

DUNAS GOLF COURSE

## A drive for excellence

Open since the beginning of June, the Dunas Golf Course is already the talk of the town in golf circles. Whether it's amateurs, professionals or specialist critics, those who have played here have been unanimous in their praise, while touting it as a world-class course, unrivalled in southern Europe.

The 18-hole, par-71 course was completed after Vanguard Properties had acquired the "Herdade da Comporta tourist development areas" and decided to revive golfing as part of its projects in the region.

Designed by the renowned Scottish golf architect David McLay-Kidd, the man who created such famous courses as Bandon Dunes (Oregon, USA), the Castle Course (St. Andrews, Scotland) and Queenwood (Surrey, England), Dunas, which is McLay-Kidd's first course on mainland Europe, stretches over 84 hectares of pine forest and sandy soil, just a stone's throw from the Atlantic coast of the Alentejo region. What is particularly impressive is how the course combines perfectly with the surrounding landscape.

*"A case of love at first sight, as well as the feeling that I was dealing with something*



*truly unique*", is how McLay-Kidd remembers his first visit to Comporta and the area reserved for the course. Such was the uniqueness of the place that he adopted a strict approach of maximum respect for the land's morphology and natural characteristics, in contrast to usual practice, which involves adapting the land to the architect's idea. This process often implies causing major disturbance, such as large-scale movement of earth, while here McLay-Kidd designed the course to take full advantage of what nature already provided. Similarly, he chose not to include water hazards, preferring bunkers containing sand from the local area.

WITH SUSTAINABILITY BEING THE WATCHWORD AT TERRAS DA COMPORTA, IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT DUNAS BOASTS A STATE-OF-THE-ART, WATER-EFFICIENT COMPUTERISED IRRIGATION SYSTEM. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE SAME SYSTEM WILL BE SUPPLIED BY THE RESORT'S WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT.

The end result couldn't have turned out any better: a remarkably beautiful, undulating course with wide fairways that McLay-Kidd highlights for its distinctiveness. He has managed to achieve a balance between a tempting challenge for more experienced golfers, as well as for those with a lower

handicap, while not punishing the less well-prepared too much. For the golf architect, this links course is unique in Europe, and a must for players who enjoy this type of play. This opinion is shared by Pedro Figueiredo, AKA Figgy, a DP World Tour golf professional. [\(continue on next page\)](#)

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sional and Vanguard Properties ambassador, who also underlines the power and skill needed for the Dunas Golf Course.

For those initially unsure of its quality, their doubts must have vanished when Dunas appeared on the World Golf Awards shortlist in a remarkable four categories: “Best new golf course in the world”, “Best new golf course in Europe”, “Best golf course in Europe” and “Best golf course in Portugal”. The results will be announced at a ceremony held in Abu Dhabi this October.

rant area, a bar, a pro-shop, as well as multipurpose rooms for meetings, congresses, conferences and other types of events.

As Terras da Comporta’s Golf Director Rodrigo Ulrich explains, “Dunas is more than an ordinary course. At every level. It’s not only the quality of the golf you can play here, but also the luxury service we will provide”.

In his opinion, this course has everything to become one of Europe’s main golf destinations. “We undoubtedly have what’s required to host world-class tournaments here.



Sergio García

**“We undoubtedly have what’s required to host world-class tournaments here. That said, we also want to promote this sport to the local area and will do everything we can to include golf in school sports in the region.”**

Rodrigo Ulrich, Terras da Comporta Golf Director

With sustainability being the watchword at Terras da Comporta, it comes as no surprise that Dunas boasts a state-of-the-art, water-efficient computerised irrigation system. In the near future, the same system will be supplied by the resort’s wastewater treatment plant. In line with the entire project, the social and support areas will also be constructed using wood, as was the recently completed Academy Clubhouse. The main Clubhouse, which is scheduled to open in 2024, will include a restaura-

*That said, we also want to promote this sport to the local area and will do everything we can to include golf in school sports in the region. This aspect is especially important to us. The overwhelmingly positive feedback we’ve had in such a short space of time makes us very optimistic about the future. Truth be told, a golf course is a living being that is always evolving. And if it’s already impressive, just think what it will be like in a few years’ time, when it reaches maturity”.*

Dunas officially opens on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023.



## Casas da Chaminé initial sales phase

**Muda Reserve is a pioneering project in Comporta. Set in a region of rare beauty, Casas da Chaminé demonstrates Vanguard Properties’ commitment to making sustainability the watchword for this part of the Alentejo region.**

**M**uda Reserve is Vanguard Properties’ first development in the region of Comporta. The place’s name, Muda, derives from the Portuguese word that means change, and was where livestock drivers and their animals used to stop and rest. Located in 350 hectares of pine forest, this residential project was devised to offer a perfect combination of the Alentejo

region’s unique tranquillity, exuberant natural beauty, where land and sea meet, and all the comforts of modern life. The first phase of the development involved properties with between four and six hectares (Quintas da Aldeia), which enjoyed immediate success when placed on the market. The second phase is now underway with Casas da Aldeia, which is made up of 175 houses, eight of which are now available.



restaurants, convenience stores and a chapel, which was donated to the community by Vanguard Properties. The place of worship was designed by Burkinabé architect Francis Kerè, a specialist in sustainable construction and recent winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize (2022).

Finally, the large, landscaped areas of Muda Reserve's public spaces will soon be a canvass for internationally recognised Portuguese artist Vhils, enhancing this unique project even further.

CASAS DA CHAMINÉ ARE CONSTRUCTED ENTIRELY FROM WOOD, USING WOODFRAME AND CLT SYSTEMS, A HIGHLY INNOVATIVE STEP IN PROJECTS OF THIS KIND.

# reaches the at Muda Reserve

Christened Casas da Chaminé, these residences were designed by the renowned Saraiva + Associados firm, who took their inspiration from vernacular architecture and Alentejo chimneys, which were given a contemporary twist to good effect. Plot areas range from 620m<sup>2</sup> to 1,125m<sup>2</sup>, and interiors from 180 m<sup>2</sup> to 290 m<sup>2</sup>, split over two floors. Each house will have a swimming pool and a private garden area that adds to the idyllic environment that Casas da Chaminé offers.

Officially launched in May at a ceremony attended by the Mayor of Grândola, António Figueira Mendes, like all the buildings in the development, Casas da Chaminé are constructed entirely from wood, using Woodframe and CLT systems, a highly innovative step in projects of this kind. Vanguard Properties

believes that this ambitious decision, which is in keeping with the demanding sustainability policy implemented by the developer in Terras da Comporta, foresees a future reality and is absolutely essential to making the project's development compatible with the region's delicate ecosystem. To this end, all Muda Reserve's houses will come equipped with photovoltaic panels, be classified as NZEB (Near Zero Energy Building) and be energy self-sufficient, capable of contributing to what will be one of Portugal's first energy communities.

In addition to their location in a special part of nature, Casas da Chaminé enjoy access to a range of exceptional facilities and services, including sports facilities, a children's playground, a co-working space, various



ALCÁ CER DO SAL

# The castle, the mathematician, the galleon



**Just a few kilometres from Comporta, we find Alcácer do Sal, a small town with a great history. Those wishing to discover it will encounter both the first civilizations and an understanding that its wonders are deep rooted in the past.**

**A**s we approach, the view of the town is picturesque. There it stands, dressed in white, with its immaculate houses overlooking the River Sado. Its church bell towers rise up, home to various storks, while the imposing castle sits upon high, shrouded in vegetation. Given its historical importance to Portugal, if Alcácer seems rather modest, a little more vanity wouldn't go amiss.

To understand the town's real significance, one has to delve into history, as far back as the Neolithic and Iron Age.

A multitude of archaeological remains retrace the steps of those who settled on the hill, which can be seen at the archaeological crypt, an underground museum. Alcácer do Sal was populated by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, as well as the Romans, who created an important settlement called Salacia Urbs Imperatoria. Here, they minted their own currency and traded salt, the substance that gave the place its name, and which was used to pay workers [the word salary stems from *salarium*]. Being close to the River Sado offered a gateway to the Atlantic, facilitating the

transport of goods, salt, cereals, wood and minerals from the interior to other Mediterranean ports occupied by Rome.

The majestic Moorish bastion inspired the other half of the town's name (Alcácer means fortified stronghold). This particular bulwark was constructed using rammed earth, an innovative technique that made this fortress one of the most impregnable in the western Iberian Peninsula. Standing 25 metres tall and numbering up to 30, its lofty towers provided a bird's eye view of the riverside area, a vast stretch of the Sado River and the extensive rice fields.

Under Arab rule since 715, the occupiers kept themselves busy with shipbuilding, agriculture, pottery and ceramics. Reconquered by Afonso Henriques in 1158, but retaken by the Almohads over three decades later, Alcácer do Sal would only be free from Muslim dominance in 1217. This was eventually

achieved after a two-month siege and invaluable assistance from the Crusaders, who were on their way to the Holy Land. The following year, King Afonso II granted it a charter (*foral*) and offered the territory to the Military Order of Saint James of the Sword. Establishing its headquarters in the town, the Order was created to combat the Muslims while spreading the Christian faith, which explains why it continues to be one of the stops on the Ways of St James.

Dom Manuel I (1469-1521) was acclaimed king in Alcácer do Sal, before going down in history as Manuel "The Fortunate". It was during this monarch's reign that the sea route to India was forged, not to mention the discovery of Brazil and the Moluccas. In 1500, Alcácer was host to the king's marriage to Maria of Aragon (1482-1517), daughter of the Catholic Kings. The chronicles of the time describe the royal feast, the streets decorated with flowers and



Once the main route for boats carrying bread to the capital, as well as a port of call for merchants and caravels, which were repaired here, the Sado River slowly wends its way before spreading out in the Sado Estuary Nature Reserve. Here, rice has been grown since the mid-18th century, occupying 2,500 hectares of wetlands, and remains important to the local economy, as well as providing food for some species of water birds. Other regional endeavours include fishing, catching shellfish and aquaculture, which includes oysters, now salt farming is less of a going concern. This area is also home to the montado system - a unique type of agroforestry -, where cork oaks make the region a top cork producer and stone pines are laden with pine nuts, otherwise known as “white gold”.

Once in a while, a galleon sails up the river, inviting people to discover Alcácer do Sal through the eyes of those who transported salt from here to other places. Originally built in 1946, the “Pinto Luísa” is a symbol of a local culture that became one of the economic drivers of this coastal region. The old salt galleon, which can carry up to 50 people, allows passengers to discover the local fauna and flora, while learning more about the importance of preserving habitats. The dates of the next tours are as follows: 23 July, 5 and 27 August and 9 September. Departures are from the quay, on the south bank of Alcácer do Sal. Reservations are required (contact the tourism office: Tel. 265 610 040 or [turismoalcacer@m-alcacerdosal.pt](mailto:turismoalcacer@m-alcacerdosal.pt)).



Statue of Pedro Nunes, in the square with his name

IN 1502, ONE OF THE FINEST MATHEMATICIANS AND COSMOGRAPHERS OF HIS TIME WAS BORN IN ALCÁCER DO SAL. HIS NAME WAS PEDRO NUNES, AND HIS STERLING WORK ON NAVIGATION MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE GREAT DISCOVERIES OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY. NUNES PROUDLY DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS “SALACIENSE”.

bedspreads at the windows, as well as the lavish riverside banquet.

In 1502, one of the finest mathematicians and cosmographers of his time was born in Alcácer do Sal. His name was Pedro Nunes, and his sterling work on navigation made a major contribution to the Great Discoveries of the 16th-century. Nunes proudly described himself as “salaciense”, and visitors can see his statue (in the square bearing his name), which pays tribute to one of the town’s most illustrious sons, who died in 1578.

## Brave Generation Academy and CUF in Comporta

Vanguard Properties recently signed two agreements that will be important for Comporta. These services, a school and a clinic, will be key for future residents of Terras da Comporta, helping combat the seasonal nature of the region.

In the area of education, a protocol was signed with the Brave Generation Academy (BGA), which is the brainchild of the Portuguese entrepreneur Tim Vieira. The BGA will be setting up a school hub that offers young people the chance to study using an international hybrid education system, based on the British International Curriculum model.

THESE SERVICES, A SCHOOL AND A CLINIC, WILL BE KEY FOR FUTURE RESIDENTS OF TERRAS DA COMPORTA.

When it comes to health, Vanguard’s chosen partner is CUF, one of the sector’s most prestigious names. The two parties have signed a memorandum of understanding, with a view to opening a neighbourhood clinic within the “Terras da Comporta” development.

This new health unit, which will be built in the “Dunas” project area, near the village of Carvalhal, will be strategically located in an area intended for culture, services, retail and food. It will be designed to meet the needs of both the local population and the development’s clients, providing the type of high-quality service CUF is well known for, while boosting the supply of health care in the region.

What the clinic provides - medical consultations, telemedicine, nursing care and medical tests - will be guided by the development’s changing needs and growth. It is expected to open between the end of 2023 and the first half of 2024.

# Art and Terras da Comporta

Ever faithful to its motto, “inspired by art, designed for living”, Vanguard Properties has cultivated close ties with the art world since its inception.

The most obvious aspect of this positioning is the work of Portuguese artists being incorporated into every project in various ways, taking an approach that boosts the value of developments, both aesthetically and financially.

This is the case of Castilho 203, a luxury residential building in Lisbon. This project, which was the first to be handed over to residents in 2021, boasts a “site specific” work in the lobby by Portuguese artist José Pedro Croft. When it came to the Amoreiras A Tower, also in Lisbon, Vanguard invited Claudia R. Sampaio from Manicómio, an organisation that works with artists that have experienced mental health issues. Sampaio designed a large tile panel in her dream-like style (5.39m x 2.12m), which was then produced by the renowned Viúva Lamego factory/studio. More recently, for the Infinity project (a 26-storey tower in Lisbon’s Sete Rios neighbourhood), Vanguard chose Joana Vasconcelos, one of the biggest names on the Portuguese and international art scenes. The artist created an exclusive piece entitled Infinity Landscape (4.50m x 2.50m) for the reception area, which will be unveiled in September at the building’s official inauguration. Further south, in the Algarve, textile artist Vanessa Barragão crafted a fine panel for the spa area of the Bayline project.

With three major projects underway (Muda Resort, Dunas and Torre), covering an area of around 1,800 hectares, Vanguard Properties is the largest property developer in Comporta. Given the size of its undertakings, their importance to the region and the company’s track record, it is unsurprising that, when it comes to art, expectations are high. For now, Muda Reserve, the most advanced of the three projects, will feature two surprising, site-specific interventions in its public areas, created by Alexandre Farto (better known as Vhils). This Portuguese urban artist has nearly completed the two works to be donated to Grândola council and set up in the garden next to the shopping area, as well as in the square, opposite the chapel, which is another of Vanguard Properties’ contributions to the



**“This piece deals with questions of geometry, how they order the world, creating a nature, another, landscape. Monumental construction, with colourful surfaces perilously balanced, seemingly about to collapse”.**

Pedro Croft

local community. The small place of worship, which was designed by Francis Kéré, a Berlin-based architect from Burkina Faso and winner of the 2022 Pritzker Prize, can also be considered a work of art, which will certainly distinguish the area. Kéré is also responsible for the three original Dunas entrances, which signal the developer’s environmental concerns.

At the beginning of this year, the first and rather unexpected Terras da Comporta-related artistic intervention occurred: labels for bottles of wine with the same name as the place, the re-

sult of a partnership with the Herdade do Rocim winery. The graphic items were developed based on a painting commissioned from the ceramist and painter Bela Silva, which was created to highlight the beauty and joy of the Comporta landscape and the warmth of the local people’s welcome.

In addition to this, since May, Dunas has been home to what is perhaps the most significant artwork in Comporta to date, a key piece that is expected to kick-start the contemporary sculpture park being studied for this development.

Based on the company philosophy, Vanguard’s idea for Comporta is that art should have a strong public element. That way, it can be enjoyed not only by new residents, but also by local populations, visitors and those just passing through. Set among the pine trees that flank the access road to Carvalhal, from where it is visible, Pedro Croft’s 6-metre-high piece was originally designed for Frieze Sculpture 2021 (London), when it was exhibited for a month and a half in the gardens of The Regent’s Park. Made up of brightly coloured steel and glass panels that contrast with the pine forest backdrop, this artwork, which evokes precariousness, disorder, and the ephemeral, embodies the constant problems of the work produced by one of Portugal’s most prestigious artists. Croft defines it as follows: “This piece deals with questions of geometry, how they order the world, creating a nature, another, landscape. Monumental construction, with colourful surfaces perilously balanced, seemingly about to collapse”.

# The precious pine nut

**Touted as “white gold”, with a price tag to match, the world’s best pine nuts are both Mediterranean and Portuguese.**

Once we pass the numerous rice fields of Alcácer do Sal, the landscape turns a deep shade of green. Stretching into the distance are thousands of stone pines (*Pinus Pinea L.*), all heaving with delicious pine nuts. This area, alongside Coruche and the border area close to the Guadiana River, make up the largest concentrations of this particular species in Portugal. Originally from the Mediterranean, this slow-growing tree can reach a height of between 18 and 30 metres, with a rounded crown, persistent leaves and a trunk covered with thick bark. Although very drought resistant, when it comes to pine nut production, rainfall influences the size of the pinecone and its yield.

Mild temperatures, proximity to the Atlantic and sandy soils lend Portuguese pine nuts a more intense flavour, as well as a smooth, creamy texture and ivory tinge, which distinguishes them from the other two most popular varieties - *Pinus Koraiensis*, from the world’s main producer China and Korea (more rounded and whiter), and *Pinus Gerardiana*, which hails from Pakistan and has a skinnier appearance. Both of these nuts are less tasty than those from the stone pine. Spain, Italy, Turkey and Tunisia rival the Portuguese market, however, in contrast, they are

also the largest consumers of unshelled pine nut exports, which they import and then sell as a domestic product.

## Handiwork and timing

In Alcácer do Sal, over the decades, an industry has been forged extracting and preparing pine nuts. Every year, between early December and late March, mid-April, people patiently harvest the delicacy. The cost of their time and skill contributes to the steep prices commanded. There is machinery adapted from olive groves that can shake the pine trees, however, it’s rarely used as it compromises the under-ripe pinecones, which haven’t reached their ideal size yet. Because of this problem, much of the picking is still done by hand, which requires a head for heights, as it involves reaching the tallest treetops, which house the first layer of pinecones. Each pine tree produces three layers, and each one has a different maturation time, before bearing fruit during a 36-month cycle.

The pinecones that fall to the ground are either left to dry in the sun, at their own pace, or placed in an oven to speed up the process. The petals then fall off, allowing the seed (pine nut) to be re-

moved. After shelling, the selection process ensures uniformity, before washing removes any remaining skin, leaving the pine nut with a certain sheen.

Pine nuts represent between 2.5% and 3% of the pinecone, which means each kilo of pinecones only yields around 30 grammes, explaining its high price. Climate change has also affected production, reducing yields from year to year, with the seed becoming more irregular in size. Prices continue to rise, this year varying between €110 and €135 per kilo, more than justifying the “white gold” tag.

## Sweet and savoury

Durable and protein rich, pine nuts were an important part of the navigators’ diet during the maritime adventures of the Discoveries. More recently, their nutritional qualities have attracted attention and interest from some of the world’s finest chefs, who began using them in their dishes. In an interview with the Portuguese Público newspaper, chef Martín Berasategui admitted that Portuguese pine nuts impressed him most.

Despite the general shortage of pinecones, the flavour of pine nuts remains the same, which makes this Mediterranean variety more appealing. In Portugal, they’re eaten as an aperitif (raw or roasted) and in salads. Most of all, they are used in sweets, especially in *pinhoadas*, from Alcácer, and *alcomonias*, from Melides and Santa Cruz. These candied delights are similar in appearance (both are diamond shaped), and both recipes are based on pine nuts and honey. Initially sold at fairs, they soon became typical sweets of each region. In local restaurants, chefs focussing on local produce have also given them pride of place in rice dishes and ice creams.

Further afield, Italians mix pine nuts with basil to create *pesto*, a heavenly combination often used in pasta dishes. All over Spain, they are served with spinach and sultanas, while the Catalans and Valencians use them in *panellets* and *cocas*, sweets served on All Saints’ Day. In Turkey, they are added to spiced *pilaf* rice, when served with lamb or vegetables. In Tunisia, mint tea with pine nuts has proved a favourite in places like *Said Bou Said*, while it is common to find them in tagines throughout the Maghreb.

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IN ALCÁCER DO SAL, OVER THE DECADES, AN INDUSTRY HAS BEEN FORGED EXTRACTING AND PREPARING PINE NUTS. EVERY YEAR, BETWEEN EARLY DECEMBER AND LATE MARCH, MID-APRIL, PEOPLE PATIENTLY HARVEST THE DELICACY. THE COST OF THEIR TIME AND SKILL CONTRIBUTES TO THE STEEP PRICES COMMANDED.



# From sport to hope: the transformative power of a sports project

The municipalities of Grândola and Alcácer do Sal are beginning to see a new era of hope and prosperity. The current social challenges aren't insurmountable obstacles, but rather offer inspiration to act and make a difference – one of the solutions involves investing in sport.

We don't underestimate the transformative power of a sports project. It is something that can unite and retain the population, driving local businesses and creating jobs, as well as offering many other benefits, such as better health and young people's development.

To this end, a veritable sports hotspot is being developed, with around 30 sports to choose from, including golf, tennis, padel, pickleball, volleyball, athletics and horse riding. Where? In "Terras da Comporta", one of Vanguard Properties' key developments, and home to the "Dunas" and "Torre" projects. This integrated and integrative investment aims to create an environment of

sporting excellence that helps unearth new talents, acting as one of the catalysts for economic and social development in the region.

The future is promising. Let's inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs, leaders... and sportspeople.

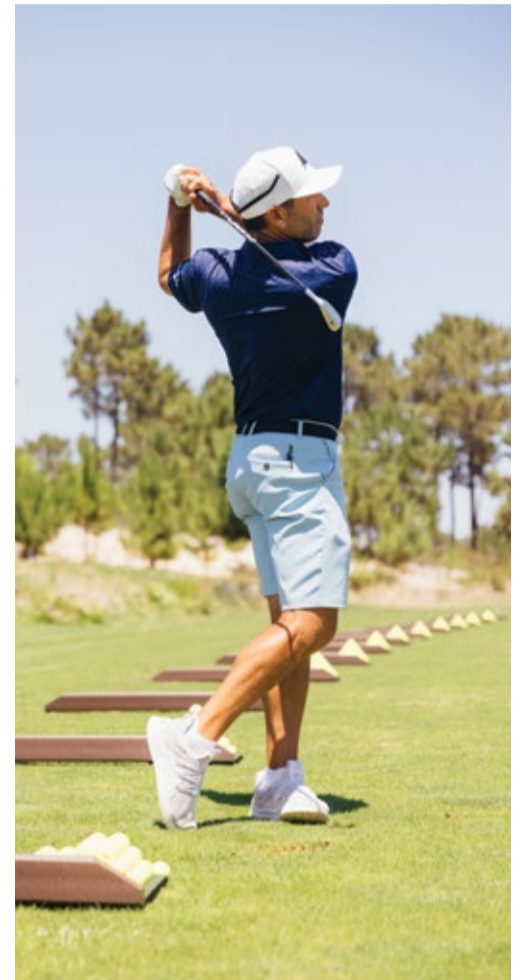
## World golf star promotes sport in Comporta

Renowned international golfer, Sergio García, certainly made an impression at the presentation of Vanguard Properties' "Terras da Comporta" sports project, radiating contagious inspiration.

During his visit, the Spaniard offered a unique and unforgettable experience to five promising young Portuguese golfers, all between the ages eight and 12. During this special meeting, the youngsters got to see García's dexterity and skill up close, as well as enjoy a practical lesson from him and enthusiastic answers to their questions.

In addition to the sharing and learning experience, the iconic golfer got the chance to see exclusive images of the future sports complex, while highlighting the importance of sport for every generation. It's worth mentioning that Sergio García, together with José María Olazábal, was selected by Vanguard Properties to revive the magnificent "Torre Golf Course", which is located in the Alcácer do Sal area and part of the "Terras da Comporta" project (scheduled to open in 2025). This course will also be home to Portugal's first major golf academy, which is being developed to become an international benchmark, providing a unique experience for golfers of all levels.

This meeting of Sergio García's talent and the ambitious "Terras da Comporta" project symbolises the perfect fusion between excellence and a love of sport. It is living testimony to the transformative power of sport, where the watchword is always achievement.



Sergio García

## Terras da Comporta through the lens of Pedro Narra

The Dunas development was the place chosen to present the book Terras da Comporta, by photographer Pedro Narra, on 15th June. Sponsored by Vanguard Properties, this work offers a wide variety of impressive images collected over time, with special focus on the Alentejo coast's fauna and flora, particularly in the Comporta region.



Pedro Narra

FEW PEOPLE KNOW TERRAS DA COMPORTA AND ITS ECOSYSTEM LIKE NARRA (...). THIS BOOK SHOWS BOTH HIS MASTERFUL PHOTOGRAPHY AND AN EXTRAORDINARY NATURAL DIVERSITY THAT MAKES THIS REGION UNIQUE IN EUROPE.

Born and raised in Setúbal, Pedro Narra has been a professional nature photographer for 25 years, having worked with prestigious publications, such as National Geographic. Boasting local family roots, few people know Terras da Comporta and its ecosystem like Narra, who has spent much of his life



Pedro Narra, Fernando Caetano and José Cardoso Botelho

in the area. This book shows both his masterful photography and an extraordinary natural diversity that makes this region unique in Europe.

During the event, which was attended by around a hundred guests, Vanguard Properties CEO José Cardoso Botel-

ho explained that this sponsorship is a way for Comporta's main developer to demonstrate its commitment to preserving a living treasure trove that belongs to everyone and needs urgent protection.

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