



HERDADE
ALDEIA DE CIMA

I VILA DE SANTANA

Santana is a small village in the civil parish of Portel, located near the old Roman road between Évora and Beja, that borders Vidigueira, along the southern border of the Alto Alentejo region.

The name Sant'Anna da Serra do Mendro was recorded for the first time in the eighteenth century, after remodeling the primitive church built in the Middle Ages between

“two villages are called Baxo (below), and Sima (above)” (...)

states the Parish Memories of Portel Vila Viçosa for the period between 1722 and 1832.

People have lived in this place, due to the high quality of its lands, since time immemorial. It was the village of “Sima” that gave rise to the Herdade da Aldeia de Cima, that was first mentioned in 1758.



II D.JOÃO D'ABOIM, THE FIRST LORD

In 1258, the King D. Afonso III granted a plot of land – the Portel Mafomode – to his steward, D. João de Aboim, making him the first Lord of Portel.

He was a man of great learning, erudite and an illustrious troubadour, who lived for many years in France. He bequeathed a huge number of love and friendship songs to Portugal, that have served as an endless source of research into medieval literature.

After D. João de Aboim's death in 1301, King D. Dinis negotiated, with his widow and daughter, the first acquisition of the estate, and it remained the property of the Royal Household until 1385, when King D. João I granted it to Nuno Álvares Pereira, after he led Portugal to victory in the Battle of Aljubarrota.

The “Holy Constable”, as he became known, later bequeathed the estate to his grandson, Fernando de Portugal, who became the Duke of Bragança. As a result, Portel pertained to the House of Bragança until the 1820 Liberal Revolution, when it was confiscated and integrated within the general administration of the Portuguese State.



III COMMUNITY LIFE

The typical Alentejan architectural style, of mud and brick houses and farm buildings, with whitewashed walls punctuated by small windows, has been recovered by the present owners – who aim to revive the estate’s authenticity and the village’s community spirit.



Due to their isolation, the Alentejan people have developed an autonomous and sustainable way of life, reflected in their rich gastronomy, that combines dairy farming products – milk, curd, cheese and lamb – with honey, nuts and produce from the local vegetable gardens and orchards. Bread remains the local staple food, attesting to the huge surrounding grain fields.





IV THE VALUE OF THE LAND

In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima every plot of land is unique. Its specific characteristics have attracted people who have settled here since time immemorial. The village was erected in a breezy zone, 330 metres above sea level, on the slope of the underlying schist outcrop.

Comprising an enormous extension of cork oak and holm oak, including 1,750 hectares in the Serra do Mendro, there has always been a typical Mediterranean land use in the local schist soils that are apparently poor, but rich in diversity.

V SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Benefiting from unique biodiversity, the Herdade Aldeia de Cima has always had abundant water, as shown by the many water wheels. The small lower-lying plots of land, in the more fertile zones, have been occupied by vegetable gardens and fig and pomegranate orchards. The plateaux are occupied by red Alentejana Cattle herds, bulls, Black Iberian pigs and sheep, who graze on white barley and oats.

Today we respect the past to build the future.

VI WILD ROSEMARY HONEY

The pure honey of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima is produced with minimal human intervention, based on the diversity of the typically Mediterranean pollen-rich wild flowers – in particular wild rosemary that grows in the unique ecosystem of the cork oak forests of the Serra de Mendro, untouched by industrial or urban pollution.

The warm early summer temperatures are ideal for extracting liquid honey, and peak production is usually between June and July. The cooler winter temperatures may cause the honey to crystallise, without any loss of nutritional value – the mark of high-quality honey.





VII THE CORK FOREST

The cork oak forest in the Herdade Aldeia de Cima is located within the Iberian-Mediterranean ecological area of the Ossa-Morena zone. Its anthropogenic system is based on the mixed presence of two oak species – the cork oak (*quercus suber*) and holm oak (*quercus rotundifolia*) and provides a variety of foodstuffs and wildlife habitats, which are essential for soil conservation, regulation of the water cycle, reduction of carbon emissions and conservation of biodiversity.

This cultural landscape of the South of Portugal is considered to be one of the world's 35 most important ecosystems for biodiversity conservation – on a par with other natural paradises such as the Amazon rain forest, the African savannah or the forests of Borneo. It offers ideal survival conditions for over 200 species of animals and 135 species of plants. It is also a paradigm of sustainability, since it produces a variety of non-timber forestry resources – of which cork is the prime example, and also including acorns, mushrooms, honey and even game.

VIII THE UNFORGETTABLE ALENTEJO

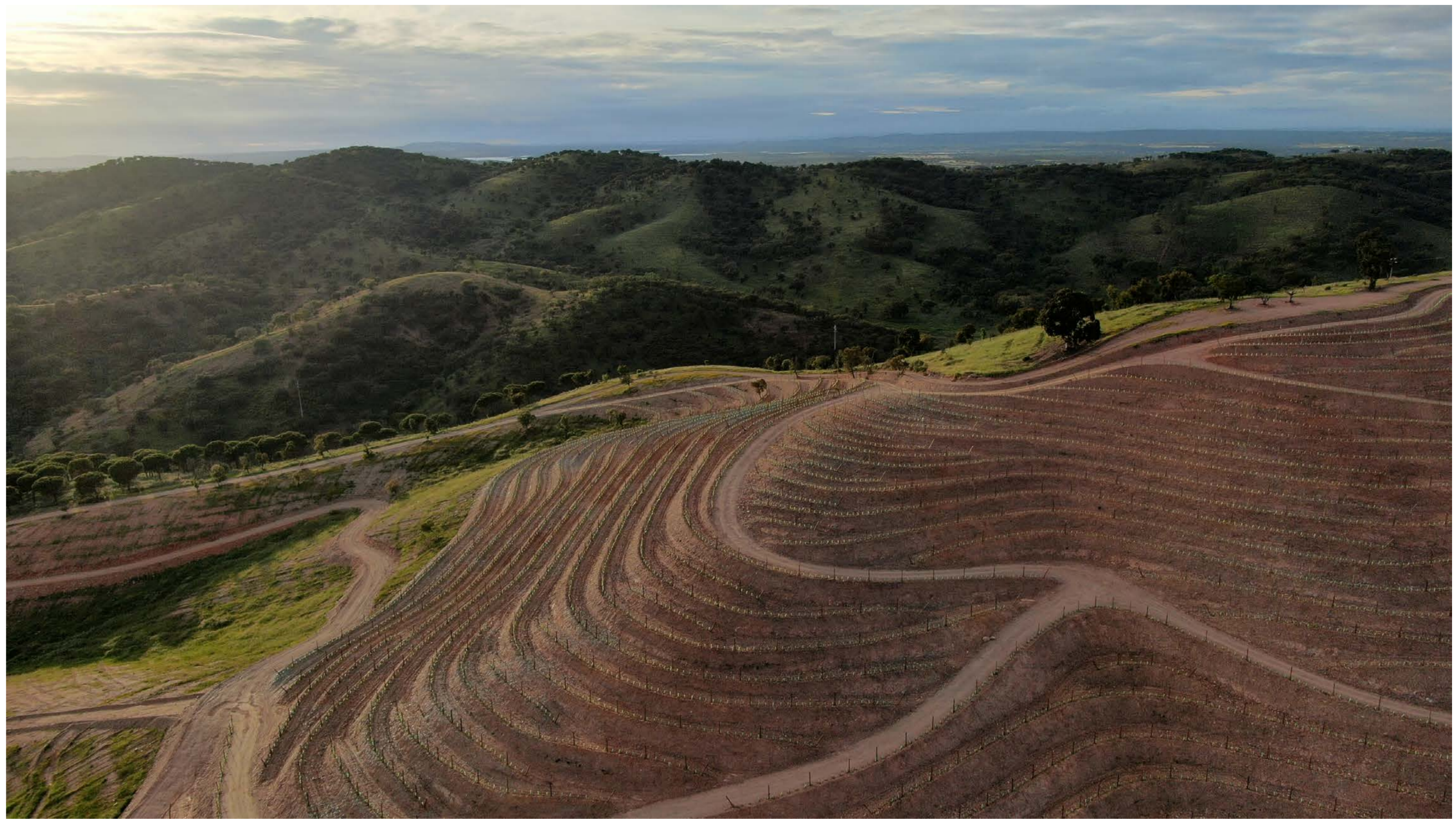
Luisa Amorim discovered the Alentejo at an early age - where the greens and browns of the cork oak trees mixed with the holm oaks and olive trees, in an immense and seemingly infinite territory, as she stayed in the region before heading south for her summer holidays in the Algarve.

In addition to cork, which plays a central role in her family universe, Luisa soon discovered that wine is one of her great passions.

She later began to manage the Quinta Nova of Nossa Senhora do Carmo estate in the Douro and the Taboadella estate in the Dão region.

Her family originally acquired the Herdade Aldeia de Cima estate in 1994. In 2017 she decided to rebuild the small village and plant a vineyard in the Serra do Mendro, which soon became a life project.

IX GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN THE ANCIENT IBERIAN MASSIF

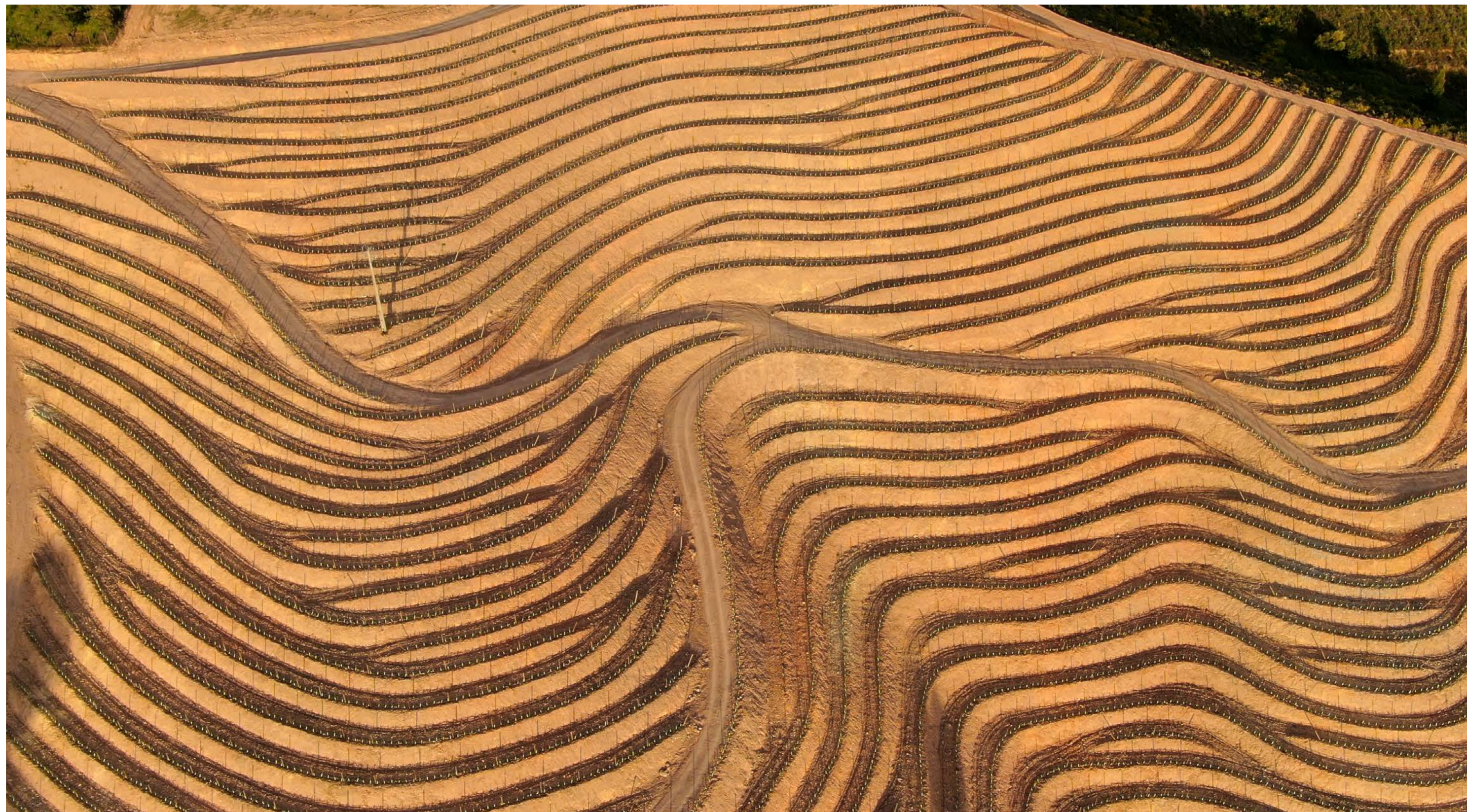


The Alentejo region has few natural resources, but it is the only Portuguese winegrowing region that has almost every type of soil found in Portugal. The Serra do Mendro separates the Alto Alentejo from the Baixo Alentejo and has its highest point in the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, 412 metres above sea level. The Serra do Mendro, is part of the oldest geomorphological zone of the Iberian Peninsula. It has a unique geological structure known as a horst that resulted from a raised block of the Earth's crust where thousands of metres of silt have been accumulated. The lands that exist today, consisting of schist, granite, gabbros, quartzite and limestone, among many other types of substrate rocks offer an original portion of the Ancient Iberian Massif, deriving from what remains of an old mountain chain in the Southeast of the Iberian peninsula, which began to rise from the ocean bed about 380 million years ago.

X PHILOSOPHY: THE WINES ARE DESIGNED IN THE VINEYARD

With its unique biodiversity, the implantation of 20 ha of vineyards in the Herdade da Aldeia de Cima, projected until 2020, accompanies the different level curves of the slopes and valleys, and occupies two distinct terroirs: one on the plateau, 289 to 300 metres above sea level, and another in the Serra do Mendro, 300 to 380 metres above sea level, in an unusual orography that makes it possible to create 24 micro-terroirs. The wines are designed in the vineyard - where we look for ancient wisdom, diversity, minerality of the soils and the silky textures that history has recounted and revealed to us!

In an attempt to nurture the typical regional characteristics of this warm region, that has been producing wine for more than 2000 years, Aldeia de Cima's classic and elegant wines reflect the enormous complexity of the heterogeneous soils and the character of the native grape varieties and other varieties perfectly adapted to the region. Wines that preserve the history of the place, presented to the market two years after the grape harvest.





Alyantju White



Alyantju Red



Reserva White



Reserva Red

XI THE SERRA DO MENDRO

The lands of the Serra do Mendro are rocky, with a rugged morphology and unusual landscape, with huge schist outcrops, in a place where daily temperatures may vary by as much as 20°C. In this respect, the zone resembles distant wine regions, such as Rutherford or To Kalon, in the Napa Valley, California.

Guided by a philosophy of deep respect for the natural resources, we preserve the less productive soils and integrate their different crops in a sound ecological manner, in light of the fact that fog and winds from the Atlantic ocean reach the slopes and the interior of the valleys at varying speeds, originates a wide array of microclimates and, consequently, micro-terroirs.

One of our biggest challenges is to maintain this natural equilibrium.



XII THE DIVERSITY OF 4 VINES

In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima we aim to plant 20 hectares of vineyards by 2020 – 65% with red grape varieties and 35% with white grape varieties, starting with viticulture in integrated production, that will later be converted into organic production.

We will start at the highest zone of the Serra do Mendro, offering views over a vast horizon, where we can contemplate in amazement the vast expanse of the Alentejo, including olive groves and vineyards, vegetable gardens, fields and the small towns and villages of Vidigueira and Beja. We will then pass to the plateau of the Aldeia de Cima - 289 to 300 metres above sea level – where we intend to explore the diversity of soils and solar exposure.

There will be 4 distinct vineyard zones in total: the Vinha dos Alfaiates, Vinha da Família, Vinha de Sant’Anna, and Vinha da Aldeya.

XIII THE VINHA DOS ALFAIATES

The singularity of this rugged terrain, crossed by the Ribeira dos Alfaiates stream, has inspired the implantation of small vine terraces in the Serra do Mendro. A unique model in the Alentejo, the Vinha dos Alfaiates has 14 hectares and enjoys stunning panoramic views over the Alto and Baixo Alentejo.

Its 12 highly typical vineyard plots have integrated production and average density of 2,800 grapevines per hectare, and potential average production of 4,000 kg/ha. Implanted in zones with an irregular geometry, characterised by more or less rounded ridges, the vineyard has a gradient of 30% to 40% in over half of the vineyard plots, with altitudes between 300 to 380 metres above sea level, from west to east and an ideal solar exposure, allied to an unusual thermal amplitude, essential to endow freshness to the wine.

Traditional vineyard terraces, encompassing 18 natural micro-terroirs are composed of folded and fractured metamorphic rock formation, primarily constituted by mica schists, in a steep, skeletal soil of red schist, which is rich in quartz and with shallow arable soil.

Vinha dos Alfaiates
Number of plants:

5,720 Antão Vaz
8,400 Alicante Bouschet
2,800 Baga
3,400 Aragonez
3,900 Trincadeira
7,890 Alfrocheiro



Schist soil for planting the Vinha de Sant'Anna and Aldeya.



XIV THE VINEYARDS OF THE PLATEAU

In the plateau of the Aldeia de Cima, the soil primarily consists of gravel-schist with hints of green schist, unique in the Iberian Peninsula. There are also granites, gabbros and quartzites that will influence the structure, aroma and body of the wines produced here.

By 2020 we plan to plant around 6 ha of vineyards in two different zones. The south- and southwest-facing slopes are excellent locations for the production of classic wines, rich, intense, concentrated wines with major solar exposure. The north-facing slopes are expected to produce wines with greater mineral intensity, freshness and fresh fruit, typical of wines cultivated in shaded areas.

XV THE VINHA DE FAMÍLIA

The Vinha de Família vineyard is a reproduction of ancient agricultural techniques, located in a plot of land of around 0.1 Hectares next to the winery 11 native species: Trincadeira, Alicante Bouschet, Antão Vaz, Aragonês, Castelão, Diagalves, Moreto, Perrum, Tinta Caiada, Tinta Miúda and Roupeiro.

Planted in a 1m square layout and using an archaic training system, based on goblet vine training, the vines – that have no wire lattice-work and display a “crawling” appearance – are surrounded by the same micro-climate. The vines’ vegetal system protects the grapes from the intense summer heat. The polychromatic plots, each with their specific propensities, provide a balanced and resilient vegetal puzzle that impedes pests and diseases. They can be worked with the assistance of animal traction, and minimal fertilisation, on the basis of annual planting of pulses, pruning, weeding and splitting.

It is a Mediterranean, humanised vine – exuberant and brimming with character. It aims to preserve the Alentejan heritage, that is closer to spontaneous life, with species that interact with each other, as if part of a giant family.



XVI WINERY

In 2017 we chose to install our winery in the impressive Armazém das Ramadas warehouse built in 1953 by Francisco Eduardo de Barahona Fragoso, son of the 1st Count of Esperança, for his cow byres.

Built in the typical Alentejan style, the warehouse is memorable for its thick, whitewashed walls that support an original metal structure with three wings that surround an impressive pair of silos in the central courtyard.



XVII AN EXCELLENT TEAM

The winery is remarkable for its ability to blend the past and future, using a minimalistic oenological intervention, highlighting the complexity of heterogeneous soils and the different characters of the micro plots and grape varieties. The winery uses small containers – such as wooden, cement and stainless-steel vats, cement amphorae and small clay pots.

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima project is managed by the couple, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Régo.

From the outset it has been coordinated by José Falé in conjunction with Gonçalo Ramos who is in charge of forestry activities and animal production.

The winemaking duo, Jorge Alves and António Cavalheiro, with viticulture support from Joaquim Faia has designed the profile of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima's wines, paying special attention to the Serra do Mendro's micro-terroirs.



XVIII IDENTITY

The Cante Alentejano (polyphonic singing from the Alentejo) is a unique expression of the local people. Its inclusion by UNESCO on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity reflects the Alentejan people's love for the land and their resilience in the face of the harshness of life. It was created to entertain workers while they toiled in the fields and evokes the purity of the spirit of the epoch. The songs are about the land, the plains, and the animals.

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima was founded in 1758, but its cultural and traditional roots date back to much earlier times.

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima echoes the voices of Phoenicians, Visigoths, Romans and, above all, the Arabs, who arrived in the 8th century and dominated the region for 500 years, and still influence the Alentejo's culture today. Some scholars describe the Alentejo as someone with the spirit of a Roman in the body of an Arab. The locals pronounced the name of their land: *وخيت نيل*.

It is a portrait that conveys the emotion of the Alentejo. When you hear the lyrics, you can almost feel the scorching heat, the aroma of wild species, and the elegant breeze blowing across the fields. You can almost discern the typical sounds of a long summer's night and the anticipation of the long-awaited harvest.



