 2021–2025 is a more representative comparison period (occupancy 73.1% → 79.9%; sales volume $8.1B → $10.7B, +32%).*

Maintenance fees rose 42% from 2020 to 2025. Over the more representative 2021–2025 period, resort occupancy and rental revenue generally increased together: occupancy rose from 73.1% to 77.6% as rental revenue climbed from $2.2 billion to $2.7 billion in 2022; occupancy dipped slightly to 76.8% while rental revenue still rose to $3.0 billion in 2023; occupancy reached 80.0% as rental revenue increased to $3.2 billion in 2024; and occupancy remained essentially flat at 79.9% as rental revenue reached $3.3 billion in 2025. The relationship is not one-to-one, but the year-over-year pattern shows that growing rental activity has accompanied higher resort utilization. Resorts may rent association-owned inventory and intervals controlled after owner delinquency to the general public, allowing non-owners to stay without assuming the long-term obligations of ownership. That demand for short-term stays does not translate into comparable public demand for timeshare resale interests. At the same time, resort rules and governing documents may restrict an owner's ability to rent commercially or limit guest use to friends and family, reducing the owner's ability to offset annual costs on an interval no longer being used.

94% of resorts use deeded / fee-simple structures	**47%** of resorts are not in active-sales	**93%** of maintenance fee accounts were current in 2025	**43%** of resorts opened in 1985 or before

Source: EY/ARDA 2026 study.

2. Timeshare Maintenance Fee Trends

Timeshare maintenance fees are the primary recurring cost professionals should ask about when a timeshare shows up in a client's financials — they are contractually owed regardless of usage, typically due by January 1, and rarely negotiable.

Six-Year Fee Growth

Year	Avg. Billed Maintenance Fee	YoY Change
2020	$1,090	—
2021	$1,120	+3%
2022	$1,170	+4%
2023	$1,260	+8%
2024	$1,480	+17%
2025	$1,550	+5%

Source: EY/ARDA 2026 study (2021–2025); 2020 figure per the prior EY/ARDA edition. The 2026 study attributes the 2022–2024 increases to a delayed pass-through of inflation on operating costs, rising insurance costs tied to natural-disaster exposure, and shifts in the mix of resorts reporting fee data; it describes the 2025 increase as more moderate and more consistent with long-term historical norms.

2025 Average Fee by Unit Type

Unit Type	Average Annual Fee
Studio	$1,180
1-Bedroom	$1,260
2-Bedroom	$1,550
3-Bedroom or larger	$1,900

Source: EY/ARDA 2026 study.

Insurance costs and general operating expenses remain the factors most often cited by resorts as driving planned maintenance fee increases. Modeled at a conservative 6% annual compounding rate, a $1,550 fee in 2025 becomes roughly $2,776 by 2035 — before any special assessments. Special assessments are billed separately from routine maintenance fees to cover unplanned costs (storm damage, structural repairs, delinquency shortfalls) and are not optional; VOC case files show individual assessments ranging from roughly $970 to over $2,400 in a single year on top of the standing fee.

Points-based and higher-status memberships (Platinum, Chairman's Club, and similar tiers across major developers) generally carry proportionally larger fee obligations, in some cases exceeding $10,000 annually, since higher status is tied to owning more points rather than a lower effective rate.

As of year-end 2025, approximately 93% of billed maintenance fee accounts nationwide were current (30 days delinquent or less) — meaning roughly 1 in 14 accounts was in some stage of delinquency.

3. Resort Age & Owner Population

Methodology note: the EY/ARDA survey instrument asks resorts to report their owners' age distribution, but the published 2026 edition does not include aggregate results for that question, so no industry-wide owner-age breakdown is cited below. The points that follow are grounded in what the study does report — resort vintage and sales patterns — plus VOC's own client-base observations, which are clearly labeled as such.

- 43% of resorts opened in 1985 or before, and these older properties are disproportionately no longer in active-sales: 84% of not-in-active-sales resorts opened in 1985 or before, versus 26% of resorts still in active-sales.
- 85% of timeshare owners reside domestically (U.S.) and 15% reside internationally, per the study's survey of resort respondents.
- 39% of 2025 sales volume went to new owners, meaning the majority of sales volume (61%) came from existing owners upgrading, reloading, or purchasing additional intervals — a pattern consistent with an aging, long-tenured owner base continuing to transact with the same developer relationship rather than new entrants driving growth.
- In VOC's own client base (not an EY/ARDA figure), long-tenured owners at legacy, no-longer-selling resorts are disproportionately represented among those requesting exit consultations, and retirees and near-retirees describe fixed incomes and mobility changes colliding with fee obligations that don't adjust for either.

For advisors, this means the “legacy owner” profile — a client holding a deeded week at an older, not-in-active-sales resort — is common enough to warrant a standing checklist item in retirement and estate reviews, not a one-off exception.

4. Timeshare Inheritance & Estate Planning Exposure

Timeshares are frequently overlooked in estate planning until they become an active problem for heirs. The mechanics depend heavily on ownership structure:

Ownership Structure	Share of Resorts Using It	Estate Implication
Deeded / fee-simple real estate	94%	Considered a real property interest; may pass through probate and obligations can continue after death
Right-to-use contract (expires at a future date)	56%	Generally a contractual/license interest, not a real property interest; terms vary by contract and state
Interest in a trust	62%	Governed by trust documents; transfer and refusal mechanics vary by program
Other (e.g., condominium)	47%	Typically follows the legal treatment of the underlying property type; verify per contract

Source: EY/ARDA 2026 study, "Legal Structures of Products Sold" (percent of 395 responding resorts; resorts may offer more than one structure, so figures do not sum to 100%).

Key points for estate and CPA conversations:

- Deeded interests can become part of the probate estate and continue accruing timeshare maintenance fees and special assessments after the owner's death, regardless of whether the estate or heirs want the interval.
- Heirs are frequently unaware of the obligation until a bill or collection notice arrives, well after estate distribution decisions are underway.
- In many states, heirs can formally disclaim a timeshare inheritance — including a timeshare — but disclaimer rules are time-sensitive and can be forfeited by any act that could be read as accepting ownership (using the property, paying a fee, or even title paperwork). This makes early identification during estate planning, not after death, the more reliable path.
- Because deed history often changes hands through resort acquisitions and management-company consolidation (see Section 7), the entity heirs need to contact may not match the name on the original purchase paperwork.

Practical takeaway: a timeshare interest is worth flagging explicitly during any estate plan review, will drafting, or trust funding conversation — not folded silently into "other real property." Addressing it during the owner's lifetime consistently produces more options than addressing it after death.

5. Common Financial Mistakes Owners Make

- **Assuming resale is a viable timeshare exit.** Resale demand is minimal for most legacy inventory; many owners cannot give a deeded week away, let alone sell it, and upfront-fee resale listing services routinely collect payment without producing a buyer.
- **Paying "rescue" or "relief" companies upfront fees.** The industry's own materials describe a category of "rescue, relief, postcard-type" operators — often working high-pressure, in-person sales presentations — that collect a large upfront fee and deliver little or nothing in return.

- **Simply stopping payment without a legal timeshare exit.** Ceasing maintenance fee payments without formally and legally ending ownership does not end the obligation. Owners who stop paying without an exit in place have experienced credit damage, third-party collection activity, and legal action.
- **Treating a resort's own "owner update" or upgrade meeting as neutral advice.** A large share of existing-owner transactions originate from these meetings; owners frequently describe them as high-pressure sales sessions rather than the courtesy check-ins they were framed as.
- **Not identifying which legal structure applies.** Deeded, right-to-use, and trust/points interests each carry different rules for timeshare exit, credit exposure, and estate treatment — a generic "how to cancel a timeshare" approach frequently does not fit the client's actual contract.
- **Assuming a rental strategy will offset fees.** Case data comparing quoted rental income against actual maintenance fee obligations shows owners typically net a loss even when successfully renting, and many developers restrict or prohibit commercial rental listings outright.

6. Timeshare Exit Pathways: Overview

There is no single timeshare exit process that applies to every contract. The realistic options generally fall into the following categories, and the right fit depends on the ownership structure, the resort/developer, and whether the account is current.

Developer / Resort Deed-Back or Surrender Programs

Some developers offer a formal surrender or deed-back program allowing an owner to return a deeded interest, typically only available to owners in good standing and not offered uniformly across brands or resorts.

Negotiated Timeshare Exit

Direct negotiation with the resort, HOA, or management company — complicated by the fact that no single arrangement governs who an owner needs to reach. Per the EY/ARDA 2026 study, resort staff are employed by a management company at 48% of resorts, by the resort HOA(s) directly at 42%, by the resort developer at 5%, and by another entity at 6% (multiple responses allowed). Separately, the HOA/COA governing the resort is owner-controlled at 89% of resorts and developer-controlled at 11%. The counterparty an owner needs is not always the entity named on the original purchase paperwork, especially at older resorts that have changed management over time.

Attorney-Supported Timeshare Contract Termination

Attorney-supported timeshare contract termination can reduce owner stress and help prevent avoidable mistakes by providing legal representation while the ownership, contract, financial status, and personal circumstances are evaluated against the available timeshare exit practices. Representation gives the owner a layer of legal protection when navigating communications and negotiations with developers, lenders, HOAs, management companies, and other industry operators, with the goal of pursuing a documented contract-exit outcome aligned with the owner's objectives. Because the timeshare operates differently from conventional, highly regulated consumer-finance and real-estate processes, selecting reliable licensed timeshare attorneys or firms that retain them with more than a decade of direct experience dealing with timeshare developers and industry operators should be treated as a non-negotiable risk-management criterion.

Resale (Limited Applicability)

Viable only for a narrow set of high-demand properties or newer points products; not a realistic path for most legacy fixed-week inventory given the oversupply of sellers relative to buyers.

Across all pathways, the two variables that most affect timeline and outcome are (1) the specific legal structure of the ownership and (2) how far behind, if at all, the account is on fees. A resource unrelated to any specific interest — the deed itself — is what determines the mechanism available, which is why professionals fielding a client's "how do I get rid of this" question should ask for the actual purchase/ownership documents before recommending a path.

7. Developer & Resort Consolidation Trends

The EY/ARDA 2026 study identifies industry consolidation — a smaller number of large developers and management companies controlling a growing share of the resort inventory — as a defining structural trend, one the study itself notes has “begun to blur the distinction between resorts that are actively selling and those that are not.” The study also describes an “accelerated effort to sunset resorts that are older or no longer serving owners well,” which has reduced total resort and unit counts by about 9% since 2020.

- 47% of U.S. resorts are classified as “not in active-sales,” meaning the property relies on maintenance fees, rentals, and ancillary revenue rather than an active developer sales operation; 84% of these resorts opened in 1985 or before.
- Resort staff are employed by a management company at 48% of resorts, by the resort HOA(s) directly at 42%, by the resort developer at 5%, and by another entity at 6% — a distinction that matters for identifying the correct counterparty on a timeshare exit request, especially at older resorts that have changed hands.
- VOC's client intake (not an EY/ARDA figure) has seen an increase in owner reports of pressure to “voluntarily” surrender a legacy deed and convert into a newer points program, sometimes accompanied by messaging suggesting the existing week is losing value; this pattern is consistent with the study's observation that consolidation is blurring lines between active and legacy inventory.
- Aging physical infrastructure compounds the issue at legacy, not-in-active-sales resorts: the EY/ARDA 2026 study reports typical resort electronics last 6.6 years and interior paint 6.1 years before replacement is needed, versus 13.4 years for HVAC and 20.1 years for tile, cabinetry, and plumbing fixtures — a maintenance cycle that requires ongoing capital reinvestment many older, no-longer-selling resorts are slower to fund.

For advisors, consolidation activity is a practical reason client-provided contact information for a resort or management company may be outdated, and why current ownership/management verification is a useful first step before any timeshare exit, refinancing, or estate conversation.

8. Financing & Lender Interest Rate Considerations

Traditional mortgage financing generally does not apply to timeshare purchases; buyers typically use developer-provided purchase financing, personal loans, or credit cards. This matters for debt counselors and advisors reviewing a client's overall obligations:

- Developer financing on timeshare purchases commonly carries interest rates in the mid-teens to high-teens (roughly 15%–18% APR in market surveys), materially above conventional consumer credit products. According to VOC’s review of thousands of timeshare contracts, in addition to developer financing, down payments averaging approximately $4,000 are often charged to branded third-party credit cards; in some cases, the full purchase price is charged to third-party credit cards exceeding 20% APR.
- Because the underlying asset carries negligible resale value, these loans are effectively unsecured in economic substance even when structured with the interval as nominal collateral — a distinction worth flagging when a client is weighing payoff priority against other debt.
- Financing practices in the space remain an active area of regulatory attention; loan term structures and disclosure practices for timeshare purchase financing have drawn scrutiny from consumer-finance regulators.

Financing-rate figures reflect third-party market survey data rather than the EY/ARDA study, which does not report consumer loan APRs; treat as directional, not audited, figures.

For a debt-management or credit-counseling engagement, a timeshare loan balance at these rates typically warrants the same high-priority payoff or restructuring treatment as high-rate revolving debt — and, unlike most revolving debt, it comes attached to a recurring fee obligation that continues even after the loan itself is paid off.

9. Case Studies (Anonymized)

The following are drawn from VOC client files. Identifying details have been removed or generalized.

Case 1 — Cumulative Cost vs. Usage

An Idaho-based owner who purchased in 2009 had paid over $19,000 in cumulative timeshare maintenance fees by 2025 on a unit used four times — that equates to roughly $4,750 per visit at a 3-star property for a week's vacation, excluding the original purchase price.

Case 2 — Storm-Related Special Assessment

A retired couple owning at a Gulf Coast-area resort were billed a special assessment exceeding $2,000 the year after hurricane damage, on top of their standing annual maintenance fee — turning a years-long "maybe someday" timeshare exit decision into an immediate one.

Case 3 — Special Assessment Stacking

A Hawaii beachfront resort owner was billed a $2,400 special assessment (labeled only as a "hotel income supplemental assessment") on top of a $2,944 maintenance fee, for total mandatory 2025 payments of $5,344. A separate Las Vegas owner was billed a $969 structural-renovation assessment never mentioned at purchase, bringing total 2025 fee payments to roughly $3,411.

Case 4 — Rental Income vs. Fee Obligation

Comparing quoted rental payments against actual 2025 timeshare maintenance fees across three point-based ownerships: a 5,500-point interest with a $1,718.90 fee returned $440.00 in rental income (a $1,278.90 net loss); an 8,000-point interest with a $982.80 fee returned $332.00 (a $650.80 net loss); a 9,280-point interest with a $2,153.42 fee returned $1,020.80 (a $1,132.62 net loss). In each case, the "rent it to cover the fee" strategy fell well short.

10. Discussion Points for Client Conversations

When a timeshare surfaces in a client engagement — financial plan, estate plan, tax return, or debt review — the following questions help scope the issue quickly:

- What is the ownership structure — deeded/fee-simple, right-to-use, or trust/points interest? This determines which timeshare exit and estate mechanics apply.
- Is the account current on timeshare maintenance fees? Delinquency changes the available options and the urgency of addressing credit and legal exposure.
- Who currently manages the resort? Given consolidation trends, the operator may differ from both the original developer and the entity named on the original contract.
- Has the client factored the fee obligation into retirement income planning or estate liquidity needs? A $1,500–$2,000+ annual, escalating, non-optional expense is a real line item, not a rounding error.
- Is the interest disclosed and addressed in the current estate plan, or left implicit? Explicit treatment — including guidance to heirs on disclaimer options and deadlines — reduces surprises during administration.
- Has the client been approached about upgrading, converting, or "voluntarily" surrendering the interest? These conversations are worth reviewing before the client signs anything new.

VOC provides a no-cost eligibility review of ownership documents for professionals who want a second opinion on a specific client's contract and options, without obligation. Contact VOC at info@vacationownershipconsultants.com or 1-800-614-5288.

Sources & Methodology

- Ernst & Young LLP, "State of the Vacation Timeshare Industry: United States Study," 2026 edition (2025 data), prepared on behalf of the American Resort Development Association (ARDA).
- Vacation Ownership Consultants, LLC — anonymized client case files, 2025–2026.
- Third-party market survey data on timeshare purchase financing rates, cited as directional only.

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