

Fit for a queen

THE QUEEN OF THE BAY PROJECT HAS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED ONE OF CARVOEIRO'S MOST COVETED RUINS

TEXT BEATRIZ MAIO

Oaktree Projects has once again done the impossible. In just a year and a half, the home renovation company completely transformed a ruin near the central square of Carvoeiro that had been abandoned since 1999, when it was last used for long-term rental. A project coveted by many, it came to life with colour and style under the skilled hands of Bart Hoogwerff Eikelenboom and his wife, Annelies.

The Dutch couple first visited the Algarve on holiday in 2003 and immediately fell in love with the region's climate, cuisine, and the people. This love affair with the Algarve led them to relocate to Portugal a decade later, eager to immerse themselves

in the "local life and culture". Their passion for the region inspired them to embark on a series of renovation projects, reviving derelict houses and infusing them with new charm.

So far, they have completed 13 projects, all in the municipality of Lagoa, for rent or purchase in diverse locations, from town centres to coastal villages. Bart had previously worked in custom home installations and built a company with offices across Europe. After completing her degree in Architecture, Annelies pursued a career in this sector where she played various different roles, which helped her develop her expertise for her current job. Their combined talents and motivation to face new challenges, coupled



Bart and Annelies

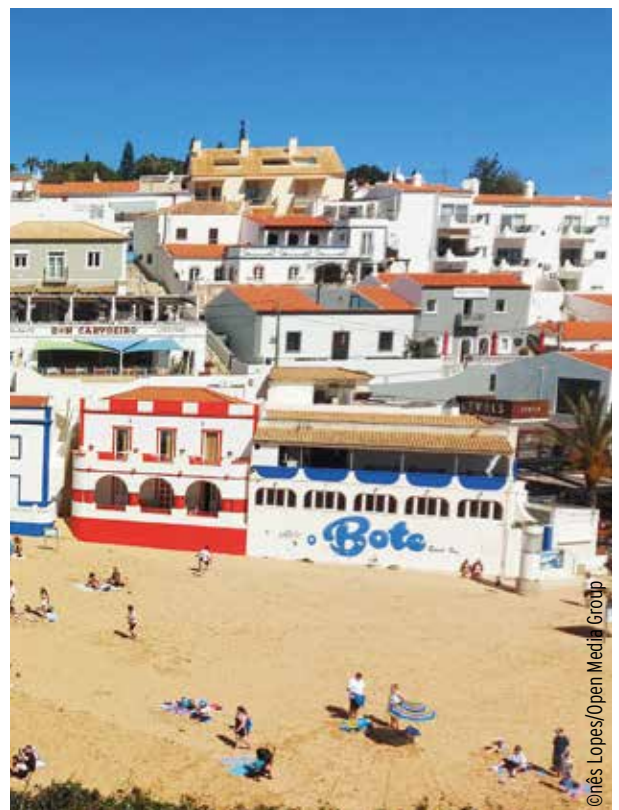


with their desire to contribute to the place they have called home for nearly a decade, have resulted in the exceptional work they now present.

They specialise in transforming long-neglected ruins into splendid local accommodations where tourists can enjoy an unforgettable holiday. “We want to give back a house instead of taking one,” Bart explained. Queen of the Bay is a great example of this philosophy, blending luxury with a genuine sense of local life. While adhering to Oaktree’s unique style, the house still manages to surprise. From the outside, it’s hard to imagine how spacious and light the it truly feels, but this perception is challenged as soon as you step inside. From its architecture and design to the décor, the space is incredibly captivating, much like all of the company’s projects, each distinctively unique.

This is their first house featuring a practical and advanced operating system. In the open-plan living room and kitchen, adorned with soft pink furniture, there are three champagne keypads with labelled buttons for different activities like cooking, creating the right atmosphere, not unlike those you’d find in renowned hotel chains. “I felt that it was time to start something new,” Bart recalled. To make the stay even easier, there is also a QR code guide explaining how to operate each appliance in the house.

What was once a dilapidated and unsightly ruin between two restaurants now brings new life to the town and joy to the residents, who have expressed their delight with this beautiful transformation. The 1880s structure has remained intact, as has the natural old rock at the back of the house that outlines the area.





When Oaktree Projects first took on the task, only the exterior walls and a few interior ones remained, with the roof having collapsed. “We tried to keep the feeling of the house and respect what we found,” Bart noted, underlining that they used the old stones from the outside patio for the windowsills.

They preserved part of the original structure, adding a delicate and functional touch, resulting in the perfect blend for a successful project. The house is tastefully decorated, from the light and neutral colours in the three bedrooms contrasting with the green on the cushions, to the elegant furnishing both indoors and outdoors, plants and beautiful pictures all around the house for a pop of colour, and the stunning hand-painted design on the inner courtyard.

The courtyard enjoys great sea views and is ideal for private outdoor breakfasts, barbecues, or drinks after the beach, with direct outdoor access to avoid tracking sand through the house. Additionally, the living room, one of the ground-floor bedrooms, the outdoor patio, and the roof terrace also offer sea views. Each bedroom boasts a private bathroom, with an extra guest bathroom available. The décor, with its nature and



PROJECT



Francisco António and Paulo Pinto



nautical elements, is one of a kind, incorporating not only special objects from around the world but also ideas inspired by the couple's travels "I get my inspiration from everywhere," Bart highlighted.

This newly completed project has already several bookings and the future looks promising. Its location is extremely inviting for outdoor walks, with the Algarve boasting some very famous hiking trails nearby, and it offers a private and privileged space to enjoy the well-known Black and White party, held every summer in Carvoeiro. "We are happy with the result, and we hope that many guests can enjoy a nice holiday here," Bart said.

Oaktree Projects prides itself on collaborating with local professionals, who work daily with utmost commitment and dedication. The team has been together since Oaktree's first project, nine years ago, consistently delivering exceptional results in old, abandoned properties all set in prime locations. Paulo Pinto and Francisco António lead the small yet efficient team, working exclusively with Portuguese suppliers. Queen of the Bay, with its breathtaking views and blend of old, modern, and elegant elements, represents Bart and Annelies' joint passion for the ruins and their desire to breathe new life into them. ■