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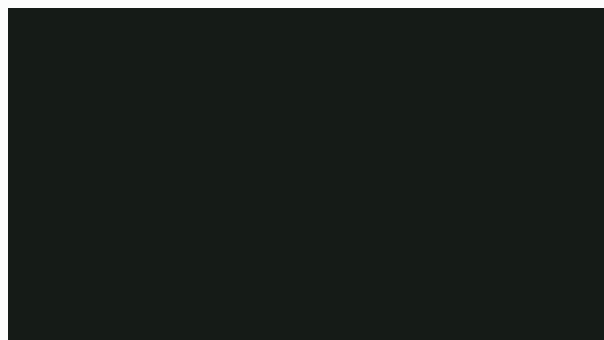
New Remote Travel Inspiration From Portugal: Herdade Da Malhadinha Nova In The Alentejo



Ann Abel Senior Contributor

Travel

I know the difference between expensive travel and the truly luxurious



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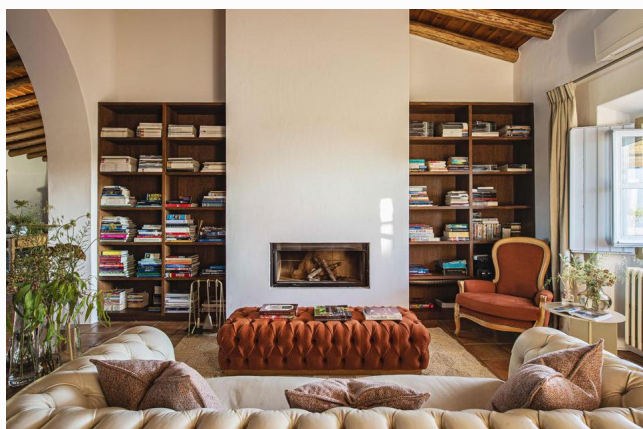
Casa do Acoradouro at Herdade da Malhadinha Nova | JOÃO GUIMARÃES

Recently, it seems, the marketers all decided to start promoting the Alentejo as the “Tuscany of Portugal.” I get it.

The pastoral district south of Lisbon but north of the Algarve's beach resorts is both rugged and agricultural, wild and organized around cultivation.

The Alentejo embodies living well while also living simply. There are rolling hills, painterly landscapes, gnarled old olive trees, zesty full-bodied wines, and many ways to eat a pig.

But as much as I understand the impulse, I think comparing the Alentejo to any other place does it a disservice. It is a world all its own. Everything is golden. Time moves slowly, steeped as it is in history, memories of past generations and the unrelenting summer heat that sears everything into clear relief. It is also a world that has no place for formality. There is zero reason to dress up. The Alentejo is one of those places that is unabashedly come-as-you-are.



The living room in the original house FREDERIC DU COUT

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And so, it seems, every so often, [another dreamy, come-as-you-are hotel](#) opens—keeping a personality all its own but also raising the bar in a region whose popularity is deservedly growing. (I've [written](#) about a [number](#) of my [favorites](#).)

The latest hotel to clear that bar is the greatly expanded [Herdade da Malhadinha Nova](#), in the lower Alentejo, where things are even balmier, slower and more soulful. Although the original elements of the place—a farmhouse with a handful of bedrooms—opened just before Portugal's last crisis, the recession that began in 2009, this incarnation is in a category of its own.

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PROMOTED

It managed to open just in time for the spring and summer travel season of 2020. We all know what happened after that. It shut back down just three weeks after opening, as Covid-19 forced the world to pull up its drawbridges. The

family behind the project, important wine distributors in the south of Portugal, hunkered down there themselves, waited for the virus storm to subside, and came out with an awfully attractive place to relax and enjoy some time even as the skies still have some clouds.



One of the Lusitano horses RICARDO VEIGA

The new incarnation of Herdade da Malhadinha Nova seems to have been designed with social distancing in mind. Long before space, privacy and exclusivity were safety things, they were luxury things. And the hotel has those luxuries down.

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The Soares family bought the estate in 1998, when the land was all but abandoned and the two farmhouses on the property—one of which dates from 1926—were in ruins. It didn't even have electricity at the time.



The Soares family FABRICE DEMOULLIN

Neither did it have grapevines. But since the family business is wine, it made all the sense for them to begin cultivating it here. Even before they contacted the architect who would help them revitalize the buildings, they began working with Luís Duarte, one of the most respected winemakers in Portugal, to help them get their vineyards in order.

From the beginning, the emphasis was quality over quantity. All the picking is done by hand, and the winery is gravity-fed. Way back in 2006, they had the idea to do everything in an earth-friendly way, and they recently completed the certification process to declare everything organic—not only the wine, but also the olive oil, fruit, honey, beef and lamb raised on the farm. To them, that means more authenticity, a better product that is the result of less intervention.

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The restaurant at Malhadinha Nova FREDERIC DU COUT

But you don't have to appreciate wine to appreciate the place. It spans more than 1,000 acres, and most of that is living fields and rugged landscapes. There are five accommodation units on the property, and a sixth a few miles away, which together total only 30 rooms. Although the plan was to have more individual rooms for couples, the current version has been a handful of private accommodations for families or larger groups, where breakfasts can be dropped off and kitchens can be stocked. If languid isolation isn't enough, you can ride the gorgeous Lusitano horses, which are bred here, in the company of a champion equestrian.

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The accommodations vary a lot. The sexy, romantic, one-bedroom Casa das Pedras (house of the rocks) suites each have their own private terrace, plunge pool, lovely linens and minimalist, contemporary design that creates a close communion with nature. The larger houses, such as Casa do

Ancoradouro (house of terra-cotta) and Casa da Ribeira (with a slow-living, river-centric theme) follow more traditional architectural styles.

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Casa das Pedras JOÃO GUIMARÃES

The Casa das Artes e Ofícios (arts and crafts house) is of special importance. It's a darling of Rita Soares, the creative brains behind the hospitality operation. For her, it was important not to let the heritage craftsmanship of the Alentejo disappear. Not only did she commission work from old-school artisans, such as pottery, baskets and woven decor, but she also arranges for some of them to come and give informal workshops in the house. A half hour of attempting to twist reeds into the beginnings of a basket, with an artisan from Rita's pet [TASA project](#), was sufficiently humbling, while listening to master boot-maker [Mário Grilo](#) was nothing but captivating. Even better is to commission a pair of made-to-measure boots that he'll craft from the local buttery soft leather.

Speaking of master craftspeople, the consulting chef, [Joachim Koerper](#), holds a Michelin star at his restaurant Eleven in Lisbon. Here he takes a more relaxed approach, letting the flavors of the Alentejo—especially the homegrown beef and lamb—sparkle and shine. He and his wife, [Cintia](#), a pastry wizard, put together memorable meals that fit with the Alentejo's, and the hotel's, come-as-you-are vibe.



A picnic in the vineyards VASCO CÉLIO/STILLS

Dinner in the pretty restaurant is nice, but dinner finished tableside at a private setup beside the pool is better. Best of all is a picnic in the vineyards, where the kitchen brigade sets of plate after plate of fresh, yummy fare out on a long table, the sommelier opens some lovely bottles, and then everyone disappears so that you can enjoy slowly, in solitude, and then spread out on a blanket beneath the trees for an Alentejo-style siesta. There's really no need to compare that to anyplace else.

Check out my [website](#).



Ann Abel

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Remember Vaping Injuries? They're Climbing Again In Some Places, But Covid-19 Makes Them Harder To Diagnose



Alexandra Sternlicht Forbes Staff

Business

I cover breaking news

TOPLINE Health officials are again seeing a rise of e-cigarette or vaping related lung disease—possibly a result of pandemic-related stress use—though the symptoms are so similar to those of Covid-19 that it's become harder to diagnose.





People vaping in New York City's Bryant Park as the city moves into Phase 3 of re-opening on July ... [+]

NOAM GALAI/GETTY IMAGES

KEY FACTS

- The 10 **symptoms** associated use-associated lung injury (EVALI), are shortness of breath, cough, chest pain, fever and chills, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, rapid heartbeat and rapid and shallow breathing—the first eight of which **overlap with Covid-19** symptoms.
- “EVALI is still happening, and on the rise again as people use vaping to cope with pandemic stress,” Dr. Denitza Blagev, a pulmonary medicine physician at Intermountain Healthcare, told **ABC 4**.
- Patients in California suspected of EVALI must first test negative for Covid-19 before being treated for EVALI.
- It took California doctors a median of

three days (with a range of one-to-eight days) to diagnose EVALI patients with the condition, suggesting it may not be the first priority.

- Minnesota health officials reported 11 EVALI cases in the last two months and all EVALI patients in the state (who were a median of 18-years-old) required hospitalization—and some needed ventilators, [AP](#) reports via *U.S. News & World Report*.

SUPRISING FACT

The CDC [discontinued](#) its collection of EVALI case reports in February due to a decline in frequency.

BIG NUMBER

2,800. That's how many people had contracted EVALI as of February—68 of whom died from the condition, according to [ABC 4](#).

CRUCIAL QUOTE

“Because EVALI and COVID-19 signs and symptoms can be similar (e.g., cough, fever, and diarrhea), health care providers should maintain clinical suspicion for EVALI during the COVID-

19 pandemic,” wrote researchers in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* via CDC.

KEY BACKGROUND

In California, 75% of hospitalized EVALI patients said they used vaping products with THC during interviews from June 2019 to February 2020. The CDC [has said](#) that vitamin E acetate is the probable cause of most EVALI cases.

FURTHER READING

[Minnesota Sees Return of Vaping-Related Lung Injuries](#) (AP via *U.S. News & World Report*)

[E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury \(EVALI\)](#) (Yale Medicine)

[Notes from the Field: E-cigarette, or Vaping, Product Use–Associated Lung Injury Cases During the COVID-19 Response](#) (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* via CDC)

[Vaping injuries climbing, more difficult to diagnose during time of COVID-19 pandemic; Proper Diagnosis is key](#) (ABC 4)

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