

sleepers

HOTEL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE

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WORDS BY CATHERINE MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF AQUAPURA HOTELS VILLAS & SPA

AQUAPURA DOURO VALLEY PORTUGAL



Nini Andrade Silva has applied her 'Ninimalist' style to the interiors of the fifty guestrooms and suites at Aquapura's flagship hotel, taking inspiration from the surrounding wine region.

Located in the UNESCO Heritage site of the oldest demarcated wine region in the world, the first resort from Aquapura is a luxurious hideaway designed to maximise its vineyard and river vistas.

Aquapura Douro Valley is a 19th century 'quinta' that has been transformed into a five-star hotel, 21 residential villas, and a 2,200m² spa, with the help of leading Portuguese designers.

Lisbon based architect Luís Rebelo de Andrade has combined the period property with a contemporary extension, tripling the size of the original building. The new areas are minimal so as not to conflict with the traditional architecture and Andrade has designed the

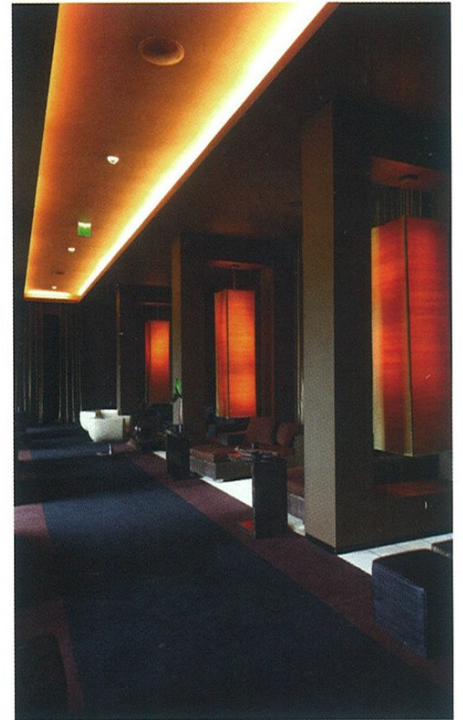
space so that the landscape of the valley can be seen from every room.

This minimal look is continued throughout the 41 guestrooms, eight suites, and one presidential suite. Nini Andrade Silva's trademark style has created a hotel with soul into which the history and traditions of the region are ingrained. Silva's brief was to design all guestrooms and public areas which include the bar, restaurants, and outside lounge areas. The team's intention was to put this hotel on the world map of desirable places to stay.

"The hotel has an overall contemporary style with the mixture of unique and unusual antiques," Silva, Head of Portuguese design service Esboco explains.

"All the colours are from the surrounding vineyards creating what some people have called 'Ninimalist', an expression I have now adopted."

In the rooms, ranging from 38m² to 52m², warm tones of claret and burgundy accentuate the purity of soft greys and white. Rooms have views of either the surrounding vineyards or the Douro River, and are equipped with the latest technology including WiFi and IP telephones. The suites, sized from 65m² to 165m², have a décor of white, beige and copper and are framed by walls of glass that benefit from panoramic views over neighbouring vineyards. These surroundings are at the core of the entire design concept, right down to the in-room spa treatments



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: En suite; The Bar area; and a typical guestroom all designed by Nini Andrade Silva
BELOW LEFT: One of the 21 villas designed by Giano Gonçalves



provided by a butler. Vinotherapy, for example, is a therapeutic bath containing olive oil and grape seeds, to be enjoyed while tasting locally sourced red wine. Throughout the hotel, original artwork and accessories from Asia mix East with West. "One of the greatest challenges was the amount of travelling I undertook to acquire a host of unique pieces, visiting Asia, India and China in my search," says Silva. "Some of these finds form the backbone to my concept, like the large panels from Negaland in India which were used in the Vale Abrão Restaurant. These were a rare find and took a local guru to unearth them along with a number of other fine antiques. "A trip to the north of China rewarded me with the



pair of doors from Ningbo that form the entrance to the Almapura Restaurant. These mixed with my own furniture designs manufactured in the Philippines from woods, natural fibres, mother of pearl, and shells complete the picture."

The 21 villas designed by Giano Gonçalves centre around two themes. The Villas da Vinha, nestled amongst the vineyards, offer a traditional design with rustic fireplaces, warm tones and rich fabrics. The Villas do Douro overlook the river and have a slightly more modern feel featuring decked roof terraces and private plunge pools. Owners of the villas also have preferential access to many of the facilities within the resort.

These facilities include an 800m² business centre with five meeting rooms, a library relaxation area, and two restaurants, Almapura and Vale Abraão, offering fine dining Portuguese dishes. The bar is located at the heart of the hotel and invites guests to savour the

local wines, whilst the wine room, with its modern interior design, offers a great location for tastings and private dinners.

Aquapura's sophisticated spa provides a menu of treatments that offer relaxation, revitalisation, and meditation. The retreat also features a panoramic sauna, water beds, a range of showering experiences, and vitality pool with water jets.

The presence of water is fundamental to Aquapura, which has ambitious plans for expansion. Founding shareholder and CEO Diogo Vaz Guedes aims to open around 15 resorts in the next 12 years mainly in Europe and Latin America. Each resort, like Douro Valley, will either be integrated with, or close to, a natural water source, be it river, lake or sea. Architecture and décor that takes inspiration from the local region, combined with signature elements will be the defining feature of future Aquapura Hotels, Villas and Spa.

ABOVE: The fine dining restaurant and bar area seating take inspiration from the surrounding wine region

EXPRESS CHECKOUT

AQUAPURA DOURO VALLEY
Quinta de Vale Abraão, 5100
Lamego, Douro Valley, Portugal
Tel: +351 254 66 06 60
www.aquapurahotels.com

- 50 guestrooms including 8 suites and 1 presidential suite
- 🍷 Almapura and Vale Abraão
- 🍸 Bar and Wine Room
- 🧖 2,200m² Spa
- ⛶ Business Centre with 5 meeting rooms