

FREE REPORT · AUGUST 2026 EDITION

The STR AI Stack Report

The exact tools we run our rentals on, what they really cost in 2026, why each one earns its subscription — and the integration traps nobody publishes.

Autopilot for your rental — **you stay in charge**

thehandsoffhost.ai

The philosophy: fewest tools, most automation

Every "best STR tools" list on the internet is written by a vendor ranking itself first, and almost none of them print prices. This report is different in two ways: it's the stack **we actually run** on our own properties, and every price is real, current, and sourced from the vendors' own published 2026 pricing.

Our operating rule: **a tool joins the stack only when the platform can't already do the job**. Every extra subscription is another sync that can break, another login, another monthly fee. You'll see below that we recommend *fewer* tools than most lists — because the modern PMS has quietly absorbed half the categories vendors still sell separately.

The stack, layer by layer

LAYER	WHAT WE RUN	REAL 2026 COST	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE
The core: PMS + AI	Hospitable →	Host \$29/mo (1 property) · Professional \$59/mo (2) · Mogul \$99/mo (3, +\$30/each) · free Essentials tier exists	The center of everything: unified inbox across Airbnb/Vrbo/Booking, automated messaging, AI guest replies, cleaner task automation, smart-lock codes. The AI features cost nothing extra. Full AI Auto Reply (sends by itself) is Mogul-only — see the plan guide below.
Pricing	PriceLabs	\$19.99/listing/mo (or 1% of revenue option) · 30-day free trial, no card	Dynamic pricing that reacts to your market daily. Their new AI connector (July 2026) plugs into Claude — ask questions about your market in plain English, push price changes from chat.
The AI agent	Claude (paid plan) + Hospitable MCP	~\$20/mo · MCP included on all Hospitable plans except Essentials	The 2026 frontier: connect the AI to your account and it reads reservations, drafts guest replies, creates cleaning tasks, posts review responses — you approve everything. Ten-minute setup; this is what our Kit's Playbook document teaches.
Cleaning & turnovers	Hospitable's built-in task rules	\$0 (included) · team payments 1.5%/clean, capped at \$5 (US)	Auto-creates a cleaning task per checkout, auto-assigns your cleaner, sends them reminders in 29 languages, generates door codes valid only during the task window. Most hosts pay a separate tool for exactly this. Don't.
Smart locks	Any well-supported keypad lock	~\$150–300 one-time per door	Codes are generated per-guest and per-cleaner automatically. Well-supported brands: Schlage Encode, Yale, August, Kwikset Halo, any TTLock-compatible. See the traps section before buying.
Noise monitoring	Minut	Sensor one-time + \$15/mo/property for the Pro tier	Catches parties and smoking before neighbors (or fines) do. Important: only Minut's Pro tier syncs with your PMS — the cheap tier doesn't, and that sync is the point.

Guest guidebook	Hospitable's guest portal + a well-built Knowledge Hub	\$0 (included)	The AI answers most "where's the / how do I" questions directly in chat when your Knowledge Hub is complete — which quietly replaces the \$15/mo guidebook apps for most hosts.
Accounting	QuickBooks Online	~\$38/mo (Simple Start, list price)	Clean books from day one: connect the bank account your payouts land in, categorize monthly, and your tax season becomes an export instead of an excavation. Ask your CPA about lodging-tax filing for your locale.

What a real setup costs per month

Worked example for a **3-property host running the full stack** (the configuration that gets you true AI Auto Reply):

ITEM	MONTHLY
Hospitable Mogul (3 properties included, all AI features)	\$99
PriceLabs (3 listings × \$19.99)	\$60
Claude paid plan (the AI agent)	\$20
Minut Pro (3 properties × \$15)	\$45
QuickBooks Online Simple Start	\$38
Cleaning automation, guidebook, smart-lock codes, guest portal	\$0 — included in Hospitable

FULL STACK, 3 PROPERTIES, EVERYTHING AUTOMATED

≈ \$262/mo

For scale: a property manager charging 20% on a portfolio grossing \$150K/year costs **\$2,500 a month**. The stack above is about a tenth of that — and starting out, you can run a single property on Hospitable Host + PriceLabs for **about \$50/month** and add the rest as you grow.

The honest question: do you need Breezeway (or any separate ops tool)?

Our verdict after running both: most self-managing hosts under ~10 properties no longer need a separate operations platform. Breezeway is excellent software — deep cleaning checklists, property inspections, its own guest messaging — and it starts around \$19/property/month. But since Hospitable shipped task rules, auto-assignment, AI-generated cleaning checklists, the cleaner Tasks App, and operations door codes, the jobs most hosts bought Breezeway for are now included in the PMS they already pay for.

Where a dedicated ops tool still earns its fee: you manage **for other owners** and need inspection reports and owner-facing quality documentation; you run **10+ units with multiple staff** and need work-order depth; or your cleaning operation bills complex extras. If that's not you, simplify. Fewer tools, fewer syncs, more margin.

The traps nobody publishes

These are the mistakes that burn real money, collected from vendor documentation and our own scar tissue:

- **RemoteLock doesn't work with new Hospitable accounts.** The integration is closed to accounts connected after March 2024. Buy from the supported list instead.
- **Schlage Arrive is explicitly unsupported** for hosting integrations — easy to confuse with the fully-supported Schlage Encode at the hardware store.
- **Minut's cheap tier doesn't connect to your PMS.** PMS sync — the thing that makes alerts automatic per-reservation — requires the Pro tier (~\$15/mo).
- **Hospitable's Knowledge Hub does not auto-update.** It reads your property details once, at generation. Change the Wi-Fi? Change it in the Knowledge Hub too, or the AI confidently tells guests the old password.
- **Question-rule timing is global.** Change "send instantly" on one question topic and it changes for all of them.
- **AI Auto Reply is Mogul-only.** The \$29 and \$59 plans get AI *drafts* and the Knowledge Hub, but replies that send themselves need the \$99 plan. Budget accordingly — or start with drafts and upgrade when trust is earned.
- **If you're on a Hospitable Legacy plan, leaving it is permanent.** Upgrade, cancel, or even a failed payment ends Legacy pricing forever. Decide deliberately.
- **Check your Airbnb fee structure.** Many software-connected hosts now use Airbnb's host-only service-fee structure, typically around 15.5%, instead of the older split-fee model — exact fees vary by host, listing and location, so verify the rate in your own account. If yours changed and you haven't repriced, your margin quietly shrank.

Which Hospitable plan do you actually need?

YOU ARE...	GET	WHY
Brand new, testing the waters	Essentials (free) then 14-day full trial	Unified inbox + basic scheduled messages + Knowledge Hub at \$0. The trial runs everything unlocked — use it to test Auto Reply before paying.
1–2 properties, want automation now	Host, \$29/mo	Full messaging rules, question auto-answers, AI drafts, MCP agent access. The AI drafts + you press send — 80% of the win.
Ready for hands-off + smart locks + direct booking	Professional, \$59/mo	Adds native smart-lock codes and a direct booking site.
Want true autopilot (AI sends by itself)	Mogul, \$99/mo	AI Auto Reply, Copilot analytics, owner statements. The full hands-off configuration our Kit documents.

Want the setup itself, not just the shopping list? The **AI Operations Kit (\$97)** is the exact configuration — the fill-in Knowledge Hub template, the Auto Reply settings step by step, the escalation safety rules, the AI-agent playbook, and six paste-ready guest messages. Or have us build your property’s AI brain for you: the **Guest Brain Build, \$249**, done in 48 hours. Both at **thehandsoffhost.ai**. Starting fresh? [Create your Hospitable account here](#) — our referral link gets you 25% off for 3 months.

Pricing verified against vendor-published rates, August 2026; prices change — check current rates before buying. Disclosure: some tools here pay us referral commissions if you sign up through links on our site (Hospitable, PriceLabs, and others); this never changes what we recommend — this stack is what we run on our own properties, and we tell you when NOT to buy a tool, which no commission encourages. Educational material, not financial, legal, or tax advice. The Hands-Off Host is independent and not affiliated with any vendor named. © 2026 Frost Consulting LLC.