

PÓVOA DE VARZIM GAMBLING TRADITIONS

by Carlos Pascoal (R-724)

Póvoa de Varzim, a northern village with its own municipality, is comprised in Oporto district and situated right up northern Portugal.

Fishers village, Póvoa de Varzim has one of the most crowded animated competitive beaches of the northern area, highly populated during baths' season, featuring details going back to the 19th Century.

Póvoa, as a summer resort centre, as always been a gambling traditional zone, in spite of every interdiction around it.

According to Ramalho Ortigão words in "Portuguese Beaches"(1876): ..."In Póvoa, as well in Espinho, Foz e na Figueira, in short, in every portuguese beach, the competition around the green cloth is curiously diversified. Men of every social background, owners, State clerks, capitalists, teachers, literates, militaries in their uniforms, priests in their vests and crowns, every and all gathered around the gambling green cloth, fascinated by the gambling itself.

Once gambling is forbidden, and considering the fact that a gambling house is a secret place, with a misterious and secret entrance, each and every one is considered a notorious person just for the fact of going there and everybody gambles"...."in every caffè there is a complementary room in which Roulette or "Monte" is gambled"...



In spite of its great and strong gambling traditions, Póvoa de Varzim was not contemplated, as an authorized zone for gambling practice, with By-Law 14643 dated 1927, December 3rd.

However, taking advantage of the fact that no one has submitted an inscription to Santa Luzia gambling area, a group of local authorities forwarded the idea of requesting a gambling permission for Póvoa, instead of Santa Luzia's.

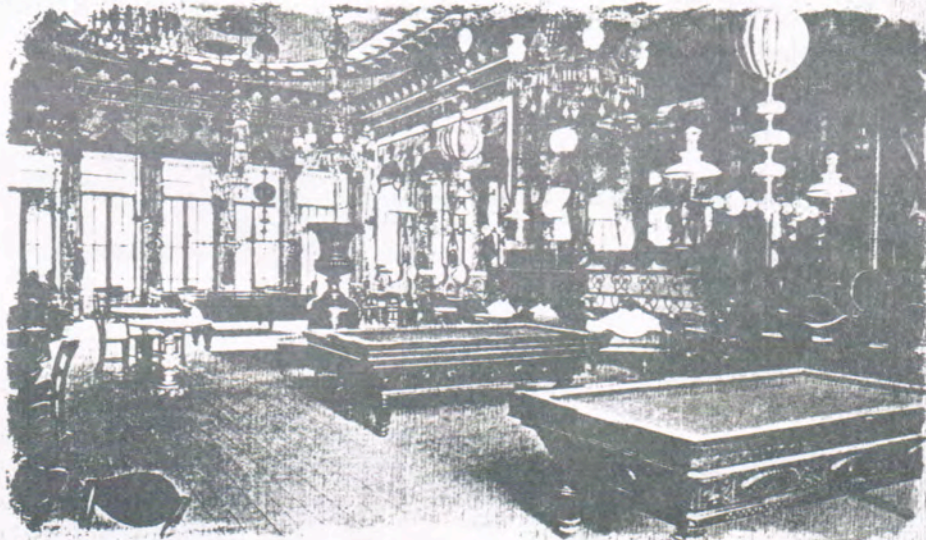
In spite of all demands imposed by local authorities, including the constitution of a partnership with a capital share of 5.500 contos, the construction of a reversible Casino for the State and a Grand Hotel with a minimum capacity of 100 rooms, the "EMPRESA DE TURISMO PÓVOA DO VARZIM" was established with a capital raised totally by common funds of the municipality, being the City Hall its main shareholder, having 22.400 of the 25.000 available shares.

The effort of local people was rewarded by the awarding during a 30 years period of a Temporary Gambling Fortune Concession, attributed to Póvoa, according to a final order published in Official Newspaper in 1928, September 14th.

The first Managing Board of ETPPV has decided to subward, in exchange of an annual amount and during a not extensible 10 years period, the exploitation rights to a company, which associates were Mr. Joaquim Correia Leal and Mr. Artur António Bessa.

In 1928, gambling was functioning temporarily in the Póvoa Assembly and from 1929 until 1933 in the rooms of CAFÉ CHINÊS.

PÓVOA DE VARZIM—Casino Chinez-Sala de bilhares



In the meantime, the Casino construction has begun in 1930, February 28th, based upon a neo-classic design, to Garnier style, a man who created Paris Opera and Monte Carlo's Casino.

In 1934, the sub-renters transferred their shares to António Fernandes Salgueiro e ARTUR ADRIANO AIRES, being this last a gambling business man in several Lisbon gambling houses.

In 1st June 1934, traditional gambling house and Casino accesses were opened to general public, just to avoid the maturity date of established granted delay, foreseen in the gambling authorization agreement.

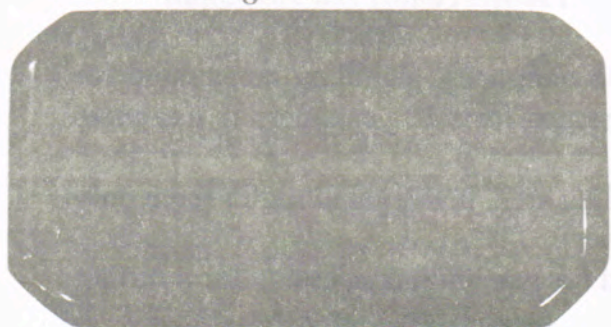
In 10th June 1934, the MONUMENTAL CASINO DA PÓVOA, was officially opened, with a spectacular opening ball, being then present the War Minister in Government's representation.

In 1947, the local City Hall has decided to transfer its own shares within the partnership, thus loosing its characteristics of local share company, submitted to local control. The control of the said share was transferred to ARTUR ADRIANO AIRES & ASSOCIADOS (some Casino's chips and plaques were even coined AAA - initials of their owner).

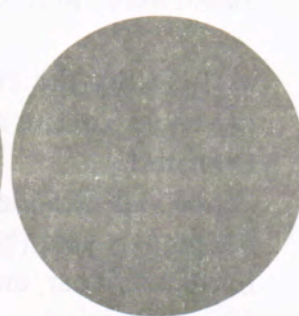
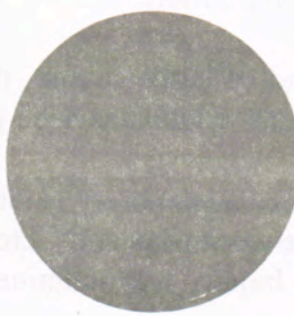
Casino da Póvoa chips and plaques 1940's



1000\$00 beige 78x57mm



500(escudos) yellow 80x42mm



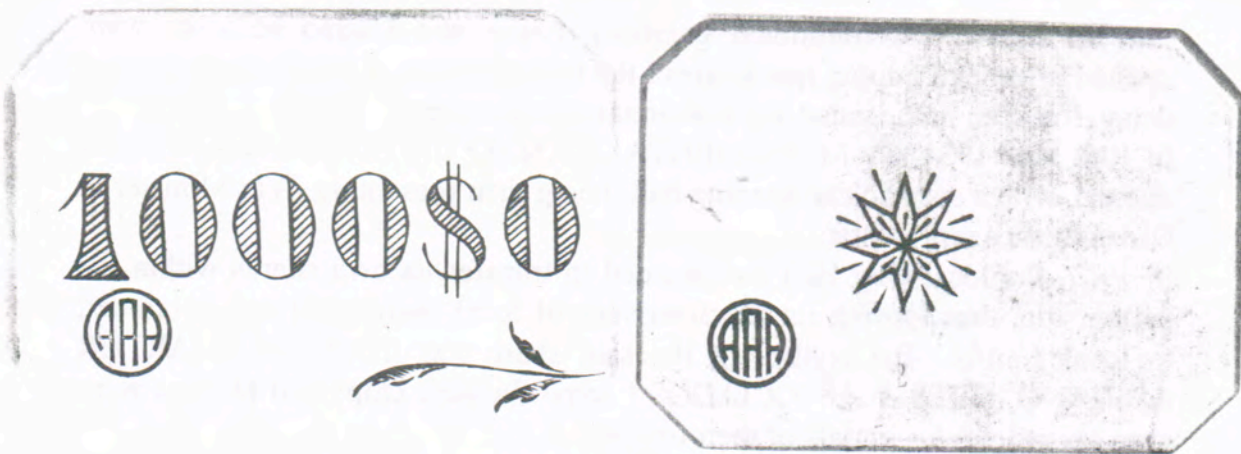
10\$00 orange 40mm



2\$50 turtle imitation 36mm



100\$00 red 50mm



1000\$00 white 80x57mm



50(escudos) blue navy 51mm



1000(escudos) red 90x55mm

In 1958, by the end of baths season, the temporary gambling concession for Póvoa de Varzim area, which has been granted for a 30 years period, has come to an end.

Póvoa was considered a temporary gambling area, being gambling in force only 6 months a year (between May and October).

Early next year, an Inquiry was submitted for gambling concession for a further 10 years period

Due to demand conditions imposed by the government authorities, the 3 concessionaires of Estoril, Espinho and Póvoa, by mutual agreement, did not submit their tender, thus preferring to await the submission of a more favourable Inquiry.

Contrary to the other two previous inquiries, in which other concurrent have presented their bids, the Inquiry for Póvoa concession registered no tenders.

In June 1959, near baths season time, with no gambling concession awarded, people faced the eventual closing of their Casino, a severe and painful situation for Póvoa in social and economical terms.

The direct intervention of the Minister of Internal Affairs led to the acceptance of Mr. Aires for a further 10 years concession period.

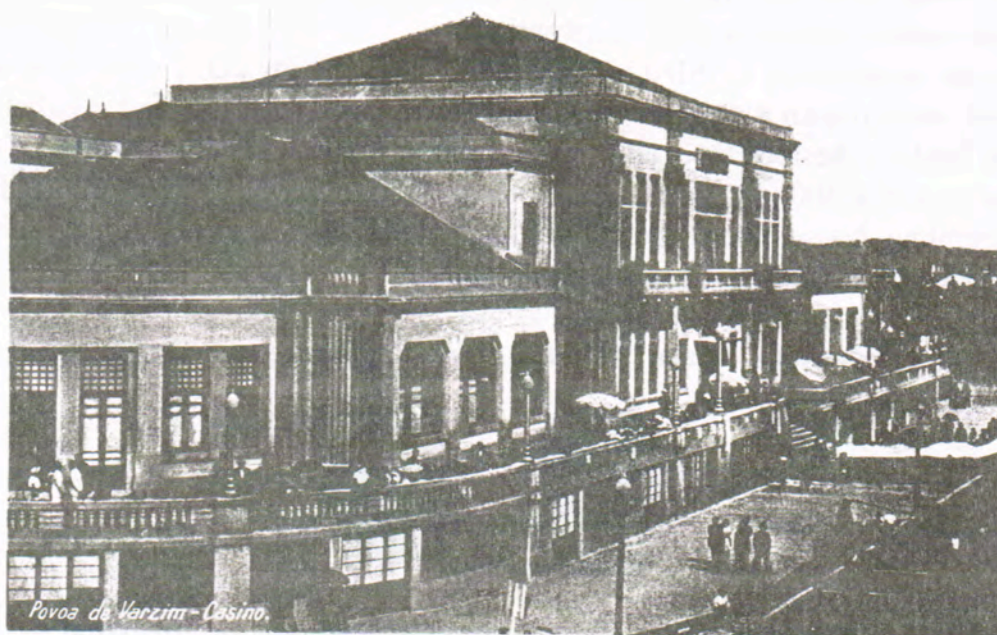
Slightly after, Mr. Artur Adriano Aires, due to a severe disease, transferred his shares to the remaining two shareholders which, due to several misunderstandings, gave great contribution to Casino's decline and also the degradation of Póvoa's image as a touristic activity centre.

Once again, local power its arms and extended its influences, and in 1966 SOPETE-SOCIEDADE POVEIRA DE EMPREENDIMENTOS TURISTICOS was created : a company with a share capital locally raised by means of a local funds raise, amounting to the minimum necessary capital: 6.000 contos.

The correspondent agreement was transcribed in 1968, September 20th.

By the end of gambling concession period for Póvoa de Varzim in December 1968, a new inquiry was opened early next year, comprising a 5 years period between 1969-1973, a very short delay for mortgaging the requested investments of inquiry process.

SOPETE, among the three bidders, was chosen and has profoundly remodelled and redecorated the Casino. It also constructed a **** Hotel, two Inn's and a great habitational and touristic complex.



Monumental Casino da Póvoa

With the end of gambling concession in 1973, a new Inquiry was submitted for a temporary gambling concession of 15 years period, to be ended in 1988, December 31st.

Among several bidders, the State, in 5.2.74, has decided to grant SOPETE the correspondent gambling concession, thus depending on financial capacity, effectively and practically demonstrated.

With this Inquiry in course, in 25th april 1974, a revolutionary rebellion knocked down the existing distatorship, in force for almost 40 years.

The 1st Temporary Government turned nul and void the previous Inquiry, authorizing nevertheless the extension of previous existing concession up to 31st December of that year.

In return, a fixed amount should have to be paid ; partially to Tourism Fund and partially to City Hall.

So, Casino opened again its doors, although temporarily.

In 11th March 1975, a public inquiry was submitted for the permisson of gambling temporary concession in Póvoa up 1988. Due to the revolucionary times in course, the inquiry specifications were too severe and precise, namely in what concerns amounts for social buildings.

Again Sopete has presented its tender and gambling concession was granted accordingly up to 1988.

As from 1980, Sopete introduced enormous magnificent alterations and remodelling to Póvoa's Casino.

In 18th August 1981, the gambling area of Póvoa de Varzim was finally,thus achieving a permanent regime, instead a temporary, which was however already opcional by that time.

In 1988, after the end of previous concession, SOPETE was granted a new concession period for a 20 years period.

In the modernized CASINO MONUMENTAL DA PÓVOA, with its restaurant and disco roomn a daily internacional show, two orchestras and a ballet group of dancers, besides the traditional gambling house, one can also find a Bingo room and a 300 slot machines room, suitable to every taste. In the traditional gambling house, there are 10 roulette tables, 2 american roulette tables, 2 black-jack tables ans 4 French Bank tables.

Póvoa do Varzim' Metallic chips-Beginning of 20thCentury



Metallic chips from DINIZ VIANA ,owner of several caffés in Póvoa de Varzim. Value in CENTAVOS, 10 and 20.



Metallic chips from Monarchy period (before 1910). Value in REIS 100, 200 and 500.C P V monogram- C (CASINO ?) P (POVOA) V (VARZIM).

MONUMENTAL CASINO DA PÓVOA - CHIPS AND TOKENS



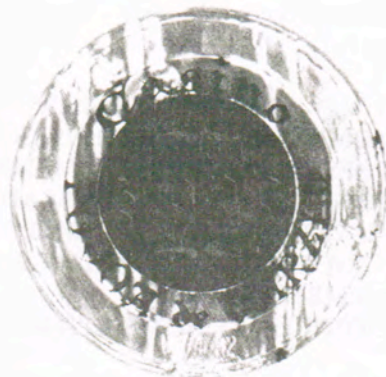
*Slot machine tokens . 10\$00 21mm brass **; 25\$00 30mm nickel ; 50\$00 24mm nickel ; 100\$00 29mm nickel .*



*=50 ESCUDOS 44mm **
-blue rim,green center disk
=100 ESCUDOS 45mm**
-white rim,black center disk
=500 ESCUDOS 51mm
-yellow rim,blue center disk
-white rim,black center disk
-red*



*=1000 ESCUDOS
-orange
=2000 ESCUDOS
- green
- light blue
plastic chips*



*=5000(ESCUDOS) 50mm
-green,dark yellow lunette
-yellow,dark yellow lunette
-white
=10000 green
=10000 yellow rectang. plaque
=20000 red rectangular plaque
=50000 black rectang. plaque
=100000 green rectang.plaque
=500000 rose rectang. plaque
acrylic chips*

Notes: **means obsolete.Monumental Casino da Póvoa is also singly named Casino da Póvoa.