

VILA DE SANT'ANNA

THE ALDEIA DE CIMA

Santana is a small village in the civil parish of Portel, near the old Roman road between Évora and Beja, which borders on Vidigueira parish, in the southern part of the Upper Alentejo.

The first mention of "Sant'Anna da Serra do Mendro" was recorded following the renovation of a medieval church that was described as lying between "two villages, the Lower Village and the Upper Village" in the Paroquial Memories of Portel, Vila Viçosa, written between 1722 and 1832. The upper village mentioned in 1758, appears to have given rise to the name Herdade Aldeia de Cima, or "The Upper Village Estate".

D.JOÃO D'ABOIM, THE FIRST NOBLEMAN

In 1258, King D. Afonso III granted the tract of land called Portel Mafomode to D. João de Aboim, his highest Chamberlain, making this nobleman the first great Lord of Portel. He was a man of great learning and erudition, who had been influenced by years spent living in France. His literary legacy to Portugal serves as an endless topic for research into medieval literature.

Upon D. João's death in 1301, King D. Dinis negotiated with the widow and their daughter the estate's first sale. The property thereby came into the possession of the Royal House until the year 1385, when it is was granted by King D. João I to Nuno Álvares Pereira, following his leadership in the great Portuguese victory in the Battle of Aljubarrota. The Saint Constable, as he would later come to be known, went on to bequeath the territory to his grandson, Fernando of Portugal, later Duke of Bragança. Thus, Portel became part of the estate of the royal House of Braganza until the Liberal Revolution of 1820, when it was confiscated and turned over to the Portuguese State.



THE VALUE OF THE LAND

Throughout the 2,400 hectares of Herdade Aldeia de Cima not a single portion of land resembles another.

The peculiar features of this land have attracted and retained residents here from time immemorial. Thus, the village was founded in a cool climate, set upon the slopes of a bedrock of schist at an altitude of 330 metres.

It encompasses a huge expanse of cork oak, including 1,750 hectares in the Serra do Mendro. Mediterranean land use patterns have typically prevailed to make use of the apparently poor schist soils which are, nevertheless, richly diverse.





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.

From her father she learned about the deep sense of pride felt by the local people, the importance of planting for the future, and the fact that, in this immense territory, the land only has value if you plant things in it. Alongside cork, a vertical pillar of her family's universe, Luisa soon discovered that wine is also one of her great passions, from her experience managing the Quinta Nova de Nossa Senhora do Carmo estate, in the Douro region, and the Taboadella estate, in the Dão region.

Herdade Aldeia de Cima has been owned by the Amorim family since 1994 and in 2017, the village's community spirit was reborn, in a project conceived by the couple, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo, who have lived the authenticity of this place with their two daughters, in the Iberian-Mediterranean ecological area of the Ossa-Morena zone.



The typical Alentejan architecture of the houses and agricultural buildings originally built from mud and brick, with whitewashed walls punctuated by small windows, has been fully restored by the present owners.

Due to their isolation, the peoples of the Alentejo developed an autonomous and sustainable way of life, reflected in the rich gastronomy, which combines products from the pasture land - milk, cheese, meat, ingredients from the vegetable gardens and orchards, honey and forest fruits such as arbutus, almond and pine nuts.

Bread remains the local staple food, attesting to the huge surrounding grain fields.



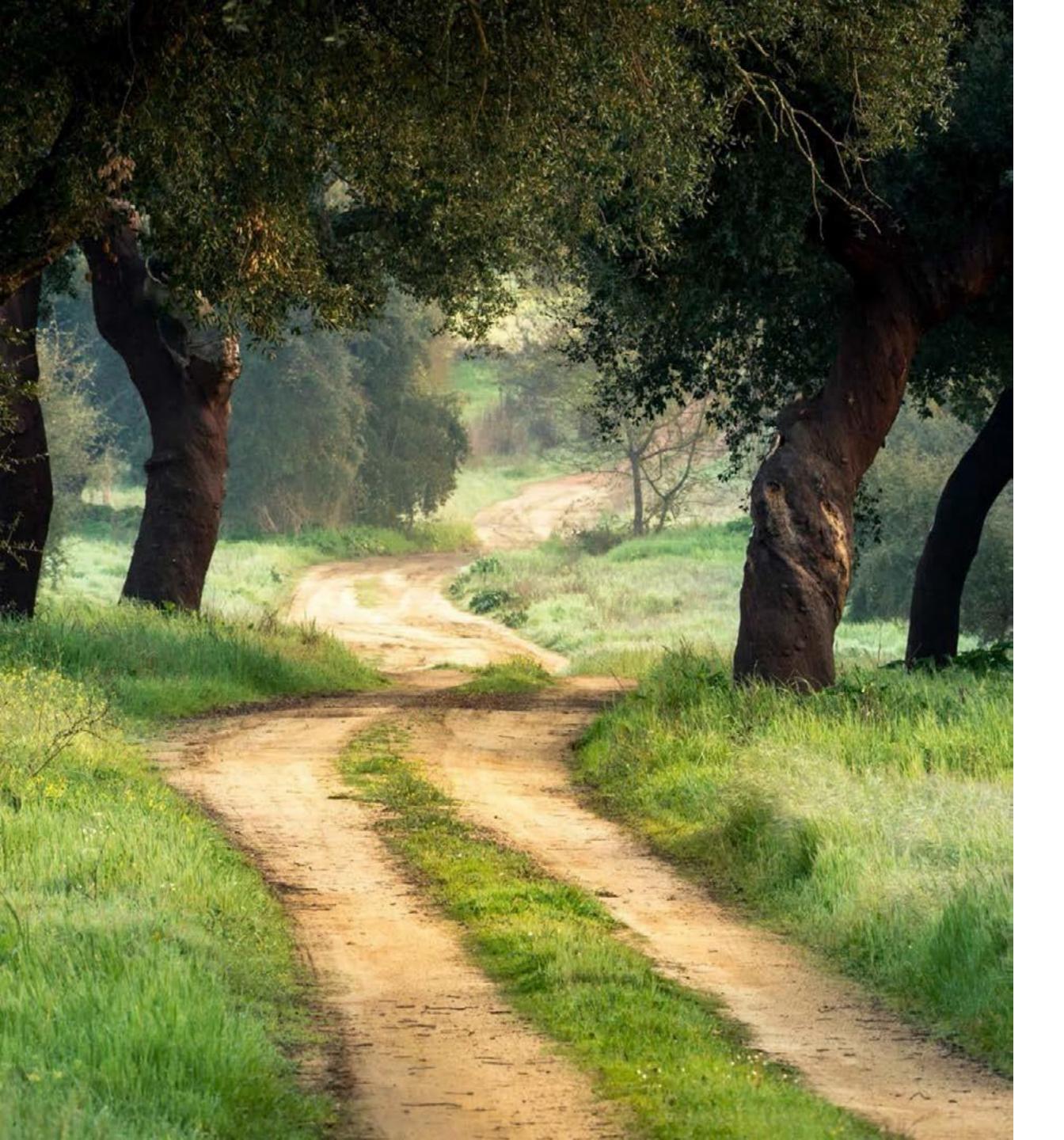
With a unique biodiversity, the Herdade Aldeia de Cima has always had plentiful water, demonstrated by the existence of several water wheels. The small plots of land in the low-lying areas, which are more fertile, were dedicated to vegetable gardens and orchards of fig and pomegranate trees. The plateaus were occupied by mules and bulls, Alentejan pigs and sheep, who graze on white barley and oats.

In the Alentejo, most of the local people still depend on the forest and agriculture for their livelihood and the Serra do Mendro is no exception - the population depends on what the land gives them, and benefits from the cultivating the cork oak forest.

The agricultural practices in the 2400-hectare estate require little intervention, and favour a production model that is integrated with nature and aims to optimise the local natural resources.

We work for nature, not against it!





THE CORK FOREST

SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The cork oak forest in the Herdade Aldeia de Cima is located in the Ibero-Mediterranean ecological zone known as the Ossa-Morena Zone. Using a sustainable agroforestry management system - which aims to generate profit over the medium to long term - the pastoral agro-silvo system of the cork oak forest, which is subject to anthropogenic interventions, is based on the combined presence of two different oak tree species - the cork oak (quercus suber) and holm (quercus rotundifolia). The forest provides a variety of food and wildlife habitats, and is essential for soil conservation, regulates the water cycle, decreases carbon emissions and conserves biodiversity.

The cork oak forest, a cultural landscape in southern Portugal, is considered to be one of the 35 most important ecosystems in the world for preserving biodiversity - on a par with Amazonia, the African Savanna and Borneo. More than 200 animal species and 135 plant species find ideal conditions for survival here.

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.

SUSTAINABLE AGRO-FORESTRY SYSTEM

In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, sustainability means profound respect for the land. Focusing on the recovery of an entire territory, this is not just a question of reducing the use of chemicals, but of recovering the Serra do Mendro's unique ecosystem, helping preserve this natural and cultural heritage, and reinforcing biodiversity for future generations and the well-being of all those who live and work there.

Today we respect the past to build the future!



WHITE MERINO SHEEP

Merino white sheep is one of the Alentejo's oldest breeds, brought by Phoenicians, Greeks and Carthaginians, on their commercial trips to the Iberian Peninsula. These docile sheep, who have a sturdy build and fine wool, graze in the large stretches of land of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima. The flock of sheep, with more than 1500 animals, is left to roam freely, taking advantage of the natural pastures of a sustainable ecosystem throughout the year, helping to maintain the soil, its biodiversity and avoiding the danger of forest fires during the Alentejo's hot summer months.





THE LEGENDARY OLIVE GROVE

In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima there is a legendary olive grove that has resisted the passage of time — the Horta dos Fontanais. More than one hundred ancient olive trees extend over 1.25 hectares, attesting to the quality of the soil and the survivability of this species, whose parched trunks can sometimes grow to a diameter of over 8.5 metres.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEEKEPING

Bees perform a crucial role for the planet and help ensure the balance of ecosystems. In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima estate, bees pollinate plants, favour agricultural production and, through their high nutritional value products - such as honey and pollen extracted from flowers - they contribute to the local population's well-being.

In the Serra do Mendro we support biodiversity and have recovered sustainable agricultural techniques with steps that help us protect the soil, conserve water and preserve the environment and local social and cultural life. This philosophy and approach to nature preserves the life of bees and ensures a more balanced system, since they require around 10 million flowers to produce one litre of honey.

We currently have 15 apiaries and 599 beehives. Whenever the right conditions exist, bee colonies are carefully transported by beekeepers to places where specific flower varieties are in full bloom. This is the reason for the varying flavours of honey, which depend on the season and the flowers in bloom.

FLOWER POLLEN

At springtime, pollen is collected from flowers by bees, transported to the hive and collected in the pollen trap.

This pure food source, which exists in the form of granules, has been valued for centuries as an extraordinary food supplement, unparalleled in nature. It is rich in amino acids and vitamins of biological origin, protides, lipids, sugars and minerals, and contains most of the elements essential to life on Earth.

Flower pollen should be chewed and consumed on an empty stomach. It may also be eaten with yoghurt, fruit or vegetable smoothies, porridge or cereal.

It should be kept at room temperature, in a dry and cool environment.





HONEY OF WILD LAVENDER

The honey of Herdade Aldeia de Cima, is pure and produced the least possible human intervention. It is produced from a treasure chest of pollens. Of particular interest is the wild lavender that grows in the unique ecosystem of the cork oak orchards of Serra de Mendro, unspoilt by either industrial or urban pollution.

The warm temperatures of early summer are ideal for extracting honey in its liquid state, a process that usually takes place between June and July, at the peak of production. The low temperatures of winter can cause the honey to crystallize without any loss of nutritional value. This is the mark of quality honey.

Over time, liquid honey tends to crystallise. It must be kept in a dry and cool environment and at room temperature.



THE ARBUTUS SMOOTH AND FRUITY FLAVOUR

When we smell the wet schist soil, between October and November, at the Herdade Aldeia de Cima estate this inspires us to harvest red fruits, in particular arbutus berries from the strawberry tree (arbutus unedo), which bring rich colours to the autumnal slopes of the Serra do Mendro.

The strawberry tree's wild and edible fruits result from maturation of the flowers from the previous year and are hand-picked. The fruit has an unusual contrasted texture: beneath the granular peel there is smooth pulp, which has an intense and fruity flavour.

The round trees found on the slopes of the cork oak forest have vibrant colours – when the fruit is ripe it varies between strong yellow and intense red – and seem to herald Christmas, making the strawberry tree one of the most striking Portuguese forest spaces.

ARBUTUS JAM

In the Serra do Mendro, arbutus jam is highly appreciated for its texture and consistency, as a perfect accompaniment for cheeses and winter desserts.

Arbutus jam from Herdade Aldeia de Cima is prepared using the local villagers' ancestral recipe and uses the whole fruit - we don't remove the seeds so as to ensure greater texture and acidity. With a velvety structure, arbutus jam maintains the original flavour of the ripe fruit, harvested between October and November, revealing a delicate, fresh and intense fruit, and great balance.

The jam jar must be kept in a dry and cool environment. After opening, keep in the refrigerator.





ARBUTUS JELLY

Jelly has been a way of preserving fruit and obtaining sweet products since antiquity. It is also a very Portuguese sweet, and reminds us of countryside aromas and flavours and precious moments spent at the family table.

At the Herdade da Aldeia de Cima estate, every moment is perfect to enjoy some traditional jelly, especially arbutus jelly, with its elegant aroma, that is reminiscent of the forest in the late autumn.

This jelly is obtained by cooking the pulp of the arbutus berries harvested in the Serra do Mendro, adding sugar equivalent to its net weight, achieving a thicker consistency due to the fact that arbutus fruit is high in pectin.

The jelly jar should be kept in a dry, cool environment at room temperature.



ECOLOGICAL BIODIVERSITY

The estate preserves natural habitats such as woodlands filled with Cretan rockrose, woolly rock rose, gorse, groom, small trees and brambles, interspersed with spontaneous grassland. This habitat is ideal for sedentary species such as Iberian partridge, hare, pheasant, small bustard, fox, mongoose, wild boar and Alentejan black pig. In these pollution-free lands, it is common to see storks, sparrows and goldfinches, as well as impressive birds of prey, such as the black vulture or kite.







GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

The Ancient Iberian Massif

The Alentejo region has few natural resources, but it is the only national wine region where we can find almost all types of soils in Portugal.

This is a different Alentejo, the Serra do Mendro, which separates the Alto Alentejo from the Baixo Alentejo, pertains to the oldest geomorphological unit of the Iberian Peninsula and presents a geological singularity known as horst, which resulted from uplifting of land that created the block of schist rocks in this area.

The lands we walk on today, that consist of schist, granite, gabbro and quartzite, among many other types of rocks, are still an original specimen of the mountain range, the ancient Iberian Massif, which authors have termed Variscan or Hercynian, which started to rise from the ocean about 380 million years ago.



MOUNTAIN RANGE OF THE ALTO ALENTEJO

Serra de São Mamede (1205 metres)
Serra de Marvão (865 metres)
Serra de Ossa (650 metres)
Serra de Arraiolos (407 metres)

MOUNTAIN RANGE OF THE BAIXO ALENTEJO

Serra de Grândola (383 metres)
Serra de Portel (418 metres)
Serra do Mendro (424 metres)
Serra da Adiça (522 metres)
Serra do Cercal (378 metres)

THE MOUNTAIN RANGES OF THE BAIXO ALENTEJO

Despite the widespread idea that the Alentejo consists entirely of immense plains and wheat fields, that stretch out to infinity, today the landscape is dominated by walls of intensive olive groves. In fact, for the local people, the Baixo Alentejo is filled with mountain ranges, with six in total, from north to south. In the southwest of the Iberian peninsula, the Alentejo is the lowest point of the remnants of this ancient mountain range.

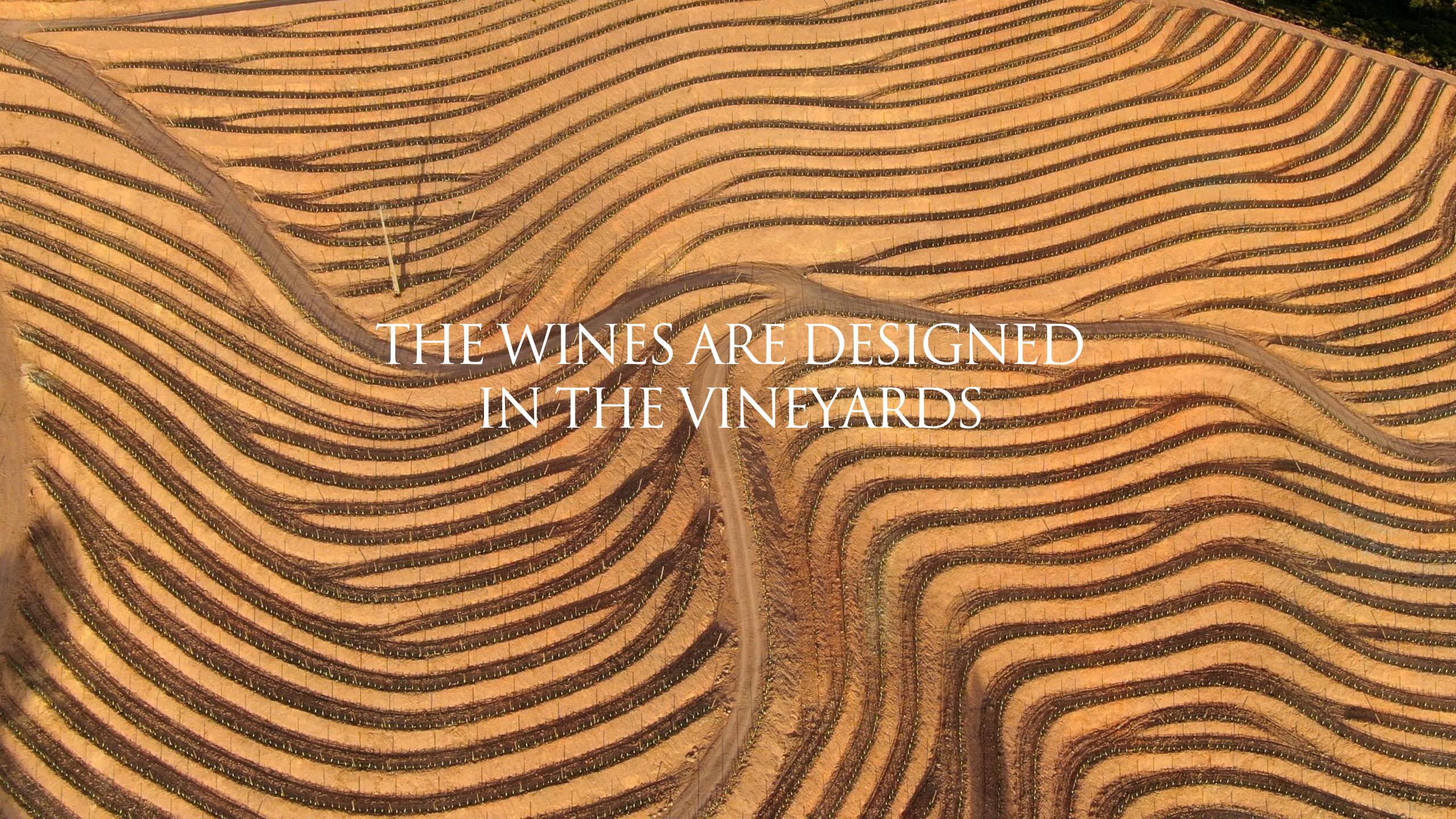
THE SERRADO MENDRO

THE MOUNTAIN RANGE THAT SEPARATES THE ALTO ALENTEJO FROM THE BAIXO ALENTEJO

Serra do Mendro - Rugged morphology and unusual landscape
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.





THE DIVERSITY OF THE FOUR VINEYARDS

A team of geologists studied the geological heritage of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, in order to choose the best terroirs to plant 20 hectares of vineyards in the Serra do Mendro, which separates the Alto Alentejo from the Baixo Alentejo and has its highest point in the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, 424 metres above sea level.

We identified four zones in the highest parts of the mountains and the plateau in the Serra do Mendro in order to obtain a naturally fresh micro-climate, in an increasingly hot Mediterranean climate. We planted 20 hectares according to the land level curves and divided them into 22 plots, most with fewer than 1.5 ha of vines per plot.



The Vinha do Alfaiates vineyard has 18 natural micro-terroirs in the Serra do Mendro

We start with the Vinha dos Alfaiates, located in the highest elevation in the Serra do Mendro
The uniqueness of this rugged terrain, crossed by the Ribeira dos Alfaiates stream, inspired a unique and singular model in the Alentejo region: a vine planted in traditional terraces using a one-cordon system, reminiscent of the terraces of the Douro wine region, offering stunning panoramic views over the immensity of the landscape, on the border between the Alto Alentejo and Baixo Alentejo.

Implanted in plots of land that have an irregular geometry, characterized by more or less rounded ridges, the vineyard has a slope of 30 to 40% in more than half of the plots, with altitudes between 300 m and 380 m, from west to east, with an ideal solar exposure, combined with an unusual thermal amplitude, that is essential to endow freshness to the wine.

12 hectares of traditional vineyard terraces | 18 micro-terroirs | Altitude: 330 to 390 metres above sea level

Grape varieties: 13% Trincadeira | 25% Alicante Bouschet | 18% Antão Vaz | 12% Aragonês | 8%Baga | 24%Alfrocheiro

Soil and rock/mineral: red, brown and yellow sediment soils with rocky fragments | quartz | clay | mica-schist | reddish schist | yellow schist



VINHADE FAMÍLIA VINEYARD

Reproduction of ancient agriculture

Planted in a 1m square layout, based on goblet vine training, the vines - that have no wire lattice-work and display a "crawling" and archaic appearance - are surrounded by the same micro-climate. The vines' vegetal system protects the grapes from the intense summer heat. The polychromatic plots, with grape varieties 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 next to the winery – 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.

1000 m2 in bush form | 1 micro-terroir **Altitude:** 325 metres above sea level

Grape varieties: 9% for each of the following: Trincadeira, Alicante Bouschet, Antão Vaz, Aragonês, Castelão, Diagalves, Moreto, Perrum, Tinta Caiada, Tinta Miúda, Roupeiro

Soil and rock/mineral: thick, loamy grey-brown soils with organic matter / rocky fragments | quartz | clay | green rocks | amphibolites



ONTHE PLATEAU OF THE SERRA DO MENDRO

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.

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.

THE VINHA D'ALDEYA VINEYARD

THE VINHA DE SANT'ANNA VINEYARD

4 hectares of traditional vineyard | 7 micro-terroirs

Altitude: 280 a 300 metres above sea level

Grape varieties: 33% Arinto | 30% Alvarinho | 13% Aragonês | 24% Trincadeira

Soil and rock/mineral: thick, loamy grey-brown soils with organic matter / rocky fragments | quartz | clay | green rocks | amphibolites

4 hectares of traditional vineyard | 10 micro-terroirs

Altitude: 325 a 345 metres above sea level

Grape varieties: 19% Tinta Grossa | 43% Alvarinho | 19% Antão Vaz | 7% Roupeiro | 12% Perrum

Soil and rock/mineral: loamy yellowy-brown soils with fragments of rock | quartz | clay



WINES THAT PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF THE PLACE

With its unique biodiversity, in the Herdade da Aldeia de Cima, projected until 2020 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!

As a family, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo are creating wines that preserve the history of the place. Brought to market two years after the grape harvest, production is small and the aim is to reach around 100,000 bottles.



11 GRAPE VARIETIES AND 36 MICROTERROIRS

In order to uphold the typical regional characteristics of this warm region, that has been producing wine for over 2000 years, we have selected indigenous grape varieties that are perfectly adapted to the region, with 65% red and 35% white grape varieties, with a commitment to viticulture in an integrated production method that will later be converted to organic production.

It is thanks to this multiplicity of natural factors, in a unique context of 36 micro-terroirs, that the profile of the wines of Herdade Aldeia de Cima has been traced in order to taste the Alentejo in a single bottle.



THE WINERY

ALENTEJAN BUILDING

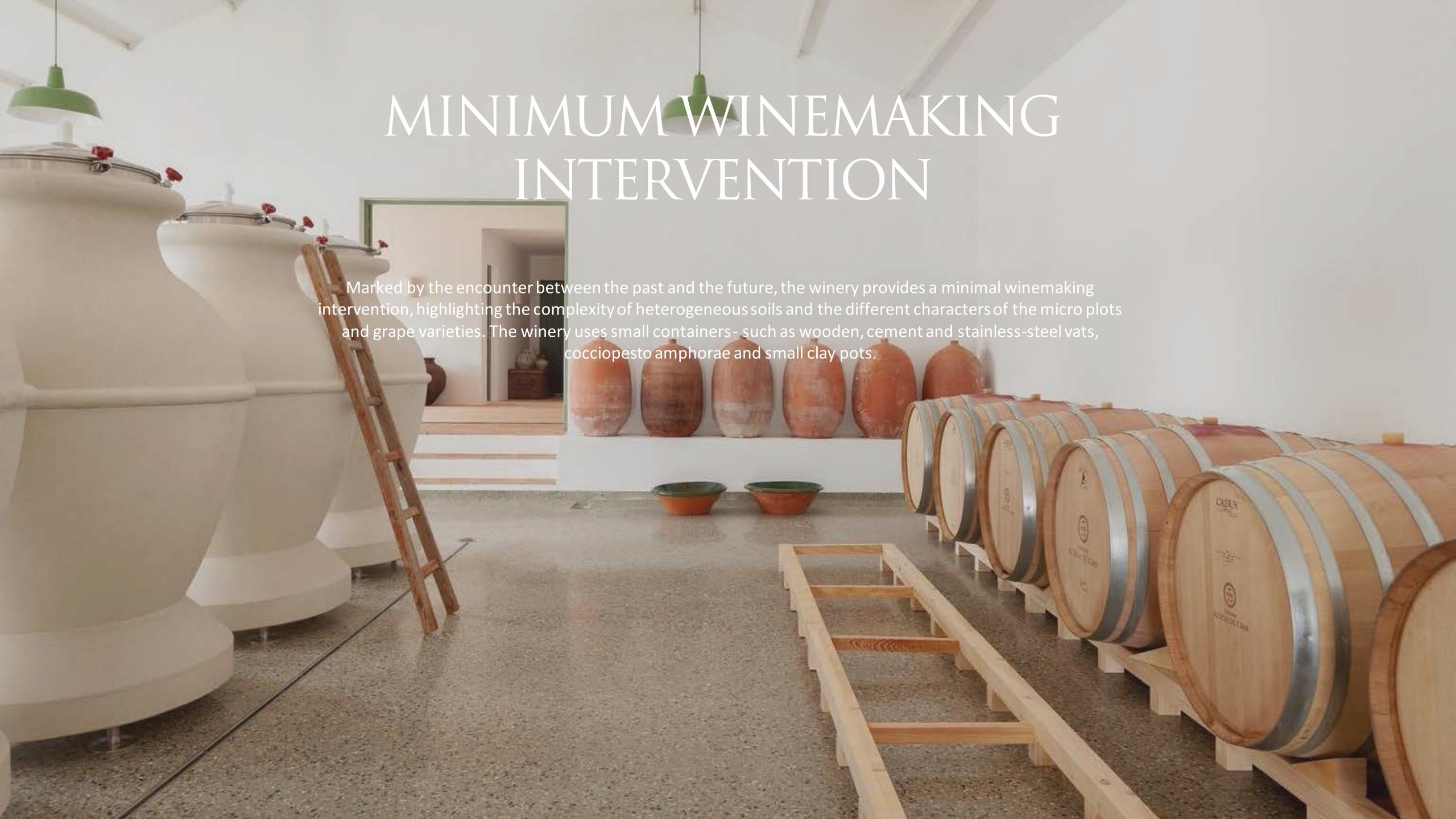
In 2017 it was decided to install the winery in the impressive Armazém das Ramadas warehouse built in 1953 by Francisco Eduardo de Barahona Fragoso, son of the 1st Count of Esperança. It was originally intended for his "ramadas" (land parched with intense heat and dryness).

To recover the warehouse, Luisa and Francisco spoke with their friends Ana Anahory and Felipa Almeida, from the studio, Anahory Almeida, whose signature and good taste are easily identifiable by the way that they work in close connection with Portuguese culture.

The final result - beautiful, minimal and memorable – blends perfectly with the striking architecture of this typically Alentejan building that 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.



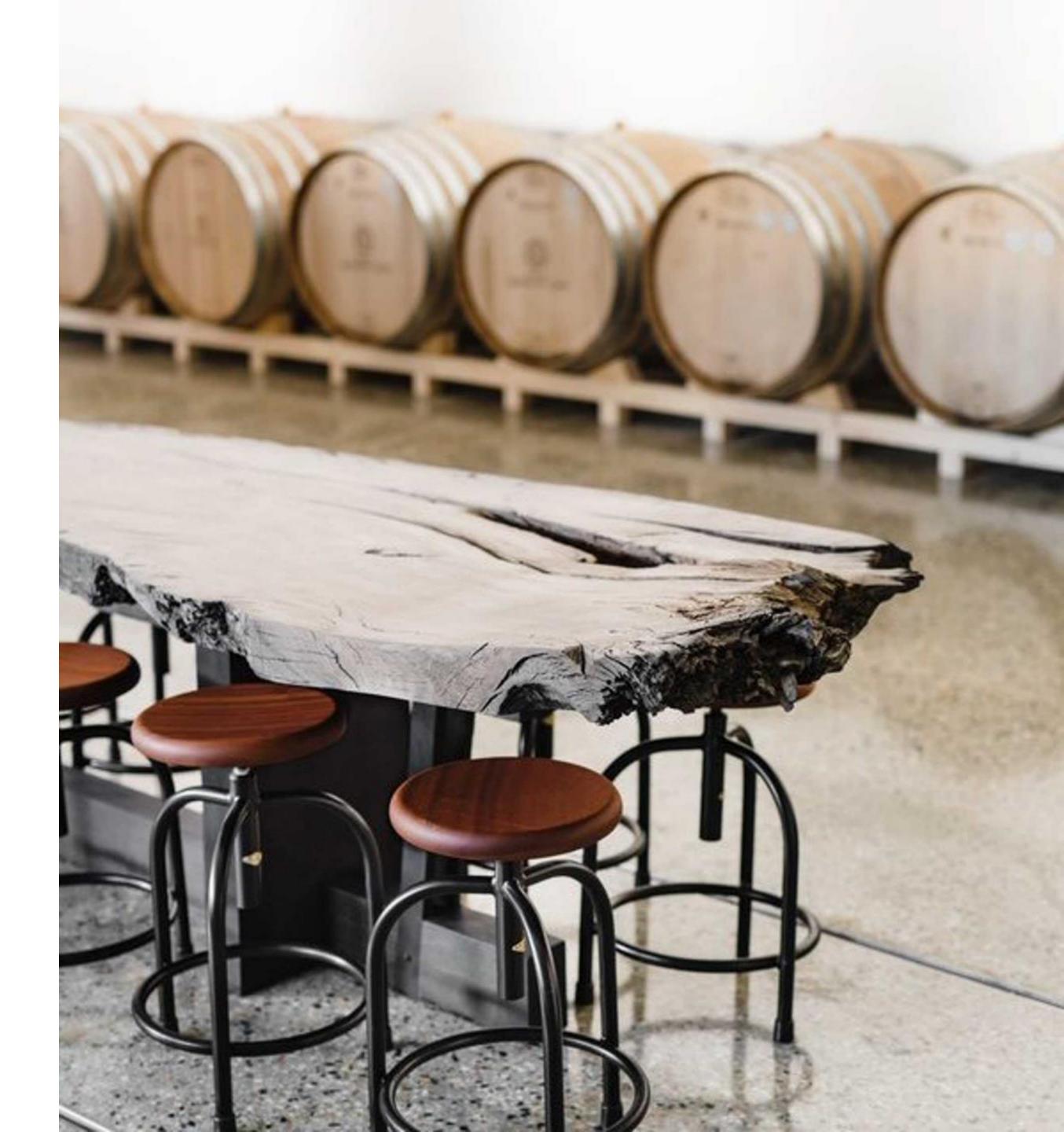




THE TRADITIONAL ALENTEJO

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima's classic and elegant wines, preserve the typicality of their terroir and have enormous complexity.

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima looked for ancestry and tradition in the ageing room where every item is unique. From the beginning it was clear that the barrels had to be 500 litres, respecting the origin and characteristics of the Vidigueira grapes.





AN EXCELLENT TEAM

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

From the outset, the estate has been coordinated by José Falé, in conjunction with Gonçalo Ramos, who is responsible for forestry activities and animal production.

The winemaking team, formed by Jorge Alves and António Cavalheiro, with viticultural support from Joaquim Faia, is designing the profile of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima's wines, paying special attention to study of the Serra do Mendro's micro terroirs.

Nelson Coelho recently joined the team to lead the sales strategy.

IDENTITY

...While Luisa talked, Eduardo drew some lines on a piece of white paper that corresponded to the facade of a whitewashed ruin from the small village.

This same respect for the culture of the village is reflected in the image developed by the designer Eduardo Aires. Whatever the path, it had necessarily to convey a sense of the Alentejo. Sketching the door opening through which you are invited to experience life in Aldeia de Cima. Together, they started from nothing and concentrated on the essential – the importance of a place which, since 1758, was the ancient heir to a past marked by five centuries of Moorish culture.

The selected colours – visible throughout the estate and in a huge variety of details in the inte-riors – are the green of the cork oak leaf and

The selected colours – visible throughout the estate and in a huge variety of details in the inte-riors – are the green of the cork oak leaf and the terracotta of the earth in which it grows, not to mention the effect of the whitewashed walls on the paper of every label.



ALYANTIJU BRANCO

This is an experimental wine. Thinking about the Antão Vaz grape variety, harvested at precisely the right moment, after waiting for the aromatic and phenolic maturation, and fermented in 500-litre French oak barrels, takes us to another level of winemaking. Here we can see the Alentejo reflected in the minerality and sweet and spicy aromas of the flowers of the fields and the brilliant sunshine. Further ahead we encounter gravity, freshness, tension and linearity of a long and precise finish. Finally, we realise that the entire Alentejo can fit inside a small bottle!





ALYANTIJU TINTO

We interpret our origins. Here, there is something that is genuine and intense and it evokes the which is unmatched in Alentejo – its density, its scents, and its depth. It couldn't have come from anywhere but the Alentejo. This is a serious wine that is true to its land, a unique combination of robust origins, with sophistication, and solid precision. It's a timeless wine with a strong personality that will last. The pull of nostalgia tells us that time has not run out.

RESERVA BRANCO

We're talking about the steep landscape of the Serra do Mendro, that separates the Alto and Baixo Alentejo. This geological phenomenon in Vidigueira, with an east-west orientation, forms a natural corridor ideal for the influence of Atlantic winds. It was here, looking up at the light blue sky, that we created our wines The Reserva Branco (white) combines the terroir of this land, influenced by the cooler climate and the diversity of skeletal soils, producing a balanced wine with a fragrant aroma, linear structure, and high density and enticing minerality.





RESERVA TINTO

We have studied ancient history of wine at vineyards in the Alentejo as well as a wide swath of tradition, geology, texture, and aromas. We are preserving what is genuine because we have felt from the beginning that time is on our side. We searched out the traditional grape varieties. We found them where they were waiting- nearby.

Using the simplest possible process, we have managed to produce wines that are, we hope authentic messengers, clearly conveying the local emotions and terroir. Our ambition was to come to understand the nature of the spots, and we succeeded.

VISITS TO THE HERDADE ALDEIA DE CIMA

In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima we spend our days working in the vineyard and forest, caring for the wines stored in the cellar, looking after our animals and performing the multiple tasks that Nature has fortunately provided us with.

We're always delighted to welcome people who love our wines and, subject to availability, we can organise wine tastings, visits to the winery and the vineyards or even suggest a personalised programme.



