



businesses: a guesthouse, which opened in March and is located on the building's first floor; and a fully-fledged therapy centre, offering yoga and Pilates classes, various therapies (with a focus on Ayurveda) and workshops. When the two sides join forces, the result is a wide range of wellness retreats.

A truly relaxing haven amidst the hustle and bustle of Portimão's centre, Villa Prana's guesthouse comprises five bedrooms, with a total of 18 beds. The rooms are comfy and bright, with spacious lockers and plenty of outdoor space for sunbathing, creating a cosy and welcoming atmosphere. Operating as an independent guesthouse, the accommodation will be used primarily for retreats in the low season, with regular guests having the option to book a therapy or attend a class downstairs on request.

The therapy centre, on the other hand, "aims to promote health and well-being within the community", explains Sílvia. With an experienced team of therapists offering everything from meditation, acupuncture and macrobiotic consultations to Ayurveda, Bowen Technique, Feng Shui, body psychotherapy and a selection of massage styles, the centre also hosts workshops most Saturdays, which are available on a donation basis, or at affordable prices. "We've had Ayurveda and



VITAL ENERGY

A HAVEN OF WELLNESS IN PORTIMÃO, VILLA PRANA COMBINES A GUESTHOUSE, YOGA AND PILATES CLASSES, AND SEVERAL OTHER THERAPIES IN A TRULY HOLISTIC PROJECT

TEXT ANA TAVARES

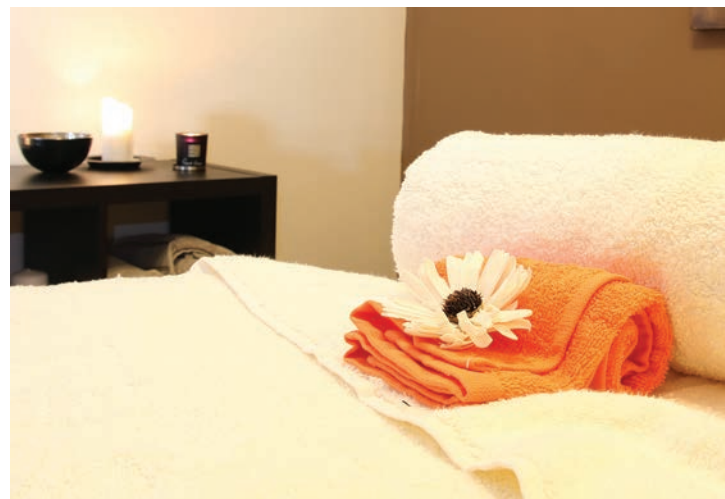
Sílvia Duarte and David Coelho are tired but happy. Like most new parents, they are sleep-deprived and have been working long hours looking after their new arrival. But in their case, the baby is a huge villa in Portimão. The couple have been busy with their new guesthouse and therapy centre, fittingly called Villa Prana – Guesthouse & Therapies. Prana is a Sanskrit word meaning "life force", and it would fair to say that the couple have been investing much of their own vital energy into this project. So far, it seems to have paid off. Opened in late January, Villa Prana had to expand its timetable after only one month in operation, as some of its



classes were getting crowded. This is well-deserved recognition for the couple, but especially for Sílvia, who has earned somewhat of a reputation as a yoga and Pilates teacher at the CLCC in Portimão. "I was comfortable and loved my job, but if it weren't for David, I would never have left it," admits the petite hazel-eyed teacher, who married David, now her business partner, two years ago, in India.

Making the most of her extensive background in fitness and yoga instruction, but also of the couple's previous experience in hospitality (both worked in large hotel groups), Villa Prana is a project that combines two separate, yet complementary





meditation lectures, macrobiotic workshops, gestational well-being master classes and yoga for parents and children, amongst others,” lists David, who is also close to completing his oriental therapies course. “This way our therapists can explain to people what they do, and if clients are interested, they can book an appointment,” adds Sílvia.

Besides her busy schedule of yoga and Pilates classes (including clinical Pilates) from Monday to Friday at the centre, in the summer Sílvia will once again partner with Kalu Beach Bar, at Praia Grande beach, in Ferragudo, to teach ‘Yoga Paddle’ lessons, which combine yoga and stand-up paddle.

In harmony with their philosophy, Sílvia and David also hope to host community yoga lessons every Friday, which will be open to local disadvantaged people. In the future, their goal is to provide training to other people, making Villa Prana a true holistic hub. With their classes and workshops full, and consultations piling up quickly, these new parents may be tired, but they certainly have a very healthy baby. ■

Prices per room start at €20 in the low season (including breakfast). Class membership available from €25 per month.

www.villaprana.pt