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## Aiming higher for the eco-buyer

**By Sarah Negrin**  
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*Duncas Beach Resort in Portugal*

**WHEN it comes to buying property nowadays, whether in the UK or overseas, green is definitely the new black, to coin a phrase.**

"Eco-developments" has become the buzz expression, especially in Portugal, which is avoiding the global credit crunch and property sale slumps experienced in other overseas

markets.

Its Silver Coast is recognised as the latest hotspot, with prices considerably lower than on the Algarve.

Only 40 minutes from the capital, Lisbon, and nestled on the west coast near the village of Santa Cruz, *Joia das Dunas* is a compact, environmentally-friendly and sustainable new-build offering the latest innovations in green housing technology.

Its 10 villas, eight townhouses and 10-room boutique hotel are all being built from locally sourced and recyclable materials, and natural geothermal energy will power the heating and cooling systems.

According to the developer, heating costs will be approximately 66 to 74 per cent cheaper than the electric and natural gas alternatives.

The five-star hotel, scheduled to open in April 2009, boasts a spa, gym, mini-cinema, conference room, swimming pool, restaurant and bar, and, rather originally, offers courses in wine, cooking and organic horticulture.

A gourmet food and wine shop selling locally produced organic products, many grown in the development's own market garden, is also planned.

Villa and townhouse owners will be eligible to join a rental and management scheme, with net rental returns predicted at around four per cent.

Owners can also make use of the hotel's own laundry, catering, babysitting, villa-cleaning, and garden and pool maintenance services.

Project managing director, Goncalo Alves, intends to live on-site, running the hotel with his wife, Martha.

The hotel's striking design will blend with the natural surroundings of Joia das Dunas.

Bathrooms will feature pebbled walls, and the planted roofs and double-height living areas have been designed to create a unique atmosphere intended to make guests feel close to nature.

And nature does not get much better than the stunning virgin beach, one of several to be found along the beautiful Silver Coast, which is only a few minutes' walk from the development.

Flanked by impressive sand dunes (hence the name Joia das Dunas, which translates as Jewel of the Dunes), you should never have to fight for some space to lay your beach towels.

The eco-development's design is in keeping with architect Vasco Vieira's philosophy of bringing the outdoors inside, to create a harmonious living environment.

Every villa and townhouse boasts sea views, three en-suite bedrooms, pool, barbecue area, terrace, satellite TV and WiFi, and underground parking.

Built in a similar style to the hotel, the properties all boast double-height ceilings and large windows, to ensure maximum light throughout.

The stark contrasts of the windows, fuss-free, stylish, contemporary interiors and rustic stone pillars, will combine to create the ultimate feelgood factor.

With only 18 properties making up Joia das Dunas, the aim is to create a community feel among residents.

"What makes [Joia das Dunas](#) attractive is its unique combination of contemporary design, eco-friendly features, beachside location, boutique five-star services and proximity to Lisbon, " said Mr Vieira.

"There's simply nothing else like it in the region for quality, intimacy and service.

"This uniqueness, combined with the convenience of the boutique hotel, bodes well for both rental yields and future values alike." With over half the development already sold, a villa is available for €800,000, while a townhouse is priced from around €625,000.

"Joia das Dunas is a leading example of how to minimise the carbon footprint of a development without compromising on design", said Tariq El-Asad on behalf of the developer West Coast Developments Portugal.

"Prices have experienced a 10 per cent uplift since the April 2007 launch."

He added: "The Silver Coast is far less expensive than the Algarve, and with Lisbon increasingly becoming a popular tourist destination, the description of the area as an emerging market within an established one is well-founded."

Almost all the properties sold to date have been to British expatriates, instantly impressed by the development.

"There's been strong interest from the UK, particularly those with a design or architectural background, and from professional people and young families throughout Europe, " said Mr El-Asad.

Eco-buyers will surely love Joia das Dunas for its green credentials, while eager investors are most likely to appreciate its potential for capital growth.

All will be won over by its fabulous location, high standards and originality. A jewel it most certainly is.

**INFORMATION:**

[www.joiadasdunas.com](http://www.joiadasdunas.com)



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