



# **BLOGS & BIRDIES**

## **Scott Kauffman's Golf and Resort Real Estate Report Vol. 1, No. 1**

Cascais, Portugal – More than 500 years ago, famous Portuguese explorers like Henry the Navigator, Vasco da Gama and Magellan set sail to discover much of the world. They landed in places such as Brazil, India and Africa, and helped Portugal – a country smaller than New York -- control half the world at one time.

Today, it is prime time to return that seafaring spirit and discover the “Real Portugal,” particularly when it comes to golf. In other words, there’s much more to Portugal’s golf lifestyle than the ubiquitous Algarve – Portugal’s version of Myrtle Beach or Hilton Head.

Indeed, one of the best places for a true Portuguese journey is the historic and romantic capital city of Lisbon. The gateway to the Atlantic Ocean, Lisbon is a cosmopolitan area of compelling contrasts. In the Age of Discovery, it was one of the world’s most important cities as it launched the great navigators that eventually changed the globe. But, being isolated on the southwest corner of Europe from the trading crossroads of the Industrial Age, Lisbon was left to mature slowly and sweetly in its latter years, much like the country’s signature Port wine.

Now, with an active campaign to market its uniquely warm and welcoming nation, there couldn’t be a better time to get a taste of that Port wine or any of the other marvelous cultural elements of this emerging European hot spot. For golfers, that means a trip to Oitavos Dunes in the swanky seaside village of Cascais is a must excursion.

Located about 30 minutes from Lisbon’s hub in an area regarded as the “Beverly Hills” of Lisbon, Oitavos Dunes, Quinta da Marinha Original, is a new upscale private resort style community that rivals most of the finest links layouts in the world. Formerly known as Oitavos Golfe, the Arthur Hills-designed course was renamed Jan. 15 to reflect its growing status as the first great links course in continental Europe.

The new name was announced by third-generation owner Miguel Champalimaud to kick off the beginning of a 100-year celebration of family passion for a property originally envisioned as a natural preserve for the then-quiet fishing village of Cascais

“Oitavos Dunes, which has become known as a natural links golf experience, typifies every aspect of links golf – windy conditions, fast running fairways, sand dunes sculptured by nature over 100 years and views of the Atlantic Ocean,” says Champalimaud, whose grandfather, Carlos Montez Champalimaud discovered the land in 1908 and purchased the property from the Count of Moser in 1922. “The name change better describes the natural sand dunes upon which it is built and the playing experience.”

The property, which has the distinction of being Europe’s westernmost course (the tee shot on the signature par-3 14<sup>th</sup> hole onto an elevated green feels like you’re

hitting right at the Cabo da Roca cliffs, the westernmost point in Europe), lays out much like the classic nine-out/nine-back links courses found throughout the British Isles. Sandwiched by the Sintra Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, Oitavos Dunes also features a highly treasured blend of distinctive eco-systems, including rolling sand dunes deposited by years of coastal wind erosion, rocky and rugged coastal transition areas and stands of beautiful Iberian umbrella pine trees planted by Carlos Montez Champalimaud 80 years ago to stabilize the dunes.

In an effort to acknowledge the Champalimaud family's dedication to protecting this pristine environment, Audubon International named Oitavos Dunes a certified Gold Audubon Signature Sanctuary shortly after the course opened in 2001. Oitavos Dunes was the first European course to receive such distinction, and only the second course in the world to be given Audubon International's highest honor.

Says Hills: "We try to build our golf courses according to the site and our client, Miguel Champalimaud, blessed us with one of the finest pieces of golfing terrain anywhere in Continental Europe. There are six or seven very demanding shots out there, but if the wind blows that figure doubles or triples. Every hole at Oitavos has a view of



the Atlantic, so the wind is always blowing."

And just as appealing as the challenging and striking nature of the course is the fantastic climate. Unlike most of the classic links courses elsewhere in Europe, golf here in the Estoril Coast is usually played year round in warm, dry, and sunny conditions (think San Diego).

So, not surprisingly, the exclusive semi-private Oitavos Dunes, Quinta da Marinha Original, not to be confused with the adjacent Quinta da Marinha hotel and public course, has quickly become globally recognized as one of Europe's leading golf destinations. In an effort to further grow its reputation, the Champalimaud family is building a new five-star resort called the Ocean Palace Hotel. Scheduled to open in late 2009, the 145-room luxury hotel will be added to an amenity list that already includes a contemporary glass enclosed clubhouse with panoramic views of the ocean, extensive short-game area and

driving range, and a private world-class health and racquet club facility that features more than 3,500 members..

Oitavos Dunes, one of approximately 65 courses in Portugal, is a six-hour flight from New York, two hours from London, and three from Paris, followed by a short picturesque drive northwest of Lisbon along the Estoril Coast of the Atlantic Ocean.

“We had a special site, a great client and the freedom to design a wonderful golf course,” said Arthur Hills senior design partner Drew Rogers. “I am thrilled with the end result. People tell me the course feels like it has been there forever. That is the best compliment I can hear because it means we successfully blended the golf course into the existing landscape to create something that looks and feels natural – a course that will endure the test of time.”

Ensuring that Oitavos Dunes’ first-class conditions and service endures the test of time, Golf Projects International (GPI), a Los Angeles-based country club development and consulting company, has been awarded a multi-year contract to oversee the marketing and operations for Oitavos Dunes at Quinta da Marinha

“GPI, which has extensive knowledge, experience, and management skills in golf course development, marketing and operations, is a key component of our management team,” says Champalimaud, whose family also stay busy as one of the region’s leading winemakers. “Together, we are sure to reach our goals of becoming one of the top courses in the world.”

The principal of Golf Projects International is Englishman David V. Smith, a former touring pro who entered the development business in 1986 with golf real estate mogul David Murdock (owner of Sherwood Country Club and Four Seasons Lanai) and later became golf professional at famed Bel Air Country Club and coach of the UCLA national championship team.

Smith’s firm advises on all aspects of the Oitavos Dunes operation, including facility and course operations and maintenance, the membership program, branding, retail, world-wide marketing strategies, special events and recruitment of key management. Among Smith’s team is former USGA staff agronomist Jim Connolly.

“We are thrilled to be a part of this special property on which the course is located, now known as Quinta da Marinha Original,” Smith says. “Having grown up playing the championship courses in England and Scotland, I can attest that Oitavos Dunes is one of the finest examples of a links course and destined to be recognized around the world as the best in Europe. Playing Oitavos Dunes is a golf experience not to be missed.”

Many of Europe’s leading professionals certainly haven’t missed it, considering Oitavos Dunes, which opened in 2001, is the home of the Portuguese Open and is the only course in Europe to have hosted tournaments from all five of the European pro circuits.

The principal of Golf Projects International is Englishman David V. Smith, a former touring pro who entered the development business in 1986 with golf real estate mogul David Murdock (owner of Sherwood Country Club and Four Seasons Lanai) and later became golf professional at famed Bel Air Country Club and coach of the UCLA national championship team.

Smith’s firm advises on all aspects of the Oitavos Dunes operation, including facility and course operations and maintenance, the membership program, branding, retail, world-wide marketing strategies, special events and recruitment of key management. Among Smith’s team is former USGA staff agronomist Jim Connolly.

“We are thrilled to be a part of this special property on which the course is located, now known as Quinta da Marinha Original,” Smith says. “Having grown up playing the championship courses in England and Scotland, I can attest that Oitavos

Dunes is one of the finest examples of a links course and destined to be recognized around the world as the best in Europe. Playing Oitavos Dunes is a golf experience not to be missed.” Many of Europe’s leading professionals certainly haven’t missed it, considering Oitavos Dunes, which opened in 2001, is the home of the Portuguese Open and is the only course in Europe to have hosted tournaments from all five of the European pro circuits.



\* \* \*

For more information on Oitavos Dunes at Quinta da Marinha Original visit [www.oitavosdunes.pt](http://www.oitavosdunes.pt); email [info@oitavosdunes.pt](mailto:info@oitavosdunes.pt) or call 351 21 486 0600