



# The Modernist architecture of Faro - Walking tour

*8-10 November  
2024*

**Join Chris, founder of The Modernist Faro and the Modernist weekend event in the discovery of iconic Modernist buildings of Faro**





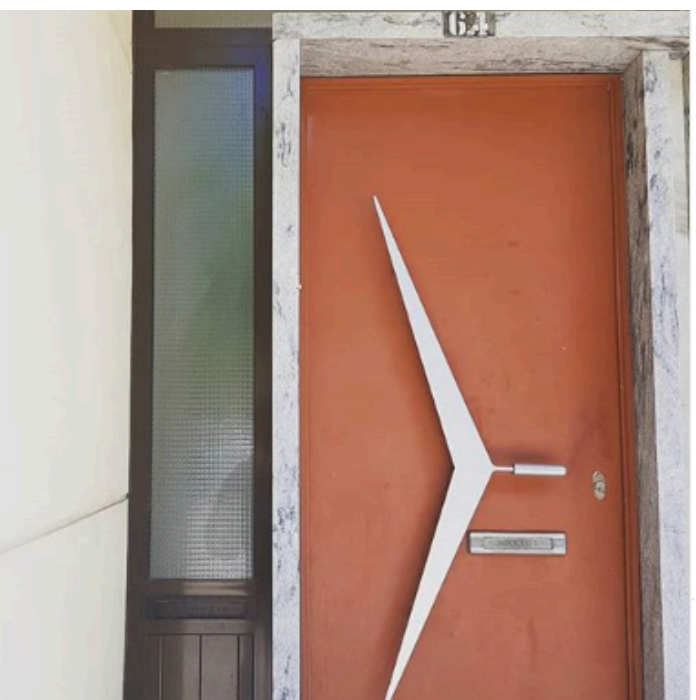
# A miracle of design: Faro, the Palm Springs of Portugal

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Faro is home to over 500 mid-century buildings, making it the area with the most of these structures in southern Europe.

In the early 1950s, a group of Portuguese architects, led by Manuel Gomes da Costa from the Algarve, returned from South America eager to challenge old political ideas and outdated styles. Inspired by famous architects like Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer, they aimed to revitalize the region. Their approach, known as the "South Modern" style, significantly enhanced Faro's architectural identity.



# Modernist influences: Manuel Gomes da Costa

The Pioneer Manuel Gomes da Costa emerged as the most influential figure in Faro's modernist movement. His work was characterized by a distinct style that blended modernist principles with regional adaptations.

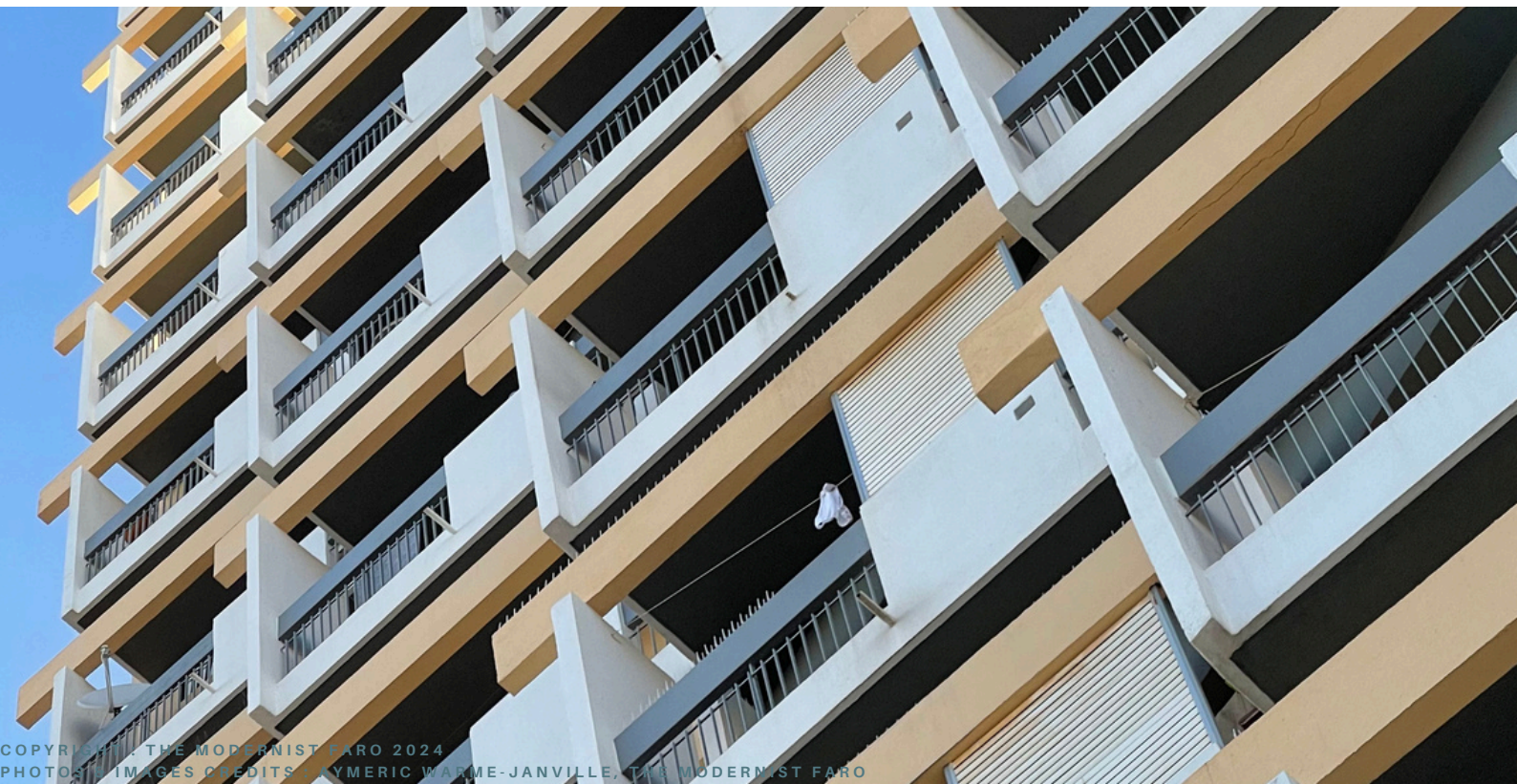


ARCHITECT  
MANUEL GOMES  
DA COSTA

## Characteristics of Faro's Modernist Architecture

Faro's modernist buildings showcase several unique features tailored to the local climate and culture:

- Flat roofs: Designed to accommodate the region's low rainfall
- Breeze blocks: Used for protection from intense sunlight
- Colored azulejos: Traditional Portuguese tiles incorporated in modern compositions
- Geometric patterns: Inspired by both modernist principles and Moorish influences
- Climate-adaptive elements: Such as shading systems for heat regulation and air circulation



# Case study : Casa Gago

1955 - architect Manuel Gomes Da Costa



## The Gago House: A Tropical Modernist Gem in Faro

Construction year : 1955 /  
architect : Manuel Gomes Da Costa

The Gago House, designed by Manuel Gomes da Costa in 1955, stands as a remarkable example of tropical modernist architecture in Faro, Portugal.

This iconic structure showcases Da Costa's innovative approach and his ability to blend international influences with local sensibilities

### Architectural Features

The Gago House exhibits several distinctive elements that define its tropical modernist character:

- Elevated Design: The use of pilotis (supporting columns) lifts the main structure off the ground, creating an airy and light appearance
- Climate-Responsive Elements: A flat roof with an oriented canopy
- A second skin made of cobogós (perforated concrete blocks) and frames
- Loggias (covered exterior galleries) that protect the interior from intense sunlight
- Natural Light and Ventilation: The design maximizes natural illumination and maintains comfortable temperatures without air conditioning



# Case study : Casa Gago

## 1955 -architect Manuel Gomes Da Costa



### Cultural Significance

The Gago House represents a fascinating intersection of influences:

- Latin American Inspiration: Despite never traveling outside Portugal, Da Costa incorporated strong Latin American architectural elements, likely influenced by his client, Alfredo Gago, a wealthy Venezuelan emigrant
- Avant-Garde Vision: At just 34 years old, Da Costa created a design that was ahead of its time for Faro, introducing modernist principles to the region

### Present-Day Appreciation

The current owner, Margarida, an architect herself, recognizes and values the exceptional design of her flat.

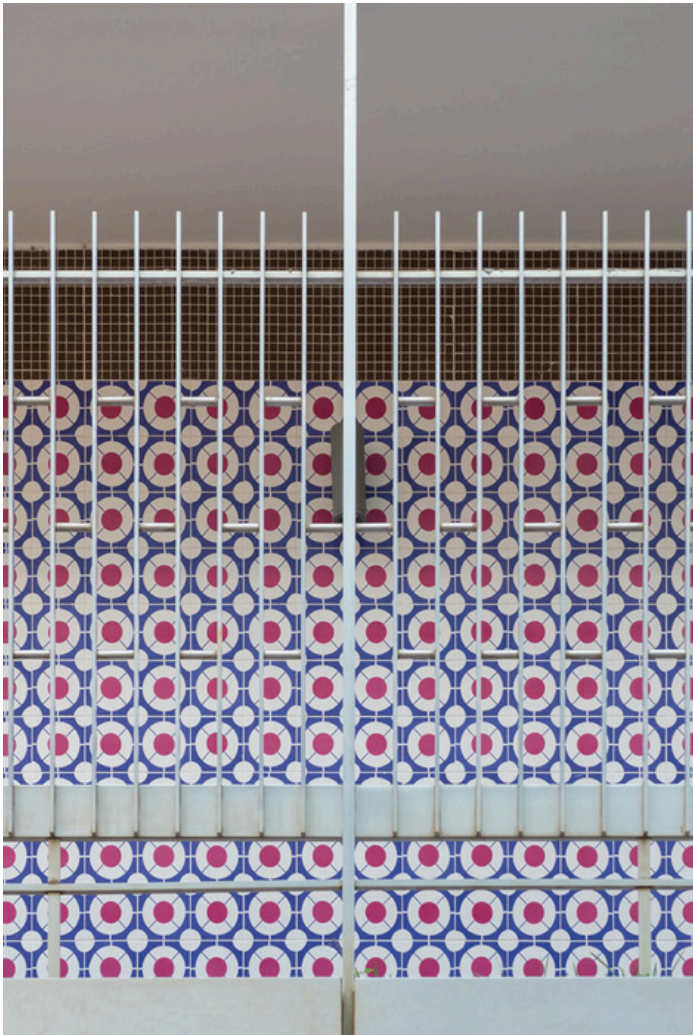
She particularly appreciates how the building's thoughtful construction allows for ample natural light and comfortable temperatures without relying on air conditioning.

The Gago House stands as a testament to Manuel Gomes da Costa's skill in adapting modernist principles to the Algarve's climate and culture. Its enduring appeal and functionality demonstrate the timeless quality of well-executed modernist architecture.



# Case study : Casa Milagre

1950 -architect Manuel Gomes Da Costa



Manuel Gomes da Costa's pioneering modernist house, completed in 1950, marked a significant turning point in Algarve's architectural landscape and launched the career of one of Portugal's most influential regional architects.

## Architectural Significance

- This groundbreaking project, conceived when Gomes da Costa was just 29 years old, showcases a masterful blend of modernist principles and traditional Algarvian elements:  
**Innovative Layout:** The design features two rectangular structures and four green zones on a trapezoidal plot, accessible from two streets.
- **Functional Design:** The house is divided into two distinct functional floors, demonstrating Gomes da Costa's early commitment to practical, modernist planning.
- **Regionalist Approach:** By harmoniously integrating local architectural traditions with modernist ideas, the house exemplifies the regionalist style that would become Gomes da Costa's hallmark

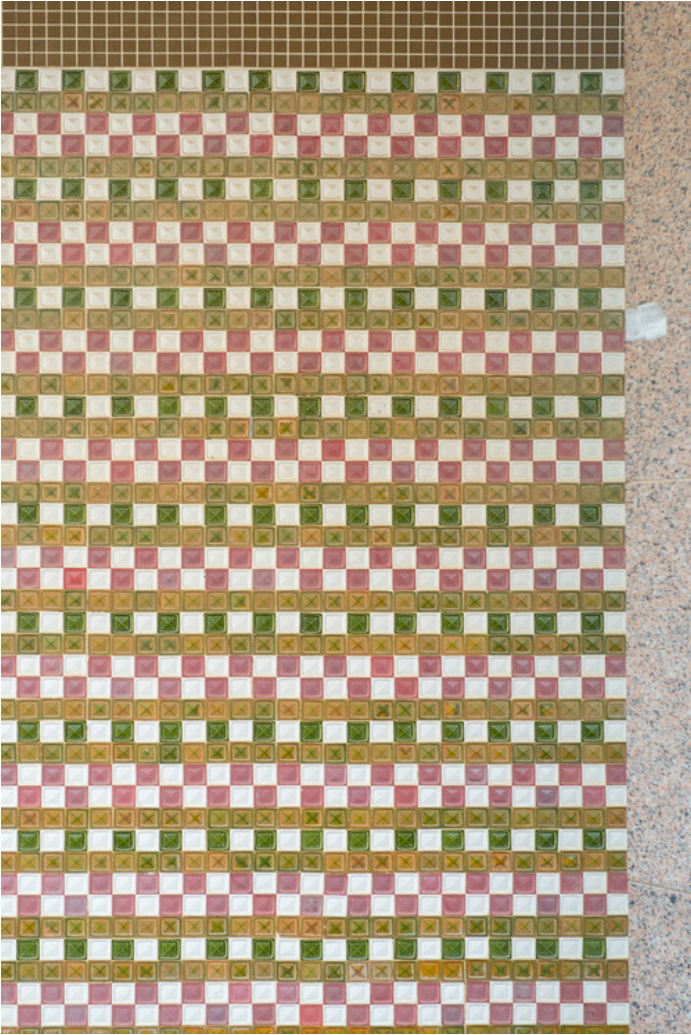


## Historical Context

- The project's journey from conception to realization highlights the tensions between progressive architecture and conservative local politics in post-war Portugal:  
**Initial Rejection:** Faro's municipality initially rejected the design, sparking a legal battle.
- **Challenging Norms:** The house's approval and construction challenged established architectural norms in the Algarve, paving the way for future modernist projects

# Case study: Casa Milagre

1950 - architect Manuel Gomes Da Costa



## Impact on Gomes da Costa's Career

- This project was instrumental in launching Manuel Gomes da Costa's illustrious career: **Early Recognition:** Despite being one of his first works, the house gained attention from the architectural community, being described as a "miracle" in some circles
- **Career Catalyst:** The success of this project helped establish Gomes da Costa as a prominent figure in Algarve's architectural scene, leading to numerous future commissions

## Legacy

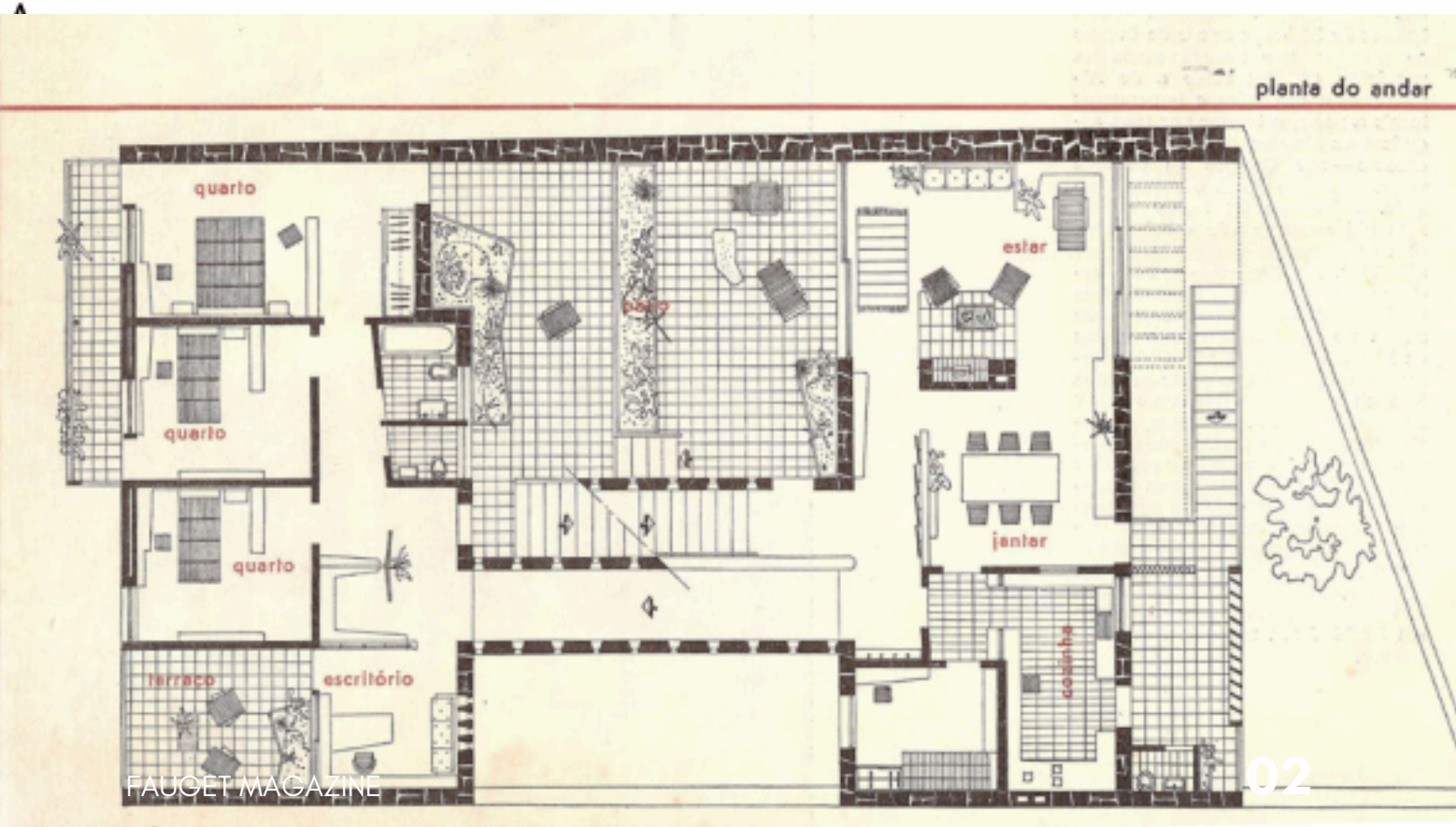
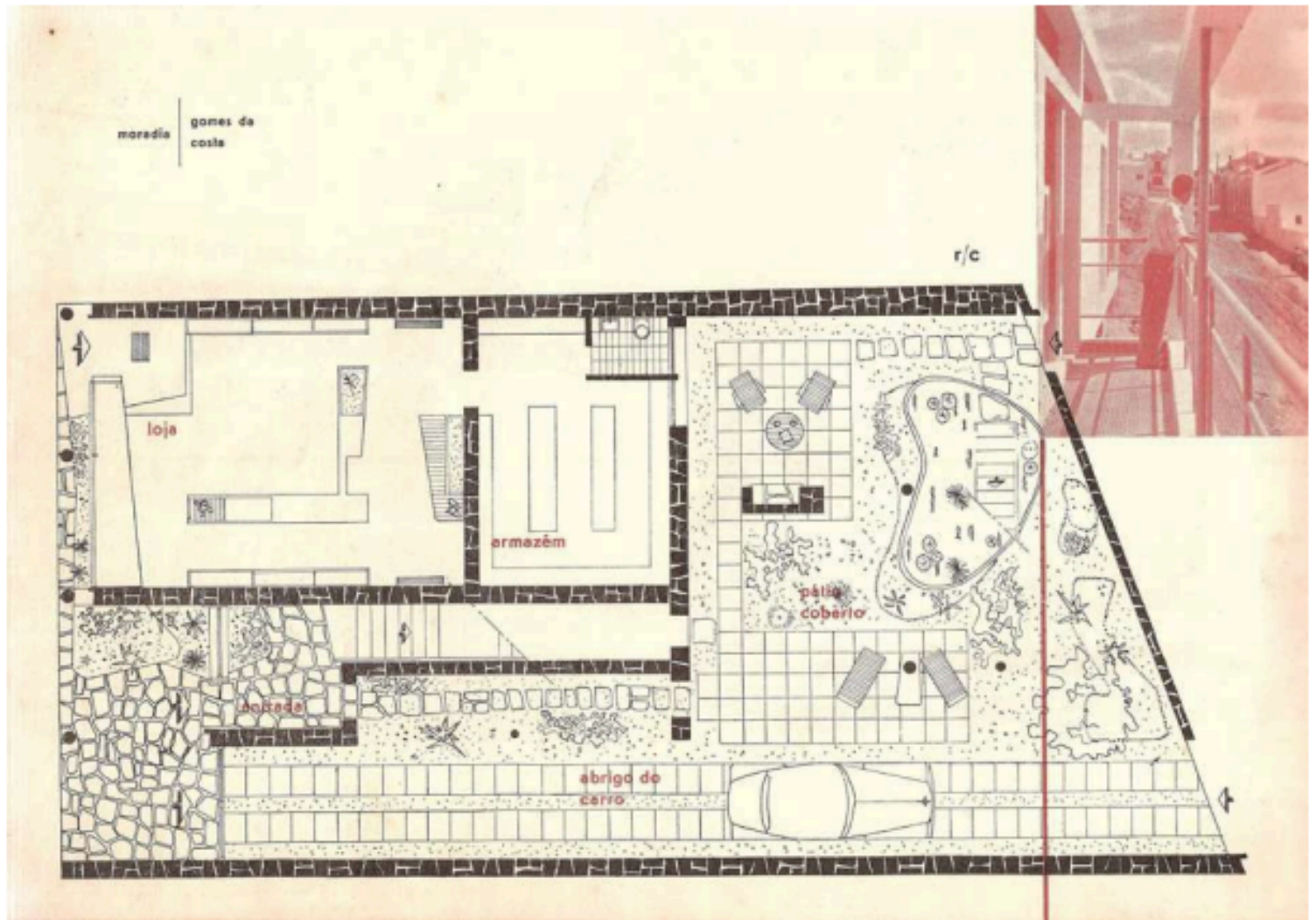
- Manuel Gomes da Costa's 1950 house stands as a testament to his innovative approach and the beginning of modernist architecture's influence in the Algarve: **Architectural Evolution:** The project marked the start of Faro's "modernist renaissance" in the 1950s and 1960s
- **Lasting Influence:** Gomes da Costa's distinctive style, first showcased in this house, was widely adopted by other builders and architects in the region, shaping the Algarve's architectural identity



**This pioneering work not only launched Gomes da Costa's career but also played a crucial role in transforming the architectural landscape of the Algarve, bridging tradition and modernity in a uniquely Portuguese context**

# Case study: Casa Milagre

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# **THE MODERNIST WEEKEND**

**FARO**

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