

Regional identity for the leisure of travellers: early tourism infrastructure in the Algarve (Portugal), 1940–1965

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The Algarve, the quasi-Mediterranean province of Portugal, a geographically and culturally differentiated region, was the first in the country to experience the consequences of, and to profit from, the consolidation of the Welfare State model in northern Europe: from the 1960s on, being both affordable and somewhat exotic, it became an important magnet for middle-class families in pursuit of the increasingly popular sun-and-sea holiday formula. Tentatively, the Portuguese regime, aided by private entrepreneurs, explored ways of reconciling the economic and political drive behind the process with its own deep-rooted strategy of preserving regional diversity as a valuable quality. The Algarve's regional built identity, translated into modern mass-tourism infrastructure, was instrumental in the endeavour of marketing the country for foreign consumers as simultaneously up-to-date and traditional. Twenty years before, however, the same regional identity was construed, through tourism facilities arising from official initiatives, to contribute to the inward-focused project of nationalism. This essay uses the case of the Algarve and three specific hospitality projects realised over a two-decade interval (one 1930s' state roadside inn and two 1950s' sun-and-sea hotels), to discuss how leisure architecture and regional built identity were combined and manipulated to serve markedly different purposes within the same, southern European, dictatorial regime.

Introduction

We do not wish for large-scale tourism. Especially since we prefer one thousand times the *foreigner* to the *tourist*. We don't mind seeing the foreigner by our side, with no binoculars or camera, thrilled before a stretch of sea or a bucolic landscape. [He is] a human being that carries (...) unbiased goals and a personal taste. [The tourist] is a fellow of conventional taste [who] will go only where he is taken or he is told to go (...) He may be, internationally, harmless—and even very useful—but he tarnishes the landscape. That is why our landscape dislikes tourists.¹

These words, taken from a 1940 official book that celebrated the variety of the Portuguese landscape, illustrate the hesitant position of the *Estado Novo* regime (1933–1974) towards the development of Portugal as an international tourism destination in pre-war times. 'We should not want foreigners to visit us *en masse*', the dictator António Salazar (1889–1970) stated in 1938, when he launched a programme of public works to mark the centennials of the country's foundation and independence.² But Portugal did expect some visitors, *foreigners* if not *tourists*, and the government did set out then to build and operate a network of roadside inns, the

'Pousadas'. It responded to increasing pressure from those who, inspired by foreign experience, saw the economic potential of tourism, and to the realisation that hospitality, a new 'national question', was the 'Achilles Heel' of its development.³ Directly associated with the improvement of the nationwide road infrastructure, one of the most visible public policies of the time, the Pousadas network was also intimately related with the regime's understanding of the landscapes of Portugal which were perceived as essential constituents of national identity, mirroring in their diversity the richness of the country's folk traditions, the Pousadas being mechanisms that would allow travellers, national or foreign, to enjoy them in a controlled manner. To unveil the Portuguese landscape whilst preserving its rural character, its authenticity and whatever made it attractive: such was the challenge, circa 1940.

The circumstances altered significantly twenty years later, when Portugal was on the threshold of a mass-tourism age and the first steps were taken to make this industry the foremost export of the country. But the challenge remained: how would large-scale hospitality architecture respond to needs that were intrinsically contemporary, while taking advantage of specific local, traditional features? And, most importantly, how could the regime remain in control of the image conveyed to foreigners, a delicate combination of tradition and modernity?

The Algarve, the southernmost region of Portugal, is a familiar holiday destination today. In the first half of the last century it was little known to foreign and Portuguese travellers alike. It remained relatively isolated and had a specific cultural heri-

tage derived from its remote past as a separate Moorish kingdom. The vernacular building traditions of its countryside, its towns and villages, strengthened the impression of such specificity and were systematically contrasted with those of other parts of the country and of the continent. Commonly referred to as more African than European, the Algarve's built environment had a striking appearance. Combined with lush landscapes, scenic coastlines and mild climate conditions, it created both enticing opportunities for tourism and numerous examples of the challenges posed by externally driven development affecting a stabilised, largely rural society.

The vernacular tradition was an important factor in the Algarve's tourism infrastructure, as it was in every other field of building practice in the region, by architects and non-architects. Looking at two different stages of development (the late 1930s and the late 1950s) and at the agendas of government departments and private enterprise, this essay will enquire how this building tradition was used and to what effect; what was included, highlighted and excluded, and why; and to what extent the Algarve's built identity was manipulated through hospitality architecture, a process that led to the creation of a new built identity in the region, essentially based on tourism, in the 1970s. Taking account of matters of regional identity, national politics and economic drives, the Algarve example suggests how closely knitted these factors were in the production of leisure architecture, in a South European state that followed, from the late 1950s on, the new needs and possibilities of its welfare-rich northern counterparts.

The Pousada, an architectural viewport over almond-blossom fields

In 1940, the state propaganda office SPN⁴ presented Portugal's coastline in terms that may seem surprising today:

It might be supposed that the Portuguese, following their Atlantic calling, prefer seaside panoramas over bucolic ones (...). This is not so. Apart from the few beaches that, between July and October, are crowded (...), the finest stretches of coast in the country (many of which are suitable building areas) remain as empty as though they were hideous.⁵

The shores had a near-mythological quality, and were the unifying trait of a richly varied hinterland—but were not the primary and outstanding characteristic of the Portuguese landscape. The sea (*mar*) was masculine (both in the protective ruggedness of the coastline and in the gender of the word *mar*), while the landscape (*paisagem*) was feminine and delicate, and ill-fitted to the 'indiscreet, almost insolent' gaze of the tourist. In the landscape's diversity, 'naturalness and lyricism', lay the main source of interest for visitors, to be handled with caution and moderation. Landscape was a key factor for the establishment of tourism in the country, as valuable as Portugal's best monuments and offering a complete and varied experience that included, but was not limited to, the scenic but deserted coastline. In 1940, the conservative *Estado Novo* regime seemed reluctant to open up the country to mass tourism, and preferred to accommodate the essential needs of small numbers of travellers where there were little or no structures, within a closely defined official pro-

gramme that would simultaneously guide private enterprise.

Such was the brief behind the construction of Portugal's first Pousadas,⁶ launched by the ministry of public works in 1938 and intended to be ready in time for the 1940 centennial celebrations and the Exhibition of the Portuguese World in Lisbon. The government defined the Pousadas as:

Houses of regional architecture [integrated with] the architecture and traditions of the areas they represent (...) furnished and decorated with similar regionalist concern, so that those who visit them keep in their retina the sweet images of the ethnography and architecture of the diverse regions of this old Portugal.⁷

These were the 'houses' created to lodge travellers that roamed the landscapes praised by the propaganda office, using the new roads resulting from the *Estado Novo*'s public works policies. Their stated purpose was to 'represent' each region's characteristic architecture and ethnography, and scholars have associated this aspect with the work of the architect Raul Lino (1879–1974) on Portuguese regional types, especially popular in the 1930s.⁸ They were to be placed alongside essential road links and/or in points of unquestionable panoramic interest. In the case of the Algarve Pousada, the second requirement was paramount; significantly, however, the choice fell not on a seaside location but on a hilltop near São Brás de Alportel, twenty km inland, among fields of almond, carob and fig trees. When it finally opened in 1944, this setting was presented in cinematic terms: recreating the experience of the motorist who overcomes the 350 curves of the mountain

range separating the Algarve from the neighbouring Alentejo, Alportel appeared as:

The first whitewashed town our eyes envisage [in the Algarve]. All around, the landscape is more dream-like than real. Hills, cliffs, suspended gardens. In the background, behind a tender rift in the mountains, the infinite sea. [Alportel] signals the frontier between well-being and discomfort (...). From a round-shaped balcony, the panorama is breathtaking. (...) [Tourist excursions] today offer no more dangers or significant difficulties. There are roads and there are Pousadas.⁹

The Pousada (Fig. 1) was to provide a pause in the long-distance journeys made possible by recent road improvements, be it for a night or for a meal; and its location was to allow for the building to function as a viewpoint over a large panorama, one that could represent the best of the Algarve's landscape. The whole central and eastern Algarve was to be as if compressed into this sample of rural landscape, to be apprehended from the fixed point of a building that was an observatory, first and foremost (Fig. 2). The sea was kept in the distant background, and no mention was made of the possibility of guests enjoying it. This was clearly not the main purpose of the Algarve Pousada.

In fact, this preference for the rural over the maritime setting was criticised within official bureaucracy by Raul Lino himself, in his capacity as ministerial architect-planner. In a 1938 report Lino denounced the rationale of the Pousadas plan, matters of regional characterisation aside: he targeted the location of the Algarve Pousada especially. It was too far inland to allow guests to take advantage of the then-recent trend of 'sea-

bathing even outside of the appropriate season' and, 'surprising as the panorama enjoyed from that point may be', still it lacked the 'vital conditions' that would make it economically viable: being only 'meant to serve pure tourism' (ie, short-stay breaks within sightseeing tours, not long-stay holidaying), it was 'too distant from the major centres' to succeed in that purpose.¹⁰ Lino, a conservative thinker by reputation, seems to have realised that the future of the Algarve's hospitality industry lay on the coastline, and not inland, lyric as its panoramas may have been; his remarks questioned an official strategy that ignored international trends (towards seaside holidaying) and pursued a cautious, conservative agenda. Lino's critique was disregarded, the plan proceeded unchanged and his real influence in the Pousadas programme was in effect diminished.

What of the architecture chosen to represent the Algarve in this national programme? 'Novelty without exoticism'¹¹ were the words Lino used in January, 1939, to praise the work of the architect Miguel Jacobetty (1901–1970): an appropriate shorthand for a project that dealt with a concise brief and a limited range of compositional devices, providing unsophisticated room and board in a building devoted to the contemplation of the surrounding landscape. Four bedrooms (for up to eight guests) occupied the upper floor of a four-pitch-roofed volume, and a large sitting-dining room for 52 people (two bus-loads), partly curved and glazed, opened onto a pergola-covered verandah (Fig. 3). This, the fulcrum of the building, overlooked 'the best horizons' and could be used, in the summer, for open-air dining.¹²



Figure 1. Pousada de São Brás (Alportel), verandah and garden, n.d. [195-]; photograph by H. Novais (courtesy of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Biblioteca de Arte, Lisbon).

A selection of details provided the exterior with the regional aspect required for all Pousadas: the wooden lattice panels sheltering the entrance porch, the closely laid pergolas, the single-pitch-roof volume of the garage and the roof terraces. Elaborate chimney tops, thoroughly detailed by Jacobetty, featured prominently on the elevations, and a double-height ceramic grid protected the staircase from the morning sun. This composition was what might be called *generically Algarvian*: a good

example of a Lisbon-based take on the region's customs, displaying elements that vaguely evoked building tradition (the lattice panels, the slanted garage volume) and replicated stereotypical features (the chimney top, the ceramic grid, the pergolas). Its source of inspiration was the rural house of central Algarve, which combined parapet-bound terrace roofs with single-pitch tiled roofs and protruding eaves, in composite volumes entirely whitewashed. Such elements were, however, freely and

Figure 2. Pousada de São Brás (Alportel), panorama from the verandah, n.d. [195-]; photograph by H. Novais (courtesy of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Biblioteca de Arte, Lisbon).



inextricably combined with recognisable modernist and conservative features (the cylindrical surfaces and the round arches, respectively). This architecture's multi-layered hybridity was, I believe, its strongest point.

The Pousadas were to encapsulate their context, the surrounding landscape (with all its meanings) and ultimately the entire region: they were to be regional condensers, allowing for passing travellers to sample a aestheticised, sublimated version of

regional identity. Jacobetty's was a tamed interpretation of the Algarve's built identity; it was discreet, domestic and familiar as called for in the brief—or, as Lino put it, 'without exoticism'.

Such 'exoticism' was present in many metropolitan interpretations in the 1930s and 1940s of the Algarve's building tradition, particularly in urban contexts: this was based in the idiosyncratic features of Olhão, a fishing village whose recent history of economic exchange with North Africa reputedly



Figure 3. Pousada de São Brás (Alportel), sitting-dining room, n.d. [195-]; photograph by H. Novais (courtesy of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Biblioteca de Arte, Lisbon).

accounted for a marked extra-European profile. Despite being almost unique, Olhão's townscape was a fixture in representations of the Algarve from the 1920s, seducing adepts of the picturesque and modernists alike.¹³ With overlapping white-washed volumes, terrace roofs and box-like turrets, it was repeatedly called Portugal's 'cubist village', a title first used in 1922 by António Ferro (1895–1956).¹⁴ As head of the national propaganda office (in charge of the Pousadas network), Ferro deployed the Olhão 'cubist' house as a surrogate

for the Algarve as a whole, whenever the region was to be represented, at home and abroad. In 1937, Olhão was presented at the Paris international exhibition as the ideal pictorial depiction of the Algarve,¹⁵ and Ferro's slogan in the Tourism room of the Portuguese pavilion proclaimed: '*Qu'au Portugal il y a une ville cubiste*'.¹⁶ In the San Francisco and New York pavilions of 1939, Portugal was miniaturised and the Algarve section was, once more, a composition dominated by Olhão-inspired buildings.¹⁷ Lastly, for the 1940

Exposition of the Portuguese World in Lisbon, the architect Jorge Segurado (1898–1990) created for Ferro's office a life-size version of those miniatures: the Algarvian section of the ensemble of *Aldeias Portuguesas* ('Portuguese Villages') was a metal-frame-and-plasterboard simulacrum of the much-admired Olhão 'cubist' house (Fig. 4).¹⁸

It would seem that 'exotic' Olhão was the favourite official model to encapsulate the Algarvian features for national and foreign travellers. However, this representation had essentially urban qualities, and would not suit the pastoral requirements of a Pousada – a country home that guests should feel had always been there.¹⁹ To build a piece of Olhão on top of a hill in Alportel would have been a mistake that architects and officials were unlikely to make, even within a plan driven by political, as much as architectural, aims. Both Jacobetty's homely cottage and Segurado's plastically rich Olhão-like cubes were deemed to be deserving representatives of the region, for use according to the circumstances. Around 1940, the regime and its agents seemed to have a clear view of how best to manipulate regional identity in order to attain differing purposes.

Algarve on the verge of mass tourism, an hotel on the edge of the sea

In 1959, Lisbon-based architects Jorge Chaves (1920–1982) and Frederico Sant'Ana (1921–1961) were commissioned to design a small, thirty-room hotel for an exceptional location, on the cliffs overlooking the beach at Armação de Pêra (Fig. 5). In a preliminary proposal for this, the Hotel do Garbe, they sought to probe the response of the authorities, stating:

We envisaged a building (...) that would not surprise (...) with its size, majesty or exoticism, but rather would have been sensed before it had been seen because it is equal in spirit to other built masses that can be found, everywhere, in the Algarve, where Man has spontaneously created an architecture that is organic and alive (...). One only has to comprehend and feel the truth there is in Man's constructions in the Algarve, (...) the wisdom that the Algarvian 'architect' demonstrates when he establishes a human scale with which to measure his buildings, a character [stemming] from his logical use of materials and, most importantly, from his concept of dwelling, which he feels in his blood [and] leads him to calve flesh of his own flesh [just as] a female cannot but give birth to anything other than her own child, her same, always bettered and more apt to live in her environment.²⁰

The project was received in the tourism department SNI with such enthusiasm that the developer was led to double the number of rooms. The SNI defended the project, which disregarded minimum distances from the cliffs' edge, from criticism by the maritime and planning departments, asking them to accept the location 'in view of [its] true touristic relevance'.²¹ The officials praised 'the effort to achieve a valid architectural work' and the adoption of a fragmented solution instead of a single volume.²² This support eased the project's approval, in 1961, by all central and local government bodies, and its classification as a 'touristic utility', a special status carrying significant tax exemptions.²³



Figure 4. 'Olhão', the Algarvian village in the *Aldeias Portuguesas* ensemble at the Exposition of the Portuguese World (Lisbon), n.d. [1940]; photograph by E. Portugal (courtesy of the Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa/Núcleo Fotográfico, Lisbon).

Chaves's and Sant'Ana's expressive statement focused on a few essential points: first, their intention to respect the 'natural setting, the jagged and sinuous cliffs' and to 'enhance their jaggedness against the blue sky, giving it a more clear and pure profile through the use of built masses rendered in whitewash' (Fig. 6). Secondly, their own 'spatial-dynamic concept' that exposed the hotel's organism through an evolving play of volumes, exploring the changing shadows projected by consecutive planes and masses. And finally, their suggestion of a 'natural', 'sensed' building, a combination of their own design skills, the requirements

imposed by the site and the lessons learned from the Algarve's building tradition, its geographic and human environment, informal agents and unwritten rules.

The Hotel do Garbe designers shared, in the late 1950s, the renewed attention to vernacular buildings that engaged architects the world over.²⁴ They belonged to a group of Portuguese post-war architects that followed closely the *Inquérito à Arquitectura Popular* process, the survey of folk architecture in Portugal, reputedly a collective effort to identify modern architecture with vernacular practice and thereby to legitimise the former.²⁵ By

Figure 5. Hotel do Garbe (Armação de Pêra, Silves), n.d. [196-]; anonymous photographer (courtesy of the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo/ Secretariado Nacional de Informação fonds, Lisbon).



1959, Chaves was increasingly integrating the lexicon of post-war international modernism with Portuguese regional materials, techniques and formal solutions, and developing a strong personal vocabulary, apparent in some of his best 1960s' work in Lisbon.

This was Chaves's first large-scale commission in the Algarve and a good opportunity to realise his version of the region's 'true' traditional features. A three-pronged, three-floor layout formed a sinuous

plan that followed the edge line, with an additional fourth wing, half-buried and landscape-roofed, whose bedrooms sat only five metres above beach level; a sequence of platforms deployed as communal spaces (lounge, dining and sitting rooms, dining terraces) against the seascape. In the upper floors, bathrooms were externalised in protruding box-like volumes that created deep, hollowed-out balconies and precisely framed views. The concept, somewhat unusual for modern hotel design, had a well-known



Figure 6. Hotel do Garbe (Armação de Pêra, Silves), n.d. [196-]; anonymous photographer (courtesy of the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo/Secretariado Nacional de Informação fonds, Lisbon).

precedent in André Lurçat's Hotel Nord-Sud in Corsica (1929–1931), an early instance of modernist engagement with Mediterranean vernacular,²⁶ but the Garbe's inset terraces had a more dramatic effect.

The hotel, in Chaves's words, would respond to the Algarve's challenging climate by 'opening up, here and there, to frame the surrounding panoramas, while sheltering [guests] from the blinding outside light'.²⁷ The same whitewash 'that for cen-

turies has covered roofs, terraces, walls, pavements and steps, sometimes smudging the floor', would tie the building to others 'equal in spirit' and, eventually, allow it to 'remain alive in a hundred years' time.²⁸ In short, with formal metaphors that generated a 'spiritual' relationship between the 1959 Hotel do Garbe and the age-old, anonymous forms of the Algarvian 'architect', the designers sought to minimise the impact of the building on its immediate context, and to bestow upon it a 'natural' long

life: overcoming the limitations of passing architectural trends, it belonged in the long-span lineage of vernacular architecture.

Finished in 1963, the Garbe soon became popular with both architectural and general media. Compliments came from the British Council of Industrial Design's press officer, who stayed and wrote to Chaves praising that 'most successful building (...) which so brilliantly combines the indigenous materials of your country with an uncompromising modernity'.²⁹ The magazine *Arquitectura* commended the project for, 'with an extraordinary strength', its contribution to enhancing 'the landscape's purest features—the shape and colour of its cliffs'.³⁰ A 1964 *Life* magazine feature on the region showed the breakfast service on the terrace of the Garbe, 'which is known as the Ritz of the Algarve'.³¹ And a travel writer called it 'a personal choice for quieter holidays (...) terraced down to the beach, rooms crisply whitewashed and furnished in Algarve style'.³²

The hotel's planning process seems particularly noteworthy here, irrespective of its architectural and commercial successes. The encouragement provided by the highest tourism authority in Portugal, occasionally countering the views of other government agencies, suggests that this formula coincided with the SNI's vision for Algarve's hospitality industry. Or, to be more precise, that the correct balance between the economic potential of the Algarve's tourism industry and its natural and human features was a concern of the office, and that the blend of regional tradition and international modernity proposed by the Garbe's designers may have been seen as a positive solution to the problem.

In 1959, as the Garbe was being designed, Portugal's government seemed hesitant as to the best way to accommodate growing foreign demand. Pedro Teotónio Pereira (1902–1972), the Minister in charge of the SNI, voiced the regime's perplexities at this crossroads when he opened the Ritz,³³ the first modern luxury hotel in Lisbon. 'It is no longer the time to philosophise on the good and evil of modern tourism' he conceded. 'We are, however, at great risk of ruining much of what nature and the past generations have left us'. A blatantly modernist building such as the Ritz was acceptable only in Lisbon's modern neighbourhoods, and would be 'unforgivable nonsense' in the old town. Similarly,

In the old villages of the inland or the seaside, in Beira as in the Algarve, where there is local beauty and character, the artists' role is not indiscriminately to reproduce small-scale, budget-conscious Ritzes, but to interpret the suggestions of the environment (...). There are plenty of empty spaces where new styles and ideas can be experimented with. [Some] traditional townscapes have to be preserved, protected and even improved and completed, if possible. That is what most of our visitors best appreciate and try to get to know. (...) The entire vast infrastructure *that modern tourism imposes on us* must be sensitive to that spirit of comprehension of local qualities.³⁴

The *Estado Novo* regime of the late 1950s was altogether different from that of twenty years before, and the realisation of the value of tourism was now an inescapable 'imposition' even for conservative political circles. As the Minister's speech indicates, there was a reluctance to let go of past formulae (easily controllable, small numbers of

travellers staying overnight in bucolic panoramas) and to embrace the demands of 'modern tourism'. The government would keep on building Pousadas 'where nothing else exists' but would have to make way for private developers to produce larger-scale structures. And while its officials still seemed determined to combine international standards with Portuguese specificity, the state knew that it was taking a serious step: it was passing on the responsibility of interpreting local or regional character through architecture, which it had so closely controlled in the Pousadas programme, to businesspeople whose key goal was commercial profit. This was a fundamental change in the production of Portuguese hospitality structures, which the Hotel do Garbe epitomises.

The Garbe, however, was not especially problematic: despite its sensitive setting, it was designed for one of those 'empty spaces' for experiments with 'new styles and ideas', and did not have to deal with the 'traditional townscapes' that were consensually considered, along with low living costs and the climate, as the key to Portugal's touristic success. As a guide to Spain and Portugal put it naïvely in 1956, these countries 'have sturdily preserved the authenticity of their culture and the originality of their way of life; as a result, their attractions for the visitor [remained] unspoiled', and their prestige 'as favourite holiday haunts' was rising.³⁵ Portugal's remoteness and underdevelopment were still attractive, as were the Algarve's character, landscape, villages and people. One visitor wrote in 1959: 'I am in a way happy to say that there is very little accom-

modation, since this is undoubtedly why the Algarve is so unspoilt. (...) Albufeira—I hate to say it because I am so afraid that I may spoil it—is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. (...) There are only two simple pensions here'.³⁶

In fact, these personal impressions of 'a country not only most beautiful but also completely unself-conscious'³⁷ ran simultaneously with the international advertisement of Portugal as the land of 'The sunniest climate—The bluest sea—The sandiest beaches',³⁸ where there was no rain 'but tourists pour in'.³⁹ And the fishing village of Albufeira embodied the 'traditional townscapes' where tensions created by the construction of 'small-scale Ritzes' rose in the late 1950s, as illustrated by the planning process of its first large hotel, the Sol e Mar.

In September, 1959, shortly before the Minister's speech (and possibly prompting his comments), 'touristic utility' status was requested for Hotel Sol e Mar, designed by the architect Fernando Silva (1914–1983) for a plot immediately below the chapel whose tower was Albufeira's landmark. The modernist slab of this fifty-room hotel was to be inlaid in the cliff wall so as not to be seen from within the village. Inversely, from the sea, its presence would be imposing: a six-storey concrete structure interrupting the rugged cliff backdrop to the scenic Peneco beach (figs 7, 8). The Prime Minister, Salazar, who had the final word on classification as a 'touristic utility', was shocked at the idea. Persuaded to support a *fait accompli* in this case (the building was under construction), he nevertheless insisted that his government should normally

Figure 7. 'Praia do Peneco' (Albufeira), the Hotel Sol e Mar under construction, n.d. [195-]; photograph by A. Pastor (courtesy of the Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa/Núcleo Fotográfico, Lisbon).





Figure 8. 'Praia do Peneco' (Albufeira): the Hotel Sol e Mar, n.d. [196-]; photograph by A. Pastor (courtesy of the Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa/Núcleo Fotográfico, Lisbon).

exercise this prerogative over hospitality structures in order to regulate their design:

[Considering] the crisis that architecture faces among us, it is convenient that official entities and technical services are consulted on the architectural quality of hotels that request the touristic utility grade. (...) We can exert a useful influence in moderating the distempers and whims of the modern art of construction, which should not be mistaken for architecture, at least by not conceding the status to buildings that lack minimum artistic requisites.⁴⁰

The conflicting views on the subject were further exposed shortly afterwards, when an English artist wrote to Salazar begging him to 'save Albufeira'. Trimnell-Ritchard thought that the 'immense block in contemporary style, with all the usual clichés and ignoring the beautiful and simple architectural style of the Algarve', could still be modified, citing the good example of the Pousadas plan, where preservation of the extant environment and the needs of travellers were reconciled. He alerted Salazar to the fact that Portugal should not try to attract tourists based on the sun-and-sea formula alone, but should rely also on 'the magnificent buildings and simple, charming villages', which were being disfigured by modern designs that, 'when trends wear out, will appear as simply ugly'.⁴¹ More significant than the complaint, however, was the response it triggered. Asked to comment on the complaint (and, implicitly, to account for the construction), the Minister of Public Works, Arantes e Oliveira (1907–1982) admitted that he approved of both location and design. To erect this large building away from Albufeira's centre, he conceded, would

have saved the village's picturesqueness and averted a clash with the new. Yet its houses were generally modest, in poor condition and devoid of individual 'plastic interest', and would not last long; consequently, once the 'inevitable transformation' of the village occurred, and the 'current, poor picturesque [was] transmuted into another formula, less pleasing to the painter and the poet, but more civilised (...) the hotel now under construction [would] look better'.⁴²

The short dispute about the Sol e Mar's modernist slab encapsulates the conflicting positions within the highest echelons of the Portuguese government regarding tourism development in the Algarve. The assertive position of the Minister of Public Works—with his extraordinary defence of a modernist hotel building as a catalyst for the urban renewal of a backward and deprived, if picturesque, fishing village—made clear how, at this threshold, there was not one clear road to follow, but many. There was no straightforward balance between such development and the region's characteristics, natural and human, even in as centralised a state as Portugal then was. Central agencies were under pressure from developers, and had only limited leeway to resist their interests, whatever the Prime Minister's own views.⁴³ Furthermore, the region's village architecture, traditional and picturesque, had a dark, insalubrious, decadent side⁴⁴ to which tourism development was likely to be seen as an eagerly awaited antidote. Local character might draw tourism, that modern phenomenon, but would eventually be itself modernised. In Albufeira, the Hotel Sol e Mar was kept hidden from one of the village's best viewpoints, and its presence in

the cliff remained an exception; the pressure of speculation and the insistence on the centre's picturesque potential later converged in unrestrained expansion inland, resulting in an exemplarily flawed case of tourism development. The visitor who found Albufeira to be 'the St. Tropez of the Algarve' in 1968, and noted that 'Development is almost out of the question because there is only space to go up the hillside',⁴⁵ was at least in this respect right.

Epilogue

The Algarve's fully-fledged touristic development and built environment transformation took place only after the opening of an international airport in Faro, in 1965. However, the late 1950s were the pivotal moment when the main elements in the equation fell into place: the region's delicate natural and man-made character and its exotic allure to national and foreign travellers, on the one hand, and the consequences of the exploitation of its attractions on that same character, on the other. Twenty years before, the difficulty of such balance was already hinted at, but a combination of internal policy and worldwide disruption (the war) prevented it from being tested.

Leisure architecture was asked to engage with the features of a conspicuous vernacular tradition, whether in more linear or sophisticated ways. The forms such negotiation produced offer a catalogue of metropolitan views of Algarve's built identity, and an insight into how the stances of different actors modulated. Some forms may have been closer to central politics (the Pousada) and others further away (the Hotel Garbe), but they shared the same

instrumental approach to the Algarve's features, aimed at potentiating the integration of demanding new facilities with the extant environment. Both were compromises, viable when the scale was insignificant (the Pousada) or the setting was generous (the Garbe). When post-war modernism forced its way in and (allegedly) believed its vernacular context would be transformed whilst being assimilated, the catch was exposed: large-scale hospitality architecture and fine-grained local building identity became mutually dependent, but the former could hardly avoid endangering the latter, and would eventually kill it—or, depending on one's viewpoint, deeply transform it.

In a broader sense, the two stages of development of tourism infrastructure in Algarve examined in this essay may also be seen as exemplary of how such processes, determined by purposes and concerns well beyond the sphere of architecture, can modulate according to changing internal and external circumstances. The Portuguese *Estado Novo* regime of the late 1930s used hospitality policies and architecture as tools in a complex, all-encompassing programme of nation building, both physical and metaphorical. The Pousadas were condensers of regional architecture, but above all they were instruments of control: through them, the regime displayed the country and its landscapes according to precise guidelines ('diversity in unity'), and sought to control the way travellers experienced Portugal, from the building's location down to the dining room's tableware and the staff's uniforms. In an incipient industry, the state established the rules and tried to perfect a largely imperfect reality.

Two decades on, with the rise of North-European Welfare State markets for Algarve's tourism and of

internal awareness of its economic importance, the regime was forced to adjust its stance. There was no longer a case for controlling the experience of the traveller with low-key facilities and country house simulacra: this was now an ideal basis on which to showcase Portugal's distinct formula of modernity and tradition, of international sophistication and local idiosyncrasy. As it gave way to private enterprise, the State maintained the illusion that such a balance could be kept—a balance that in many ways mirrored the conundrum that the state itself faced, trying to sustain a fascist regime in post-war western Europe. And even its representatives' actions seemed engaged in the same tight-rope-walking exercise. When, in July, 1965, the President of the Republic visited the Algarve finally to inaugurate the airport in Faro, he lodged at the Alportel Pousada and attended a gala dinner and fireworks display in the Hotel Sol e Mar in Albufeira,⁴⁶ thus combining two tenses of tourism in the Algarve—the past (the Pousada) and the present (the Hotel)—and evoking the sense of transition towards a future (the airport) that seemed promising but unclear.

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Notes and references

1. Luís Reis Santos, *et al.*, *Paisagem e Monumentos de Portugal* (Lisbon, Secção de Propaganda e Recepção da Comissão Nacional dos Centenários, 1940), p. 11.
2. [António de Oliveira Salazar], 'Independência de Portugal (Nota Oficial da Presidência do Conselho) [Março de 1938], ' *Revista dos Centenários* (1939).
3. Joaquim Roque da Fonseca, Leitão de Barros, (editor), 'Hotel Modelo. A Iniciativa do Nosso Jornal Apreciada pelo Presidente do Centro Português de Turismo (A.C.P.),' *O Notícias Ilustrado* (17th September, 1933).
4. Called Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional, SPN, from 1933, and Secretariado Nacional de Informação, Cultura Popular e Turismo, known as SNI, from 1944.
5. L. R. Santos, *et al.*, *Paisagem e Monumentos de Portugal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9.
6. A batch of eight projects, seven of which were commissioned in September, 1938: the architect Rogério de Azevedo was given the units in the north of the country (Marão, Vouga and Estrela), the architect Veloso Reis Camelo those in the centre (Arrábida and Alfeizerão) and the architect Miguel Jacobetty the units in the south (Elvas and São Brás de Alportel): *cf.*, Lisbon, IHRU/DGEMN, file DSARH-011-0002/01 ('Pousadas. Processo Geral'). Later Jacobetty also designed the unit in Santiago do Cacém (Sines). The Arrábida project was never built.
7. 'As Primeiras Pousadas de Turismo Estarão Prontas em Agosto', *[Diário de Notícias]* (4th May, 1940).
8. This link has been established primarily through the analysis of Lino's 1933 best-selling book *Casas Portuguesas* and of his prominent role, that same year, in the Hotel Modelo (Model Hotel) newspaper campaign and itinerant exhibition. See Susana Lobo, *Pousadas de Portugal* (Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2007). Lobo considers the 1920s' Spanish 'Albergues de Carretera' and Francisco de Lima's 1936 thesis *Pousadas* to have been other fundamental references for the launch of the Portuguese state's Pousadas programme. The author of this essay, in turn, suggests that Lino's influence in the Pousadas plan can be traced back to 1915, when he presented his own thesis of a 'Portuguese Hotel to be Built in the South of the Country'—a strong didactic hospitality prototype in many ways similar to the 1933 Model Hotel proposals, commissioned and supervised by Lino. See Raul Lino, *Memória Justificativa e Descritiva de Um Projecto de Hotel Português Para Ser Construído no Sul do País* ([n.p.]; [n. pub.]; [1915].) and José Leitão de Barros, (editor), 'O Nosso Jornal e o Turismo', *O Notícias Ilustrado* (30th July, 1933).
9. Armando de Aguiar, Anne Marie Jausse, (illustrator), 'Digressão Turística à volta da Pousada de São Brás', *Panorama. Revista Portuguesa de Arte e Turismo* (1944).
10. R. Lino, 'Anteprojectos de Pousadas para as Regiões (...). Parecer', assessment, 22nd October, 1938: Lisbon, IHRU/DGEMN-DSARH-011-0002/01 ('Pousadas. Processo Geral').
11. R. Lino, 'Conselho Central. Pousada do Algarve', assessment, 27th January, 1939: Lisbon, IHRU/DGEMN-REE-0171/02 ('Pousada a Construir em São Brás de Alportel').
12. M. Jacobetty, 'Projecto da "Pousada do Algarve" em S. Brás de Alportel. Memória Descritiva e Justificativa', project statement, 6th April, 1939: Lisbon, IHRU/DGEMN-DSARH-011-0036/04 ('Projecto da "Pousada do Algarve" em S. Brás de Alportel'). The Pousada was furnished with paintings by Carlos Botelho and decorated by Vera Leroy and Anne Marie Jausse.
13. Olhão and Fuseta (a nearby fishing village) are unique in the Algarve, in what regards the systematic repetition of the same terrace-roofed urban house type. On the background of the modernist fascination with Olhão vernacular, see Ricardo Agarez, 'Olhão, Modern Vernacular and Vernacular Modernism', in

First International Meeting EAHN—European Architectural History Network (Guimarães, European Architectural History Network and Universidade do Minho, Escola de Arquitectura, 2010). On the influence of such a fascination in Lisbon-designed low-budget housing schemes for Olhão, see Ricardo Agarez, 'Metropolitan Narratives on Peripheral Contexts: Buildings and Constructs in Algarve (South Portugal), c. 1950', in *Peripheries*, Ruth Morrow, Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem, eds (London, Routledge, 2012).

14. António Ferro, 'Olhão, Terra Cubista', *Ilustração Portuguesa* (14th January, 1922).
15. In the Portuguese pavilion of the 'Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne' in Paris, the visitor was welcomed into the hall of honour by paintings depicting nine Portuguese provinces; 'Algarve' was a fantasised version of Olhão by Francis Smith (1881–1961), with almond trees blossoming among oversized, immaculately white houses on whose terraces women laboured.
16. 'Only in Portugal can you find a cubist town': cited in, Margarida Acciaioli, *Exposições do Estado Novo. 1934–1940* (Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 1998), p. 60.
17. Portugal's regions were represented by a series of cabinet-sized models of picturesque scenes, created by Jorge Matos Chaves (1912–1988), which replaced life-size replicas and presented traditional architecture, monumental and vernacular, scaled-down to toy dimensions. See Jorge Segurado, 'Portugal nas Exposições de Nova Iorque e São Francisco', *Revista Oficial do Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos*, no. 11 (1939). The 'Algarve' model displayed the Olhão house type surrounded by other conventional Algarve attributes (almond tree, decorated rural house, horse-drawn cart).
18. The ensemble is described in some detail by Luís Chaves, Horácio Novais (photographer), in *Roteiro do Centro Regional. Exposição do Mundo Português*, edited by the Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional (Lisbon, Edições SPN, 1940).
19. 'If a guest comes into one of these Pousadas and has the impression, not that he came into a hotel where he will be known by his room number, but that he arrived at his country home, where his servants await him—then we will have achieved our purpose.': A. Ferro, lecture at the SPN headquarters (Lisbon), 27th March, 1943, cited in S. Lobo, *Pousadas de Portugal*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
20. Jorge Ferreira Chaves, Frederico Sant'Ana, 'Hotel do Garbe', preliminary design statement, 5th February, 1960 (Lisbon, AMFC).
21. Secretariado Nacional de Informação, letter 4152/T-3 to Direcção-Geral dos Serviços de Urbanização (DGSU), 24th May, 1960 (Lisbon, AMFC).
22. Secretariado Nacional de Informação, letter 40.230 to Francisco Santos, 17th April, 1961 (Lisbon, AMFC).
23. The 'Utilidade Turística' status was established in 1954 and detailed in 1956: cf. Presidência da República, 'Lei n.º 2073', *Diário da República I Série*, 286, 23rd December, 1954 (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1954); ———, 'Lei n.º 2081', *Diário da República I Série*, 113, 4th June, 1956 (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1956).
24. Best known today are the cases of Giuseppe Pagano's work on Italian rural architecture featured in the magazine *Casabella* in the 1930s and exhibited in Milan in 1936, and of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's survey of American vernacular tradition published in 1957. On these subjects, see, respectively, Michelangelo Sabatino, *Pride in Modesty: Modernist Architecture and the Vernacular Tradition in Italy* (Toronto, Buffalo, London, University of Toronto Press, 2010) and Hilde Heynen, 'Anonymous Architecture as Counter-image: Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's Perspective on American Vernacular', *The Journal of Architecture*, Vol. 13, no. 4 (2008).
25. The survey, planned by Portuguese architects since the 1940s (Távora in 1945, Keil do Amaral in 1947), was

- finally realised from 1955 onwards with a grant from the Portuguese state. The results were published in 1961 as *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal*, a book that became a key reference on the subject for succeeding generations of architects. The importance of the survey for both the architectural and anthropological cultures in Portugal has been widely discussed. See, for instance, Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50* (Porto, FAUP, 1997); João Leal, *Etnografias Portuguesas, 1870–1970* (Lisbon, Publicações Dom Quixote, 2000) and João Leal, 'Entre o Vernáculo e o Híbrido: a Partir do Inquérito à Arquitectura Popular em Portugal', *Joelho*, no. 2 (2011). The survey's approach to the Algarve and its misgivings have recently been scrutinised in Ricardo Agarez, 'Vernacular, Conservative, Modernist: The Uncomfortable "Zone 6" (Algarve) of the Portuguese Folk Architecture Survey (1955–1961)', in *Surveys on Vernacular Architecture. Their Significance in 20th Century Architectural Culture*, Alexandra Cardoso, Joana Cunha Leal, Maria Helena Maia, eds (Porto, ESAP-CEAA, 2012).
26. See Jean-Louis Cohen, *André Lurçat: 1894–1970: Autocritique d'un moderne* (Liège, Mardaga, 1995), pp. 110–120.
 27. Jorge Ferreira Chaves, 'Hotel do Garbe,' final design statement, 20th December, 1960 (Lisbon, AMFC).
 28. Cf. Jorge Ferreira Chaves, Frederico Sant'Ana, 'Hotel do Garbe,' preliminary design statement, 5th February, 1960 (Lisbon, AMFC).
 29. David Wainwright, letter to Jorge Ferreira Chaves, 1st October, 1963 (Lisbon, AMFC).
 30. Rui Mendes Paula, 'Hotel do Garbe', *Arquitectura*, no. 83 (1964), p. 103.
 31. Farrel Grehan (photographer), 'Portugal's Algarve—Lovely, Little-known, Europe's Best Travel Bargain', *Life* (23rd October, 1964), p. 65.
 32. Adrienne Keith Cohen, 'Turn Left at Sagres', *The Guardian* (28th December, 1968), p. 5.
 33. Designed by a team led by the architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro (1897–1957) and built under the supervision of Jorge Chaves, between 1952 and 1959.
 34. [Pedro Teotónio Pereira], 'O Futuro Demonstrará, Firmemente o Creio, Que Foi Avisado Dotar Lisboa...', *O Século* (25th November, 1959), p. 7 [my italics].
 35. *Spain and Portugal*, Fodor's Modern Guides, Eugene Fodor, ed. (London, Newman Neame Limited, 1956).
 36. Pierre d'Harcourt, 'Time Off in Portugal', *The Observer* (8th March, 1959), p. 29.
 37. Garry Lester Hogg, Beth Hogg, 'Money Goes a Long Way in Portugal', *The Manchester Guardian* (18th April, 1955), p. 12. Garry Hogg had previously published a travelogue on Portugal, *Portuguese Journey* (London, Museum Press, 1954).
 38. 'The Sunniest Climate—The Bluest Sea—The Sandiest Beaches—The Loveliest Scenery—Gay Resorts—Good Food and Wine—Inexpensive and Friendly Hotels', as advertised in *The Guardian* (30th December, 1959).
 39. This was the slogan in a poster by Nuno Costa, 'No Rain in Portugal but Tourists Pour In', *Panorama. Revista Portuguesa de Arte e Turismo* (March, 1959).
 40. António de Oliveira Salazar, government order, n.d. [September, 1959], Lisbon, ANTT/AOS-PC-44B-cx.625-pt.27 ('Declaração do Hotel de Albufeira de Utilidade Turística. Valor Arquitectónico dos Hóteis de Utilidade Turística').
 41. Edgar Trimnell-Ritchard, letter to António de Oliveira Salazar, 13th October, 1959, Lisbon, ANTT/AOS-OP-9-cx.482-pt.15 ('Urbanização de Albufeira. Construção do Hotel Sol e Mar em Albufeira').
 42. Eduardo Arantes e Oliveira, assessment of the complaint by Trimnell-Ritchard, 16th November, 1959, *ibid.*
 43. As the architect Keil do Amaral (1910–1975) so clearly expressed it in his 1961 text 'Nuvens Negras Sobre o

Futuro do Algarve' ('Dark Clouds Over the Algarve's Future'). His concerns about the region's projected development, mirroring those of the Lisbon and Porto intelligentsia at the time, were then translated into his Public Works-commissioned Report 'Bases para o Desenvolvimento Turístico do Algarve' ('Bases for the Touristic Development of the Algarve'), 1961–1962. See Ana Tostões, 'Estilo Internacional, Turismo e Transformação do Território ou as "Nuvens Negras" Profetizadas por Keil do Amaral', in *Arquitetura Moderna e Turismo: 1925–1965, Actas do IV Congresso DOCOMOMO Ibérico* (Barcelona, Fundació Mies van der Rohe—DOCOMOMO Ibérico, 2004)

and Susana Lobo, 'A Colonização da Linha de Costa: Da Marginal ao "Resort"', *Jornal Arquitectos*, no. 227 (2007), p. 22.

44. Captured in a few contemporary accounts; the case of Albufeira, for instance, was described in detail in Frank Edward Huggett, *South of Lisbon* (London, Gollancz, 1960).
45. Diana Petry, 'Only Just Found, Not Yet Lost', *The Observer* (23rd June, 1968), p. 29.
46. 'Programa da Visita de Sua Excelência o Senhor Presidente da República ao Algarve, nos Dias 11, 12 e 13 de Julho de 1965' (June, 1965; Lisbon, PCM/AOS-PT/SGPCM/AOS/G-237/06).