

Newsletter archive

4/3/19 Casa do Vale upgrade.

We are pleased to advise all incoming guests to Casa do Vale that as from 1st March 2019, in conjunction with our continuous upgrades and improvements schedule, the villa now has fibre broadband available which gives up to 100Mbps downloads and similar uploads. As a result the lounge streaming IPTV package now has the majority of UK content including SkySports, SkyMovies, BT Sports and free on-demand movies and box sets. The wireless network (WiFi) has both 2.4GHz and 5GHz (high speed) capability. We offer this a free service and trust you will enjoy the enhanced entertainment options.

10/4/19 Luxury private motor yacht charter.

As an add-on to any private villa rental we are pleased to promote our new partners for exclusive luxury private motor yacht charters. Cool Charters Azimut 58 flybridge is the largest private charter motor yacht available in Vilamoura marina. Just a short drive from both our villas this stunning charter will only enhance your holiday experience and has packages to suit all needs. You need to let them know that you have been referred by us, **Supremevillas.com**, on first contact and you will be especially looked after or you may book directly with us at the same price, commission-free. Remember – book quickly as available dates are in high demand! Please use this link for further information - <https://www.coolchartersvilamoura.com>.

10/4/19 Enhanced TV packages upgrade.

Whilst we acknowledge that the primary objective of a private villa rental in the Algarve is for 'outdoor living', we are pleased to announce that we have upgraded the TV/Entertainment packages in the lounges at both of our villas. This now includes all Sky Sports, BT Sports, Sky movies, all UK terrestrial and a host of other channels, including many foreign channels for our non-UK guests. There is also a comprehensive library of other movies (over 2000) and series box sets. We offer this as a completely free service via the internet included with your rental and trust you will enjoy the enhanced content and features.

18/4/19 Spa use 2019.

After the first four rentals this year we have been advised by our management company in the Algarve about certain issues that need to be emphasised regarding the use of the hot tub at Villa La Quiete. Guests are still either not reading or choosing to ignore the Operating/Safety manual sent out the week prior to arrival, a copy of which is at the villa and is also available on-line in the 'Members Area' on our website at <https://antjohn.wixsite.com/supremevillas>.

All of the issues over the past years, bar one minor functional breakdown, have been as a result of non-adherence to the instructions or misuse of the equipment. The spa is primarily offered for adults to relax in a warm spa environment and is **not** offered or intended as a children's recreation small 'splash pool'. Whilst we have no objection to well-behaved younger guests also enjoying this facility, but **only** when supervised by an adult, we respectfully submit that most spas in health/leisure clubs expressly forbid under 16's from using these types of facility at all.

To avoid any confusion this year we have made the operating procedure even simpler; there are just 2 operating buttons and the temperature is automatically maintained at 35°C. Due to the obvious required safety features associated with any volume of water linked with electricity when these safety parameters are exceeded the equipment shuts down. This complex leisure item is installed and maintained by our Spa professionals in the Algarve with whom we have a service contract. Our local management company can only perform certain function tests, cleaning etc; they cannot effect repairs and software resets. Besides which, they are now extremely busy with rental management and can only attend on a priority basis. We also cannot guarantee our spa service provider call-out lead times.

Normal use over the years has not resulted in problems. Any abuse of the facility or non-compliance of the operating/safety instructions will result in immediate suspension of operation of the spa with no further liability on our part or refunds of any supplement.

8/7/19 July 2019 advisory.

The owners, in conjunction with their management company partners in the Algarve, Villa Support, have requested we highlight some issues that have become apparent mid-way through this season's rentals.

Whilst we acknowledge that guests do not travel to the Algarve to sit inside and watch TV, to enhance the villas' facilities the TV/entertainment packages were upgraded in April this year (see April newsletter) to include a vast range of channels and movies/box sets to suit the majority of tastes. The IPTV infrastructure that supports this free upgrade is available on the large LED TV's in the lounges of both villas but does not extend to the cinemas. Legitimate HD BluRay and DVD media are playable in the cinemas for a proper cinematic experience.

Please note that there is no VPN (virtual private network) at either villa so, as most devices and contracts are geo-specific for streaming personal content such as NetFlix, Amazon Firesticks, SkyGo etc, they may not operate in Portugal. Certain rentals have been attempting to re-configure settings, the results of which just lead to non-operation of equipment and call-out of personnel to effect resets/ repairs.

The inclusive maid service involves light cleaning, making of beds and removal of bathroom refuse only. They are not responsible for the removal and cleaning of soiled clothing and/or the handling of any item that contains bodily fluids etc.

You are responsible for the disposal of your own refuse as clearly indicated in the manuals of both villas. On departure days especially, large volumes of refuse are being left for our staff to deal with, particularly waste food and drink. Their vehicles are not 'dust-carts' as they invariably contain fresh food for welcome packs and clean laundry. Any excess refuse will be dealt with by the local council.

Our local managers will advise where possible regarding most Portuguese/Algarvian specific criteria but please remember that we are not a holiday company and they are not reps. Ultimately we offer self-catering rental accommodation, managed by our own staff on behalf of the villa owners.

This newsletter is produced purely to advise about current issues that have become apparent and no offence is intended or implied. We would hope that any advisory information just enhances your villa experience for a smooth relaxing holiday.

12/7/19 VERY Important notice!

Despite the cautions detailed in the 'Advisory Notes' links on our website forwarded the week prior to arrival, the owners are extremely disappointed that certain guests are still disregarding the advice regarding content sources for the cinemas at both villas. The cinemas are **ONLY** capable of playing genuine legitimate HD BluRay and DVD media in their respective players for a proper cinematic experience (we are unaware of any UK cinema currently screening 'soap' episodes). A recent rental, while attempting to playback other media from alternative sources, have forced access to the amplifier inputs, broken a glass cover in the process and subsequently destroyed the equipment. This is the 2nd time such damage has occurred in 3 years. This has now become a very costly affair for the rental concerned to the tune of approx. £3000 including replacements, shipping and labour, besides which the following rental was without the use of the cinema for 4 days whilst a temporary solution was expedited. As you are the principal renter and the person ultimately responsible for the group it is your responsibility to make members of your group aware of this situation. It is pointless later claiming that other members of your group have caused the damage. Guests in your group may well be 'experts' in entertainment technology in their own homes but the equipment in our villas has been set-up by local professionals for optimum viewing within the limits and parameters offered. It is **not** your equipment to meddle with.

Both cinemas are full HD using the HDMI interface which should **NEVER** be un-plugged/plugged as, even when in standby, carry residual voltages causing damage to equipment hardware and software. We enclose a recent relevant article from reputable AV forums:

"You should never hotplug HDMI equipment.

All devices should be completely removed from power while making or breaking connections.
Not in standby, completely removed from a power source.

Otherwise you are playing Russian roulette with your equipment, one day you will hotplug and find that none of your HDMI ports will work anymore because the HDMI chipset has been fried by an ESD/EOS event.

If you are seeing sparks, this is a combination of ESD and EOS.

ESD is electro static discharge from the body.

EOS is electrical over stress from HDMI 5v line not dealing with the sudden make or break in connection.

Note that even in standby the HDMI 5v line is always active. Its primary purpose is to power the EDID in the sink or display, so even if the display is completely removed from power its still getting 5v from the source via HDMI.

So all HDMI devices in the chain must be completely removed from power while making breaking connections to avoid damage."

We have upgraded the media packages for the lounge TV's at both villas to include a vast library of box-sets, world TV channels including SKY and BT sports and over 2000 movies. With the decline of BluRay/DVD use we are looking into the future feasibility of potentially upgrading the cinema media content to either a NAS server or incorporating a media streamer such as Google Chromecast but as this is a rental property any devices must be simple to use and operate for obvious reasons.

Our local managers have been advised that any deviation from the normal usage will result in withdrawal of the facility with no further liability on our part.

17/7/19 Villa La Quiete Internet.

We have recently been made aware that the internet speeds at Villa la Quiete can be quite low at times, varying between 2 and 3.5 Mbps and this has caused the IPTV to stutter or freeze at times, especially when watching in HD. We have had all the villa's Wi-Fi and router hardware checked by professionals and it is functioning correctly. The problem would appear to be with the service provider, MEO (formerly Portuguese Telecom (PT)) now owned by the French company, Altice.

We have raised several tickets with technical services and have been informed by MEO that we should not expect equivalent acceptable off-season speeds of 8-9Mbps due to the following:

1. During holiday season, the additional drain on their network infrastructure due to tourism is overloading a network that can barely cope with the local population demand.
2. Villa La Quiete is at the end of the network on a copper line that at maximum will only allow 24Mbps and there is no fibre cabling in the vicinity.
3. There are too many devices on the internal network at any one time attempting to stream/download etc.

We are unable to use an alternate service provider as they can only 'rent' the existing line with the same limitations. Fibre is currently not available in this area from any supplier. Lodging a complaint and instigating legal action takes months/years and is no guarantee of a solution; only possible compensation if a judgement is favourable. Our other villa, Casa do Vale, has a contract with the same supplier, is cheaper per month, has fibre broadband and speeds are nearly always in the region of 90 Mbps downloads and even faster uploads and so it would appear that the explanation is plausible.

We apologise in advance if this causes inconvenience but we do offer this as a free service and can only be responsible for our internal networks etc. Remember this is Portugal and it is very slow to upgrade to newer technology for a multitude of reasons but, whilst it is unacceptable that progress proceeds at snails' pace, getting fractious with them just results in them digging in their heels and placing you to the back of the queue. Just to put things into perspective, the UK is currently advertising guaranteed download speeds of up to 1Gb per second. We have associates in S. Korea that have had minimum 5 Gb per second speeds for the past 6 years for the equivalent of only £5 per month.

Our advice is as follows. If you experience problems at the villa, particularly when watching TV, we advise that you temporarily log-off non-essential devices from the Wi-Fi network. The TV works via a LAN cable and takes precedence over all wireless devices. Obviously if you are trying to watch TV and there are 6 iPhones, 3 Samsungs, 2 laptops, 2 iPads/tablets and both the PS4 and X-Box connected to the network all trying to feed off a small bandwidth the system is bound to fail with the current limitations. The new TV package has normal definition (SD) and some 'Low Internet' channel versions with slightly reduced resolution for such situations. For some reason Apple devices seem to be better at capturing bandwidth at the expense of other Wi-Fi devices (Samsung, Huawei etc).

As roaming charges have been abolished within the EU (yes, we are still in it) Facebook/Instagram etc can all be used with your own UK data plan allowance at no extra cost so that is another factor to consider.

If it is imperative that you require maximum connection stability for a work issue during your holiday please speak with our local managers who can assist with procuring a Mobile router from Vodafone. A reliable version is currently available for approx. 49.99 euros with a sim card with 30GB of data for 15 euros. Once expired this can be topped up again with a minimum 15 euros for 30GB. We advise you do not stream (TV, YouTube, ShowBox etc) with this type of device as 30 GB will be consumed in about 6 hours of use at 720p resolution, besides which it cannot be linked into our home network.

10/1/20 Casa do Vale upgrades 2020.

As part of our continued programme of upgrades and refurbishments we are pleased to announce that the TV in the lounge has been upgraded to a 65" (from the 2018 55").

After successful trials we are pleased to announce the latest upgrade to the cinema at Casa do Vale. As Blu-Rays and DVD's are becoming obsolete we have replaced the hardware with a Google Chromecast Ultra to allow guests to view their own personal content from their media devices in the cinema. This includes movies and media content on devices such as phones, tablets and laptops. You no longer have to remember to bring Blu-Ray and DVD discs. This device can display in 4K resolution (Ultra HD) and is compatible with Apple iPhone/iPad and Android equipment (Samsung, Huawei etc.) and both Mac and PC laptops. Detailed instructions as to how to 'cast' your content to display on the 'big screen' are available in the Members Area of our website by clicking on the 'Casa do Vale Cinema' link (use the password 'algarveholiday' - without the apostrophes to access this area).

We trust that this will allow our guests from all parts of the world to enjoy their own specific genres of video and audio entertainment. Less equipment means easier operation and a simpler single remote. The new instruction manual for operating the equipment will be in the cinema along with the remote as before.

This is offered as a free upgrade and we hope this only enhances your holiday experience at Casa do Vale.

Your own media subscriptions such as SkyGo, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub, All 4 etc. may work as long as they are not restricted by geolocation (i.e. will only allow access within a specific country). There is no VPN (Virtual Private Network) infrastructure at Casa do Vale and the Internet Service Provider (ISP) does broadcast the IP address of the hardware as located in Portugal.

Please note that the cinema equipment does not allow for any additional hardware to be added such as Amazon FireSticks, Android media boxes etc

We accept no responsibility for prohibited access of these types of services in the event of any restrictions imposed with your subscriptions.

The free IPTV service in the lounge currently has 650 TV channels including most major UK and European listings, Sky movies and others, Sky sports, BT sports and others, 14 day catch-up and over 19000 free on-demand listings of movies and box-sets.

10/3/20 New Tesco supermarket.

We would like to inform you all of a newly opened (March 2020) supermarket in Almancil called The Food Co. It may appeal mainly to our English guests as they are stockists for a large range of Tesco products which they will be familiar with. Prices are slightly higher than the UK (obviously due to transport costs) but still seem reasonable. A link to their website is <https://www.thefoodco.es/>. It is obviously situated closer to Casa do Vale (Almancil) than Villa La Quiete (Vilamoura) but may be worth a trip for bulk buying for the large groups that are hosted at our villas. It is not within walking distance of Casa do Vale.

For those who prefer not to cook we would advise all our guests that it is still very reasonable in Portugal to eat out at local restaurants where you can enjoy great value food and wine, that is home cooked with fresh local produce allowing you to savour the holiday experience and Algarve culture.

We thank you for your anticipated co-operation.