



## Newsletter 2015 06 – Portugal’s Unique New Hotels

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As it was mentioned in worldwide media, last year Portugal had its best year for tourism growth. If we look specifically at the US market, the number of American visitors was the highest in 40 years.

So, to keep you in the loop, here’s what’s new:

Lisbon is no longer the only region in the spotlight. In previous newsletters, we have highlighted cool cultural and historic traits of every Portuguese region. Being one of the oldest countries in Europe, Portugal is about as real as it gets. Portugal has done well with American and other visitors, for three key reasons:

Affordable luxury – Our hotels offer amazing service and facilities for much less than other destinations in Europe;

Authenticity – most of our hotels, inns and resorts are locally owned, and have a real Portuguese flavor;

Uniqueness: from Fado music, to Manueline architecture, to the famous Nata pastry.

In addition, the Portuguese government, along with private investors, sees growth in this sector. The government has made key investments in infrastructure, offering fast rail links to the Algarve region and shaving off 30 minutes on train trips from Lisbon to Portugal’s Alentejo museum-city of Évora (also classified as a World Heritage Site). Just last week, the government announced it had spent over 80 million dollars on monument renovation all over the country. Lisbon’s International Airport has a whole new wing and a new subway station that connects the airport to the city center in 30 minutes. Porto’s airport is consistently rated one of the best in Europe.

Recently, a new Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report for 2015 ranks Portugal at the 15th most competitive tourist economy in the world. But it also ranks Portugal as one of the top 10 for tourist infrastructure, and in the top 20 for natural and cultural resources. The report puts Portugal at 14th for international openness, and in the top 10 for safety and security. Lastly, it says that Portugal is the most affordable destination in Western Europe for travelers.

Numbers consistently tell us that Portugal is an emerging destination, but what about the hotels?

In the last 10 years, the number of hotels in the country grew by 87%. And most of those hotels are 4 or 5-star. In 2015 alone, as the Portuguese economy is expected to grow at the highest rate since 2010, more than 50 new hotels are expected to open according to the 2015 Portugal Hotel Atlas by Deloitte:

21 in Lisbon;

11 in Porto & Norte;

10 in the Centro region;

4 in the Alentejo;

2 in the Algarve;

4 in Madeira;

1 in the Azores.

In the Douro region, the new Six Senses Douro Valley is the Asian chain's first foray into Europe. Set high on a hill, 65 miles from Porto, this 19th century renovated manor house has been revamped into a luxury resort amid surrounding landscapes of Portugal's most famous wine region. In September, the Hotel Vista Alegre will open in the Portuguese Centro, in an 18th century palace, adjacent to the famous Vista Alegre porcelain factory, which has been operating since 1824. This new wing actually extends the palace to the waterline, which will give the 83 rooms breathtaking views of the Aveiro Lagoon. In Lisbon, the new Pousada is about to open on the new riverfront promenade, and all eyes are set on this new Pestana Group investment. In a renovated historic building, the first Pousada of Lisbon will offer 90 rooms many with river view, a spa, a swimming pool and a restaurant with traditional Portuguese food, led by executive chef, Tiago Bonito, who has worked at the 3 Michelin Star Alinea, in Chicago, Illinois.

But there are many more. Here are some of the new hotels opening in 2015:

### **Porto & the Norte region**

#### **Six Senses Douro Valley (scheduled to open July 15<sup>th</sup> 2015)**

Nick Yarnell will manage the new Six Senses Douro Valley Resort, whose opening is scheduled for July. This beautiful hilltop resort, located 15 miles from Vila Real and 65 miles from Porto's airport, is set in the unique natural environment of the Douro region. It is located at the site of the former Aquapura Douro Valley resort, in a 19<sup>th</sup> century manor house. The Six Senses features 41 rooms, 9 suites and 7 villas, many with private swimming pools, a spa, organic gardens and did we mention the view? The Douro river valley, home of Port wine, is breathtaking and has new river cruises, inns and wineries. <http://www.sixsenses.com/resorts/douro-valley/destination>

#### **Douro Equus Nature Resort (scheduled to open August 2015)**

The new Douro Equus Nature Resort, a charming four-star resort being built in the town of Mogadouro, will cost around 7.5 seven million dollars and should open in August 2015. The project, built by Mogaequestre, also provides four-star camping and will focus on equestrian tourism, with a riding center and a "biocampus." The entire complex will be located in the village of Vila Ala, near Mogadouro, and will host international events. Resort developers hope to mix equestrian tourism with ecological and educational values with a "biocampus", which will be created to support the local flora and fauna. <http://www.douroequusresortnatur.com/> <https://www.facebook.com/douroequus>

## Centro region

### **Vista Alegre Art Factory Hotel (scheduled to open September 2015)**

This hotel is scheduled to open in September 2015. Owned by the Group Visabeira – the owner of the renowned Vista Alegre Atlantis – it will be located in the Vista Alegre quarter in Ílhavo, off of the Aveiro lagoon (*Ria de Aveiro*). It is being built in an 18th century palace, adjacent to the famous Vista Alegre porcelain factory, which has been operating since 1824. This new wing actually extends the palace to the waterline, which will give the 83 rooms breathtaking panoramic views of the Aveiro Lagoon. The new hotel wing will have 73 rooms and one suite, while the palace will offer 10 rooms and 5 suites. Besides the hotel luxury facilities, guests can also visit the famous porcelain factory and the recently restored Chapel of Nossa Senhora da Penha de França – a national monument. <http://www.visitcentrodeportugal.com.pt/hotel-vista-alegre>

### **Aqua Village Resort (scheduled to open August 1<sup>st</sup> 2015)**

More than a 5-star hotel with a spa, the Aqua Village Resort features modern architecture and uses the natural surrounding landscapes as an extension of its spa. After a 5 million dollar investment, the Eco Spa will provide wellness experiences in an ecological context, such as the outdoor massage in the treetops, and relaxation activities. The resort features a regional restaurant, a congress room, a movie theatre, a library, a research center for thermal waters, a thermal water fountain, three swimming pools, an adventure sports park, a shopping area, and other services; a total of 29 spacious and well-equipped apartments with hot tubs, and a presidential suite. It is located in Oliveira do Hospital, in the beautiful *Serra da Estrela* region. And there will be a private river beach! <http://www.aquavillage.pt/>

## Lisbon region

### **Pousada de Lisboa (opened June 1st 2015)**

Lisbon's first Pousada is in the building that was home to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the riverfront square Praça do Comércio. It opens today with 90 rooms – many with river views – a spa, a swimming pool and a restaurant with traditional Portuguese food, led by executive chef, Tiago Bonito, who has worked at the 3 Michelin Star Alinea, in Chicago, Illinois. This new hotel had an investment of almost 10 million euros by the Portuguese hotel group Pestana and is one of the most awaited openings of the year. <http://www.pestana.com/en/hotel/pousada-lisboa>

### **Hotel Porto Bay Liberdade (Opened April 2015)**

Soft opened in February 2015, the Porto Bay Liberdade is the Porto Bay Group's new five-star hotel in Lisbon and has 98 rooms designed by architect Frederico Valsassina, who preserved the historic facade of an old Lisbon palace from the early 20th century. There is a spa, a swimming pool and a gym, and an *haute-cuisine* Bistro with affordable *Petiscos* (Portuguese refined tapas) and signature dishes. It is already ranked as #19 out of the 227 hotels in Lisbon on Trip Advisor! <http://www.portobay.com/en/hotels/portugal/lisbon-portugal/porto-bay-liberdade/>

## Alentejo region

### **Monte da Provença (Opened February 9th 2015)**

Close to the Spanish border, the town of Elvas just got a new 4-star hotel; a total investment of almost 2 millions dollars, used to recover already existing century-old constructions in the Monte da Provença estate. There are now four houses, with a total of 10 rooms (4 of these are suites with own living rooms, kitchenettes and private porches). The hotel features a swimming pool, gardens, an indoor patio, a cellar and a wine tasting room. This is also a perfect place for events! This property also boasts its own vineyard, an olive plantation and a small lake. <http://www.montedaprovenca.com/en/Utilities/Homepage.aspx>

### **Vila Galé Évora (opened April 25th 2015)**

The Vila Galé Évora is a new 4 star hotel with a unique location on Túlio Espanca avenue, just meters from

the historic center of the city. This hotel unit offers 186 rooms and 6 suites, a restaurant, a bar, an outdoor swimming pool and a Satsanga Medical Spa with a heated indoor pool, gym, sauna, Jacuzzi and six massage rooms. <http://www.vilagale.com/en/hotels/alentejo/vila-gale-evora>

### **Algarve region**

#### **Pestana Alvor South Beach (scheduled to open August 2015)**

The Pestana Group will open a new hotel in the popular beach town of Alvor, in the Algarve region. Pestana Alvor South Beach will be a 4-star hotel with 76 rooms. <http://pestana.com/>

#### **Vila Monte Farm House (under renovation, scheduled to open July 1<sup>st</sup>)**

This charming hotel in Moncarapacho is undergoing a full renovation. When it opens its doors again, it will have a new BOHO-chic style with some references to typical Algarve region elements. This is an innovative farmhouse, where guests may engage in outdoors activities. The À Terra restaurant uses only fresh local ingredients and there is a grab & go store in the lobby where guests may purchase produce food and crafts. This property features a total of 4 buildings with 55 rooms (18 suites, 1 suite with a private garden, 14 junior suites, 11 standard rooms and 11 superior double rooms). There are two swimming pools, 2 restaurants, a tennis court, meeting rooms and massage spots in the gardens. Other activities are offered outside the property, such as horseback riding in the Algarve mountains, seafood tasting, a day at a desert island beach and local market visits with the resident chef. <http://www.vilamonte.com/>

### **Madeira region**

#### **Saccharum Hotel (opened April 18<sup>th</sup> 2015)**

Overlooking the sea and near the Marina of Calheta, this resort was designed in a natural and scenic setting, close to the sea and the mountains. The hotel has 175 rooms, 6 suites and 62 apartments, and features a spa, a massage center, a gym, a fitness club, three outdoor swimming pools (one for children), an indoor pool, and several restaurant and bar areas, including a barbeque section near the pool, on the top floor. <http://www.saccharumhotel.com/en/>

### **Azores region**

#### **Santa Barbara Eco-Beach Resort (opened June 1st 2015)**

Located in Ribeira Seca, on the island of São Miguel, the Santa Barbara Eco-Beach Resort has just opened and offers 14 modern villas, an outdoor pool and a restaurant. All villas boast incredible sea and mountain views, and they are equipped with balconies, kitchens and dining areas. There is a private beach area and plenty of outdoor activities, such as cycling and hiking. After an investment of 2 million dollars, Santa Barbara also hopes to accommodate participants in the sports events hosted in the area (Golf, Mountain Biking and the 6-star surfing World Qualifying Series event). <http://santabarbaraazores.com/>

#### **Furnas Boutique Hotel Thermal & Spa (opened March 2015)**

Located in Furnas, on São Miguel island, this hotel was built in a historic 100-year old spa. The new hotel offers 55 rooms, but the highlight is of course its thermal spa, which is one of the largest of its kind in the world. It has outdoor and indoor thermal swimming pools, a fitness center and 10 massage rooms, including a Jacuzzi, a sauna and a steam room. À Terra the restaurant serves various Portuguese-style roasts and grills prepared in a wood-burning oven, which also delivers fresh bread all day long! <http://www.furnasboutiquehotel.com/en/homepage>

- See more at: <http://pressroom.visitportugal.com/en/2015/06/newsletter-2015-06-portugals-unique-new-hotels/#sthash.VbYVXQmj.dpuf>