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HOTEL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE

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**EMIRATI ELEGANCE**  
STYLISH NEW HOTELS FROM  
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JAYA IBRAHIM MEETS  
FOSTER + PARTNERS

THE VINE — MADEIRA • MONTE MULINI — CROATIA • SOMNUS NEU • LUTRON LIGHTING FORUM



WORDS BY GUY DITTRICH

# THE VINE MADEIRA

Nini Andrade Silva – a former beauty queen known locally as ‘the girl of the pebbles’ – has created designs for The Vine in Funchal Madeira influenced by the local landscape, viticulture, and the four seasons.

**T**he effervescent Nini Andrade Silva walks the talk at the Vine Hotel, a deluxe hotel in Funchal, the capital of Madeira. Striding purposefully from room to room, her pyjama-like trousers billowing behind her, she explains, “I was tired of just specifying and wanted to tell the whole story.” Here the Madeiran-born interior and furniture designer has developed layer upon layer of stories each brought to life as much in the telling as the realisation. “I love everything I can create”, she enthuses and there is no question this former Miss Madeira beauty queen is passionate about her first hotel project on the Portuguese island. Andrade Silva is known also as the Garota do Calhau,

or the girl of the pebbles, after her painting and jewellery based on the softly rounded stones found on the island’s beaches. And pebbles are just part of the hotel’s strong island imagery. The oval forms of her Esboço range of sun-loungers decorate the rooftop’s poolside terrace. A round sofa that dominates one end of the lobby is also piled with felt-covered “pebbles”. Real pebbles line the large walk-in showers and separate WCs of the guestrooms providing a smooth yet non-slip surface. The cascading water-spouts of the showers are reminiscent of the springs gushing directly out of cliff faces commonly seen as one drives around the twisty roads of the island. Continuing the water theme, the island is also criss-crossed by





*levadas*, or irrigation channels painstakingly tunnelled and terraced across the hillsides to bring water from the wetter North West to the better growing conditions of the South East. The rooftop Jacuzzi™ is a 20-metre long trench based on the levadas.

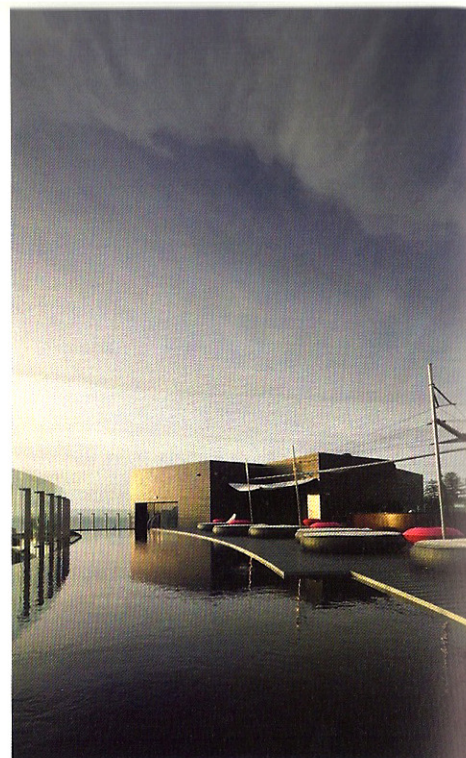
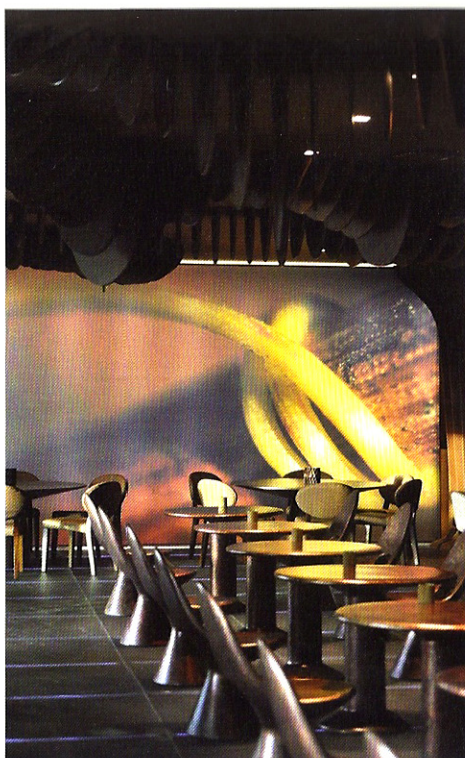
The Vine Hotel's urban location does not preclude oenological orientated design interventions. This second set of layers in the hotel's story is altogether more obvious to the guest and once again the cup of imagery is overflowing.

Enlarged photographs of grapes and vines decorate the ceilings above the beds and cover light-boxes that have been cleverly used to hide massive pillars that are oddly positioned in guestrooms. Gnarled

vines as thick as your wrist (sourced from Thailand) partially screen the lobby from the earthy-browns of the Terra restaurant. Hanging from the ceiling are fin-like protrusions depicting weighty bunches of grapes. The rooftop 360° bar with appropriate all-round views of the island is shaped like a wine barrel. The adjacent heated pool, tiled in burgundy mosaic, looks like a vat of wine. The public toilets at the lobby level are a grape-like shape. Decorative wooden bowls and cocooning wicker seating by Kenneth Cobenpue reflect traditional grape harvesting methods. The top-floor gourmet restaurant is called Uva, Italian for grape, and has an extensive wine list. The basement spa also captures the wine theme

with treatments using South African-based TheraVine products that include scrubs with crushed grapeseed and baths and massages using grapeseed oils. The treatment rooms, steam bath and hydro-pool are coloured in rich clarets and burgundies with much mosaic from Trend. Chartreuse-coloured wall recesses are the striking feature of the Vichy water treatment room complete with padded, waterproofed tabletop. The final part of the story is that of the four seasons, colours of which portray each floor. The most is made of the large, rather angular guestrooms that appear even more spacious due to the floor-to-ceiling windows. Blinds close automatically as soon as your key card is removed





ABOVE (LEFT): The Uva restaurant is named after the Italian word for grape (MIDDLE): The Terra Lounge Restaurant features vine-like imagery (RIGHT): The roof terrace features a 20m long Jacuzzi

keeping the rooms cool in your absence. Beds are softly underlit and the bedside controls, whilst half hidden by a freestanding stainless steel plinth of a bedside table, do at least have an 'All Off' option. Baths are often double-ended, some covered in faux-crocodile skin. Esboço furniture and accessories such as soap dishes and tissue holders inlaid with mother of pearl, decorate the rooms.

Interestingly for a resort destination, the hotel is located in the downtown of Funchal and is part of new mixed-use retail and residential complex designed by Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill. The hotel is accessed via lifts and a spiral staircase, veiled with strings of silver beads, which awkwardly are within

the main shopping centre entrance. These require the constant presence of a hotel doorman that has to be an operational headache. Furthermore, as the terraces of the residential units are only a few metres opposite some of the guestrooms, the privacy provided by the creased organza curtains is essential. The glare from the all white and glass roof of the overlooked shopping centre make the 100% effective blackout blinds a godsend.

No doubt the site is tricky but such architectural issues have been overcome through effective interior design and operational procedures. Andrade Silva believes "every hotel has to have a soul," and her numerous layers of imagery provide just that.

# EXPRESS CHECKOUT

THE VINE  
27A Rua dos Aranhas, 900-039  
Funchal, Madeira, Portugal  
Tel +351 291 009 000  
[www.hotelthevine.com](http://www.hotelthevine.com)

- 79 Guestrooms
- Uva & Terra Restaurants
- 360° Bar
- The Vine Spa, Roof top pool & Jacuzzi





ABOVE (LEFT): The hotel forms part of a mixed use complex designed by Ricardo Bofill, alongside retail and residential components (RIGHT) Guestroom feature floor-to-ceiling windows with blinds that close automatically when guests leave the room BELOW The design of rooms on different floors are themed around the four seasons, with underlit beds and backlit photographic images on the ceiling

