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

**VISITING VILA DO BISPO**

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

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

HISTORICAL CENTRE

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

getting to know the vila do bispo area

RAPOSEIRA

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

MAIN CHURCH

Of the original church, founded in the 16th century, all that remains are the Manueline doorways at the front and side, the bell-tower which culminates in an octagonal pyramid, the arch of the main altar and, at the back, an interesting corbel with a human face.

The lateral altarpieces are carved and gilded, with statues. There is an altarpiece depicting São Miguel (St. Michael) crushing the demon, as well as religious artefacts (16th/18th centuries).

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

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

BUDENS

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

MAIN CHURCH

A country church (13th century). Interesting effigy of Nossa Senhora do Rosário (Our Lady of the Rosary) (13th century).

CHAPEL OF SÃO ANTÓNIO (ST. ANTHONY)

13th century edifice. Panoramic views from the churchyard.

CHAPEL OF SÃO LOURENÇO (ST. LAWRENCE)

Built in the 12th century. The front of the altar is decorated with 13th century tiles.
**Sagres Fortress - LC**

Atlantic navigation and the discovery of the African coast as far as the stand buildings that evoke the past of a place that is part of the history sense here of Prince Henry the Navigator during the early days of on Cadiz, as part of a privateering campaign.

**Sagres dates back to before the Roman conquest.**

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

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

**FORTRESS**

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

**CHURCH OF NOSSA SENHORA DA GRAÇA**

 Tradition has it that this church was founded by Prince Henry the Navigator.

The strategic importance of Cabo de São Vicente and the need to protect the area was part of the Promontorium Sacrum (from which the name Sagres is derived), the most westerly point in the world, where the setting sun made the waters of the ocean boil. The transportation, after the Arab invasion, of the body of São Vicente (St. Vincent) to the cape that was named after him turned it into a place of pilgrimage for centuries. In 1173 the first king of Portugal, Afonso Henrique, gave orders for the holy remains to be brought to Lisbon.

**An obligatory landmark for any ship travelling to the Mediterranean, Cabo de São Vicente was the scene of many major sea battles.** In 1693 the French admiral Tousville defeated an Anglo-Dutch squadron. A Spanish fleet suffered a similar fate in 1780 at the hands of the English admiral Rodney. Nelson and Jarvis defeated another Spanish fleet in 1797. The squadron in the service of the absolutist King Miguel was captured here in 1833 by the squadron on the Liberal side flying the flag of his niece, Queen Maria II.

**FORTRESS**

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

**THE MUSIC OF THE WAVES**

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

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURE**

The existence of veins of flint in the Vila do Bispo area, along with the opportunities for finding food among the rich marine fauna, as attested by the presence of shell mounds, must have been one of the reasons for the first human settlements.

The most interesting testimony to the past is, however, the large number of menhirs (4,000 to 3,000 B.C.). Hewn out of white limestone, usually conical in shape, and sometimes bearing decoration carved in relief, they are reminders of ancient cults linked to fertility and the dead. The Romans too left important remains of the fish-salting industry and of the manufacture of amphorae for transporting the finished product.
The whole of the coast to the north of São Vicente is a huge fishing ground, teeming with the fish that legends are made of, from fighting croaker to tasty sea bass. Every rock, every cove has its own particular fans, fishermen who return to the same spot time and again. After that it’s skill and good luck that determine the size of the catch…

Surfers too, appreciate the regular waves of the coast to the north, the safety of its broad beaches and the total freedom of the ocean. The wide bay defined by Ponta de Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente is an excellent place for scuba divers to appreciate the colourful diversity of fish and the dream-like landscapes of caves and hollows carved from beneath the cliffs.

Near Budens, a golf course set among rolling hills with views to the sea is an invitation to spend a few pleasant hours enjoying the delights of the game.
Delicate female hands make bobbin lace in Vila do Bispo and Sagres, keeping up a centuries-old tradition that has always been associated with towns near the sea.

In the country villages, the locals still weave attractive products from palm-leaves and esparto grass: baskets, bags, mats, etc.

Sea on two sides, land on one. The typical cuisine of Vila do Bispo reflects this dual influence: dishes such as “jantar de grão” made with chickpeas, boiled cabbage flavoured with sausages, “xerêm” (made with maize meal) with sardines, “papas moiras” (also made from maize meal) and delicious fish dishes: risotto with conger eel, golden bream or sea bream baked in the oven, “caldeirada” (fish stew), sandwiches made with fried moray. Shellfish in Vila do Bispo is always tempting, as anyone will vouch who has eaten the barnacles and whelks harvested from the rocks, or the succulent lobsters that the boats bring in at dawn.

To protect the beauty of the landscape and the wealth of flora and fauna to be found there, a protected landscape area has been created along a stretch of coastline extending from Belixe to Odeceixe. Here it is possible to see dozens of species of wild flower, and to observe animals like the wild boar and the eagle in their natural habitat. There is also an opportunity for an endless variety of enjoyable walks, along cliffs and beaches, across hills and valleys.

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