



PRESS RELEASE LONDON 11TH MARCH 2011-

7th Annual Property Conference 'Selling in the UK – how to find buyers in a stagnant market'

10th March 2011 saw the Portuguese Chamber hosting its 7th annual Property Conference in London, with over 100 delegates present at the Pestana Chelsea Bridge Hotel. The event sponsors were Banco Santander Totta and Banco Espírito Santo.

The conference was opened by His Excellency the Portuguese Ambassador Mr. Joao de Vallera and delegates were then welcomed by the Chamber's General Manager Christina Hippisley. The audience then listened to presentations from several expert speakers.

Amidst the presentations and networking, the conference continues to provide a valuable platform for the embattled property sector, which plays an important financial role in the Portuguese economy.

The conference Chairman, Dr Jorge de Abreu, reviewed the outlook for the property sector in Portugal in 2011/12 and highlighted some new areas of development, including 'magic cities' such as Lisbon and Porto where owning a second property is becoming desirable. He noted that the Government should support tailor-made promotions for overseas investors and should create more inviting tax breaks such as a non domicile concept for foreign residents.

Following on, Francisco Palma, Research Director at Espírito Santo Research, presented the results from their own recent full scale research into Portugal's residential tourism. In his detailed presentation, he highlighted the enduring relationship between the UK buyers and Portugal and their continued preference for a second home in France, Spain or Portugal. Importantly, he identified that this relationship will endure.

With over 50 years of residential development experience, Andre Jordan spoke with authority on the need to recognise Portugal as offering a niche product for niche markets. He urged the industry to target buyers who warmed to the Portuguese characteristics of low key chic, and upmarket discretion, who appreciate 'cheaply expensive'. Marrying good residential product with services such as gardening, catering, security etc. is now more essential than ever and continues to appeal in mature markets such as the UK. More developer collaboration must also be matched with much more Government support for this sector.

In the following Q&A session, Filipe Silva, the recently appointed Head of Tourism in London stated that he supports the concept of residential tourism and will assist wherever he can.

Vasco Mendes, Head of Business Development at Pelicano Real Estate, then gave an insight into the dynamic and different projects currently in development in their portfolio. He emphasised the importance of hotel brands but also the integration of the hotel partner to help real estate sales. Vasco hailed the imminent launch of the National Resort Association in Portugal, a new lobbying group that will create a framework to assist overseas buyers in Portugal.

Carol Mann from RGM Digital gave a fascinating insight into internet marketing, the importance of a developer's website, interaction with social media and the value of 'keywords'. Carol's message was simple; invest in online, be involved with social media or go and sit on a beach!

James Harrison from Pestana said that his real estate sales stem from Pestana's philosophy of 'from two nights to a lifetime'. Although their marketing budget is mainly spent in tourism, Pestana sees their holiday guests as pre-qualified sales leads for whole ownership, fractional and timeshare. Fractional sales provide a significant pipeline of upgrades to whole ownership and in 2010, 90% of Pestana's buyers were cash buyers. James reiterated that throughout the Pestana Group, costs control, being risk averse and delivering real customer value for money continue to be the bedrock of their progress.

Andrew Coutts identified that with the mix of the established resorts and the arrival of new, very modern resorts such as the Conrad Residences, Portugal now has the opportunity to become a fashionable residential destination again. He highlighted the role of new hotel brands coming to all parts of Portugal, and mentioned too some not-so-glamorous favourable taxation laws for 'non-habitual residents', which can all combine to help make Portugal a fashionable destination again.

Lindsay Brazington of Village Design & Creative Marketing talked about the importance of 'the sizzle and the sausage' using effective marketing to generate sales. Her example was Barbados, where her client, using the correct balance of both product ('sausage') and marketing ('sizzle') generated off-plan sales of over €50m. Lindsay's tips for success are to know your Unique Selling Proposition, research and spend thoughtfully and appropriately.

Jorge de Abreu then concluded the conference by summarising that Portugal needs to focus on exploiting its positive characteristics (discretion, a chic destination etc.) and the new National Resort Association must work very hard to be heard. Dr de Abreu finished with his now familiar closing statement 'Go home and get to work!'

All presentations are available to download on the Chamber website – www.portuguese-chamber.org.uk/events.php

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR PICTURES PLEASE CALL 0207 201 6638 OR E-MAIL: c.hippisley@portuguese-chamber.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Portuguese Chamber's annual property conference is one of the Chamber's most successful conferences and a highlight of our events calendar.

The Portuguese Chamber of Commerce in the UK was founded in 1979 to give a collective voice to Portuguese and English companies operating here, and to provide them with business and networking opportunities. Today it has over 120 company members, and offers a full programme of conferences and networking events.

Given the popularity in the UK of Portugal as a second home and retirement destination, many of the Chamber's corporate members are in the residential and tourism sector, among them some of Portugal's leading developers, like Quintas de Óbidos, Praia D'El Rey Golf and Beach Resort and Planbelas, S.A.. Other members include the developers behind such well known resorts as the Algarve's Lakeside Village and Quinta da Boavista.

Sponsored by Banco Santander Totta and Banco Espírito Santo, since its inception in 2004 the conference has gone from strength to strength and is now the most important annual event in the UK and Portugal for all those involved in the Anglo-Portuguese residential property market.

It attracts leading developers, financiers, lawyers, brokers, consultants, property investors and the press. The networking dinner that follows the conference provides a great opportunity for introductions and business generation.