

# W O O F W E L C O M E

CAN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF HOLIDAYING WITHOUT YOUR SPECIAL COMPANION? IF YOU AND YOUR POOCH TRAVEL IN STYLE, WE HAVE THE PERFECT RETREAT. BUT IF PRIVATE TIME IS NEEDED, THERE'S A HIDEAWAY THAT WILL HAVE TAILS WAGGING

Words: CATHY LEIBMAN

**I**T'S NO SECRET. There is an understanding that our fur babies – dogs in this case – are considered part of the family and are huge boosters for our mood. Hazel, our Frenchie, is smothered with attention and affection; Hugo appears in our friends' family Christmas card; Labradors Mabel and Olive went viral as owner, BBC sports broadcaster, Andrew

Cotter commented on their antics during Covid-19 shutdown. Scientific research shows that having a pooch contributes to better cardiovascular health and fewer heart attacks (obviously related to all those walks we are doing). Our four-legged friends may need us to survive, but the past few months have proven that we need them just as much. So much so that we don't want to holiday without them. Hoping to take a boutique-hotel break has us blinded with guilt.

And so, we were assigned by AlgarvePLUS the task of seeking a hotel here in the Algarve for the most discerning of luxury travellers, inclusive of our tail-wagging besties. We guarantee you and your favorite pooch will be content with our recommendation. And without further ado...



## The Grand House

In the historical town of Vila Real de Santo António at the very eastern edge of the Algarve, one can find the Grand House. This stunning Belle Époque hotel which overlooks the Rio Guadiana, is the town's first five-star luxury hotel. It's the kind of place that inspires – with only 30 rooms, cosy nooks and seating areas to curl up with a book, light-filled tranquil rooms decorated in muted tones, an Instagram-worthy infinity pool overlooking the sandbanks of the river and neighbouring Spain and a plethora of explorations a short drive away.

An unobtrusive sign at the entrance screams privacy. Cross the doorway, and you will be transported back into time with its elegant décor and colonial touches. A secret rooftop garden and junior butler add to the charm.

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The ambassador of this pet-friendly hotel is a Portuguese Water Dog, named Grand (of course) and has the title of Junior Butler.

Water Dog, named Grand (of course) and has the title of Junior Butler. We are told she is a good soul and all-round good girl. Working in the area of customer service, her affectionate, social nature makes her the perfect fit for the role. And what does she do for her fellow four-legged friends? A comfortable bed, food and water bowls and special treats are all part of the basic overnight package. Doggie day care and shampooing can be arranged. The vet's number is on speed dial. Grand can recommend favourite walks and running routes, areas to experience nature, play and run freely. It's important that four-legged guests are treated as well as their two-legged ones. After all, a happy dog, means a happy human.

Portuguese law now allows Grand and you, her four-legged clients, access to the restaurant based on timing and availability, and is always cognisant of other guest's requirements. When reservations are being made, please

give your name, breed and size and, like your human companions, any special requests. There are no restrictions in room categories, so encourage your human to book that suite with a terrace. Would you prefer the carpet in your room to be removed? Ensure that your vaccinations, especially rabies (this is mandatory in Portugal) are up-to-date. There will be an additional daily cleaning fee of €25 with €10 donated to an animal support association. Let your owner know that you will be leaving your mark on the local community. Good dog!

The Grand House will have you leaving with a smile on your face and your dog wagging her tail. Isn't life Grand? ▶

Avenida da Republica, no. 171  
Vila Real de Santa António 8900-203  
+351 281 530 290  
info@grandhousealgarve.com  
grandhousealgarve.com