AUTHENTIC ALGARVE

The rural southern Algarve has been put back on the map, thanks to a lovingly restored shepherd's hut, fishing warehouse and merchant's house

WORDS BY **ISABELLA SULLIVAN**

Clockwise from opposite: Earthy interiors at Casa Um; chefs can whip up local flavours; Casa Dois' stylish courtyard

There's a reason travellers love the Algarve, the salty-aired southernmost region of Portugal and the country's sunshine capital. Its archetypal Mediterranean aesthetic has long made it a favourite for sunseekers, who flock for its rugged Atlantic beaches, golf courses and Moorish villages. Swathes of wild borage, almond trees and ubiquitous olive groves sway in the perfumed breeze and waves draw surfers to its windswept coast. It's here that Belgian friends Bert Jeuris and Ludovic Beun have set up one of Europe's most exciting new holiday rental companies. Launching this summer, The Addresses is made up of three unique and history-rich villas: Casa Um, Casa Dois and Casa Trois.

"It all starts with the location of our houses," explains creative director Beun, a grape merchant who cofounded The Addresses after falling in love with Portugal. "They all show a different aspect of the Portugal we fell in love with, and are never in over-touristic areas – what we see as the 'authentic' Algarve." Tapping into growing demand for luxury private rentals in the pandemic travel sphere, the duo set out to create a collective of breezy rural retreats. "We wanted to find the perfect balance between a private holiday house and the pampering feel of a nice hotel," Beun explains.

The pair's debut house was Casa Um, a former shepherd's hut turned eight-sleeper whitewashed villa in the peaceful farmland of Tavira. The original structure sits above a lavender-filled dry garden, housing a kitchen with wicker-lined ceilings. New additions →

"OUR ARCHITECTURE IS A COMBINATION OF THE ORIGINAL AUTHENTIC HOUSES WITH ALMA (SOUL) AND DISCREETLY ADDED NEW ELEMENTS"

include four white-cube bedrooms, their gravelled terraces rolling onto amber-hued fields speckled with carob trees and gnarled citrus groves.

"We try to blend in the local area as much as possible," explains Beun, who enlisted the help of Portuguese architecture collective Atelier Rua for their debut project. "Our architecture is a combination of the original authentic houses with alma (soul) and discreetly added new elements." For the breezy farmhouse interiors, the pair turned to Belgian design atelier Studio Stories, who incorporated touches like woven mats, natural wood and earthen pots. Elsewhere, a glass-walled grape cellar and a patio housing an old bread oven.

Next came Casa Dois, a reborn fishing warehouse in the briny and soulful fishing town of Olhão. Sleeping four people, it now resembles a modern townhouse, with airy high-ceilinged rooms and warm terracotta floors. Original features like preserved arches are found throughout, and there's a private patio, plunge pool and rooftop terrace with views over the Ria Formosa. "Most of the chosen materials are literally from the village or the nearby area," explains Beun. "The marble stone in the kitchen and bathrooms are from our local village, and the handmade tiles are from nearby Santa Catarina."

Following the success of Casa Um and Dois, Casa Trois was conceived as a former merchant's dwelling turned spacious four-bedroom villa in the historic city of Vila Real. It sits just across the Guadiana River on the Spanish border, and ferry rides from the nearby marina to the town of Ayamonte are a favourite pastime. A shady courtyard hides a blossoming citrus tree and plunge pool, while minimalist white rooms pop with vivid oranges and blues. Thanks to the sugar-cube structure, there are many roof terraces – ideal settings for alfresco meals of cataplana and squid-ink spaghetti vongole, all of which can be organised through the company.

"At The Addresses, you can have as little or as many extras as you like," says Beun. "If you want to be left alone, you will not see anyone, but if you want, you can have bread delivered to your door, have massage therapists come to your terrace or be visited by a cook. For us, the Algarve is a relaxing, authentic, no-nonsense, and unflashy location, and we're excited to share it with the world".

Clockwise from top: Casa Dois' courtyard hides a charming plunge pool; stairs leading to Casa Dois' panoramic roof terrace; squid-ink spaghetti vongole at Casa Um; Casa Um champions indoor-outdoor living with open-plan interiors and a series of outdoor spaces

PHOTOGRAPHS: FRANCISCO NOGUEIRA, RAF MAES