

THE CASA DA ROSA GAZETTEER  
A PERSONAL GUIDE TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE ALGARVE  
WITH CASA DA ROSA AS YOUR BASE

by  
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### **Welcome to the Algarve, southern Portugal**

The Algarve is the wonderful coastal area at the southern end of Portugal, an idyllic holiday destination. The 160km of coastline offers many sandy beaches, wild cliffs and hidden bays. The region offers almost perfect weather suitable for the beach, which lasts from April through to October; and pleasantly warm winters which are ideal for touring, sightseeing and enjoying a wide range of activities to suit all ages and interests be it sports, family activities, discovering cuisine or exploring historical sites. Each of the Algarve towns has its own unique attractions, and all provide great value and excellent tourist facilities. Inland areas invite discovery of traditional Portugal, with destinations such as Monchique, a market town up in the *Serra de Monchique*, a thickly wooded mountain range separating the Algarve from Alentejo where the journey offers spectacular views being quite different in character from coastal Algarve; and São Bartolomeu de Messines which is a

typical inland Algarve town set in a valley to the north east of Silves. São Bartolomeu de Messines is a village rich in remains of the past, where you can find Megalithic monuments that date from 4000 BC; and its church to be found in the older part of Messines (Igreja Matriz), originating from 16th century. Visitors to the Algarve everywhere are guaranteed a welcome by the locals.

Casa da Rosa is a superbly appointed holiday property located in the pretty village of Fontes da Matosa just ten minutes from the resort of Armação de Pêra. The main house has two bedrooms, one double with en suite and one family bedroom that can sleep up to four people with a separate bathroom. There is also a large lounge diner and separate kitchen area that leads to an adjoining sun terrace with splendid views over the pool and gardens. A further two bedrooms are situated in a self-contained annexe with kitchen, lounge and wet room. Both have air-conditioning, central heating and SKY / satellite TV. Below there is a basement/garage that houses a utility room with washing machine and dryer, etc. Outside is an 11m x 5m heated pool with separate shower, a Jacuzzi and large well tended gardens.

Armação de Pêra is situated centrally on the coast between Lagos and Faro and so is perfectly placed for a restful beach holiday, or for wider exploration of the Algarve regions coastline, towns, countryside and the many entertainment and adventure destinations to be discovered.

Situated in the Algarve area of Portugal and only one mile from one of the regions latest golf experiences, Amendoeira Golf Resort boasts 2 superb golf courses and other top class sporting amenities. The historic town of Silves, with its thriving markets is only 10 minutes away and the lovely town of Monchique nestled in the mountains is less than an hour away with beautiful scenic views. 10 minutes drive in the other direction is the charming coastal town of Armação de Pêra with its bars, restaurants and long sandy beaches. Also nearby is the port of Portimao with its renowned fish restaurants and marina where numerous boat trips are available. For the children there is the Aqualand Water Park situated only 3 minutes from the Villa and also Zoo Marine an experience not to be missed. The Algarve Shopping Mall in only 15 minutes away by car. Restaurants serving locally sourced produce are within 5 minutes of the villa.

## **SHOPPING LOCALLY**

Local Services & Businesses:

- (1) **The Algarve Shopping Centre, Guia.** – (Lanka Parque Comercial e Industrial do Algarve Lote R, Fracção 3 Tavagueira Guia, 8200 - 417 Albufeira, Portugal)  
[http://www.algarveshopping.pt/index.php?lng=\\_EN](http://www.algarveshopping.pt/index.php?lng=_EN), only 15mins back down the N125 towards Faro. Basically it's your deluxe out of town complex with everything in one place including a large hypermarket (Continente) with its great fish section!
- (2) **Pingo Doce (dos), Armação de Pêra (AdP)** – Good cheaper local grocery supermarket, where the locals shop! Left out of gate, go left onto N125 through Alcantarilha, turn right at next main roundabout and follow road into AdP (3km) As you hit town (tower blocks) go straight over two roundabouts and at third turn right up hill and shop is on the left. You'll find it, most do! Otherwise there is an Aldi on N125 roundabout at Alcantarilha and an Intermarche

at the junction to Senhora da Rocha (go through Porches on way to AdP or the beach!).

(3) **Portimao/Other town market days** -

<http://algarve.angloinfo.com/information/lifestyle/local-markets/> For a true taste of Portuguese shopping, try the regular market days. Exploring is good for the soul, good luck!

(4) **Chemists etc.** – Up to 10 are located in **AdeP** and most open till 22.00hrs in the summer. English papers can also be bought in town. You'll find a blue booklet in the house, "Blue Pages Portugal" with more useful information.

## EATING OUT

You will certainly never starve in this area. If fish is your preference, there are many good ones in Armação de Pêra. Why not walk the front and side streets to experience the feel first. Here are some others to try too. You can always look on the web of course...

[http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurants-g652080-Porches\\_Faro\\_District\\_Algarve.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurants-g652080-Porches_Faro_District_Algarve.html)

1. Villa Italia: Nice friendly Italian. Armacao de Pera. Good food. Poss best to book. From main Porches roundabout off N125, head for Armacao de Pera, and look for petrol station on left/Intermarche on right, turn right for Senhora da Rocha, next main turn left and will see sign for it first right. Tel +351 282 317 077.
2. Casa de Pasta Ze Leiteiro: Great fish restaurant, all you can eat! Rua Portas do Mar 19, Armacao de Pera 8365-119. Tel +351 282 314 551. Near end of town by fisherman's beach.
3. Restaurante A Grelha: Rua Alentejo 2, Armacao de Pera 8365-123, Tel +351 282 312 245. Up the back street off seafront but worth a visit. Food is v.good. Service friendly if a little slow. [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g189113-d2617878-Reviews-Restaurante\\_A\\_Grelha-Armacao\\_de\\_Pera\\_Faro\\_District\\_Algarve.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189113-d2617878-Reviews-Restaurante_A_Grelha-Armacao_de_Pera_Faro_District_Algarve.html)
4. O Leao de Porches : Rated, if a little expensive. <http://www.oleaodeporches.amawebs.com/>. [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g652080-d2161541-Reviews-O\\_Leao\\_de\\_Porches-Porches\\_Faro\\_District\\_Algarve.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g652080-d2161541-Reviews-O_Leao_de_Porches-Porches_Faro_District_Algarve.html)
5. Restaurante O Cantinho: Largo da Igreja, n09, Alcantarilha 8365-012, Portugal. Tel +351 282 313 205. A great family run traditional restaurant near the old Chapel of Bones. My friends favourite. [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g580250-d1879098-Reviews-Restaurante\\_O\\_Cantinho-Alcantarilha\\_Faro\\_District\\_Algarve.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g580250-d1879098-Reviews-Restaurante_O_Cantinho-Alcantarilha_Faro_District_Algarve.html)
6. Rocha da Palha:– A great beach-based bar and restaurant! Good. Bit further up fisherman's beach and actually ON IT! Tel +351 282 315 596. [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant\\_Review-g189113-d2417499-Reviews-Rocha\\_da\\_Palha-Armacao\\_de\\_Pera\\_Faro\\_District\\_Algarve.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189113-d2417499-Reviews-Rocha_da_Palha-Armacao_de_Pera_Faro_District_Algarve.html)

7. Cafe Ingles Restaurant . Cafe – Bistro with a difference.  
<http://www.cafeingles.com.pt/en.html>. If you're in Silves, you will see it right by the castle!  
Give it a try. Rua do Castelo, Nº 11, Silves, 8300 – 144. Tel +351 282 442 585.

Amendoeira Golf Resort. Morgado da Lamaeira, 8365-302, Alcantarilha Algarve, Portugal. Tel. +351 282 320 671. And for a full English? - Why not try the Golf Club! Just round the corner from Fontes da Matosa. Well priced and lovely surroundings. Open to the public for drinks too, oh, and golf!  
<http://www.oceanicodirect.com/amendoeira-golf-resort.html>

## **SPORT and RECREATION**

### **Tennis**

If you fancy a game of tennis whilst on your Algarve holiday, or perhaps want to hone your skills and take some lessons while you're here, then take a look at the Algarve Tennis clubs and centres directory, to find a facility near you.

If you're just after a knock around, then don't forget that many resorts and complexes have their own tennis courts and equipment available to hire.

<http://www.your-perfect-algarve-holiday.com/algarve-tennis-clubs.html>

### **Mountain biking**

The mountain bike adventure centre is situated in Lagos, in the southwest corner of the Algarve, Portugal. The Algarve is an ideal location for mountain biking with 1000m extinct volcanoes 30kms away, vast natural parks on the west coast and endless dirt roads and single track surrounding Lagos.

<http://www.themountainbikeadventure.com/>

### **Cycling**

Coastal route from Carvoeiro to Alvor via Ferragudo and Portimao (51 km. / 32 miles).

Alvor is very pretty - especially at night, and Ferragudo is also a nice town. There are plenty of places to stop. In Portimao it is possible to follow a cycle lane along the river parallel to the road. It is too hard to describe an exact route, but it is easy to follow a map including these places.

Carvoeiro to Silves to San Bartolomeu de Messines to Armação de Pêra and coast route back (74 km. / 46 miles).

Silves is a pretty town indeed with plenty to see (serious cobbled streets though). The setting, castle, cathedral, central square etc are all wonderful to see. The village of Benagil is very pretty but with a very steep descent and climb out.

<http://www.carvoeiro.com/info/cycling>

### **Swimming an Snorkelling**

Portugal has some of the most beautiful secluded beaches in Europe, particularly in the Algarve region where secluded coves have been carved into the magnificent honey-coloured cliffs along the coast. Here is a selection of secluded beaches that offer holidaymakers the perfect escape from the bustling resort towns:

#### **Praia da Marinha, Lagoa**

This attractive cove is located on the Atlantic coast of Portugal, near the city of Lagoa. The sandy beach is surrounded by honey coloured cliffs that are common in the Algarve area. The arches that have formed in the rocky outcrops only add to the beauty of the beach. It's no surprise that this gorgeous beach has been used in numerous international advertising campaigns. To access Praia da Marinha you need to climb down a steep set of stairs. At high tide there is just a narrow strip of sand, but at low tide you can also access the adjacent coves. You can also take boat trips from the beach to explore nearby grottos.

#### **Praia da Dona Ana, Lagos**

Dona Ana beach is a stunning beach that is surrounded by towering cliffs and striking rock formations. The sandy beach is just a 20 minute walk from the Lagos town centre, and can be accessed by a footpath and steep flight of stairs that lead down the side of the cliff. There is a bar nearby that sells drinks and snacks. Dona Ana is perfect for sunbathing, swimming, or snorkeling around the rocks, although it can get crowded so it's best to avoid coming here on the weekends or busy summer months.

#### **Praia do Beliche, Vila do Bispo**

Beliche beach is nestled between cliffs on the most westerly tip of Portugal, near the town of Sagres. This golden sandy beach attracts a variety of visitors. There is a flat, shallow area which is popular with families with small children, and those who want to swim and snorkel. Praia do Beliche also has some interesting caves that provide some shelter from the sun. Away from the sheltered sandy bay, the swells are big enough to provide some good waves for surfers. There is also a section of the beach where swimwear is optional, so if you'd prefer not to take your kids to a nudist beach, Beliche may not be the best option. Reaching the beach is fairly easy, although it does require walking down a long flight of stairs. There is plenty of parking nearby and there is also a small restaurant right on the beach.

#### **Praia do Carvalho, Lagoa**

The municipality of Lagoa is one of the best places in Portugal to find secluded beaches. Praia do Carvalho is an Algarve beach that offers an escape from the busy seaside resorts in the region. The sandy cove is surrounded by rugged cliffs which act as a windbreak, making the calm waters ideal for swimming. To access the beach there is a steep flight of stairs that has been cut into the side of the cliff, which takes you through a tunnel that is cut through the rocks. The beach is practically deserted in the low season, and even in the busier summer months it is much quieter than most Algarve beaches.

### **Praia da Senhora da Rocha, Lagoa**

The Algarve beach of Senhora da Rocha is set back between tall cliffs. The cliffs provide protection from the wind, which means the water here is calm and ideal for swimming. You can also take boat excursions from here to explore the grottos in the area. On the rocky outcrop that lies to the west, you'll find the enchanting Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Rocha. It's worth a visit, even if just for the stunning views. The beach itself has excellent facilities including parking nearby, restaurants, as well as rental companies for water sports enthusiasts. The beach even has wheelchair access. It can get very crowded during the summer months and the weekends, but the rest of the year it's a great option for anybody staying in an Algarve holiday rental such as Casa da Rosa.

### **Carvoeiro Beach, Lagoa**

In the centre of the town of Carvoeiro, nestled between craggy cliffs, you'll find Carvoeiro Beach (also known as the towns "main beach"). It's a firm favourite with locals and tourists during the summer months, so if you want to avoid crowds it's best to go in spring or autumn when the beach is much quieter. It's well-equipped with toilets, showers as well as a snack hut, bars and restaurants. Jet skis and pedalos are available for hire, and there are a couple of diving schools based in Carvoeiro. It's also one of the few Algarve beaches that is wheelchair accessible. The calm waters of the sheltered beach, as well as the easy access, make it a favourite with young families who want to avoid the dangers of taking a steep flight of stairs to reach the beach.

### **Praia do Paraiso, Lagoa**

A little bit further along from the main beach at Carvoeiro, is a quiet little cove known as Praia do Paraiso. This beautiful, secluded beach can only be reached by climbing down a long flight of stairs that snakes its way down the cliffs that surround the beach. The rich-coloured cliffs and deep blue-green water make this beach a haven of tranquillity. Although there is a small parking area at the beach, there are no other facilities. To reach Praia do Paraiso, drive up the hill on the western side of Praia do Carvoeiro, following the road to the right, where you'll find the car park near "Restaurante O Boteco".

### **Fishing**

<http://www.portugal-sport-and-adventure.com/fishing-portugal.html>

### **Hiking**

<http://www.carvoeiro.com/pdf/TrailsInThe%20Algarve.pdf>

### **Golf**

Amendoeira Golf Resort opened in 2009 is a natural paradise near the ancient Algarve capital of Silves, a region steeped in history and just 1 mile from the Casa da Rosa Villa. Set in an area of outstanding beauty with the glorious backdrop of the Monchique Mountains the resort has two championship golf courses, Oceanico Faldo and Oceanico O'Connor. Sensitively integrated into the landscape the 2 golf courses have been designed as a perfect compliment to it, including unique features reflecting the history and culture of the area. There is also a Golf Academy boasting superb practice facilities at which individual or group tuition can be pre booked. The Amendoeira Golf Resort promises a fascinating golfing experience, perfectly attuned to this superb natural environment.

The Amendoeira sports club also caters for football, rugby, crown and flat green bowling, tennis and cricket.

#### **Links to find other activities in the Algarve**

<http://www.simplylagos.com/activities.htm>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/portugal/the-algarve/activities>

<http://www.mydestination.com/algarve/things-to-do/21099>

<http://www.portugal-sport-and-adventure.com/guide-to-the-algarve.html>

There are of course many other sites to explore for your specific interests.

#### **ATTRACTIONS**

##### **Water Parks, Theme Parks and Zoos**

[www.aquashowpark.com](http://www.aquashowpark.com) is near Quarteira and Vilamoura. A bus between Quarteira and Loulé stops outside. The theme park is open all year and they have an ice rink for winter.

[www.aqualand.pt](http://www.aqualand.pt) is near Alcantarilha, about 7km/ 4 miles from Albufeira and 2km/1.5 miles from Armação de Pera

[www.slidesplash.com](http://www.slidesplash.com) is just outside Lagoa and not far from Portimão and Praia da Rocha. It's about 13 miles / 20km from Albufeira.

[www.zoomarine.pt](http://www.zoomarine.pt) is just outside Guia, close to Albufeira (4 miles / 7km) and Armação de Pera. This location has a bus stop nearby with six to eight buses a day from Albufeira, Armação de Pera, Lagoa and Portimão. They do run their own buses from all the major tourist areas which are more convenient for most. These buses must be pre-booked.

Zoomarine has rides and a marine wildlife centre and for 2014 will be open 1st April to end October.

[www.krazyworld.com](http://www.krazyworld.com) is a small zoo and playpark about 4km north of Algoz. Open daily April to September, limited opening at other times. Closed mid-December to mid-January. Check website for dates and times.

Lagos Zoo is just outside the village of Barão São João, a few miles from Lagos. It is open all year round. A local bus from Lagos stops outside.

Sandworld is an exhibition of sand sculptures located near the village of Pera, a few miles from Albufeira. This is open from mid-April to mid-October. It is not accessible by bus.

Parque Aventura, located in the Santa Eulália area of Albufeira, offers an assault course for children of 4 and upwards, which consists of moving from tree to tree through a series of challenging physical games and trails, at varied heights, and they can also enjoy a game of Paintball, in a total area of 2500m<sup>2</sup>

The assault course encourages participants to develop their own sense of responsibility as they move through the games under the watchful supervision, encouragement and guidance of qualified personnel, and participants feel a sense of achievement having successfully completed the challenges adapted to their own level of capability. Routes differ in height according to the level of difficulty (vertical nets; cobweb; monkey's bridge; Tyrolean of 90m) thus encouraging the participants to push themselves both physically and mentally.

This may or may not be for your kids but if it is, the Parque contact tel no is (+351) 913 185 782 and you can e-mail them at [info@lusoaventura.com](mailto:info@lusoaventura.com)

Albufeira has a new indoor karting centre located in the underground car park at the marina. Information about hours and prices is not known at the time of writing.

### **Country Riding Centre, Silves**

Martina Frähsdorf, who along with partner Steve Michell owns and runs the Country Riding Centre, is also a fully Portuguese-qualified instructor specialising in children's training. The centre prides itself on being thoroughly family-orientated and throughout the year organises several events for all family members.

During the summer, children can take part in stable days, which involves a whole day packed with activities and a ride suitable to the child's level of experience. Activities include team games, playing in the pool and riding area and stable management skills. Lunch, snacks and drinks are also included at a total cost of €20 per child.

For youngsters who want more action, the centre is also hosting three day Country Riding Camps, with sleepovers in tents, meals, horse riding and activities, which include swimming with the horses at the Silves dam (barragem) for more experienced riders. Confident riders can also book morning hacks at the centre, which includes a one hour and 40 minute ride to the dam followed by a picnic lunch, then riding the horse bare back into the lake for a swim.

Saturdays at the riding centre are largely dedicated to children, with small group lessons in the mornings and Pony Club in the afternoons. At Pony Club kids get up close and personal with the horses, learning more about the gentle giants. This includes playing horse-football and cushion polo plus gymkhanas, dressage, some mucking out and tack cleaning. Lessons can be taught fluently in a number of languages, including English, Dutch, German, and Portuguese.

[http://www.countryridingcentre.com/Winery\\_tours](http://www.countryridingcentre.com/Winery_tours)

### **Forests**

The original tree cover of the Algarve Region probably consisted of Canary Oak and Lusitanian Oak, the latter being a semi-deciduous species. Cork Oak, one of the great features of the countryside in the Algarve, and which continues to provide an income from producing cork stoppers for wine bottles, was probably a later arrival.

These ancient trees have all but disappeared from the landscape, although remnants can still be found on a few north-facing slopes in the hills. They have largely been replaced by fast-growing Eucalyptus plantations for the production of wood pulp.

The tough coastal conditions in the Algarve make life very difficult for trees, and so the most common tree species on cliff tops and immediately inland from the beaches tends to be the Stone, or Umbrella, Pine (*Pinus Pinea*) which copes very well with the arid and windswept cliff and coastal conditions. It is also a favourite species on golf courses because it is attractive as well as being tough and drought-tolerant. Stone Pine is also cultivated inland in massive plantations for its wonderful crop of pine kernels which are so popular in modern cuisine and baking. However as these plantations are vigorously managed and undergrowth kept to a minimum, they tend not to be good places for seeing native plants and flowers.

In early spring no visitor can miss the Acacia (*Mimosa*) trees which line many roads in the Algarve. Their bright yellow flowers and heady scent provide quite an assault on the senses where they are particularly numerous. The species that provides us with Gum Arabic, still used in the production of confectionary and glues today, is Acacia Senegal. The countryside is also dotted with Almond trees, and their beautiful flowers appear in January and February. On old and abandoned farmland, the Almond trees are frequently interspersed with ancient Olive trees. Olive culture probably began in the Mediterranean Region some 7,000 years ago, and remarkably, some trees are so old that they (or parts of them) may quite literally have been around for up to 2,000 years. Olive production is still an important part of the Algarve economy today.

Mixed Cork Oak and Pine woodlands have the greatest wildlife diversity. The best type of woodland for the wildlife enthusiast is undoubtedly one of mixed oak and pine, and there are still some good examples of this type of habitat dotted around the Algarve. If the oaks are Cork Oak, the woodland may be managed from time to time when the trees are being stripped of their valuable bark, but the ground is not treated with the herbicides and pesticides which are the scourge of so much of our landscape in northern Europe, and so many native plants are able to survive the management routine and continue to thrive there.

There are some excellent examples of this type of wildlife-rich woodland up towards and around the Monchique area, and also out towards the western Algarve between Vila do Bispo and Odeceixe. It is normally quite easy to access these areas, and unless land is fenced off or clearly being cultivated, it is usually perfectly acceptable to wander through the woods and you are unlikely to be challenged.

In April and May the woodlands are alive with the sound of Cuckoos, and numerous woodpeckers hammer away at the tree trunks in search of the bugs that live there. Other woodland birds include tits, including the Crested Tit, Azure-winged Magpies (which are increasing greatly in number in the Algarve) and warblers. In summer Nightingales can be heard in the woods too.

### **Historical Sites and Museums on the Algarve**

Explore the history of the Algarve, through a wealth of forts, Roman ruins and castles of the Moorish empire. Travel around and discover striking buildings and palaces throughout the Algarve.

### **Tavira Castle**

The ruins of this former Moorish stronghold were rebuilt after the Christian conquest of the Algarve in the 13th century. Its towers provide beautiful panoramic views of Tavira and the surrounding countryside while the delightful garden inside, with its shaded benches, provides a welcome retreat on a hot day.

### **Museu Municipal de Faro (Faro Municipal Museum)**

Housed in the Convento de Nossa Senhora da Assunção (our Lady of the Assumption Convent). Located in Vila-Adentro, this 16th century convent is now home to the Faro Municipal Museum. Partially destroyed by the English in 1536, it continues to be one of the finest examples of early Renaissance architecture in the Algarve. The museum contains Roman and Medieval archaeological findings as well as numerous art collections.

### **Roman Ruins Vilamoura**

For avid historians there is a preserved Roman Site and Museum providing an insight to the area's past. Vilamoura was originally a Roman fishing town, the ruins include baths in which the mariners used to bathe.

### **Faro Roman Walls**

The city has both Arab and Roman ruins but most of the present attractive older buildings were constructed after the disastrous earthquake of both 1755 and 1532. The Moors who occupied the town in the 8th Century Particularly attractive is the old part of the city surrounded still by the Roman walls which date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> Century. Inside a spacious open square that was once the site of the Roman Forum is a 13th Century Cathedral that faces the 18th Century Episcopal palace.

### **Faro Palace**

The "Palácio do Visconde de Estói" was built at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century . This beautiful Rococo building, originally used as a pleasure seat, has been under reconstruction for several years and now serves as a Pousada, opened in 2009.

### **Roman Ruins Faro**

ESTOI is 11 km (7 miles) from Faro, and the site of several Roman ruins dating from the first or second century AD. There are thermal baths, columns, mosaics depicting sea life, and a well-preserved villa dating from the 2nd century. Some other finds are now housed in Faro's Archaeological Museum. Overlooking the site are also the remains of a temple, which was later converted into a Christian basilica in the 3rd century, making it one of the world's oldest churches. The Ruins are amongst the most important remains of the Roman presence in the Algarve and now form an imposing archaeological site, which has been classified as a national monument.

What is to be found there today is the remains of a luxurious rural villa, transformed into a prosperous farm in the 3rd century, although it abandoned its pagan status in the 6th century in order to be put to the service of the Christian church, having also been used as an Islamic cemetery later on. In the 10th century, the site was abandoned when the vaulted ceilings collapsed, and it did not regain any life until the beginning of the 16th century, when a house was built on the ruins,

representing at that time a unique and precious example of civil architecture in the Algarve with its cylindrical buttresses.

Its important historical heritage has been recovered and today the Casa Rural das Ruínas (the Country House of the Ruins) has been transformed into a visitors' centre, allowing us to have a real idea of how the Romans spent their days, during the period when they chose the Algarve as a place to both live and rest.

The ruins have been uncovered and they now present to us the remains of a manor house, farm buildings, a wine press, baths and a temple, a centre for private worship dedicated to the theme of the various water-based activities, which was built in the 4th century to satisfy the pleasures of the Romans. In addition to this, two mausoleums can be seen and a peristyle with 22 columns, alongside an open courtyard, with a garden and the respective water tank. One particularity of the villa is that all the buildings used for housing purposes display clear signs of deliberate embellishment with marbles and mosaics in a variety of patterns.

Also worth seeing in Estoi is the Estoi Palace, just off the main square. Built in the 18th century, it is one of the few buildings to escape the 1755 earthquake.

### **Muralhas, Lagos Town Walls**

Originally of Carthaginian or Roman origin, the ramparts were extended by the Arabs and then again in the 14th and 16th centuries to accommodate the town's growth. The walls offer beautiful panoramic views of the surrounding hills and the bay of Lagos.

Many monuments were destroyed by the earthquake and tsunami of 1755. But it still preserves some rebuilt walls from the 16th century, a governor's castle from the 17th, and the site of what is believed to have been the first black slave market in Europe (the Mercado de Escravos, opened in 1444).

### **Lagos Museum**

The modest regional museum of Lagos is located next to the church of St. Anthony. It houses an eclectic collection of archaeological finds from the prehistory (ammonites, dinosaur teeth) and the Neolithic (axe heads, pottery shards). The mishmash continues with an assembly of minerals, Roman mosaics and Moorish oil lamps and pottery.

The ethnographic section deals with scenes from the past and has some very old weapons and artefacts from Mozambique. There is also an assorted display of old European weapons such as swords, muskets and cannonballs. You can also see the charter by which King Manuel conferred some privileges to Lagos.

Probably the most valuable items are the sacerdotal vestments worn during the last Holly Mass attended by King Sebastião, before leaving on his ill-fated conquest of Morocco. There is also a diptych dating from the 16th century with scenes from the Annunciation and Presentation of Jesus at the Temple.

### **Silves Castle**

One of the Algarve's great landmark features, Silves Castle dates back to Moorish times, but may have been built on Roman fortifications. Its formidable red sandstone battlements and massive polygonal towers enclose a vast compound.

### **Castro Marim**

The enormous frontier castle overlooks the border between Spain and Portugal. Built in the 13th century, the castle was the first headquarters of the Order of Christ. Henry the Navigator was a frequent visitor.

### **Aljezur**

Dominating the landscape around Aljezur are the ruins of the town's 10th-century castle. Perched on a hillock with fabulous views of the coast and Serra de Monchique, this Moorish stronghold controlled an ancient river port and provided a vital link with the open sea. Its broad, overgrown courtyard hides remnants of a vaulted cistern and is surrounded by high ramparts reinforced by two towers, one round, the other square.

### **Fortaleza de Sagres**

The fortress is steeped in history and myth. Huge walls and bastions date from 1793: little, if anything, remains of Henry the Navigator's original fortress. Whether or not there was an academy of navigation founded here remains a matter of debate and legend. An 18th-century sundial fashioned into the wall is aligned with the famous wind compass

### **Caves**

The Algarve coastline is famous for its amazing rock formations and caves. Benagil Cave is a real gem of the whole Algarve coast. It is located 150 meters to the east of the small beach of Benagil on the village of Benagil. The sea cave has two magnificent entrances, a huge collapsed roof, a secluded beach of sand and a circular inner grotto. You can visit the cave by commercial tours, kayaking trip or by swimming (in this case, a calm sea is required).

### **Churches**

There are so many churches to see, and the ornate and rich decoration defies description.

### **Sé Catedral (Cathedral)**

Situated in the historic Vila-Adentro area of the city, Faro Cathedral was built on the site of a 13th century church and a former Moorish mosque. Ravaged by the English attack of the 16th century and the 18th century earthquake, it was rebuilt at the end of the 18th century and is therefore a blend of architectural styles. The first floor tower and two of its chapels are all that remain of the original church. From its vantage point, you can enjoy the sight of the many storks' nests adorning the roofs of surrounding buildings.

### **Igreja de Santa Maria do Castelo (Church of Saint Mary of the Castle)**

Allegedly built on the site of a former mosque, in Portimao this 13th century church was partially rebuilt after the devastation wrought by the 1755 earthquake and features various architectural

styles. Gothic elements include the porch and ogival window while other distinguishing features are its 17th and 18th century tiles and several beautifully carved altarpieces. It also houses the tombs of seven knights of the Order of Sant'Iago and claims to house the tomb of the Grand Master of the Order, Dom Paio Peres Correia.

### **St. Anthony**

Famous Lagos 'golden church' of St. Anthony which was rebuilt in 1769 entrance to this church is through the museum at the side and both the museum and the church are well worth visiting. Igreja de Santo António / St Anthonys Church - Its plain façade with the dissimilar bell towers, dating from 1715, and contrasts sharply with the extravaganza of the beautiful and richly decorated interior. Its blue-and-white azulejos tiles (18th century) and gilded, intricate wooden carvings (talha dourada), among the most beautiful in the country, fill every inch of the walls of the nave, together with the six Baroque paintings by Mestre José Joaquim Rasquinho, representing the miracles of St. Anthony. The wooden vault was painted with a trompe-l'oeil effect, leading one to believe it is much higher.

The polychrome statues of cherubs playing with animals and fishes are a delight to the eye. This church of St. Anthony of Lisbon was one of the few building to survive quasi-intact the Great Earthquake of 1755. There was some reconstruction by the commander of Lagos Infantry Regiment. That is probably why the polychrome statue of St. Anthony on the altar wears a military sash. It was also in this church that King Sebastião reputedly attended his last mass before his ill-fated expedition to Morocco. Marina

## **LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

### **Bird watching**

The Algarve's coastline boasts an array of wetlands that are of international significance, either for their birdlife or for their important plant communities. Many different habitats occur - both salt and freshwater types that provide the suitable niches for a large variety of waterbirds. The conservation of these sites, for the refuge and replenishment of migratory species, both winter visitors and passage migrants is paramount. Most species of west European waders occur in large numbers, especially during spring and autumn migration when the Algarve's wetlands become vital refuelling grounds for these birds arriving from or leaving to African wintering areas. Breeding species are not lacking either, with many of the Mediterranean specialities being well represented. Furthermore, many of the sites boast peripheral habitats, like scrubland or woodland that add further interest for the birdwatcher. Visits are rewarding throughout the seasons and contact should be made with at least some of the more bird-diverse sites when staying in the area.

### **Walking**

Walking holidays in the Algarve are becoming increasingly popular. Stunning natural scenery, a great variety of flora and fauna and a relatively untouched landscape a stone's throw from popular resorts are also important factors. Rising from the coastline, the scenery changes from blue to green. Undulating hills, speckled with tiny cottages, colourful wild flowers and majestic cork trees spread before you like a fresh green blanket, enticing you to walk, ramble, picnic and explore.

Moving inland from the coast, the road soon begins to rise, winding its way through the town of Monchique itself, before reaching Fóia, the highest point in the Algarve, standing at 902m above sea level. The views from Fóia are totally stunning. On a clear day you can see the towns of Lagos, Portimão, Albufeira, and even as far as Vilamoura on the southern coast. To the west you have the Costa Vicentina natural park and to the north you can see the broad plains of the Alentejo, the Algarve's neighbouring province. It's easy to see why so many people choose to spend their holidays in the Algarve; the beautiful scenery is hard to beat.

In decades past, the countryside surrounding Monchique was more densely populated, with many small farms worked by family groups. As in so many rural communities, urban attractions enticed younger people to try their luck on the coast, leading them to abandon their traditional homes and farm work. We passed several small stone cottages, looking very picturesque, if a little sad, amid fields of poppies, with views across stone terraced fields sweeping down to the coast.

You can choose to follow more or less demanding routes depending on your experience and fitness. There are local guides available who can not only show you wonderful routes, but give you a detailed and intimate snapshot of this under-appreciated area. Even if you're not a regular walker, just a country stroll through the hills will enrich your stay in the Algarve.

### **Scenic drives**

At the Fortaleza de Sagres, drive 5km (3 miles) to the promontory of Cabo de São Vicente. It was from this cape that Vasco de Gama launched his caravels to discover the world. You can spend 2 hours or so exploring the cape and its dramatic ocean scenery with wind-tossed waves. (One good way to discover the cape is by biking.) If time remains in the day, you can take in some beach action. Our favorite is Mareta, but countless other beaches dot the peninsula around Sagres.

### **Lagos & Portimão**

From Sagres drive 34km (21 miles) east to reach the ancient port city of Lagos. Historically a port of call for the sailors of Admiral Nelson's fleet, Lagos can be visited in 2 hours. In the town itself, its single major attraction is Igreja de Santo António, dating from the 18th century and containing remarkable baroque gilt carvings. Allow 30 minutes for a visit. Spend another hour or so wandering the streets of the old town, poking into courtyards and ducking into shops looking for handicrafts. The Old Customs House, Antigo Mercado de Escravos, was the site of the arcaded slave market, the largest in Portugal. Before leaving the area, drive 2km (1 1/4 miles) to Ponta da Piedade, one of the most beautiful spots of the western Algarve. Enjoy a lunch in Lagos at Os Arcos Marisqueira, then continue east toward the bustling fishing port of Portimão, lying 18km (11 miles) to the east of Lagos. Frugal travelers can seek affordable lodgings in Portimão itself, and others can stay at one of the surrounding beach resorts such as Praia da Rocha, which has the most options. You can explore Portimão itself or visit Praia da Rocha's beach, 3km (1 3/4 miles) from the center of Portimão. If you'd rather play golf, you'll find some good courses here. In the Portimão area, one possible excursion is to the mountain range of Monchique. After a morning of driving through the mountains, have lunch at the Estalagem Abrigo de Montanha.

Lying inland, Silves is reached after an 18km (11-mile) drive to the northeast of Portimão. Its chief attractions are the red-sandstone Castelo dos Mouros and the 13th-century Cathedral of Silves. Because Silves was the capital of the Moorish kings and is an ancient site.

The cliffside town and old fishing village of Albufeira. Resembling a village in North Africa, Albufeira is at the center of one of the great beachside tourist developments in all of Portugal.

From Faro, the best road-trip possibilities include a stopover in the old market town of Loulé, lying 15km (9 1/3 miles) north of Faro and in the heart of the Algarve's chimney district. Fret-cut plaster towers rise from many of this town's cottages and houses. These are our favourite chimneys in all of Europe, and you can purchase miniatures of them as souvenirs. The town also features two worthy attractions, the Igreja de São Clemente, Matriz de Loulé and the ruins of its old Moorish castelo.

Drive to São Brás de Alportel, 20km (13 miles) north of Faro -- it's one of the most beautiful spots in the Algarve. There you can dine in the rustic dining room of the Pousada de São Brás. En route back to Faro, stop off in the little town of Estói where you can explore the grounds of the baroque Palácio do Visconde de Estói. The drive back to Faro is 8km (5 miles) to the south, heading toward the coast.

Again from Faro, drive 85km (53 miles) east to the border town of Vila Real, adjoining the Spanish frontier. En route here, you can make two stopovers -- first, at Olhão, a distance of 10km (6 miles) east of Faro. Beloved by painters, this is the famous cubist town of the Algarve, so called because its homes are stacked like white blocks one upon the other. You can easily spend 2 hours wandering its ancient streets, which are very evocative of North Africa. Continue east toward Tavira, a distance of 31km (19 miles) east of Faro. On the banks of the Ségua and Gilão rivers, you can spend another 1 1/2 hours wandering the streets of this town. Because of its many canals, the town is likened to Venice, but that, of course, is a gross exaggeration. You can see a seven-arched Roman bridge and many arches, as well as flamboyant chimney decorations. Wander also to the fruit and vegetable market along the river esplanade. Drive on to Vila Real de Santo António for the night, a distance of 23km (14 miles). You can explore the streets of the town, good examples of 18th-century town planning. Then try to visit either the Museu de Manuel Cabanas or the castle-fortress of Castro Marim. If you have time, you can head southwest of Vila Real to check out the beaches of Monte Gordo, lying 4km (2 1/2 miles) to the southwest of Vila Real at the mouth of the Guadiana River.

## **Outlet shopping**

### **FARO**

Second biggest centre in the Algarve ( 45,000 sq.m. ), built in 2002.

Over 200 shops, spread over two levels. Half of them in the open air and half under cover.

Plenty of Cafes and Restaurants.

A huge hypermarket ( Jumbo ). A couple of points... when you enter Jumbo, supermarket attendants will normally ask to seal the bags from other shops with Jumbo logo'd sticky tape to combat shoplifting. Don't be upset as it is pretty much standard practice at many large stores in Portugal.

Also Jumbo is one place you are guaranteed to find that elusive baby formula (dry or ready made up).

A family entertainment centre. Well suited for children.

Baby facilities in every cafe and restaurant.

A Multiplex ( 9 screens ) Cinema - Tel: ( +351 ) 289 887 210.

You can get more information on the Forum Algarve by calling the customer service desk, ( English Speaking )

OPEN :The shops are open every day between 09:30 and 23:00 and in the summer months and leading up to Christmas they are open until Midnight.

TEL :( +351 ) 289 889 300.

WHERE :Located in Faro itself. On the EN125, head in the general direction of the airport and then follow the shopping signs into Faro.

WEB : FORUMALGARVE.NET

## **PORTIMÃO**

Aqua Portimao

Covering a total floor area of 47,250 m<sup>2</sup> spread over three levels (making it the biggest in the Algarve) , Aqua Portimão features a shopping gallery of 35,500 m<sup>2</sup>, attached to a Jumbo hypermarket and offering 117 stores, nine mid-sized units and 21 restaurants. All the facilities you would expect, Post Office, ATM, Baby facilities, etc.. It also includes a three-level underground parking area with 1,800 spaces.

HOURS :

CENTER -Sunday to Thursday 09.00 - 23.00

Friday, Saturday & Holiday Eve 09.00 - 0.00

July, August and December 10.00 - 0.00

PHARMACY

SUPERMARKET -Sunday to Thursday - 09.00 - 23.00

Friday, Saturday & Holiday Eve 10.00 - 0.00

July, August and December 10.00 - 0.00

ADDRESS :Rua de São Pedro, nº 72, 8500 Portimão

WHERE :From A2, A22 or N125 head toward Portimao centre, take the exit ( Cardosas ) right next to the tunnel - at the roundabout follow signs Aqua Portimao.

TEL :(+351) 282 413 536.

FAX :(+351) 282 483 551.

## **GUIA**

A busy large mall with a large selection of stores ( 100+ shops ).  
A comfortable multiplex cinema.  
A hypermarket.  
Several cafes and restaurants on the top floor.  
A large sun terrace.  
Free pushchairs and pedal cars.  
There is a crèche on the first floor for 2+ year olds ( €5.00 per hour ).

## **OPEN**

CENTRE :09:00 to 00.00.

SHOPS :10:00 and 22:00.

ADDRESS :Algarve Shopping, Lanka Parque Comercial e Industrial do Algarve. Lote R, Fracção 3  
Tavagueira Guia. 8200 – 417 Albufeira Portugal

WHERE :Guia, on the EN125 just outside of Albufeira.

TEL :(+351) 289 105 500

FAX :(+351) 289 105 514

WEB : AQUAPORTIMAO.PT

## **THE ALGARVE, A NOTE ON ITS HISTORY**

Between 700BC & 1086 the Algarve had been invaded by Celtic settlers, Romans, barbarian tribes from central Europe, Visigoths, Muslim Berbers & Arabs, known collectively as Moors and Almoravides of North Africa. It was only after King Afonso III of Portugal re-conquered the Algarve, or “al-Gharb” as it was coined by the Moors, that the Moorish rule ended and sovereignty was claimed by King João I after defending Portugal against a Castilian army.

One of King João’s sons, Prince Henry ‘the Navigator’ is famous for becoming the governor of the Algarve in 1418 and for his School of Navigation in Sagres, which delivered improvements in offshore navigation and led to the redesigning of the caravel to enable long ocean journeys. This period of sea voyage became known as the Portuguese Discoveries and the explorations led to the ‘discovery’ of Madeira, the Azores, Cape Verde, and West Africa as far as Sierra Leone.

Fortaleza de Sagres in western AlgarveHistory was again re-written in 1580 when King Philip II of Spain claimed the Portuguese throne and united the two kingdoms. The association with the Spanish led to attacks on the Algarve from Sir Francis Drake in 1587, during which the Prince Henry’s School of Navigation in Sagres was destroyed.

Portuguese retaliation against the Spanish rule in the 1600s restored Portuguese independence in 1640. This, however, was not the end of the troubles for Portugal or the Algarve. In 1755 Portugal was hit by an earthquake – Lisbon was destroyed along with much of the Algarve and Alentejo.

France then invaded under Napoleon, but was forced to withdraw when British troops helped out in the Peninsula War between 1808 & 1811. Although then stable from external attacks, internal

conflicts in Portugal led to the assassination of King Carlos I and King Manuel II was forced to abdicate in 1910 during the Republican Revolution, which ultimately brought an end to the monarchy.

April 1974 was another important historic milestone for Portugal, when a group of radical army officers carried out a bloodless coup, known as the 'Carnation Revolution' because the soldiers carried flowers in their rifle barrels. The revolution ended 50 years of dictatorship and initiated a democratic constitution which led to victory for the Socialists with the government being led by Prime Minister Mário Soares. April 25th is now one of the major holidays in Portugal to remember 'Freedom Day'.

In 1986 Portugal joined the European Union (EU) and Mário Soares became the first civilian President of Portugal. Soares held on to the presidency for 10 years, before retiring in 1996. Today the President of Portugal is Aníbal Cavaco Silva. Silva was the centre-right Prime Minister from 1985 to 1995, before winning the presidential poll in January 2006. He is the first centre-right President since the coup of 1974. Pedro Passos Coelho (of the Social Democratic Party) is the Prime Minister of Portugal today.

Silves Castle - the biggest in the Algarve! Although this is a rather brief glimpse of Portugal and Algarve history, we hope that it serves to intrigue you so you come and visit the Algarve to find out more about the history for yourself. The great thing about Algarve history is that there are still so many reminders present today: much of Lagos is still enclosed in the old town walls, there are impressive forts still guarding Sagres, Castro Marim and Lagos for example and the largest castle in the Algarve is to be found at Silves.

The importance of Henry the Navigator has been remembered over the years through the erection of statues, and his name is often incorporated into street names, and business names. For example in Praça Infante Dom Henrique, Lagos, there is a large bronze statue of him holding his sextant and gazing out to sea.

## **TOWNS AROUND THE AREA LOCAL TO CASA da ROSA**

### **Armação de Pêra**

A popular tourist attraction with fine beaches and a good selection of hotels, cafés and restaurants, Armação de Pêra is on a broad bay that stretches from Pont da Galé all the way to Senhora da Rocha.

Like many other coastal towns in the Algarve region, the area has a rich fishing history and is popular amongst travellers for its location - near to many of the Algarve's hotspots.

For those looking for a relaxing break, Vila Vita Parc is considered one of the most prestigious spa resorts in Europe.

The nearby rural village of Pêra remains as a reminder of the un-spoilt typical sleepy Algarve. With Silves, Algoz, Albufeira and Porches (famous for its pottery) all nearby, Armação de Pêra is a great place to explore on its own, and perfect as a base from which to discover the beautiful surrounding areas.

## **Albufeira**

As the 'Tourist Capital' of Portugal, Albufeira is a favourite destination for many, because of its wide variety of attractions, including the great nightlife, the stunning beaches, the exhilarating water sports, golf courses, glorious landscape and of course, the wonderful local cuisine.

The '**Old Town**' is a lovely place to stroll around, either in the morning when it's quiet, or in the evening when it truly comes to life. There are dozens of pavement cafes to be found on its cobbled paths, where you can watch the street musicians and buskers, with a huge choice of restaurants and shops which cater for all tastes and budgets.

Another popular area, better known by tourists as '**The Strip**' - promises a lively night out with a great atmosphere, and is also a great place to shop for souvenirs by day. The Strip stretches from Montechoro Hotel heading straight down towards Oura Beach in the south - yet another jewel in the crown of the city...

With more than 3000 hours of sunshine per year, its colourful landscape and the friendly charm of it's people, it is little wonder that many people flock to the area to enjoy a long weekend, or indeed, a lifetime!

## **Lagos**

Lagos is a unique little jewel in the Algarve. It has chosen to develop its tourism with taste and class.

It offers a balance of the charm and history of Portuguese culture with a blend of creature comforts, and facilities to please the desires of the most discerning tourist. Lagos Marina makes for a great place to while away the hours, as does a saunter through the quaint pebbled streets nearby, brimming with boutiques, coffee shops, restaurants and gelaterias, all fitting seamlessly within the older and more historic nature of the town. The 'Golden Church' of St. Anthony is so called for good reason, and well worth a visit!

There is a daily market near to the town centre, offering fresh fish, seafood, bread, vegetables, preserves and dried fruit, and also a very popular food market every Saturday - one of the cheapest in the Algarve!

The warmth of Lagos (and indeed, her people) make it difficult to resist falling in love with this seaside resort.

## **Portimão**

Portimão is the biggest town in the western Algarve and sits on the bank of the Arade river facing Ferragudo on the opposite bank. Portimão's atlantic beach of Praia da Rocha has, over the years, become a resort in it's own right with lots of hotels and apartments, restaurants and bars, discos and clubs and shops.

Portimão is a mix of late 19th, early 20th century buildings in the older part of the town, and high rise apartment blocks in various pastel shades of blue, pink and coral around it. The town centre is simply perfect for those who love to shop! It is jam packed full of shops, offering a wide choice of clothes, gifts, souvenirs, electrical goods and general household items. You'll see brands you see at home, such as Mango for the ladies and plenty of traditional shops selling bargain leather goods, such as handbags and belts.

'Manuel Bivar' gardens in Portimão There are also plenty of bars, restaurants and café's where you can sit for a bite to eat or a drink and watch the town carry on around you. To see the more relaxed

side of Portimão, wander down to the river front, where the 'Manuel Bivar' gardens are, and have an ice-cream or a coffee at one of the cafe's along the front. You will also find Portimão's famous fish restaurants at the end of the waterfront near the bridge - just follow the aroma of sardines barbecuing!

The roads in and around Portimão are quite confusing and congested, especially if you end up in the narrow back streets where everyone parks on both sides of the road. There is plenty of car parking around the town, and there is a particularly large free car park on the waterfront which is very easy to find if you approach from Portimão marina end and follow the river. There is also a large underground paying carpark in the centre of Portimão (just follow the signs for 'centro' and you can't miss it!).

The Portimão shopping scene has got better and better and it is probably one of the best towns for shopping in the Algarve with retail parks and shopping malls galore! Coming into Portimão from the west is a large Intermarché supermarket, which opened in 2009. A short distance down the road is Portimão retail park with amongst others a large Worten (electrical goods), Casa (everything for the home), Page 1 (fashion), C&A (clothes), Brinca (toyshop) and a supermarket. Nearby is the newest of the shopping malls, Aqua Portimão, with a large Jumbo supermarket and a really good selection of shops including H&M and Primark which are proving very popular! There are 2 floors of shops and a top floor with various restaurants and fast food outlets.

Jet-skiing on the river in Portimão On the main dual carriageway around the town heading towards Praia da Rocha is a large Continente supermarket on the left hand side. Although not obvious from the outside there are also lots of other shops in the mall (shoes, clothes, accessories, electrical, sports goods etc) as well as a small food hall and cinema.

As well as shopping, there are also Portimão Events throughout the year to be enjoyed, like powerboat racing or jet-skiing on the river, fantastic fireworks and live music to celebrate the New Year, and various exhibitions and sports events at the Expo-Arade centre. The most popular place for events in Portimão has become the Autodromo do Algarve, the motor racing circuit for which Portimão (and the western Algarve) is now famous for!

Portimão Marina Portimão Marina you simply have to see with your own eyes, because you'll never have seen colours like it! Only a place in the Algarve could carry off ochre and terracotta! The marina is at the eastern end of Praia da Rocha at the entrance to the river and includes the Tivoli Arade and Nikki beach resort. There are shops as well as a selection of restaurants and bars to occupy your time!

There is an abundance of hotels and other accommodation both at Praia da Rocha and on the roads leading to it - all of which is within walking distance of the town centre. The area just to the west of Praia da Rocha, Praia do Vau, also has plenty of mostly low rise accommodation around the beach and still accessible to the town.

Take a trip up the Arade river to Silves from the river front in Portimão There are plenty of things to do in Portimão whatever your age - there are boat trips for fishing, trips to the caves, dolphin watching trips or a trip up the Arade river to Silves from the river front. There are several golf courses nearby and at Portimão municipal aerodrome near Alvor various pursuits like parachuting for the more adventurous! Lagos zoo is just a short distance away to the west and Zoomarine at Guia is just a short distance to the east - both great family days out - or for those that prefer to keep cool, then Slide and Splash Water Park at Lagoa is nearby as well.

### **Silves**

The origin of this town traces back to around 1.000 BC, and it was already a well established place in Roman times. Silves was also the ancient Moorish capital of the Algarve, and still today it is filled with

many interesting things to do and see. The town itself is an enchanting and quaint place filled with citrus trees and perched right on the banks of the Arade River ("Rio Arade").

Silves is a beautiful place to relax and take it easy, and is not far from the new shopping centre in Portimão for a 'spree', if needed.

The earthquake of 1755 sadly destroyed most of the original town and its historic buildings, but the remains of the Moorish castle are still impressive, and the huge underground water reservoir is still used by the city today.

The best known monument is 'Castelo de Silves', which is now the best preserved castle in the entire Algarve.

### **Vilamoura**

For those who like extravagance, a trip to Vilamoura is a must! The marina is the main centre of activity with a huge range of restaurants, bars and shops. During the day, although it can get quite busy, it is usually a very peaceful area to stroll around. It gets more lively at night, with everyone coming to eat and sample the bars, but overall it is still a very laid back and plush resort.

The 1,000-berth marina, set in 2,000 hectares of land, attracts the wealthy, also yachtsmen, golfers, and celebrities. Surrounding Vilamoura there's something for everyone to enjoy - from boat trips to specially designed trails for walking and cycling, and restaurants and bars to suit all tastes and budgets.

Against the backdrop of trees and wildlife and contemporary sculptures is the fabulous 27-hole Vila Sol golf course. This course has twice played host to the Portuguese Open and has also won prestigious awards and certificates.

Nearby Quarteira is within walking distance - with a gypsy market every Wednesday, a lovely beach and long open promenade, it is little wonder that this area is favoured by Portuguese tourists year after year...

### **PORTUGUESE - A NOTE ON LANGUAGE**

Portuguese is a part of the Ibero-Romance group that evolved from several dialects of colloquial Latin in the medieval Kingdom of Galicia. With approximately 210 to 215 million native speakers and 260 million total speakers. Portuguese is usually listed as the sixth most spoken language in the world, the third most spoken European language and the major language of the Southern Hemisphere. It is also the most spoken language in South America and the second most spoken in Latin America, after Spanish, as well as an official language of the European Union and Mercosul.

Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes once called Portuguese "the sweet and gracious language" and Spanish playwright Lope de Vega referred to it as "sweet", while the Brazilian writer Olavo Bilac poetically described it as "a última flor do Lácio, inculta e bela" (the last flower of Latium, rustic and beautiful). Portuguese is also termed "the language of Camões", after one of the greatest literary figures in the Portuguese language, Luís Vaz de Camões.

In March 2006, the Museum of the Portuguese Language, the first language museum in the world, an interactive museum about the Portuguese language, was founded in São Paulo, Brazil, the city with the greatest number of Portuguese language speakers in the world.

## TRAVEL

If not arriving with your own transport it is ideal to hire a car for the duration of your stay.

### From Faro Airport to Fontes da Matosa

When leaving the airport, follow the N125 road out of Faro heading north towards the A22. After approximately 1.5km look out for a blue sign for **Lisboa – Portimao - Louille A22** and follow that turn. Keep on for approximately 5km, pass the sign for Espaniah but take the next turn for **Lisboa – Portimao – Albuferia** which will take you on to the A22 heading west. Remain on the A22 until junction 7 for **Armação de Pêra**. When leaving the A22, take the second turn towards **Lagoa**, you will pass **Aqualand** after 200m. Take the next right turn to **Fontes da Matosa** and follow the lane for approximately 2km (passing under the A22) until you see a further sign to turn right for **Fontes da Matosa** after which you will find **Casa da Rosa**, the first house on the right. You have arrived!

An alternative is to follow the **N125** towards **Lagoa**, and having passed through **Alcantarilha** you will shortly pass over a roundabout (as above if you had exited from the A22), (and then you will see **Aqualand** on your right), then from the N125 take the next right turn to **Fontes da Matosa** and follow the lane for approximately 2km (passing under the A22) until you see a further sign to turn right for **Fontes da Matosa** after which you will find **Casa da Rosa**, the first house on the right.

We hope that this Gazetteer helps you to choose Casa da Rosa as your preferred holiday choice. In that event we have a further information guide for our guests with detail of local services and all that you need to know about the facilities in the villa. The link to receive this will be sent to you on a confirmed booking.

This gazetteer is for your information and to enhance your stay at Casa da Rosa. Content has been gathered from numerous sources freely available on the internet, all copyright of the original material belongs to the originators and is acknowledged. All activities are undertaken at visitors own risk, Casa da Rosa owners may not be held responsible for any loss or injury arising from participation, use or visits described in this gazetteer.

Paul Andrews can be contacted on 0044 7901 716333. If no answer, try close local friend Colin on 00351 919 845877. The Casa da Rosa address is on all pages of this guide.