

# GOLFING

## — SPRING 2019 —

Your ultimate guide to golf holidays this season

**SHORT HAUL  
HOLIDAYS**

Ideas for breaks in Slovenia,  
Madeira and France

## Top 100 Resorts in GB&I

The most informed ranking of our best play-and-stay venues

**SHORT HAUL**

## THE ALGARVE

A 10-page focus on Europe's No.1 destination

**LONG HAUL**

## BAHAMAS BEAT

A peak inside paradise... The Abaco Club



Quinta da Ria, Algarve

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# A GREAT TIME – GUARANTEED

Why the Algarve remains the smartest choice for travelling golfers after more than 50 years. Over the next 10 pages, we explore the region. More information on all courses is available at [visitgolfalgarve.com](http://visitgolfalgarve.com)

**T** HERE are lots of aspects in life where cutting a corner is a clever option; saving a few pounds to get the same service or product just makes sense. But your annual golf holiday is definitely not one of them. We all look forward to our next golf trip from the moment the last one has ended and, as a result, there is a great deal of expectation of something special every time we set off.

So, there's nothing worse than arriving and quickly realising it's just not right. A horrible feeling that, for the sake of saving a few pounds, you've booked a golf holiday that simply isn't going to measure up. You'll make the best of it, but the

knowledge you could be having a better time elsewhere will nag at you.

While fledgling golf destinations have cost appeal, they inherently lack the expertise and experience in delivering memorable golf breaks.

In contrast, you can trust the Algarve. Every golfer who has ever been there knows you can. They know a great time is guaranteed there and has been for over 50 years.

This is the destination that delivers special memories; great golf breaks come as standard in the Algarve. It's the reason the region attracts hundreds of thousands of golfers – of all ages and abilities – every year. Why? It could be the outstanding year-round climate or sunny

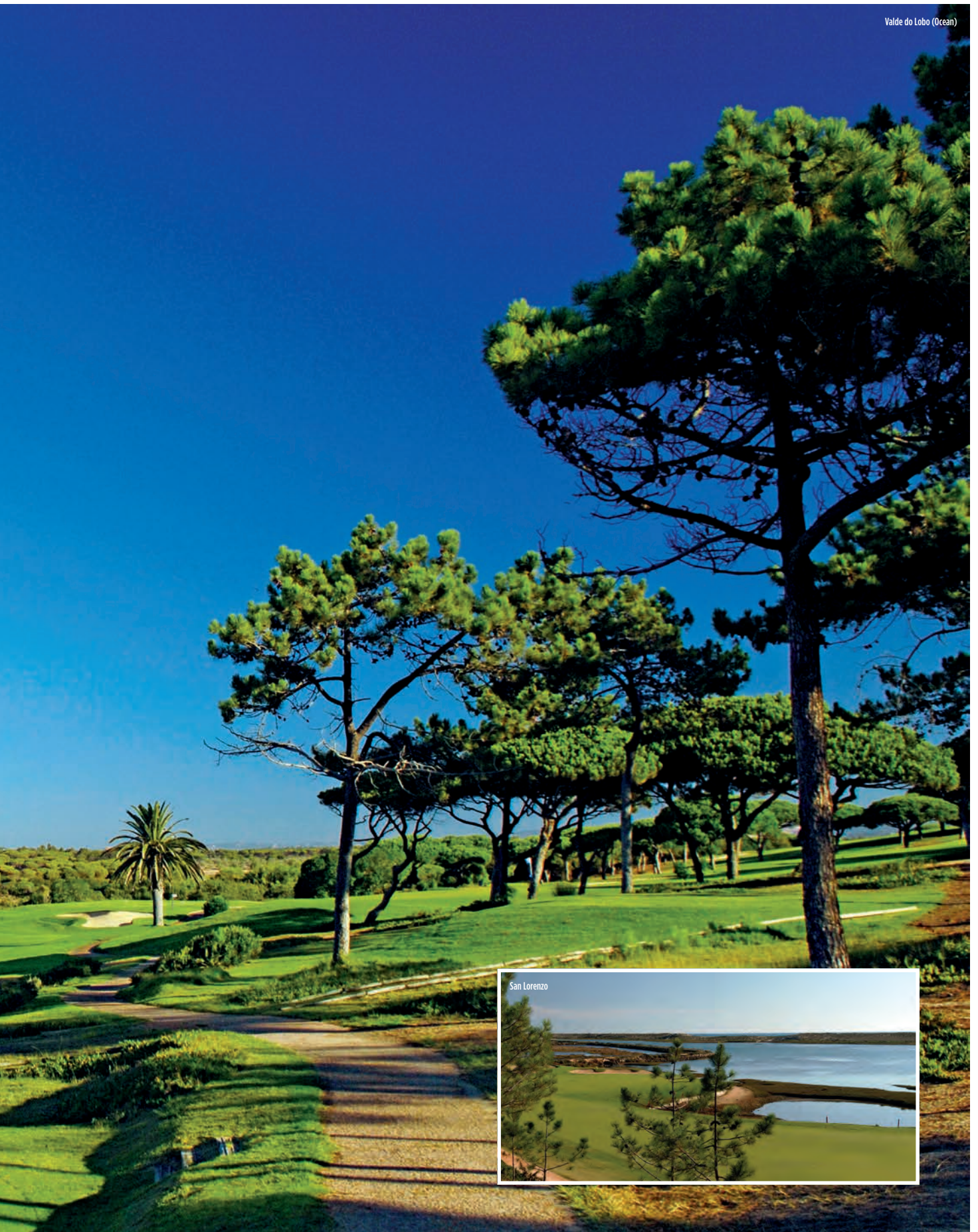
disposition of the people. It might be peerless choice of 43 courses or selection of 'golfer savvy' hotels and self-catering complexes.

It will often be the awesome access to Faro airport from so many UK airports. And, once you're there, the excellent road network that makes getting to tee times stress free. Add in the array of affordable restaurants, the off-course attractions that vary from beautiful beaches to water parks to historic buildings and it is easy to see why golfers have known the Algarve is the best golf under the sun for over five decades.

We're now going to take you on a tour of seven fantastic potential bases for your next golf break...







San Lorenzo





# LAGOS

Three excellent courses in one of the Algarve's most tranquil areas.

**E** **SPICHE** is one of the Algarve's most recent additions, a challenging course designed to complement the distinctive landscape of the Algarve's Barlavento by embracing an ecological ethic and sustainability. Lakes, streams and native plants enrich local biodiversity while creating a unique playing environment.

The wooded fairways can be narrow while bunkers guard most greens, which are large and undulating, demanding a sure touch with the putter. Espiche is a shot-maker's course, where each hole poses a new challenge thanks to the variety of the layout.

The par-5 1st, dropping some 80 feet

from the tee before rising back to the same height at the green, is a fine start.

**Boavista** is conveniently just a couple of minutes away from the motorway that runs the length of the Algarve yet is in a haven of tranquillity.

This Howard Swan design enjoys highlights at the 7th – a lovely par 4 set against the backdrop of the Atlantic with views extending from Praia da Luz round to the hills of Monchique – and then at the thrilling par-5 13th, the short 14th and the risk-and-reward 17th.

It is part of a superb play-and-stay complex that offers sumptuous villa accommodation as well as the excellent course. A lower-profile star of the area.

**Onyria Palmares** has been rewarded by its bold decision to undertake a thorough renovation in 2009 under the eye of famed American architect Robert Trent Jones Jnr.

There are three loops of nine, all with different characteristics. The first, Alvor, starts high up in the forested hills as the old course did but now there is also a stretch of holes – The Praia – down at the bottom which are linksy in nature and add a unique aspect to a course on the Algarve. You enjoy panoramic views across the Bay of Lagos from the Alvor and Lagos (parkland in nature with two lakes) nines. Palmares is one of the region's strongest courses.



Onyria Palmares

Espiche



Boavista

## OFF THE COURSE

Lagos is known for its walled town, cliffs and Atlantic beach. Steep wooden steps lead to gorgeous sandy cove Praia do Camilo, expect headland views and a lighthouse at the cliffs of Ponta de Piedade. And Lagos marina is renowned for its wide variety of restaurants – from Peri Peri to seafood to lively bars serving tapas-style food.



# PORTIMÃO

Where Algarve golf originated – and remains so strong to this day.



Penina



Morgado

**PENINA** is where the Algarve's enduring love affair with golf began. It was Sir Henry Cotton who created the Championship course here in 1966, one of a quintet of layouts the Englishman created in the Algarve.

The whole complex oozes class, from the characterful hotel to the kid's club... but nothing more than the course.

Cotton's layout weaves between mature trees that are part of flora that forms a delightful backdrop to a course stiffened by water features.

Host of the Portuguese Open on 10 occasions, Penina remains a quality course 50 years after it was established.

The first couple of holes are relatively open and a welcome chance to settle in, because after that virtually all the fairways are lined with a myriad trees. Water is in play on several occasions.

**Pestana Alto** is another Cotton design and here the rolling fairways are reached by several elevated tees.

Located between the picturesque village of Alvor and the bustling tourist resort of Praia da Rocha, water hazards cleverly come into play at driving distance off the 3rd and 4th tee as well as a huge lake dominating the par-5 16th. Located close to stunning beaches and a wide variety of traditional and international restaurants and bars.

**Morgado** is located north of Portimão and has wide, sweeping fairways, so although it is a full-size course, it is an ideal friendly place to play if you are beginning the game.

Laid out by European Golf Design, it enjoys one of the quietest settings in the region. The natural terrain has been moderately landscaped and as a result the course fits perfectly into the surrounding countryside.

Lakes and strategically positioned bunkers ensure it can test all levels.

Sister course **Alamos** is found on the north part of Morgado do Reguengo

Resort, and offers great views over the water reservoir and the vineyard – in summary, it offers a lovely view of the peaceful inner Algarve. Alamos differs from Morgado in that the fairways are tighter and each hole is well defined by native trees. Greens are smaller compared with its sister, but more irregular – often raised and defended by 'proper' bunkering.

There is no doubt **Amendoeira (Faldo)** is one of the Algarve's most challenging courses. But play it from tees suited to your ability and you will relish this classy championship course.

Fairways are lined by anything from cacti to wild herbs, spartan Holm oaks to ancient olive trees and desert scrub bunkers of crushed limestone. The common theme is a course that revels in the classic principles of strategic play.

It covers undulating terrain, linking two of the highest points on the expansive Amendoeira estate.



## OFF THE COURSE

Characterful Portimão is known for its old quarter, busy marina and its nearby beaches – not least Praia da Rocha, with a backdrop of ochre cliffs. You can also explore the Gothic-style Nosa Senhora da Conceição church, with its painted tin-glazed ceramic tiles, the medieval Fort of Santa Catarina de Ribamar, and Museu de Portimão. It's a good shopping centre too.

Pestana Gramacho

The hills and undulating ground are used to maximum effect to create a course to challenge the mind as well as the skill of the player.

In contrast, sister course **Amendoeira (O'Connor)** is more playable, with multiple tees enhancing that fact. It weaves through valleys punctuated by lakes and bunkers that create an American-style challenge.

Designed by the hero of Europe's 1989 Ryder Cup victory, lakes and streams feature on nine of the 18 holes and indeed a glance at the course map on the scorecard makes it appear like a golf course built in Venice.

This includes the 3rd, where water surrounds an island which is home to a landmark moorish relic.

**Pestana Gramacho** is the work of former Open champion and world No.1 Nick Price in collaboration with the well-respected architect Ron Fream.

Laid out on three loops, the middle section from the 5th to the 13th forms the tightest stretch. It sits on undulating land and the 1st hole illustrates this fact instantly, with a delightfully crumpled look to the fairway. Humps and hollows

are joined by rocky outcrops to form a characterful opening scene.

It is a funky start to the round that gets you interested immediately.

The 4th does too, a downhill par 3 to a large undulating green with slopes and hollows, while the 10th is another beautiful par 3 with palm trees dotted around and water left and beyond. There is just nowhere flat here, the terrain being full of valleys and hills. It will have been hard to design a course on it, but Price and Fream excelled.

Fream was also involved at **Pestana Vale da Pinta** and it is a five-time host to the Seniors tour.

It starts with a 310-yard par 4 that tracks uphill right to left and sits on similarly undulating ground as

Gramacho. There are distinct changes in elevation and, again, bumpy ground.

The 10th has a narrow tee shot that exemplifies Pinta's occasionally demanding nature, as does the big, bold jigsaw-shaped bunkering.

Two lakes influence play on four holes – the 4th, 5th, 13th and 14th – while the bunkers are many and varied.

The course can challenge the strong player but also give the higher handicapper a playable experience.

**Pestana Silves** sits on the outskirts of the gorgeous little eponymous town and is laid out on flat land as you climb away from the sandy beaches into the mountains.

It is notable for having negligible housing around its perimeter, with vines and olive trees instead providing the backdrop around its edges.

Fairways are separated by small trees and there is very little rough, while the bunkers have low-lying lips.

So this is a forgiving course, which extends to its wide, deep greens. However it is wide open and is affected by breezes off the Atlantic – and there are two water hazards to contend with.

Amendoeira (Faldo)





# ALBUFEIRA

One of the iconic scenes in Europe and a wealth of high-calibre courses.

**PINE CLIFFS'** bright orange cliffs are one of the best-known sights in the world of golf.

Built in a pinewood setting, with tree-lined fairways running parallel along the Atlantic Ocean, this stunning nine-hole course by Martin Hawtree allows golfers to drink in breathtaking views along the Algarve coastline.

It is one of the best nine-holers, it sits on the edge of orange cliffs perched 200 feet above the white sand beach and Atlantic nad has long provided a distinctive image of golf in the Algarve.

Laid out across 168 acres of land, the dark red of the sandstone cliffs contrasts sharply with the immaculate green of the course above and the

sparkling blue ocean below.

The standout hole is the par-3 6th, known as the Devil's Parlour; it is built over a ravine that requires a 220-yard carrying shot over the cliffs to a deep but narrow green.

**Salgados** was laid out within a protected Natural Wildlife Reserve by Pedro Vasconcelos and enjoys a terrific setting. Salgados is a neat little complex that we really, really liked. It sits next to the coast on low-lying undulating land punctuated by palm trees and water winding between holes in a series of canals

Part of the Nau Group, it is well presented and predictably especially exhilarating as it gets out towards the coast.

It is naturally breezy but unless your ball finds water, you will always find it. It has the feel of the Eastern Algarve's Quinta da Ria to it, with less hustle and bustle so if that appeals to you, you will enjoy it here.

## OFF THE COURSE



This former fishing village is now a major holiday destination with sandy beaches and a busy town centre. It is one of the Algarve's 'liveliest' towns for nightlife but it also has some lovely, quieter bars and restaurants in characterful side streets so has something for everyone. You can also go diving, dolphin watching and take boat trips from here.



Pine Cliffs

Salgados



# QUARTEIRA (Vilamoura)

The heart of the Algarve, dominated by explosive, historic and Tour-standard courses.

**D**OM PEDRO VICTORIA burst onto the global scene when it hosted the World Cup in 2005 a year after opening and it has continued to remain high profile as host of the Portuguese Masters.

Arnold Palmer and his team took care to preserve wetlands and the native vegetation of carob, olive and almond trees. Several lakes, occupying 13 hectares, provide mirrors of water.

Also by Hawtree, **Dom Pedro Millennium** opened in, obviously, the year 2000 with the original back nine formerly part of the 27-hole Laguna. These renovated nine holes, including totally new 8th and 9th holes, were joined together with a new loop to

offer a layout of different character.

It is an open course ideal for beginners or those wayward off the tee – although some holes, especially from the 3rd to the 7th, weave between pine trees and here greater accuracy is required.

**Dom Pedro Laguna** is laid out over low-lying coastal terrain and boasts many water hazards and few trees.

Water affects 11 holes which, as well as acting as hazards and emergency water reservoirs, attract a variety of aquatic birds, as well as otters and terrapins.

**Dom Pedro Old** is a 1969 Frank Pennink design often described as the 'Grande Dame' of Algarve courses.

It travels over gently undulating terrain between relatively narrow avenues of

pinus towards slick, small greens. One of the finest courses in Europe.

**Dom Pedro Pinhal** was the second course built in Vilamoura, Pennink finishing work on it in 1976. It has been tweaked a few times, with the most significant by Robert Trent Jones Snr in 1985. Laid out on a rolling terrain, numerous umbrella and Atlantic pines line many of the fairways.

Donald Steel created three fabulous loops of nine at **Pestana Vila Sol**.

Weaving between mature trees and with frequent elevation changes, you are constantly thinking. There are wickedly undulating greens.

## OFF THE COURSE

Another of the Algarve's lively spots, Quarteira is in the heart of renowned Vilamoura. It remains a fishing hub with outstanding restaurants on the palm-lined promenade of Avenida Infante de Sagres mixing with bustling bars around the famous marina. It has lots of larger hotels and is ideal for a family break with water parks and mini golf facilities.

Dom Pedro Victoria



# ALMANCIL (Quinta do Lago & Vale do Lobo)

Home to two of Europe's outstanding resorts as well as one of the continent's most scenic courses.

**V** **ALE DO LOBO (Ocean)** was formed when Cotton's original design was split into two to provide the basis of the Ocean and Royal courses. The Ocean features undulating fairways that run alongside a nature reserve, before leading gently down to the shores of the Atlantic. Its signature holes are two challenging and spectacular par 4s – the 11th and the 14th – which treat you to some of the most spectacular views in the Algarve. The par-3 15th – which runs alongside the beach – is world class.

**Vale do Lobo (Royal)**, meanwhile, boasts its own iconic hole – the par-3 16th over red cliffs. It begins a lovely closing stretch of exhilarating views.

It is characterised by fairways rolling through stretches of pine and beautiful lakes surrounded by wild flowers. Its other feature hole is the short 9th, whose green is virtually an island.

**Quinta do Lago (North)** has been totally renovated by former Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley and architect Beau Welling and is now a super-playable modern course built for fun.

Its first five holes were originally designed in 1974 on sandy ground littered with umbrella pines trees with

the rest added in 1989. There is now loads of width off the tee but accurate tee shots are rewarded with the best angle into greens for approaches, otherwise you face tricky but fun short-game shots if you miss your target.

**Quinta do Lago (South)** is widely regarded as one of the leading courses in the Algarve, mixing high-calibre golf holes with breathtaking scenery.

It can test any standard of player but also remains playable for the higher-handicapper.

Expect plenty of thrilling elevated tee shots and also some tricky approaches but a consistently interesting journey across undulating terrain.

**Quinta do Lago (Laranjal)** might have been the third course to open in QdL but is far from the weak link.

Originally an orange grove, it now offers a beautiful experience along narrow fairways lined by umbrella pines, cork oaks and orange trees.

It is quietly one of the most under-rated courses in the Algarve.

**San Lorenzo** offers lovely views of the Ria Formosa nature reserve with elevated tees giving you the chance to fully enjoy the scene.

Joe Lee sculpted this outstanding

course in 1988 over undulating pine woodland. Bordering the salt water lagoons, it is laid out in a figure of eight with the clubhouse in the middle.

The stretch from the 5th to the 8th is especially good, taking in elevated drives and magnificent views.

**Pinheiros Altos** is a 27-hole course that offers varying levels of difficulty through three evenly-balanced nine-hole groupings.

Located next to extensive unspoilt beaches and the Atlantic Ocean, it is also one of the most prestigious golfing academies in Europe, and features an extensive range of state-of-the-art technology and facilities.

## OFF THE COURSE



The small town of Almoncil is dominated by two of the Algarve's most impressive resorts – Vale do Lobo and Quinta do Lago. They both offer various kinds of luxury accommodation, high-class food in a myriad restaurants, superb beaches and of course excellent golf. Several smaller towns surround these 'super resorts', which are so comprehensive.



Quinta do Lago (North)



# TAVIRA

A beautiful, easy-to-love town in the quieter eastern Algarve.

## OFF THE COURSE

This ancient town has admirably retained its character, a mix of traditional Portuguese architecture with Moorish influences. It sits along the banks of the Gilão River and it is a joy to explore its cobbled streets, historic buildings and decorative churches or simply relax in its charming plazas. A serene golf break is guaranteed here.

**B**enamor is a few kilometres east of Tavira in the foothills of Barrocal and was completed in the spring of 2000.

As well as mountain and sea views, it is notable for being a construction-free resort. It opens with a lovely dog-leg hole that sets the tone for this pleasant round. The closing stretch sees three of the course's longest holes paired with a delightful short hole; a super way to conclude a terrific course that illustrates the strength in depth of the Algarve.

Since opening in 2007, **Monte Rei** has established itself as one of Europe's premier courses. The Jack Nicklaus design enjoys a tranquil setting in the foothills between the Serra do Caldeirão mountains and the Atlantic, its 'runways' of green fairway snaking between arid burnt-orange soil. At well over 7,000 yards, it can test even the Tour pros who

visit here – not least because of water on 11 holes, the large bunkers or the huge undulating greens. Its consistency and variety are outstanding.

**Quinta da Ria** offers seaside views as good as on arguably any course on the Algarve by virtue of several holes' location on the edge of the beach.

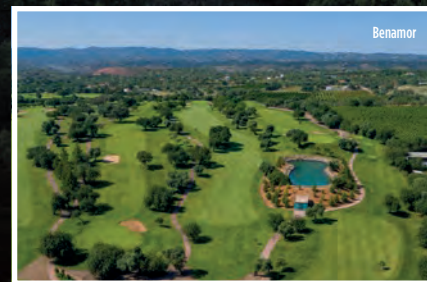
Much of the front nine sits on fairly flat land lined by semi-mature trees and punctuated by a lake, but then in a run of holes in the middle of the back nine there are moments of uncommon excitement. The long 11th plays down to the ocean then you play all along the shore to a terrific green site with unobstructed sea views and followed by a magnificent par 3 towards the ocean.

Its sister course **Quinta da Cima** sits further inland. Also opened in 2002, this classy course sits among mature trees and water over undulating land.

It lacks the sea views of its sister but is technically highly accomplished, probing your game on accuracy and strategy.

Dog-legs in both directions play a strong part with mature carob and olive trees ensuring the overly brave or ambitious are punished by their rescue shots being necessarily conservative.

The Cima will not be as thrilling to most, but to many others it will be a refreshingly cerebral challenge.



Benamor

Monte Rei



# VILA REAL DE SANTO ANTONIO

Two fine courses – one by the legendary Seve – located in one of the Algarve’s most serene locations.

**T** HERE are three loops of nine – the Atlantic, the Guadiana and the Grouse – at **Castro Marim**. Opened in 2001, expect great views to lap up as well as lakes, undulating fairways and elevated greens.

Designed by Briton Terry Murray, the 1st on the Atlantic is an acute dog-leg before more gentle tests on the next two holes ease you into your round.

The lakes first come into play on the drive off the 5th tee, where a slice or even just a slight push will end up wet.

Fast and true greens, several of them elevated and protected by bunkers, inviting elevated tees and dog-leg fairways carved out of canyons are

features of the courses. The Grouse, opened in 2008, is the newest of the three nines and offers more far-reaching inland hill views. It has rolling terrain with fewer trees.

You can experience the genius of the late, great Severiano Ballesteros at **Quinta do Vale**.

Opened in 2008, it comprises six par 5s, six par 4s and six par 3s – with opportunities to make birdies on the three-shotters.

Holes dart in all directions, many with a view over the Guadiana River that is the border between Portugal and Spain. Expect numerous dogleg holes – none more acute than on the 17th – but wide

fairways as well as water on the holes that close each nine in front of the clubhouse. ♦

## OFF THE COURSE



Situated on the Rio Guadiana, this pretty, relaxed town is laid out in a neat grid system. There is a large town square, ‘Praça Marquês de Pombal’, which is edged with orange trees and populated with low white buildings, shops, cafes and restaurants. This beautifully quaint town is ideal for anyone who likes the quieter side of life.



Castro Marim