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Portuguese Jewelers Come to New York

In October 2005, the Consul General of Portugal in New York, Ambassador Alexandre Fernandes held a lavish cocktail reception for Mr. Jorge Van Zeller Leitão of Leitão & Irmão, the Antique Jewelers to the Portuguese Crown.

[Casa Leitão \(The House of Leitão\)](#) was established at the end of the XVIII century in the city of Porto, Portugal. In 1887, Casa Leitão & Irmão was honored with the title of Jewelers to the Portuguese Crown. They have served as jewelers to five kings of Portugal and Brazil. The Casa Leitão & Irmão hallmark is the oldest hallmark in Portugal and is one of the oldest hallmarks in the world.



During the course of the evening, I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Van Zeller Leitão to learn more about his fascinating company. Both Mr. Van Zeller Leitão's father and his grandfather were designers, and although Mr. Van Zeller Leitão himself is not a designer, he knows what he wants to create and makes replicas of important pieces. Mr. Van Zeller Leitão, who is the 6th generation in the Leitão family business, was in New York to exhibit their distinctive editions of Leitão & Irmão Portuguese Nautical Astrolabes.



Mariners Astrolabes, also called Nautical Astrolabes, are ancient astrological instruments, that date back to as early as 400 A.D., and were used to determine the latitude of a ship at sea by measuring the noon altitude of the Sun or the meridian altitude of a star of known position. Leitão & Irmão's limited edition Nautical Astrolabe replicas in sterling silver were made from original astrolabes from the 15th and 16th centuries, and were also created as exceptional pieces of jewelry in sterling silver, as well as in gold and diamonds. All of the pieces are numbered and dated with the year 2005, and would be a perfect addition for a nautical collector.

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It was truly a remarkable evening, as invited guests had the opportunity to view these rare and striking works by Leitão & Irmão, as well as sample authentic Portuguese wines and cuisine from the Portuguese restaurant, [Alfama](#), in New York who catered the event.

For more information on Leitão & Irmão, please visit their website at www.leitao-irmao.com.
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