

Gambling at Madeira Island

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Madeira Island



Madeira Island is an island in the Atlantic Ocean, which together with Porto Santo and Desertas islands form an archipelago named Madeira Archipelago, situated between $32^{\circ}25'$ and $33^{\circ} 7'N$ latitudes and $7^{\circ} 30'$ and $8^{\circ} 7'$ longitudes, at west Lisbon.

In July 2nd 1419, two great portuguese navigators- João Gonçalves Zarco and Tristão Vaz Teixeira, on behalf of Infante D.Henrique, seeking a land which people said could be seen from Porto Santo in clear sunshined days, sighted an island to which they named Madeira, due to its features and its exuberant vegetation, almost impossible to penetrate, such was the density of its luxuriant shrubs and trees.

Madeira island has a vulcanic origin, highly mountainous, full of peaks, here and there interrupted by valleys and streams, which give it a very picturesque feature and look.

Due to the beauty of its landscape, of its agreeable climate, of its vegetation so various, rich and magnificent, and also due to its excellent touristic structures, Madeira island is no doubt a touristic desired destiny, very appreciated throughout the whole year.

Funchal, its capital city, is a very nice pretty town, constructed near the bay of the same name. It is constructed in an amphiteatre way, at south of the island, with very high mountains at its rear, almost totally arbored and cultivated. Looked from the sea, one can observe a magnificent view.

Madeira Archipelago is, and has always be, part of Portugal.

The Gambling

Madeira island, better speaking, its capital city - Funchal -, was ever since the first portuguese legislation on gambling activity, going back to 1927, designated as Permanent Exclusive Area for Games of Chance and Misfortune. However, and benefiting from its strategical position, considering the fact it was a supply passage port for all shipping activity, also due to the strong british influence of all inhabitants going back to the XVIII century, and finally due to the the fact of being a very important touristic zone ever since the last century, gambling activity in Funchal is much more ancient.

The first known registrations on gambling in Funchal go back to 1482.



Torre Bela palace where was installed the Club Funchalense

In this issue, we shall stress, however, gambling in casinos and clubs in Funchal as from the XIX century on, trying to give a real global idea of its history and to reproduce most used and known tokens and chips ever since those times.

Several registrations from the beginning of the XIX century account for the fact that illegal gambling in Funchal was commonly spread, being several fines applied due to gambling activities.

Even considering houses duly licensed for the practice of legal gambling, games of chance and misfortune were also played. In this group, were included private establishments, clubs and associations with some responsibility within Madeiran culture.

This kind of houses grew rapidly and profusely in Funchal, and in 1891 the Governor granted a license for the practice of legal games to clubs, such as CLUB RECREIO MUSICAL and CLUBE UNIÃO, and to a group of billiard establishments, owned by Ferreira Carvalho. In 1898, the same happened to six private institutions and in 1900 to some clubs, such as Club Recreio Instrução and CLUBE RESTAURAÇÃO, and also to seven private persons.

Gambling vice spread all over the island, in spite of all repressive initiatives from local authorities.

In the early XX century, one could easily confirm that during the twenties gambling houses in Funchal were commonly and profusely spread throughout the island.

In 1920, the Internal Minister established that Madeiran Governor should in fact repress and restrain gambling in the island. In May of the same year, some actions took place with the timide apprehension of roulette tables and similars. As a matter of fact, authority agents due to their non initiative, were envolved in a suspicious environment and atmosphere. There were even some people stating that some illegal gambling houses were running under legal authority protection.

Others had more than one back door, and as soon as police agents entered the main entrance, gamblers slipped through the back door. Besides informers

inside police organisation, gambling houses had vigilants, which informed gamblers of any eventual authority movement or action.

In 1921, Madeiran Governor ordered the Police Comissary to proceed to a quarrel to the under mentioned gambling houses: José de Sousa, Dafundo, MONTE ESTORIL, CLUBE RESTAURAÇÃO, Hotel Benfica, as well to some houses situated at Rua das Murças.

From these police actions, only some arrestments were made at Hotel Benfica, and not even eventual gambling money or equipment were confiscated and aprehended.

This attitude from the police agents who avoid to perform their legal duty, more than suspicious, led to the disciplinary prosecutions of such agents.

Gambling houses kept on running, in spite of determined periodical orders from the Internal Ministry, aiming to the repression of illegal gambling.



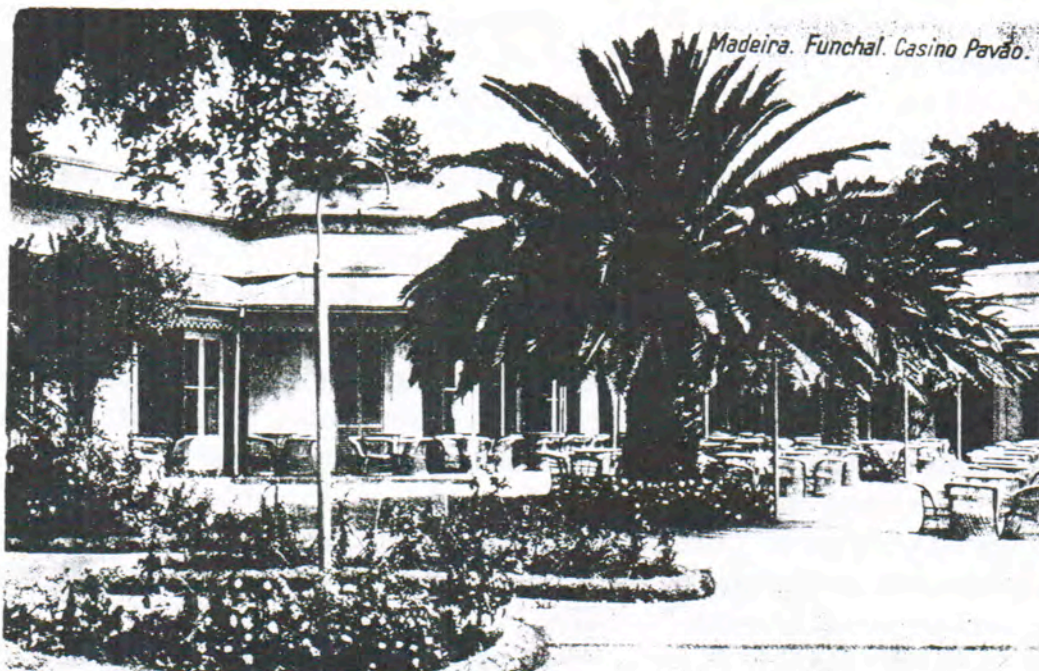
Casino Vitoria

By the end of the past century, and the beginning of this one, the CASINO DA QUINTA VIGIA was operational and installed in a farm with the same name. During that very same period, another casino was in activity at Monte (situated in the mountains near Funchal): the CASINO PERESTRELO.

Also at Monte, which was in the early XX century a privileged summer resort for the rich Funchal's families to spend holidays, one could find roulettes tables running in every existing hotel in that area, namely BELOMONTE and MONTE PALACE.

Not taking into consideration some private clubs, we have no doubts when stating that as from the early twenties, nights at Funchal city were decisively marked by CASINO PAVÃO and CASINO VICTORIA's activity.

The former operated its activity at Quinta Pavão, while the latter, owned by Empresa do Casino Victoria, worked in a building placed at Rua Alexandre Herculano, and was later transformed into Victoria Cinema.



Casino Pavão

These two abovementioned casinos were, in their golden times, the most in, excellent amusement places at Funchal. Several references in the press, account for these statements and confirm our judgement.

Some of these news are even printed in the most prosperous and powerful community language of these days: english.

Beneficent balls, art exhibitions, gala fancy balls, charity parties, luxurious receptions offered to the steamship's passengers which often entered Funchal's port, musical concerts.....Everything gave a special glow to the life of these casinos, where gambling was an active growing activity, in spite of the statements and convictions of the Internal Ministry, pointing out to the non tolerance of the Government towards gambling in Madeira.

Still in this decade, more precisely in 1927, one can find references made to MONUMENTAL CASINO. In February 24th of the same year, Casino Victoria was overthrown by a fire, being then several gambling rooms totally destroyed, as well as ball rooms, along with its valuable and rich furniture.

Gambling legalization

With the regulation of gambling within national territory by the end of 1927, the Permanent Area of all Games of Chance and Misfortune at Funchal is finally instituted, being gambling thenceforward authorized to work under concessions previously granted by tender bids, in an exclusive basis.

In 1928, the Companhia de Turismo da Madeira (Madeiran Tourism Company) came to light, being António Vieira de Castro its main shareholder. Its main goal was to run for the awarding of game's exclusivity in Madeira. This company was awarded the concession for the exploration of General Gambling in Madeira, through an official publication in

June 23rd of that year, stating the heads of the agreement and all the clauses laid down by the Contract signed and agreed with the Portuguese Government. CASINO DA MADEIRA started then, and by means of the above proceedings, its gambling activity.

Considering the fact it was a permanent gambling area, being therefore the awarded company forced to a continuous and effective activity, it soon felt some difficulties on the running and rentability of its exploration, once gambling was too much dependent on a fluctuant population, closely associated to the coming and going of ships.

In October 29th 1932, the Government, taking into consideration that the Madeiran Tourism Company has closed its Casino doors, because it was in no conditions of keeping the exploration running in the terms and clauses in force by the Agreement opportunately signed, withdrawn its gambling concession.

It then makes a public offer for the gambling exploration, including all games of chance and misfortune, for the permanent gambling madeiran area, intended to cover the period between December 1st 1932 and December 1st 1933.

The CASINO DA MADEIRA re-opens in December 9th 1932, being the correspondent award given to the Sociedade de Turismo da Madeira (Madeiran Tourism Society) up to March 31st 1937. Its installations kept on functioning at Quinta Vigia.

However, as a result of the problems hereinabove stated, the gambling exploration still faced some difficulties.

Deeply concerned with the tourism situation in the archipelago, to which the gambling activity is closed and strictly attached to, in 1936 the Portuguese Government establishes the Madeiran Tourism Zone, therefore supporting some measures to its real implementation and improvement.

CASINO DA MADEIRA

DANCING TO A MODERN DANCE BAND IN THE LUXURIOUS BALLROOM OF THE MOST SELECT AND GLAMOROUS ESTABLISHMENT ON THE ISLAND.

TEA CONCERTS and DANCE MUSIC

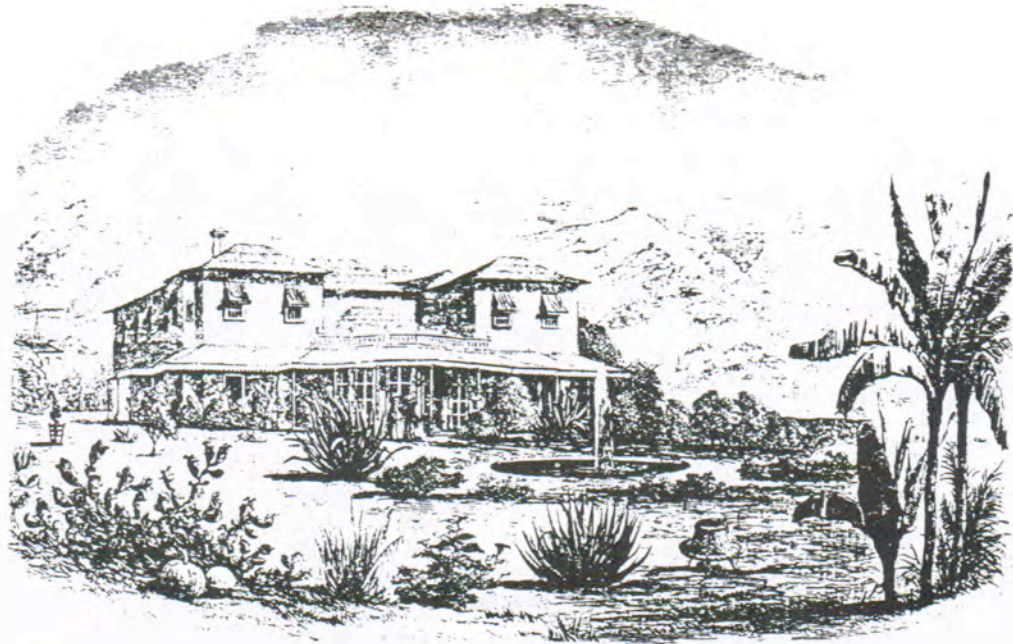
RESTAURANT and AMERICAN BAR

BEAUTIFUL GARDENS AND A LOVELY TERRACE, OVERLOOKING THE HARBOUR.

ROULETTE
CHEMIN DE FER
ETE.

THE CASINO IS RUN STRICTLY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT
ALL PROFITS ARE HANDED OVER TO CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS

Casino da Madeira postcard (circa 1936)



Quinta Vigia.

Similarly to some important decisions taken, aiming to the tourism improvement (in that year about 112.000 tourists entered Funchal's port), the government also establishes the Sociedade de Turismo 1936 Ltda. (1936 Touristic Company Inc.), which thenceforward claims to itself the control of CASINO DA MADEIRA's exploration, still situated at Quinta Vigia. As from that moment on, the casino acts directly under government orders, being its gains and other income distributed to Charity Homes at Funchal.

While Quinta Vigia undertook several improvement works, aiming to the re-opening as a casino, CASINO DA MADEIRA re-started its gambling exploration on January 4th 1936, in the Casino victoria's facilities, which in the meantime were reconstructed.

For some months, and in a temporary basis, it runned its activity there, after which it moved again to Quinta Vigia, after improvements works were completed.

CASINO DA MADEIRA, with its permanent orchestra giving a special glow to tourist nights, was provided with a restaurant, an american bar and several gambling rooms, where one could play roulette, baccarat and chemin de fer.

However, and in spite all improvements made, madeiran gambling activity would not be totally and definitively established and working in a continuous basis.

Due to the II Great World War, and the consequent decrease on the tourism and travelling flow, the regular gambling activity, suffered a severe stroke and would meet dark days.

We strongly believe, that is not until 1956 that CASINO DA MADEIRA works in a regular gambling basis, always and ever situated at Quinta Vigia.



Partial view of Funchal. At right side we can see Casino Park Hotel and

CASINO DA MADEIRA



As from these days forward, tourism became regular throughout the year, due to promise regarding the construction of Saint Catarina's airport, thus bringing an enormous increase in air trips.

In 1968, CASINO DA MADEIRA was functioning at Quinta Vigia, opened from 16 p.m. to 3 a.m., with shows every night, international artists and local folklore.

Provided with a restaurant service, club and gambling saloons, it presented, during summer period, several shows, restaurant and club services in its magnificent park. In its gambling great room, one could still play roulette, baccarat and french bank.

Madeiran gambling is as from 1968, a concession of I.T.I., being CASINO DA MADEIRA presently functioning in a building specially constructed for that purpose, with an architectural appearance designed by Arqt^o Niemeyer, and attached to Casino Park Hotel. This touristic assemblage was built in available land at Quinta Vigia.

The Casino is still an amusement reference point to all amused and leisure nights at Funchal, with its restaurant, daily shows and its gambling rooms, where one can play european games as well as american, namely: french bank, american roulette, black jack, craps, baccarat, chemin de fer and slot machines. Although designated as Gambling Zone, by means of a legislation published in 1989, Porto Santo Island has still no interested parties, either private or public, in its concession.

CLUB FUNCHALENSE

This club was set up on 3.12.1839, and its articles of association were approved by the General Meeting on 18.12.76 and by the Civil Governor on 16.2.77. It existed for approximately 60 years and was housed in the Carmo from where it moved to a palace in the Rua dos Ferreiros where it remained until it was dissolved. Members came from the better-off classes only, although leading traders were also admitted to this club. Shopkeepers and other traders who had shops were not accepted as members. The club was famous for its balls and "soirées" and all illustrious visitors to the island were received here in great style.

Chips: There are ivory chips with the figures 1, 2, 5 and 10, which date of issue was 1896. These chips had a value of 100, 200, 500 and 1000 Reis (Kings) respectively.

Note: The currency in Portugal during monarchy was REIS. With the Republic implantation in 1910, the portuguese currency became ESCUDO, instead of ancient REIS.

CASINO DA QUINTA VIGIA

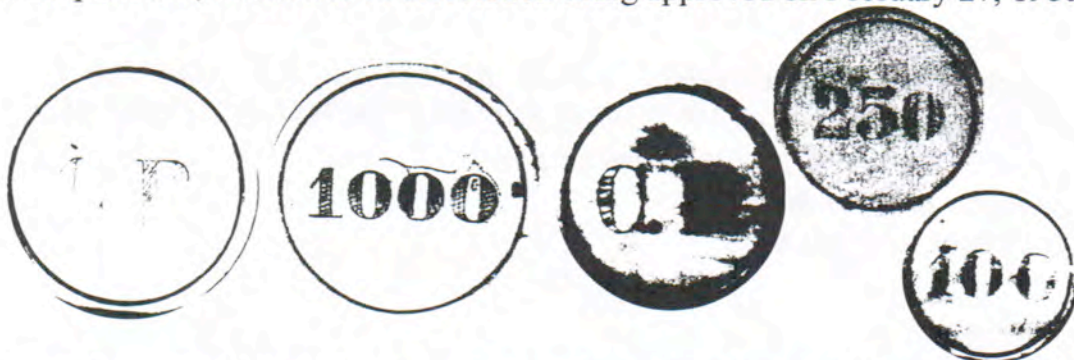
The Quinta Vigia, one of the Madeira's most beautiful "quintas" (farms), originally belonged to the wealthy Englishman Richard Davies, who came to the island at the beginning of the 19th century. Queen Adelaide of England lived there, as did the Empress Elizabeth of Austria and the Archduke Maximilian, later Emperor of Mexico etc.



Value 200 (REIS); 2,3 cm; silver; 1901

CLUB RESTAURAÇÃO

The club was set up in May, 1879 in the premises of the defunct Clube União in the Avenida Manuel Arriaga, formerly the Praça da Constituição. Its articles of association were approved by Order of the Civil Governor on August,12, 1889 and amended by the General Meeting in February 21, 1897. After it was dissolved, it was replaced by the "Novo Clube Restauração" which occupied the same premises, its articles of association being approved on February 27, 1980.



Bone chips issued in 1901. C R and figures engraved in red. Values 100, 200, 250, 500 and 1000 (REIS), with 2,4 cm, 2,7 cm, 2,7 cm, 3 cm and 3,5 cm diameter respectively.



Alluminium chips issued in 1901. Values 100, 200 and 500 (REIS), with 1,9cm, 2,4cm and 3cm diameter respectively



Cardboard chips. Obverse: CLUB RESTAURAÇÃO value in figures. Reverse: CLUB RESTAURAÇÃO O THESOUREIRO (The treasurer). 100 (REIS) 3,8x3,5cm green cardboard; 200 (REIS) 4,8x3,6cm yellow cardboard; 250 (REIS) 5,3x3,8cm red cardboard.



Cardboard chips. Obverse: CLUB RESTAURAÇÃO value in figures FUNCHAL. Reverse: CLUB RESTAURAÇÃO FUNCHAL O THESOUREIRO. 1\$000 (1000 REIS) 4,6cm diameter pink cardboard; 2\$500 (2500REIS) 5cm diameter blue cardboard.

CASINO VITORIA



1 ESCUDO 3,3cm diameter white metal

CLUB RECREIO MUSICAL

The Clube Recreativo Musical was located in the Rua de João Tavira. It was founded just after 1888 and dissolved shortly after 1900.



Nickel chips. Values in REIS. 1,9cm, 2,2cm, 2,35cm, 2,5cm, 3cm and 3,5cm diameter from 50 Reis to 1000 Reis respectively.

MONTE ESTORIL

It was for a while a bar, restaurant and dancing in Rua Roberto Ivens, near S. Francisco Garden

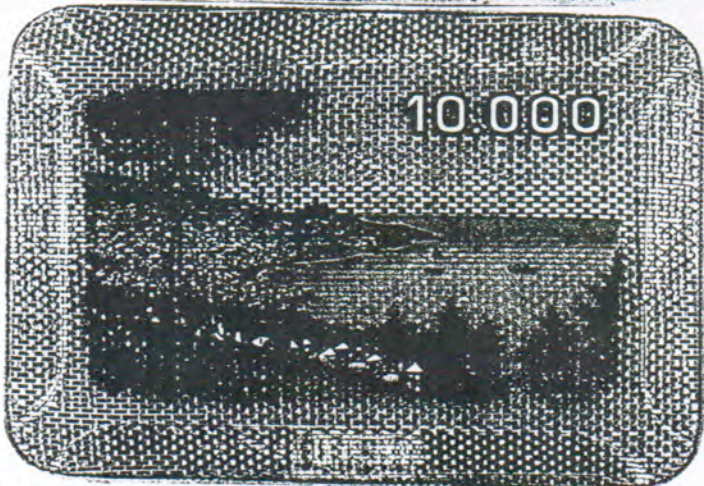
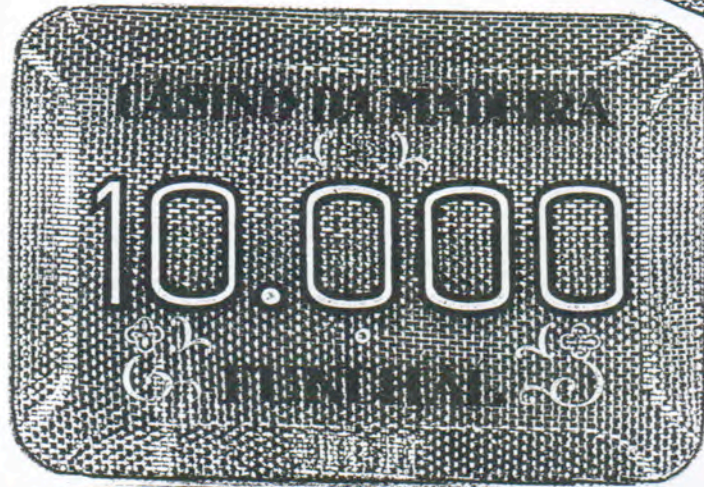
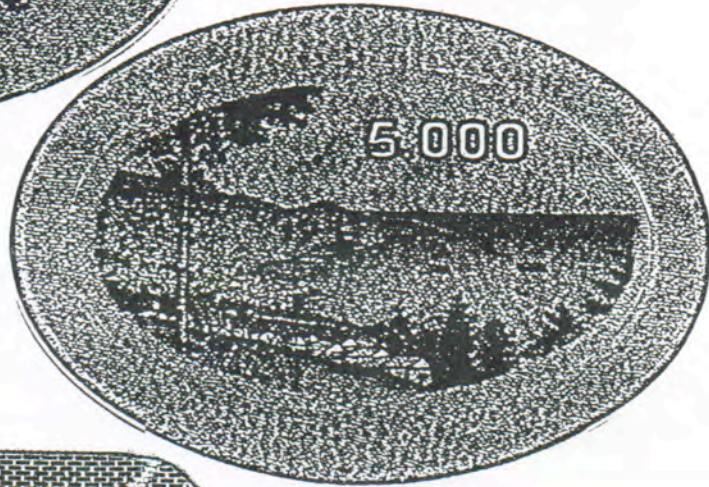


Nickel. Values 200 and 500, with 2,3 cm and 2,7cm diameter

CASINO DA MADEIRA



Acrilic chips and plaque: Value in ESCUDOS. Reverse similar to obverse. 50 (ESCUDOS) 4,2cm diameter in six colours:orange, green, yellow, blue, dark red and red orange. 100(ESCUDOS) 5cm diameter black. 200(ESCUDOS) 5,4cm diameter in five colours: white, blue, light blue, pink and red. 500(ESCUDOS) 6cm red.1000(ESCUDOS) 6,8x4,8cm blue plaque.



a) Acrylic plaques. 5000(ESCUDOS) 9,3x6,5cm elliptic bronze-coloured. 10000(ESCUDOS) 9,3x6,5cm rectangular golden. 20000(ESCUDOS) silver-coloured
 b) American style chips used in black jack tables. 500(ESCUDOS) red with 3 lilac inserts hot stamped-H's mold . 1000(ESCUDOS) blue with 3 brick-red inserts-diamond and squares mold; 2000(ESCUDOS) green with 3 light green inserts; 5000(ESCUDOS) brown with 3 beige inserts. 10000(ESCUDOS) beige with 3 beige inserts..



Acrylic chips and plaques. 500(ESCUDOS) 4,7cm in five colours: blue, yellow, white, green and lilac. 1000(ESCUDOS) 5cm in four colours: yellow, red, light blue and dark blue. 2000(ESCUDOS) in three colours: blue, dark red and cream. 5000(ESCUDOS) orange rectangular plaque 6,8x4,8cm . 10000(ESCUDOS) yellow rectangular plaque 8,2x5,7cm . 20000(ESCUDOS) blue rectangular plaque 9,5x6,6cm . 50000(ESCUDOS) carmine rectangular plaque. 100000(ESCUDOS) red rectangular plaque



First series: Bronze tokens. 5, 10 and 25 (ESCUDOS). Old casino logo



Second series: Nickel-copper tokens. values in figures and ESCUDOS. 15, 25 and 50 ESCUDOS. Real casino logo



Third series: Nickel-copper tokens. Value in figures. 15, 25, 50 and 100 (ESCUDOS). Real casino logo

