MADEIRA
make it real.

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if you were dreaming of a haven lost
in the middle of the ocean, a refuge
for your mind, a sanctuary for
your body, open your eyes,
you've just found it.

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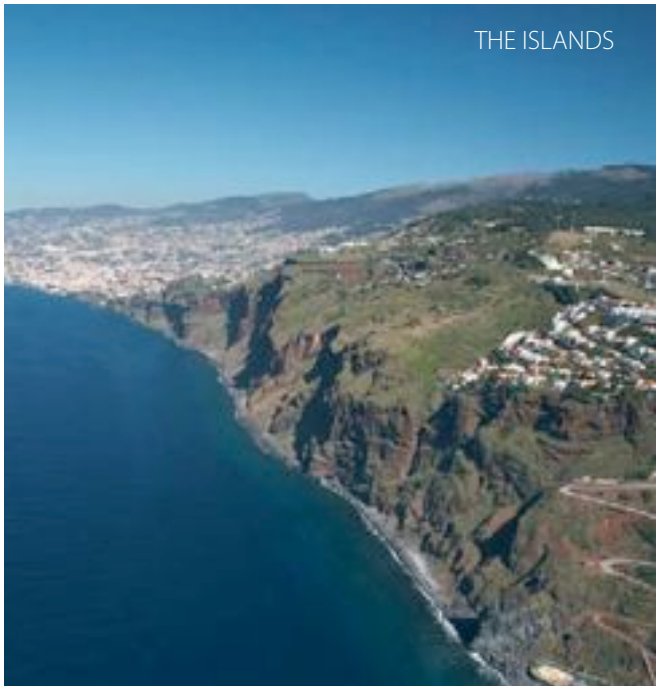


# *the* ISLANDS

Mentioned in the *Libro del Conoscimento* in 1350 and shown on 14th century Italian and Catalan maps, Madeira was only officially discovered by João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira in 1419, a year after they had discovered Porto Santo. The island was named "Madeira" (which means "wood" in English) because of its abundance of that raw material.

57 km long and 22 km wide classify a destination that's only small on the map. Grandiose in everything it has to offer, it is on Madeira, the main island of the archipelago bearing the same name, that the Laurissilva Forest can be found, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Natural Site.

Visitors to the archipelago will also discover absolute gems of Nature in the other islands. Located 50 km from Madeira is the island of **Porto Santo**, where limpid and balmy turquoise waters lap the golden sands, making this place a haven of tranquillity.

The names say it all. The uninhabited **Desertas** and **Selvagens** (literally "deserted" and "wild") **islands** are the perfect place to set out on an expedition and observe the rare species of fauna and flora that abound. It is hardly surprising that the monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), the world's rarest seal species, chose this place as its last refuge.

Contrasts are one of the archipelago's biggest assets, helping to make this place a destination to which you will always want to return.

# FUNCHAL

The capital of the archipelago is **the city of Funchal**, which takes its name from the Portuguese word for fennel (*funcho*), the wild herb that grew here abundantly at the time of the first settlers. Established by Royal Decree in 1508, traditional and cosmopolitan co-exist here in perfect harmony, with plenty of commercial, tourist or cultural options on offer to visitors.

Funchal is located on the south coast of Madeira island and is 700 km off the coast of Africa, relatively near to the strait of Gibraltar. As soon as it was inhabited, thanks to its geographical position, Funchal became a crucial port of call, and soon became characterized by the convergence of cultures and traditions of the many peoples that stopped by en route.

As from the end of the 15th Century, the cultivation of sugar cane turned Funchal into an international business hub, and eventually turned it into a required port of call on the Atlantic routes.

The Portuguese Discoveries, the maritime routes to the Indies, trials for the first south Atlantic crossing by plane, and being a crucial port of call for transatlantic vessels during World War II, all contributed to enhancing the noteworthy Atlantic status of Funchal.

Lots of famous people have visited too, over the centuries, for a variety of reasons. One of the most renowned visitors to the island was Christopher Columbus. Married to the daughter of the colonial captain of the island of Porto Santo, where he lived for some time, he travelled regularly to Funchal to deal with sugar cane business matters.

In the 19th century, illustrious visitors from noble European families, that sought this popular and therapeutic destination, include the empresses of Brazil, the archduchesses of Austria and queen Adelaide of England. Empress Sissi of Austria sought refuge here as well, to cure her romantic ailments. And also Winston Churchill, who, on a very regular basis, enjoyed the tranquillity of the island, which he painted often.

Thus, through the centuries, the city of Funchal came to be included in the main tourist itineraries of aristocrats, merchants and business men, heads of state and politicians. To this day it is still a destination of which a warm welcome, individual service and first class hospitality are an integral part.

To visit Funchal is to visit a city with centuries of History, where you can go back 500 years in time. Or you can make the most of here and now and experience exciting and unforgettable contemporary happenings.

Relive the History of the Discoveries in one of the city's museums. Go to the Botanical Gardens and delight in the scent of plants and flowers brought from every corner of the world. Dive into the sea and swim with dolphins or view the city from the cable car. In the old part of town, where it feels like time has stood still, you can roam the narrow cobbled streets that are seeped in history. Visit the wine lodges and sample Madeira Wine, savour the most exotic fruit in the market place or watch the sunset while you dine in a restaurant overlooking the sea. The choice of things to do in Funchal is never ending.

# *a* PART OF MADEIRA

## THE WINE

The production of **Madeira Wine** can be traced back to the 15th century, when it first attained fame and recognition. The first grape varieties were introduced by order of Prince Henry the Navigator and Madeira Wine soon became a requisite presence at banquets and the most refined tables of European courts and their colonies.

This **fortified** wine, which has a high alcoholic content, is appropriate for all occasions, and is equally excellent as both an aperitif or to end a meal. Toast to life with a glass of Madeira Wine, one of the most internationally renown and main symbols of the archipelago.

# MADEIRA EMBROIDERY

English influence brought about the initial creations of **Madeira embroidery**, which first appeared in the 19th century. To this day, everything is still done entirely by hand. There is a remarkable assortment of these exquisitely fine articles which vary from rich tablecloths to the most delicate handkerchiefs.

The product of long hours of dedicated work, Madeira embroidery is a true hallmark of the island, much-used by a number of designers in their creations. Taking one of these beautiful articles home is to forever own a keepsake of these talented artisans.

# MUSEUMS

The History of the archipelago is told in its various **museums**, where the vast and rich Madeiran heritage is unfolded. Visit the *Museu Quinta das Cruzes*, the *Museu Etnográfico* (ethnographic), the *Museu de Arte Sacra* (sacred art), the *Museu de Arte Contemporânea* (contemporary art), the *Museu da Baleia* (whale) and the Story Centre, among many others, and get to know local traditions and customs first hand.

# WICKERWORK

The tree that yields the raw material for the wickerwork is a cross between the white willow (*Salix alba*) and the crack willow (*Salix fragilis*), and can usually be found growing beside streams or marshy land. These trees are easy to find in Madeira.

The main production centre is located in Camacha, and the manufacture of wickerwork started in 1850, as a result of the easy application of wicker on delicate and light materials, to make decorative and practical things, such as pieces of furniture. There is a vast array of attractive wickerwork items made by local craftsmen, including boxes, chairs, tables and baskets that visitors can admire and buy.

# WICKER SLEDGES

One of the most well known and typical Madeiran attractions is the descent **in a wicker sledge**, from Monte to Funchal. These two-seater vehicles are made in wood and wicker and date back to 1850, when they were used by local merchants to get quickly from Monte to Funchal. A unique thrill awaits you in this unusual means of transport, which is controlled by two men called *carreiros*, who guide and control the sledge, using their heavily booted feet as brakes.

# *the* FLAVOURS OF MADEIRA

Madeiran gastronomy has been influenced by all the cultures that passed through the islands over hundreds of years and left their mark.

Discover the regional flavours beginning with some typical starters: **bolo do caco** (similar to unleavened bread) **with garlic butter**, grilled limpets, tomato and onion soup or black scabbard fish roe, are just some of the treats you cannot miss. As a main course try the famous pork marinated in wine and garlic, or the legendary beef *espetada*, grilled on a skewer made from a laurel stick. And since you're on an island, make the most of the fresh fish: sample the black scabbard fish fillet (*espada*), tuna steak with fried maize (*atum com milho frito*) or grilled wrasse (*bodião*).

From typical restaurants to fine dining, in Madeira you'll find traditional fare based on the freshest regional products as well as contemporary cuisine that reinvents them, using them in original and sophisticated ways.

In the must-visit marketplace, ***Mercado dos Lavradores***, where colour, aroma and flavours blend, you will find the varied produce that make Madeiran gastronomy so rich and diverse.

# *let the* PARTY BEGIN

Madeira is peace, harmony and tranquillity, but it's also high spirits, sparkle and excitement. Surrender to the festive feeling that lingers all year long, and look out for the main celebrations which at certain times of year fill the island with an explosion of colour.

Take on a different identity for a day, dress up and participate in the **Carnival** pageants that take place in the month of February. Join in with the locals and find out for yourself why laughter really is the best tonic!

If you feel the scent of flowers is even stronger than usual, then you're probably visiting Madeira in April. This is when one of the archipelago's main attractions takes front stage: the flower. Watch the dancers and floats bedecked in flowers parade through the centre of town during the **Flower Festival**, filling the air with Nature's own perfume.

The **Atlantic Festival** is in June, featuring the International Fireworks Competition and in September the **Columbus Festival** takes place in Porto Santo, with a re-enactment of the bygone times when Christopher Columbus used to live there. Both festivals are well worth catching.

If you enjoy motor sports, then don't miss the **Madeira Wine Rally**, one of the major European car races, which takes place in August. Join the local population and feel the excitement this competition generates, which boasts the participation of famous drivers of the international racing scene.

During the ultimate wine month, September, discover how this nectar is made by participating in some of the activities that take place during the **Wine Festival**. The grape harvest is an experience you will not want to miss.

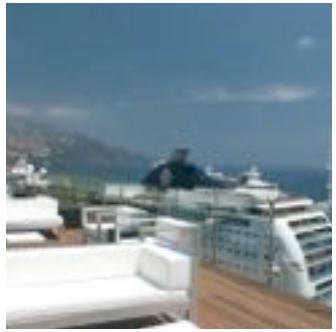
The fabulous fireworks, the festive feeling and the live street acts and performances place Madeira's New Year festivities among the most famous celebrations in the world. Go outdoors and listen first hand to the clock strike twelve, and let music usher your New Year in.

# *the* BEST VIEW

Madeira has most excellent accommodation to suit all tastes. From classic to ultra-modern hotels, quality and first class service are a tradition in this archipelago.

If you would like to revisit the archipelago's history, there is an exclusive accommodation opportunity on the island: the *Quintas* of Madeira. Former country house estates, these properties vary from the luxurious to the rustic. Dating back to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, these unique places, scattered pretty much all over the island, bear witness to the histories of European noble families who chose to live here.

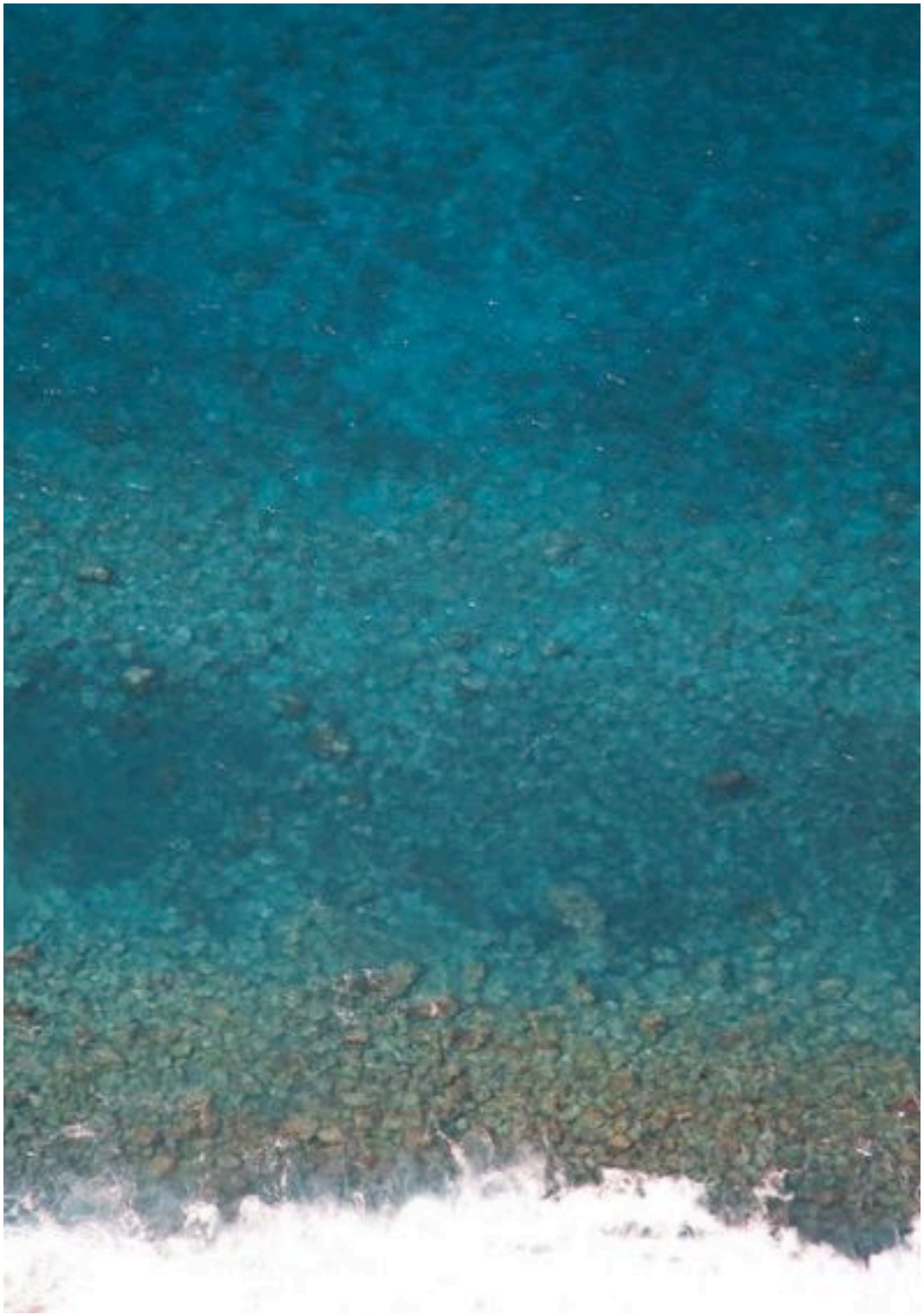
Thanks to the richness of the volcanic soil and the mild climate, exotic plants brought from all over the world thrive in every corner of the lush *Quinta* gardens.



# WELL-BEING

Exfoliate your feet in the hot sand of Porto Santo beach, stimulate your circulation in massage sessions offered by the waves, burn calories and tone your muscles on mountain walks. Beyond this spa provided by Nature, there is a wide choice of luxury spas in Madeira, with an array of treatments available to promote your ultimate well being by re-establishing the balance between body and mind.

Water, an element which is abundant in Madeira, is one of the energy sources that will help you reencounter your equilibrium. Make the most of the seawater and the seaweed with a **thalassotherapy** session, and feel your body tone, hydrate and rejuvenate.



The geomedicine centre, which resorts to the unique properties of the Porto Santo sands, or the thalassotherapy centre, that draws the formula for carrying out various treatments from the water itself, are just some of the healthcare facilities you will find in Madeira Islands.

Try a **Madeiran Aloe Vera oil** treatment, or some **Winetherapy** and let Nature look after you on your next holiday.

# GOD'S GARDEN

To talk of Madeira is to talk of Nature. God's Botanical Garden, Pearl of the Atlantic, or Garden of Eden, as many have called it, are some of the terms that define this island, abundant with exotic flora, lush with species brought from every corner of the world by navigators, botanists and visitors.

Delight at the wonders Madeira has to offer, and explore firsthand one of Portugal's greatest treasures, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Natural Site. Considered a relic of the subtropical forest, that existed in the Tertiary Period in southern Europe and the Mediterranean basin, the Madeira Laurissilva Forest is currently the largest and most well conserved area of Laurissilva in the world. Spreading over approximately 15,000 hectares, mostly on the island's north coast, it is made up of flat leaf shrubs and trees, ferns, mosses, lichens, liverwarts and other small plants, with endless endemisms.

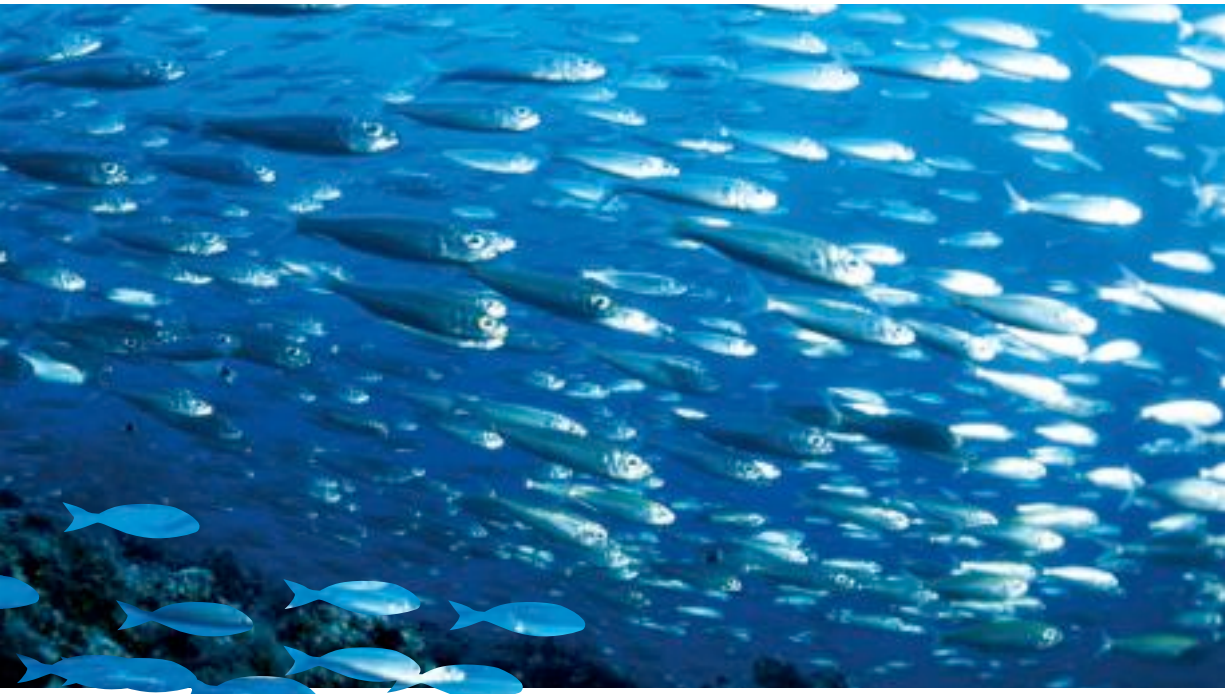
Go for a walk along the mountain trails and admire the *levadas* (water canals), a unique engineering feat almost 600 years old, that spread 2,150 km across the island.

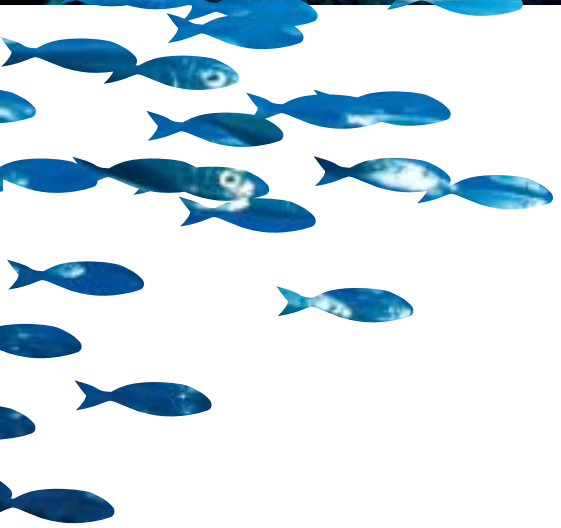
About 50 cm deep, *levadas* are irrigation canals built into rocks that capture rainfall and water from natural springs and deliver them to the population, in places difficult to access. With close to 200 different routes and varying levels of difficulty, choose a path and discover unique unseen landscapes that would be inaccessible by any other means.

Or follow one of the walks along the mountain trails that will take you from the sea shore to the island's highest peaks, and soak up breathtaking views of unique natural beauty.

# *don't* STOP

Dive into tepid water alongside dolphins, see the treetops as you "fly" in an unbelievably blue sky, and enjoy many other greens while you practice your swing.

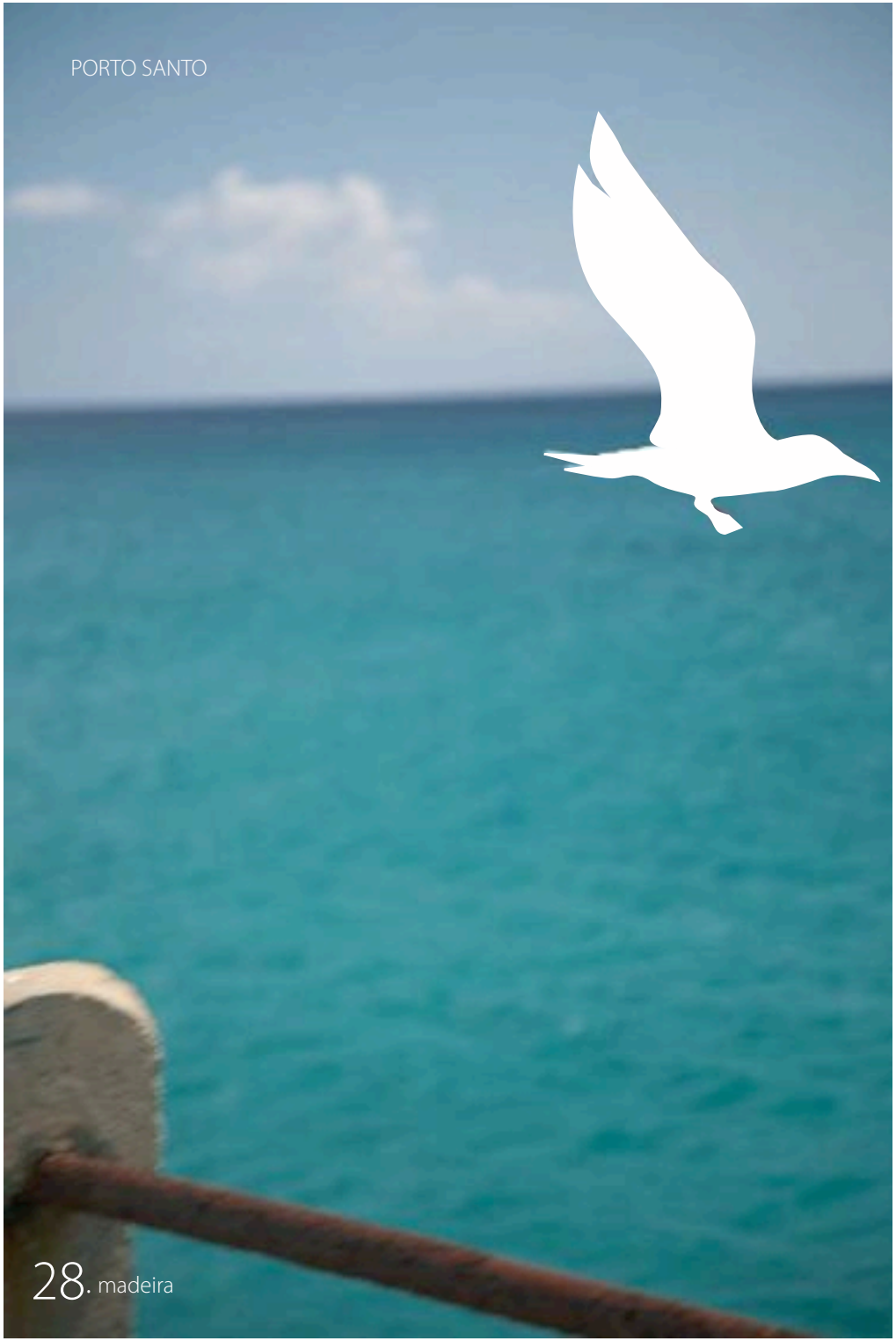




Swim in the limpid waters of the **Madeira** archipelago, considered one of the best places on the planet for scuba diving. Marvel at the amazing underwater world in the **Garajau Nature Reserve** and observe at close range species such as the **Moray eel** (*Muraena augusti*), the **Sea bream** (*Diplodus cervinus*) and the **Garden conger** (*Taenioconger longissimus*).

If you like sport fishing, visit this destination, considered a dream location by renowned world class big game fishermen. The biggest blue marlins in the world can be found here, weighing over 450 kg. Tuna, Atlantic bonito, barracuda or wahoo are some other examples of fish that can be caught here. For those who prefer a more contemplative "sport" choose one of the trips that will take you out to sea to watch dolphins and whales such as sperm whales and pilot whales.

Madeira is the ultimate holiday destination for making the most of Nature and all it has to offer. Start by enjoying the view while you play a round of golf on one of the archipelago's courses, and discover why this is a favourite spot for many golfers, pros and otherwise. For a different angle, go for a paraglider ascent and contemplate the island's unique landscape from high above. If adrenaline is what you crave, then ride the dirt trails on a mountain bike or come into close contact with Nature itself exploring a creek or waterway doing canyoning. Or why not make the most of the year round mild climate and allocate a day to sailing? In Madeira there are plenty of options for those who want to do more than simply rest during their holidays.

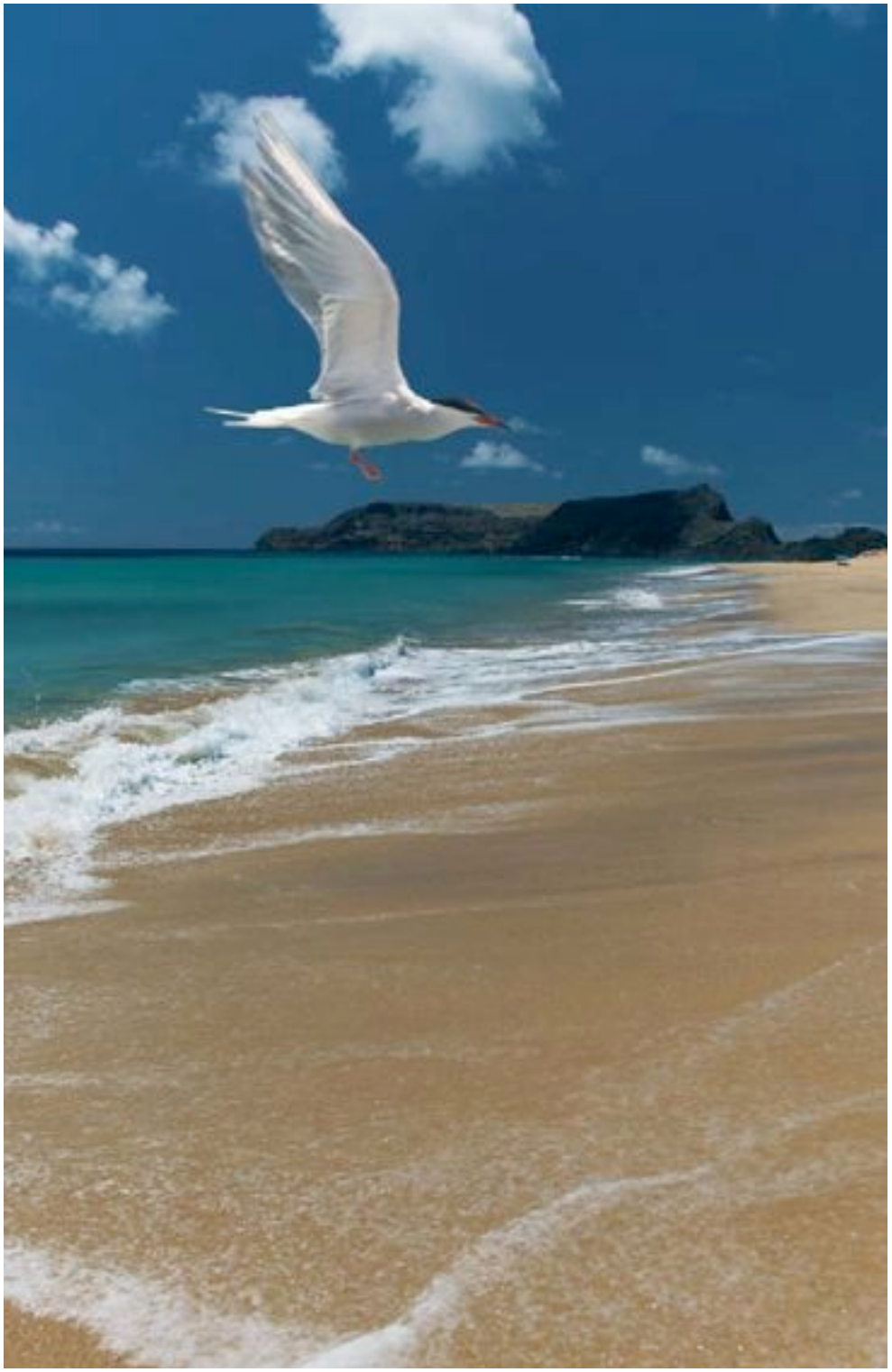


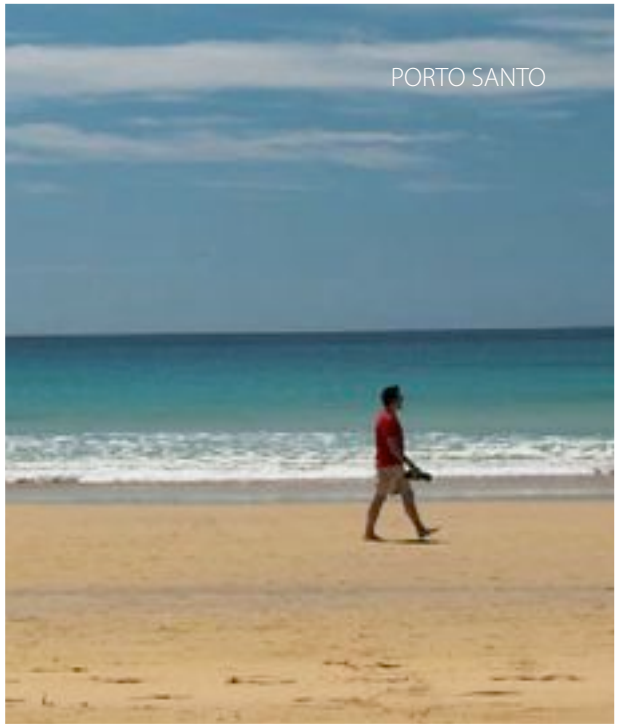
# *the colours of* PORTO SANTO

50 km northeast of Madeira lies the island of Porto Santo, a 10 minute plane flight away from Madeira airport, 20 minutes by helicopter, or 2 1/4 hours by boat.

Discovered in 1418 by João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira, this was the first island of the archipelago to be discovered. What was then a safe harbour to navigators escaping a storm is now a haven of tranquillity to those who visit.

On this still not very populated island, there is a most magnificent beach, bathed by a tepid, shimmering blue sea. The 9 km of fine golden sand make it a paradise for holidaymakers, especially families.






Comfort and quality service are mainstays of the island's hotels. Porto Santo also has spas, as well as thalassotherapy and geomedicine centres. Treatments draw on the unique elements of the island's sand, rich in iodine, calcium and magnesium, to promote the cure of many orthopaedic and rheumatic illnesses or treat those in need of physical medicine and rehabilitation. There is a wide choice of stimulating natural options that will restore you.

Make the most of your stay in Porto Santo and take some time to explore what it has to offer. Visit the house where Christopher Columbus lived, cycle around the island, or go horseback riding; play golf or go scuba diving in the calm sea that's heated by the Gulf Stream. You'll be spoilt for choice in Porto Santo!

MADEIRA ISLAND
PORTO SANTO ISLAND
DESERTAS ISLANDS
SELVAGENS ISLANDS
Madeira

Madeira International Airport is located in the municipality of Santa Cruz, **20 km away from Funchal**. It is the main airport in this Autonomous Region, and is connected to about fifty airports worldwide.

Easy accessibility, **the mild climate and natural beauty**, the renowned quality of its hotel industry and the variety of **leisure and sports activities** make this region the ideal destination to spend a dream holiday or hold events, congresses or business meetings, **at any time of year**.

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