



© João Ferrand



HERDADE
ALDEIA DE CIMA

Press release - Maio 2023

HERDADE DA ALDEIA DE CIMA RECOVERS AN 18TH-CENTURY OLIVE GROVE IN ALENTEJO

Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo continue their refurbishment endeavours at Herdade da Aldeia de Cima, now with *Horta dos Fontanais*, a typical 18th-century olive grove. Having refurbished the boutique winery, house and farm buildings, and having restored the cork forest, the duo then turned their attention to the old olive store at Horta dos Fontanais, set in a beautiful olive grove.

The ambition for restoring this unique space that showcases Alentejan culture and craftsmanship at its best, is to provide unique moments to all visitors to the Estate and the winery with private and exclusive experiences such as wine tastings, meals or walks in the stunning scenery of the Serra de Mendro.

This refurbishment included natural materials, such as schist and clay, as well as the traditional whitewashed walls and the green tone of the cork oak leaf that is always present on the doors and walls across the estate, a project that relied on the interior design duo Ana Anahory and Felipa Almeida, who built the future while respecting the past.

The very best way to enjoy this architecture is to immerse yourself in this place and breathe in the surrounding nature. Horta dos Fontanais is a centuries-old olive grove walled in schist and divided into two areas — a cosy porch with an outdoor fireplace and a view to the olive grove, and an outdoor seating area and two indoor rooms for wine tasting, meals and games. Every meal at Horta dos Fontanais must be booked ahead and is subject to availability since it only operates with reservations and under particular conditions.



The bread, a staple of the local culture, is kneaded on the spot and baked in the wood-fired oven. Is it too much to ask to try one of the world's best coffee experiences prepared on an old, worn-out clay chocolate pot?

For those who have the opportunity to enjoy this private experience at Horta dos Fontanais, you can taste and purchase the wines, the honey and pollen from Herdade Aldeia de Cima, Portuguese handicrafts made with different materials, such as clay, cork, olive wood, tapestries from Monsaraz, handmade medronho soaps, and others.

THE WINERY

But Horta dos Fontanais is not the only place driven by a connection between the past and the future.

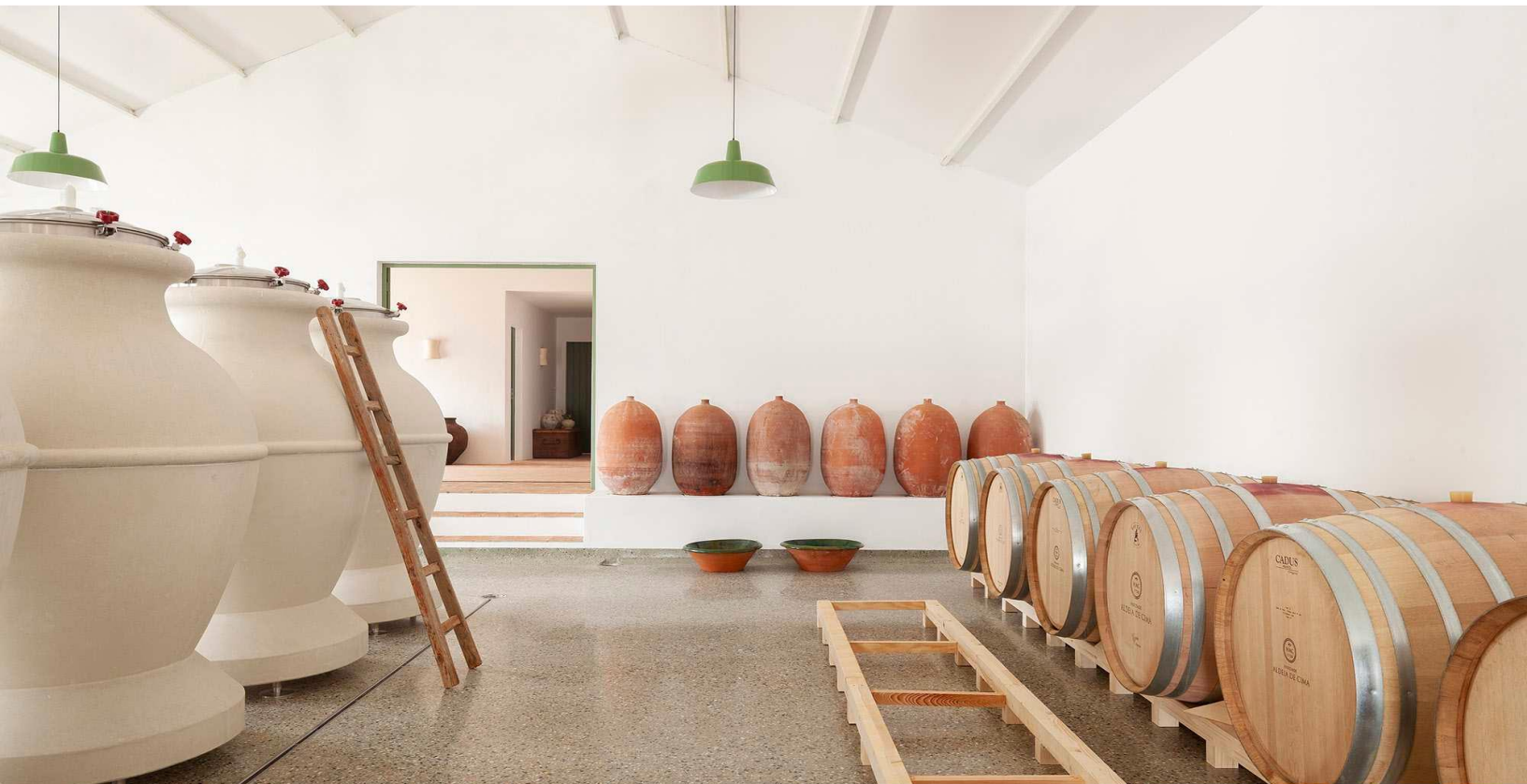
The typical Alentejo building dating back to 1953 — beautiful, minimal and memorable — calls on the local culture and stands out for its thick, whitewashed walls sustaining the original metallic structure with three wings, enclosing an amazing pair of silos in the central courtyard.

Currently, Herdade da Aldeia de Cima produces about 40,000 bottles. The boutique winery, with a capacity for 100,000 bottles, follows an oenology of minimal intervention, where the aim is to highlight the diversity and distinct characteristics of indigenous and Portuguese grape varieties in 22 different vineyard plots, totalling 36 distinct micro-terroirs.

With the intention of following typical regional winemaking, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo defined that the wines would be launched two years after the harvest and that fermentation in oak vats and Nico Velo cement vats would be essential to enhance the textures, the minerality of the soils, antiquity and tradition.



Ancestry and tradition in the ageing room are completed in the small terracotta vats of about 180 litres, in which no two pieces are alike, and in the amphorae, produced with ceramic powder on a structure of natural fibres called cocchiopesto. The average ageing in wood takes place in oval vats of 1,200 litres and barrels of 500 litres, respecting the origin and the characteristics of the grapes from Vidigueira, as the tannins have a silkier texture in this region.



REGENERATIVE FARMING

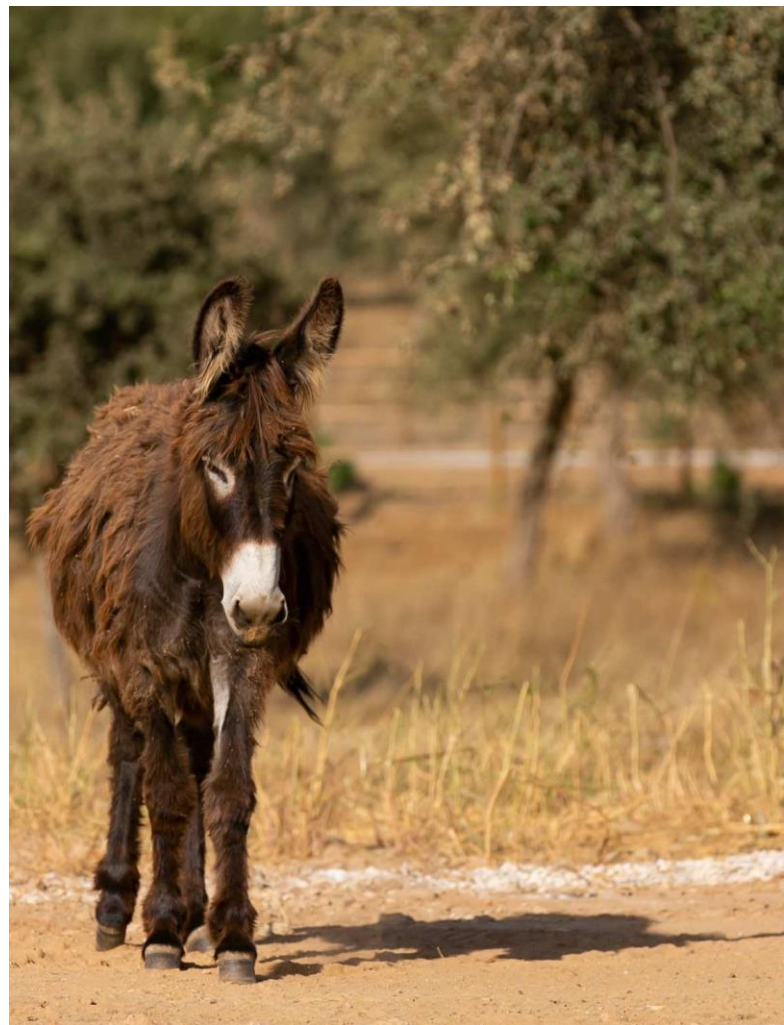
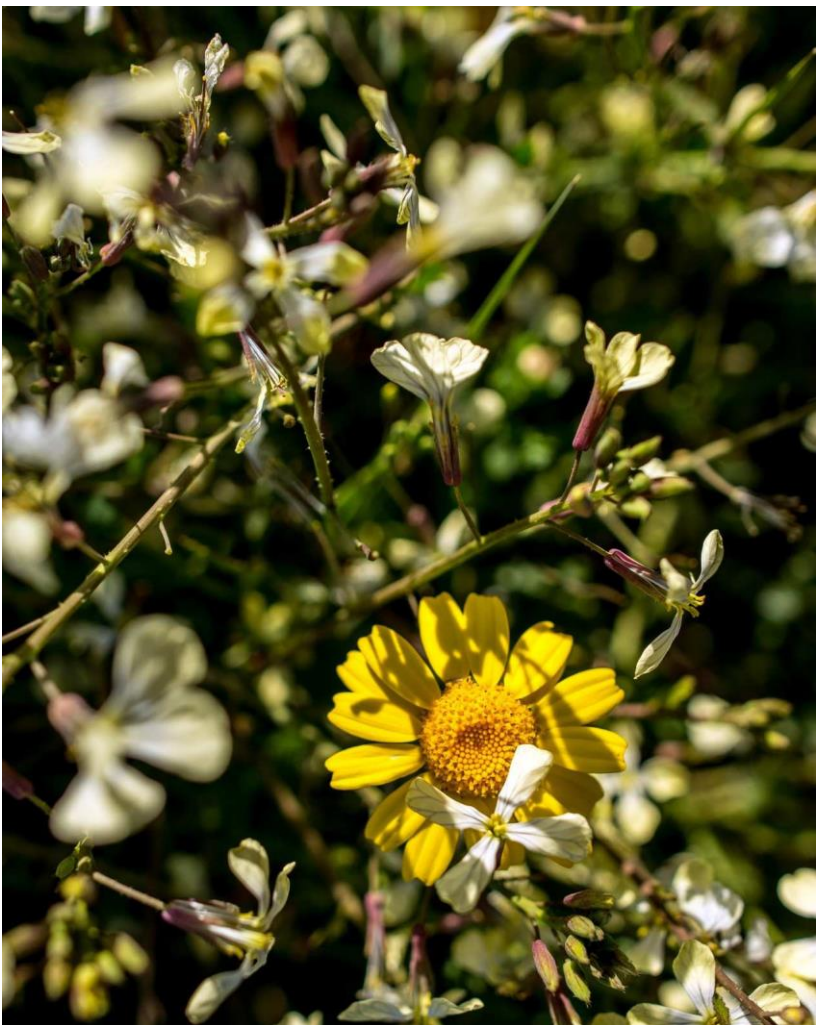
Working to benefit nature has been the motto of Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo, a lifetime project in the Serra do Mendro on a 3000-ha estate in Herdade Aldeia de Cima, recovering the authenticity of the place and the community spirit of this village in the Iberian-Mediterranean ecological area of Ossa-Morena.

Here, every plot of land is unique.

The orography and heterogeneous flora have contributed to an extensive oak grove, forming part of one of the 35 most important ecosystems in the world for biodiversity conservation — compared to paradises such as the Amazon, the African savannah or Borneo. Over two hundred species of animals and 135 species of plants find the ideal conditions for their survival in the oak grove.

Nature works and has always worked in Alentejo as a holistic community, connecting people, animals and the land. Currently, the natural regeneration of the cork oak forest is carried out in an agro-silvo-pastoral system. Here, Herdade Aldeia de Cima has always practised a typically Mediterranean style of land use on seemingly poor schist soils but rich in diversity, providing a variety of food and wildlife habitats, fundamental to the soil vitality and resistance, the water cycle regulation, the carbon emissions reduction, and the biodiversity conservation of the estate, the planet and human health.

Due to its isolation, the population of this village has developed an autonomous and sustainable way of life, reflected in the rich gastronomy, which combines the products of pasture — milk, cheese, lamb and Alentejo black pig meat — with ingredients from the vegetable gardens and orchards, such as olive oil, fresh fruit and from the forest, cork, firewood, game, heavy amidella mushrooms, honey, pollen, medronho (arbutus-berry) and now wine.





THE IDENTITY OF THE VILLAGE

It is on the old Roman road between Évora and Beja that, in 1758, the settlement of "Sima" was referenced, an untouched land on the southern edge of the Alentejo, raised on the slope of the schist mother rock. With a unique biodiversity, Herdade Aldeia de Cima is born in the Serra do Mendro, separating the Alto from the Baixo Alentejo, reaching its highest point in this estate at 424 metres of altitude.

The typically Alentejo architecture of the houses and farm buildings initially built in lath and brick, with whitewashed walls punctuated by small windows, have gradually been restored by the current owners, allowing the authenticity of this place and the identity of the village to be revived.

This same respect for the land is ever present in Luisa and Francisco's passion for craftsmanship and all interior details, reflected in the image developed by designer Eduardo Aires. The starting point is with the colours of nature, the green of the cork oak leaf and the terracotta of the clay of the land that saw it grow, as well as the effect of the whitewashed walls on each wine label. The doorway invites us to discover the essentials of living in Aldeia de Cima.

THE VALUE OF THE LAND

As a family, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo create wines in Serra do Mendro — the mountain range that separates the upper Alentejo from the lower Alentejo — highlighting the traditional character of the Alentejo.

They started at the highest elevation of the Serra do Mendro (424 m) with the Vinha dos Alfaiates vineyard, planted on levels, the first of its kind in the Alentejo, from where one can see the vast horizon and gaze in wonder at the immensity of the Alentejo land, the olive groves and vineyards, the vegetable gardens, the fields of corn and the small towns and villages of Vidigueira and Beja.

Then we move on to the plateau of Aldeia de Cima, with elevations between 289 and 300 metres, where we intend to explore the diversity of soils with three vineyards: Vinha da Família, Vinha de Sant'Anna, Vinha d'Aldeya. At the foot of the mountain, we find the Cevadeira (237 metres altitude) and Zorreira (225 metres altitude) vineyards, not ploughed in brown soil, totalling 36 distinct micro terroirs.

With the intention of following typical regional winemaking, they have selected indigenous grape varieties perfectly adapted to the region, with 65% red grape varieties and 35% white grape varieties, betting on a viticulture that converts to organic production.



AWARDS

2020 – European Design Awards – Gold category – alcoholic beverages packaging

2022 – Revelation Producer of the Year Prize – Revista de Vinhos

2022 – Initiative & Innovation – Revista Mais Alentejo

HORTA DOS FONTANAIS HERDADE

ALDEIA DE CIMA

Reservations for groups with a minimum of 6 people and a maximum of 20 – 40 people.

Subject to availability and booking in advance.

Available all year round, except during grape harvest and between Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Prices upon request.



HERDADE ALDEIA DE CIMA

Estrada Municipal 531- EC Apartado 29 | 7220-999 | Portel | Portugal

Phone +351 227 475 800 | Mobile +351 965 553 630