

PORTUGUESE NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE “YEAR OF THE POUSADAS” CAMPAIGN



Situation Analysis:

In seeking a strong promotional angle to create a more defined image and brand positioning for the country of Portugal, M. Silver Associates, in its newly appointed role as agency of record for the Portuguese National Tourist Office, launched a 2002/03 marketing campaign focusing on the country's charming *Pousadas*. This collection of distinctive accommodation options situated throughout Portugal exemplified the diversity, culture, history and style of the country itself. The *Pousadas* also represented an inviting theme to encourage visitors to travel beyond Lisbon and experience the country's warm and welcoming people, villages and lesser-known tourism regions. With limited promotional dollars, the *Year of the Pousadas* became the primary focus of the tourist office's marketing endeavors in the US.

Statement Of Objectives And Goals:

- Stimulate leisure travel to Portugal from the US
- Use the *Pousadas* theme and accommodations concept to generate country-wide travel
- Provide the media with a “new angle” to generate destination coverage
- Create excitement and word-of-mouth buzz with consumers, media and travel agents by promoting Portugal as a diverse and “undiscovered” European destination
- Obtain coverage that would introduce the variety and affordability of the Portuguese *Pousadas* as an ideal lodging choice on par with the Spanish Paradors

Program Planning And Strategy:

To present this to the media in a memorable way, M. Silver developed an umbrella publicity campaign that celebrated the 60th anniversary of the founding of the government-owned Pousadas of Portugal hotel group. Program elements included:

- Specialized press kit profiling the country's variety of *Pousadas* accommodations with corresponding destination information, suggested tours, sightseeing opportunities, attractions, etc.
- *Year of the Pousadas* press luncheons in New York City and Los Angeles to launch the program and introduce the Pousadas hotel group and Portugal's various tourism regions, as well as its cuisine, arts and crafts and wines and ports to leading travel and lifestyle media
- A series of group and individual media country visits with itineraries designed to showcase every region of the country
- A writing contest for journalists for the “Best Article on Portugal” to encourage and reward significant destination coverage

Results:

The *Year of the Pousadas* and the Pousadas of Portugal were covered significantly in national, regional and local market media outlets. As reported by the Portuguese National Tourist Office, country publicity during this period doubled from the previous year, with more than 13 million impressions achieved. The country and its marketing campaign were featured in such outlets as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Travel Agent Magazine*, *Modern Bride*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Newsday*, *Patriot Ledger*, *American Way*, and *Boston Globe*, among others. Correspondence with media confirmed that the “Best Article on Portugal” contest stimulated more interest in covering the destination.

Additionally, the Pousadas governing body, ENATUR, confirmed that travel to Portugal and actual reservations for Pousadas accommodations increased during the campaign period.

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