vila do bispo

HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY

The mythical atmosphere surrounding Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente (Cape St. Vincent), places dedicated to the gods for thousands of years; the unspoilt coastline, with its dramatic horizons of cliffs and sea; the many menhirs that bear witness to prehistoric rites; memories of the epic of the Discoveries and the enigmatic figure of Prince Henry the Navigator: such are the attractions of Vila do Bispo and its municipality, a vast triangle where the sea is a constant presence. And where nature combines with history to create a unique region that is well worth getting to know.

least as far as the Neolithic period and, if some shallow graves are to be trusted, the undertaking known as the Discoveries ensured Vila do Bispo a prominent may date from the Palaeolithic period.

The large number of menhirs - standing alone, in groups or in cromlechs - is one of the most important vestiges of the past to be found in the Vila do Bispo area. Also of interest is the fact that their use in religious rites continued, in the Cabo de São Vicente area, until the period of the Roman occupation.

The religious importance of the Cape persisted in the Middle Ages with the-pil grimages that were made, even during the centuries of Arab rule, to the burial place of São Vicente (St. Vincent).

It is agreed that the human presence in the south-western Algarve goes back at In the 15th century, the presence of Prince Henry the Navigator at Sagres and place in history.

> Identified by some authors as the site of the then famous Igreja dos Corvos (Church of Crows) mentioned by Arabic chroniclers, Vila do Bispo has its origins in a village which was granted to the Bishop of Silves, D. Fernando Coutinho at the beginning of the 16th century, and was elevated to the status of a town in 1633. It suffered serious damage in the earthquake of 1755. Proud of its past and of its participation in the Discoveries, the municipality of Vila do Bispo is an integral part of the Algarve, present and future.

VISITING VILA DO BISPO

The windmills which recalled the fact that, for centuries, Vila do Bispo was the breadbasket of the Algarve have disappeared. What remains, however, is the charm of whitewashed houses tumbling down the slopes of a hill crowned by a church tower.

getting to know the vila do bispo area

RAPOSEIRA

One of the places in the southwestern Algarve where Prince Henry the Navigator lived. Tradition says he stayed in a house which has now lost its original character and of which all that has been identified is the lintel of a 16th century door.

MAIN CHURCH 02

Of the original church, founded in the 16th century, all that remains are the Manueline doorways at the front and side, the bell-tower which culminates in an octagonal pyramid, the arch of the main altar and, at the back, an interesting corbel with a human face. The lateral altarpieces are carved and gilded, with statues. There is an altarpiece depicting São Miguel (St. Michael) crushing the demon, as well as religious artefacts (16th/18th centuries)

CHAPEL OF NOSSA SENHORA DE GUADALUPE (OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE) 03

According to local tradition this was a place of prayer for Prince Henry the Navigator. Romano-gothic (possibly from the 13th century), it has a plain façade with an ogival portal and rosette. The chancel has lateral columns with sculpted capitals and a vault. Also visible are lateral buttresses with gargoyles. Surrounded by countryside, it was part of the Quinta da Raposeira, where there are ruins of a 15th century manor house.



CABO DE SÃO VICENTE (CAPE ST. VINCENT)

Its status as a sacred place since Neolithic times is confirmed by the presence of important groups of menhirs and by an account written by classical writers in the 4th century B.C describing religious ceremonies involving libations and stating that it was forbidden for humans to go there after dark, because at night it was inhabited by gods. In the period when the Phoenicians had trading-posts in the Algarve, it is thought certain that there was a sanctuary dedicated to the Greek hero Hercules and the Phoenician god Melcart, while in Sagres there was another under the invocation of Chronos-Saturn-Baal. For the Romans the whole area was part of the Promontorium Sacrum (from which the name Sagres is derived), the most westerly point in the world, where the setting sun made the waters of the ocean boil. The transportation, after the Arab invasion, of the body of São Vicente (St. Vincent) to the cape that was named after him turned it into a place of pilgrimage for centuries. In 1173 the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques, gave orders for the holy remains to be brought to Lisbon. An obligatory landmark for any ship travelling to the Mediterranean, Cabo de São Vicente was the scene of many major sea battles. In 1693 the French admiral Tourville defeated an Anglo-Dutch squadron. A Spanish fleet suffered a similar fate in 1780 at the hands of the English admiral Rodney. Nelson and Jarvis defeated another Spanish fleet in 1797. The squadron in the service of the absolutist King Miguel was captured here in 1833 by the squadron on the Liberal side flying the flag of his niece, Queen Maria II.

FORTRESS 12

The fortress was built in the 16th century and rebuilt in the 17th and 18th centuries. The arms of king D. Joao III are visible on the main gate. Inside can be found the former monastery of Hieronymite friars, founded in the 16th century. The interesting lighthouse at the extremity of the Cape is an updated version of the beacon that the Bishop of the Algarve D. Fernando Coutinho had built for the safety of shipping in 1515.

THE MUSIC OF THE WAVES In the fortress, there are deep fissures in the rock, and when the sea is rough the pounding waves transform these into vast natural organ-pipes.

THE PLEASURES OF SUN AND SEA

The coast, which extends to the north and east of Cabo de São Vicente (Cape St. Vincent), is dotted with more than 20 beaches. Some are sandy coves hidden at the foot of cliffs, others broad expanses of sand that stretch away to the horizon. Each has its own particular charm, waiting to be discovered along with peace and solitude.

Murração

A small beach with a broad stretch of sand. Barriga and Cordama A series of broad beaches separated by cliffs but with access between them. Very quiet. Castelejo A beach surrounded by rock formations. Tourist facilities. Ponta Ruiva Stretches of sand at the foot of steep escarpments. Little visited Telheiro Pleasant, sheltered beach. Beliche Sandy beach in a small bay scooped out of the cliff. Calm. Tonel A sheltered beach with good views of the Ponta de Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente. Support facilities. Mareta Long beaches. Tourist facilities. Starting point for discovering the underwater delights of a coast dotted with caves and hollows.



Martinhal and Rebolinhos



COSTA VICENTINA PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA To protect the beauty of the lands cape and the wealth of flora and fauna to be found there, a protec ted landscape area has been cre ated along a stretch of coastline extending from Belixe to Odeceixe. Here it is possible to see dozens of species of wild flower, and to observe animals like the wild boar and the



EN

BUDENS

A village with picturesque streets, with an old fountain and tank for washing clothes. Nearby stand abandoned windmills and a typical limekiln.

MAIN CHURCH 04

A country church (18th century). Interesting effigy of Nossa Senhora do Rosário (Our Lady of the Rosary) (17th century).

CHAPEL OF SÃO ANTÓNIO (ST. ANTHONY) 05 18th century edifice. Panoramic views from the churchyard.

CHAPEL OF SÃO LOURENÇO (ST. LAWRENCE) 06 Built in the 17th century. The front of the altar is decorated with 18th cen tury tiles.

BARÃO DE SÃO MIGUEL

A typical village surrounded by rolling hills covered with cistus.

MAIN CHURCH 07

16th century in origin. Baroque altarpiece with an effigy of the Arcanjo São Miguel (Archangel Michael) (18th century).

SAGRES

Sagres dates back to before the Roman conquest. The frequent presence here of Prince Henry the Navigator during the early days of Atlantic navigation and the discovery of the African coast as far as the Gulf of Guinea has forever linked this picturesque fishing port with the Discoveries.

Vila do Infante and its fortress, which were founded by Prince Henry, were sacked and destroyed by Sir Francis Drake in 1587, after his attack on Cadiz, as part of a privateering campaign.

On the Ponta de Sagres, a giant finger of rock pointing out to the ocean, stand buildings that evoke the past of a place that is part of the history



THE COASTAL DEFENCE FORTRESSES

The strategic importance of Cabo de São Vicente and the need to protect the local popula tion from marauding pirates led to the heavy fortification of the whole coast. In addition to the forts at Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente, which were key to the defence of the area, many others were built, all offering magnificent views to anyone who travels along the coastline.

Torre de Aspa

Figueira Ruins of a watchtower on a hill overlooking Remains of a 17th century fortification. the sea (elevation 156 metres), and affording aAccess difficult. panoramic vista of the coast as far as Cabo de Zavial Ruins of a 17th century fortification. The ruins São Vicente and Sagres. of a large masonry tower are visible at Ponte Burgau Fortification built in the reign of King João IV da Torre. (17th century). Baleeira Remains of a fortification and a lookout tower. Boca do Rio Ruins of a fort built on the orders of King Beliche 11 Filipe III (17th century), nowadays in ruins. Fortress dating from the 16th century. Coat Some distance away are the remains of a of arms of King Filipe III on the entrance gate. Chapel of Santa Catarina (St. Catherine), cubic medieval chapel and a watchtower. in shape, reminiscent of a marabout (a mos que of a Muslim ascetic).

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURE

The existence of veins of flint in the Vila do Bispo area, along with the opportunities for fin ding food among the rich marine fauna, as attested by the presence of shell mounds, must have been one of the reasons for the first human settlements. The most interesting testimony to the past is, however, the large number of menhirs (4,000 to 3,000 B.C.). Hewn out of white limestone, usually conical in shape, and sometimes bearing decoration carved in relief, they are reminders of ancient cults linked to fertility and the dead. The Romans too left important remains of the fish-salting industry and of the manufacture of amphorae for transporting the finished product.

BUDENS

Long beaches in a broad bay. Wonderful views of the small islands off the beaches. Tourist facilities. Barranco, Ingrina and Zavial Sandy coves in small bays. Calm. Tourist facilities. Figueira

Small isolated beach.

Salema

Located in a picturesque fishing village. Pleasant beach. Tourist facilities. Boca do Rio Stretch of sand along the bottom of a valley crossed by two gentle streams. Peaceful.

Cabanas Velhas (Almádena)

Small and seldom-visited beaches.

Burgau A typical fishing port looking out to sea. Calm and family-oriented. Tourist facilities.

A PARADISE FOR FISHERMEN, SURFERS AND DIVERS

The whole of the coast to the north of São Vicente is a huge fishing ground, teeming with the fish that legends are made of, from fighting croaker to tasty sea bass. Every rock, every cove has its own particular fans, fishermen who return to the same spot time and again. After that it's skill and good luck that determine the size of the catch... Surfers too, appreciate the regular waves of the coast to the north, the safety of its broad beaches and the total freedom of the ocean.

The wide bay defined by Ponta de Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente is an excellent place for scuba divers to appreciate the colourful diversity of fish and the dream-like landscapes of caves and hollows carved from beneath the cliffs.

Near Budens, a golf course set among rolling hills with views to the sea is an invitation to spend a few pleasant hours enjoying the delights of the game.







of the world.

FORTRESS 08

Dating back to the 15th century, and successively rebuilt and repaired in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Adjoined by former batteries that defended the beaches of Tonel and Mareta.



CHURCH OF NOSSA SENHORA DA GRAÇA (OUR LADY OF GRACE) 09 Tradition has it that this church was founded by Prince Henry the Navigator. Built in the 16th century, with a Renaissance doorway. On the altar there is an interesting statue of São Vicente (St. Vincent) holding a ship (17th century). Headstones from the 16th and 17th centuries.

WIND ROSE 10

A vast circle with radiating points, 43 metres in diameter, marked out in stone on the ground. Possibly dating back to the 15th century.

CISTERN-TOWER An interesting vestige of the old buildings. Now incorporated into a modern complex.

PANORAMIC CIRCUIT

One of the charms of Ponta de Sagres are the varied views of the coast provided by the paths cut along the cliffs, from which the sea has gouged huge caverns and hollows.

VILA DO BISPO

Vale de Gato de Cima	Adreneira				
Three scattered menhirs.	Three menhirs which are thought to have				
Pedra Escorregadia	been part of a cromlech.				
Three decorated menhirs and a collective grave Figueira					
with corridor and chamber.	Burial sites consisting of chambers made				
Casa do Francês	of sandstone slabs (Bronze Age).				
Six small menhirs and a slab decorated with Praia da Salema					
dimples and furrows.	Remains of a Roman villa and a fish preserve				
Amantes	factory.				
A large group of menhirs, which we	re part Boca do Rio				
of two cromlechs.	An important Roman villa with frescoes and				
	mosaics, bathhouse, warehouses and a fish				



Burial site consisting of chambers made of limestone slabs. Nearby, three menhirs.

SAGRES

Praia do Martinhal A major Roman pottery centre, with three kilns for the production of amphorae. On the small islands off the beach are remains of tanks used for salting fish.



2013 . 3rd Edition



芨	National Republican Guard	\bowtie	Post office	Ă	Camp site
-	Health center	Щ.	Market	₽**	Beach
	Chemist	S.	City Hall	Ĩ	Lighthouse
4	Fire brigade	+†+	Cemetery	\mathbf{O}	Natural Park of the Southwest Alentejo and Vicentina Coast
	Táxis	H	Industrial zone		Building of interest
Ţ.	Bus stop		Football stadium	A. C3	Parish Office
*	Motorway	K,	Golf course	B. D3	Cultural Centre











MAIN CHURCH 1. C5

The façade is typical of the art of the 18th century, with a doorway surmounted by an eye-window and a curved pediment. The central nave is clad in blue tiles depicting jugs and dolphins, dating from 1726. It has what is known as a "kneading-trough"-cei ling, with painted coffers. On the carved gilt altarpiece of the main altar (18th century) is a statue of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (Our Lady of the Conception) (early 16th century), patron saint of the church. There are two lateral altars with carved altarpieces and 18th century statues. The sacristy has a large chest, a number of 18th century. Attached to the church is a museum containing some interesting works of religious art, notable among which are two statues of Our Lady from the 16th century.



HISTORICAL CENTRE

The narrow streets surrounding the church contain many houses typical of the old Algarve, with whitewashed walls, bands of bright colour, carved stonework around doors and windows and cool shade even at the hottest time of the year.

THE TASTE OF GOOD COOKING

Sea on two sides, land on one. The typical cuisine of Vila do Bispo reflects this dual influence: dishes such as "jantar de grão" made with chickpeas, boiled cabbage flavoured with sausages, "xerém" (made with maize meal) with sardines, "papas moiras" (also made from maize meal) and delicious fish dishes: risotto with conger eel, golden bream or sea bream baked in the oven, "cal deirada" (fish stew), sandwiches made with fried moray.

Shellfish in Vila do Bispo is always tempting, as anyone will vouch who has eaten the barnacles and whelks harvested from the rocks, or the succulent lobsters that the boats bring in at dawn



POPULAR CRAFTS

Delicate female hands make bobbin lace in Vila do Bispo and Sagres, keeping up a een turies-old tradition that has always been associated with towns near the sea. In the coun try villages, the locals still weave attractive products from palm-leaves and esparto grass: baskets, bags, mats, etc.





