

## EUROPE

# What's New in Portugal?

By Barbara Radcliffe Rogers and Stillman Rogers

**W**ithout losing a bit of the Old World charm and grace that makes it unique in Western Europe, Portugal has undergone some changes your clients should know about. The big hotel news for 2010 is more stars for less money. A total of 29 hotels, most 4- or 5-star, opened in 2010, adding 7,000 rooms to satisfy Portugal's increasing tourism numbers. Clearly this little country is no longer a secret, but the good news for visitors is that average hotel rates have fallen by 15%; Lisbon's average nightly rate is 84 (about \$110).

### New Algarve Hotels

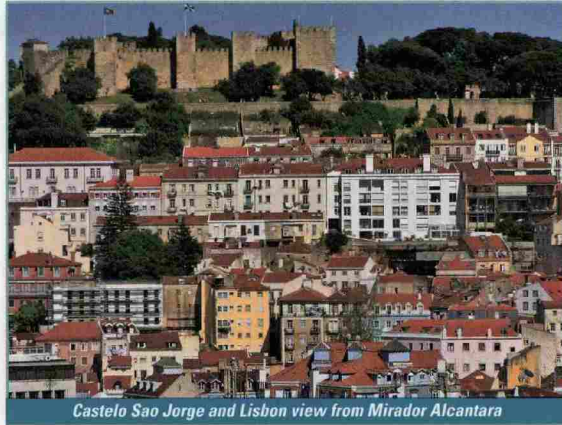
Half those new rooms are along the sunny southern coast, a year-round playground of long beaches and manicured golf courses. **Radisson Blu** ([www.radisson.com](http://www.radisson.com)) will open in Portimão early in 2011, and the 5-star **Vale D'Oliveiras Quinta Resort & Spa** is already open, near the beaches of Carvoeiro ([www.valedoliveirasresort.com](http://www.valedoliveirasresort.com)). Its organic farm produces ingredients for the resort's restaurant. Family-oriented 5-star **Real Marina Hotel & Spa** ([www.realhotelsgroup.com](http://www.realhotelsgroup.com)) in Olhão includes a marina for easy boat access to island beaches. Also catering to families is the 5-star "Barefoot Luxury" **Martinhal Resort in Sagres** ([www.martinhal.com](http://www.martinhal.com)). Nearby, the new **Memmo Baleeira Hotel** ([www.arteh-hotels.com](http://www.arteh-hotels.com)) has a chic contemporary style and a smart restaurant, overlooking the harbor and lighthouse.

Arteh Hotels is a good resource for agents, representing select independent hotels and pousadas throughout Portugal; all reservations made through them are fully commissionable. Also a member is the luxe hideaway, **Monte do Casal**, a converted 18th-century manor house overlooking terraced gardens, within minutes of the Algarve's airport at Faro. Be sure to reserve clients' dinners here, since this is one of southern Portugal's best dining experiences, with plenty of variety to keep palates pleased through a week's stay ([www.arteh-hotels.com](http://www.arteh-hotels.com)).

### A Lot to Love in Lisbon

The star of Lisbon's hotel news is in neighboring Cascais, the glamorous seaside enclave of deposed royalty and spies during World War II. Opening this month, **The Oitavos** is a bold contemporary work of art filled with sculpture and paintings by Portuguese artists ([www.theoitavos.com](http://www.theoitavos.com)). Not new, but in the city's best location, **Hotel Mundial** is in the heart of Lisbon, in the path of the historic #28 Tram, affording access to the most popular attractions. Request a room with castle views ([www.hotel-mundial.pt](http://www.hotel-mundial.pt)).

Tell clients about two new museums in Lisbon, one of them hailed as the equal to the Guggenheim in Venice. **The Berardo Collection Museum** in Belem shows about 250 pieces cov-



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Castelo Sao Jorge and Lisbon view from Mirador Alcantara

ering the 20th and 21st centuries, including major works by Andy Warhol, Picasso, Modigliani, Magritte, Miró, Pollock and Dali ([www.museuberardo.com](http://www.museuberardo.com)). The **Museu do Design e da Moda (MuDe)** displays iconic works of influential 20th-century designers, including "New Look" fashions by Christian Dior ([www.mude.pt](http://www.mude.pt)).

Equally big news is Lisbon's dining scene. No longer limited to the traditional dishes, Lisboetas have embraced a new breed of chefs and their restaurants. Still firmly dedicated to the best fresh local ingredients – just-caught fish, Iberian pork (porco preto), mountain cheeses – Lisbon chefs are rocking the table with innovative pairings and presentations. Leading the pack is Vitor Sobral, serving tapas-style dishes at his new **Tasca da Esquina** ([www.tascadaesquina.com](http://www.tascadaesquina.com)). Miguel Castro e Silva puts an international edge on Portuguese favorites at **Largo** in a former cloister ([www.largo.pt](http://www.largo.pt)). Or reserve clients a table at Luis Baena's avante-garde **Manifesto** ([www.restaurantemanifesto.com](http://www.restaurantemanifesto.com)).

### The Alentejo and North

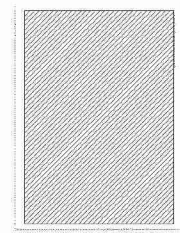
Even a short visit allows time to get beyond the capital, and Evora, in the heart of the Alentejo region east of Lisbon, is a good place to head. Book clients inside the UNESCO World Heritage city center, at the stunningly sophisticated **M'ar de Ar Aqueducto** (<http://mardearaqueduto.arteh-hotels.com>), and a table at **Degust'AR Restaurant**.

Suggest they try one of the fine Alentejo wines that are turning heads at international tastings, and follow the wine route to visit vintners. Or they can sample a wide selection of the very best at the wine co-op in Borba ([www.adegaborba.pt](http://www.adegaborba.pt)).

The hot news in Poro, Portugal's second-largest city, is the construction of a new cruise terminal at Leixões, where the Douro River meets the Atlantic. Scheduled for 2011-12 completion, it includes a terminal building, a Science Park of the Sea and a new dock accommodating ships up to 300m long, boosting Porto to a major port-of-call.

Clients traveling by land can still enjoy a cruise experience on a day- or week-long boat trip up the Douro through the steep terraced slopes of Portugal's best-known wine-growing region. Active travelers might prefer the new 5-night bike tour priced at \$3,200 ([www.bluecoastbikes.com](http://www.bluecoastbikes.com)) exploring the valley's villages and vineyards by bicycle, boat and train.

Book their city stay at the beautifully restored **Hotel Infante Sagres** ([www.hotelinfantesagres.pt](http://www.hotelinfantesagres.pt) or [www.slh.com](http://www.slh.com)), a grand hotel with chic contemporary rooms in the heart of the



old city. Across the river, amid the Port wine lodges of Vila Nova de Gaia, **The Yeatman Hotel & Wine Spa** opened this summer with terraces overlooking Porto ([www.the-yeatman-hotel.com](http://www.the-yeatman-hotel.com)). **Design Hotel Teatro** opened in the spring, a theatrically stylish 74-room lodging in central Porto (<http://hotelteatro.pt> or [www.designhotels.com](http://www.designhotels.com)).

For unforgettable dining on fresh local ingredients, clients will thank you for booking a table at the new **Restaurante DOP**, in the Palácio das Artes, where chef Rui Paula creates masterpieces on plates ([www.ruipaula.com](http://www.ruipaula.com)).

Clients may have heard of Portugal's Pousadas, located in authentically restored historic buildings. One of the finest is a richly endowed medieval convent on a hillside overlooking nearby Guimares, the **Pousada Santa Marinha** ([www.pousadas.pt](http://www.pousadas.pt) or [www.arteh-hotels.com](http://www.arteh-hotels.com)). Cordial service and an excellent dining room presenting updated local classics add to the experience. Suggest that clients explore northern Portugal's beautiful countryside and beaches, staying in another historic property in the elegant small coastal city of Viana do Castelo. **Casa Melo Alvim** ([www.meloalvimhouse.com](http://www.meloalvimhouse.com), [www.arteh-hotels.com](http://www.arteh-hotels.com)) occupies a grand manor house, a historic landmark in the heart of the city.

Book trans-Atlantic travel to Lisbon or Porto from New York and Star Alliance hubs via **TAP Air Portugal** (800-221-7370, [www.flytap.com](http://www.flytap.com)) or to Lisbon from Boston, Oakland or Toronto on **SATA Azores Express** (800-762-9995, [www.sata.pt/en](http://www.sata.pt/en)). For more information visit [www.visitportugal.com](http://www.visitportugal.com)