

# PROMONTORIO

VILALARA THALASSO HOTEL  
LAGOA, PORTUGAL  
2010–2008

A luxury boutique resort  
designed to create a unique  
club-like experience

An elegant boutique concept  
for serviced apartments  
in one of Europe's most exclusive resorts

On a boat trip in 1966 Almeida Araújo, a self-taught architect, and his English wife Jackie picked out from the sea the 11-hectares site where the Vilalara Resort is now located. Backed by his father-in-law, the financier George Ansley, and inspired by Sardinia's lavish Costa Smeralda, Araújo began the construction of this unique and ambitious project. In 1968, the birth of their daughter Lara served as a motto for naming the project "Vilalara". Following Jacques Couëlle's Cala di Volpe scheme at Porto Cervo, Araújo made Vilalara into one of Portugal's most exclusive vacation clubs.

A few years later, the tourism entrepreneur Leon Levy visited the property, and was smitten by it, eventually buying it in 1970. By 1990, Vilalara had opened its saltwater-based thalassotherapy centre for which it was to become internationally acclaimed.

In 2007, the Amorim Group took over the whole resort and launched a competition that was won by promontorio for its in-depth renovation, including not only the serviced apartments and villas, but also common areas, such as restaurants, lounge, bar and pool.

Without falling into pastiche, our aim was to subtly recreate Vilalara's original ambience, by evoking the characteristic elements, motifs, textures, patterns and colours of late-60s tourism architecture. The typical organic fluidity influenced by Mediterranean and North African vernacular, with its riadh-like rough stucco, rounded corners, soft material transitions and joints, coalesces with the intimate scale and privacy of the apartments and Vilalara's stunning natural setting.

Location: Lagoa, Porches, Algarve, Portugal

Client: Amorim Turismo

Operator: Blue & Green Hotels

Positioning: 5 Star Hotel

Type: Resort

Scope of Services: Architecture renovation and interior design

Project brief: Resort interior design and infrastructure renovation of 104 junior suites, 7 suites and 12 luxury residences

Gross built area: 9,000 sq. m

Construction cost: EUR 9m

Project status: 2008 (invited competition, 1<sup>st</sup>-prize) – 2010 (completed)

