

# PRO MON TORIO

## L'AND HOTEL

MONTEMOR-O-NOVO, PORTUGAL

2011–2005

The project is the outcome of an invitation in 2005, by a family-owned wine-making and agro-business company to masterplan an innovative resort concept that would combine the rural experience of wine and olive oil production, with the amenities of a leisure destination. With 66 hectares, the site is in the vicinity of the whitewashed town of Montemor-o-Novo, in the Alentejo, near the unesco World Heritage city of Évora.

Located on a gentle valley facing South and overlooking the skyline of the town's medieval castle, the masterplan was devised in a system of clustered villas and terraced row-houses reminiscent of the former agricultural compounds of the Alentejo, known as "montes", which literally means "mount" or "hill" in English; an etymological reference to its topographic condition. In addition, a small lake cools the air and is used for leisure activities besides serving as a sustainable water-retention basin for agriculture.

This unconventional hotel comprises a main building that concentrates major services and a series of adjacent guesthouses.

The main building includes the reception, clubhouse, restaurant, spa with indoor pool and back-of-house service support to the guesthouses. In addition, the building functions as a winery, where guests experience the whole winemaking process, from selecting grapes, crushing, fermentation and pressing, to barrel aging, blending, filtering and bottling.

Inspired on the white walled patios of the Alentejo, the building was conceived as a hinged prism from which its four corners were cut-off (reception, chill-out, restaurant terrace and industrial patio), creating shaded and intimate areas. Topographically, the volume has been carefully positioned to meet the contours of the ground with the least change. The large window of the indoor pool at the lower level, suggests itself as a wall folded to release the views over the landscape. Inside, oak wood fluted wainscots and thick black slate from the Alentejo, convey an atmosphere of comfort and warmth, creating a striking contrast with the roughness of the areas devised for the wine production operation.

Overlooking the lake, the hotel guest suites are broken down into a series of rows and terraces, forming a kind of amphitheatre adjacent to the main building.

To adjust to the topography, minimize their visual impact and make the most of the lake views, these 2-storey units are half-buried in two terraces which follow the topographical contours. Within this setting, it was possible to create a discreet intermediate level for parking between terraces from which the entry is made by descending into a sunken patio.

In plan, these units are centralized around the living room, which opens onto the main patio and lake views. A beam structure simultaneously generates a protective shade from the hot southern sun and offers the opportunity for an evocative vine gazebo that blends its presence with the surrounding landscape.

Besides designing the masterplan, the hotel, the apartments and a cluster of villas, promontorio was invited to curate, the invitation to four other studios to design the remaining clusters, namely: Peter Märkli, of Zurich, Sergison Bates, of London, Carrilho da Graça, of Lisbon, and José Paulo dos Santos, from Porto.



Location: Montemor-o-Novo, Alentejo, Portugal

Client and operator: Sousa Cunhal Turismo, SA

Interior design: Studio MK27 with Promontorio

Landscape: PROAP

Scope of services: Architecture

Project brief: Winery hotel with 25 townhouse suites, destination restaurant and spa

Gross built area 2,064 sq. m (main building) and 900 sq. m (townhouse suites)

Project Status: 2005 (concept design) – 2011 (completed)

