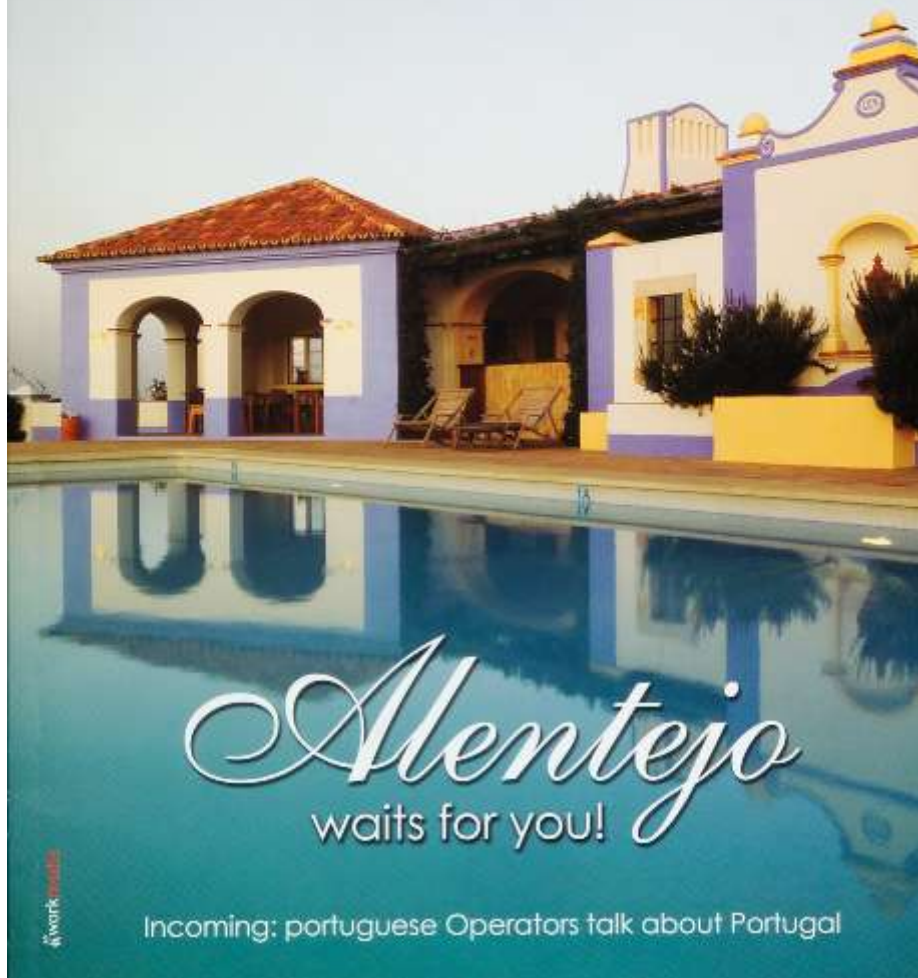


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Alentejo
waits for you!

 iWork

Incoming: portuguese Operators talk about Portugal

Herdade do Touril de Baixo

the essence of the Alentejo

The life style and the hospitality of Herdade do Touril will charm guests and make them come back!



T

he road to get there is not easy, especially if you're travelling at night, which happened to be the case. We headed towards the south just like a person sets off into the unknown. Yes, that's right... Although small and remote, the Alentejo is full of surprises. Our destination was located about 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) from Zambujal do Mar, a quiet town that has become more famous after someone decided that this was the perfect location for one of the country's major summer music festivals. Year after year, the town is "invaded" by thousands of people from various countries who come here in search of a perfect combination: beach, health and music.

But changing the subject... as Herdade do Touril awaits us. We take the south highway (A2) and everything goes off without a hitch. The real adventure begins when we exit the IP6, near Sines (one of



► Outdoor swimming pool

► Room's decoration combines the modern and the rustic style





the known Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, and led towards the heart of the coast (Costa Vicentina) namely do Torpes. From there on, we continue our trip on a road along the coastline, an unspoiled area.

The first stop is in Porto Côvo, a picturesque village behind the Atlantic. The village is dotted with picturesque Alestep towns, every single painted white & blue or white & yellow. Further on the road, we find Vila Nova de Milfontes. Although we don't see thousand fountains (Milfontes), we do find the River Mira flowing to sea. This long kiss resulted in Vila Nova, currently one of the most visited destinations by Portuguese tourists. Since we are in do Torpes, we have seen a number of small secluded beaches, all of which invited us for a swim.

It's right when we're about to arrive at Zambujal de Mar that we find Herdade do Touril, near a municipal road. Owned by the same family for many generations, the farmhouse was recently converted for rural tourism. Let's remind you, that we are within the Costa Vicentina, the Southwest Alestep Natural Park.

We are guided by the smell of rosemary and the sound of crickets. At Touril, rustic is synonym for comfort and good taste. We do have your breakfast either on a porch, in the living room, decorated with antiques, or by the magnificent pool, which combines refinement with the rustic charm. Even the bar seeks to have its own

sea... it almost doesn't need the help of waters. It depends on each of the guests at Touril. Nearby is the Maral House, where white and blue are the predominant colours. The house features four bedrooms, with intercommunicating doors between two rooms. Further down is Casa do Fator and Casa do Pastor. The former features a room and a suite, which can be connected by an inside door forming a 2 BR house; the latter features two rooms and a junior suite, with independent terraces and access. On the opposite area of the estate is Casa do Rendoso, which features a two bedroom unit and a double room, with independent access, forming a three-bedroom unit.

Guests staying at these houses can always have more privacy, if they wish; breakfast is served at dusk each morning.

If you think there are no activities available at Herdade do Touril, think again. There are a number of activities available; Herdade do Touril offers bikes for guests to explore the surroundings. It was at the end of Herdade do Touril de Baixo, heading down a dirt road and throwing casual glances at the cattle, that we were surprised by an unthinkable spectacle. We found a wild beach, flanked by steep slopes. Located in a lot cave, we are forced to go down through the rocks and with the help of ropes just to get there. This is certainly not for the faint-hearted. But the reward is well worth the effort. And there we were, all alone, between the sea and the steep slopes, listening to the echo of our own voices. Herdade do Touril de Baixo has got a soul of its own, it's the soul of the Alestep. Skosh... don't tell anyone! Let this be our little secret. ■



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