

QUINTA DO MAR RESORT
SINTRA, PORTUGAL
2025–2019

Quinta do Mar hotel is a stunning property overlooking the cliffs of Praia Grande beach and part of the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, 30 km north of Lisbon. Originally created as a holiday camp for workers' children, built and managed by the CUF (Companhia União Fabril) conglomerate, the property comprises 6.7 ha of pine forest. It contains 18 small buildings designed in the 1950s by architect António Lino (nephew of the leading Portuguese Heimatstil proponent Raul Lino), in the style of the so-called Casa Portuguesa, championed by the Estado Novo (New State) regime. Listed as a national monument, this picturesque ensemble — unused for the past 30 years — consists of a series of five dormitory buildings positioned on the site in a fan-like configuration, plus another five in a chessboard-like layout. In addition, it contains various pergolas, a director's house, an office, a janitor's house, a water tower and the main building, the latter, facing south, with a large open courtyard in front.

The project has been devised to make the fewest possible changes to the existing buildings, other than those deemed necessary to accommodate a contemporary hotel programme. This largely involves the fenestration —enlarging the guestroom windows— while nonetheless preserving the ethos of the site. Another proposed modification is the replacement of the existing regular terracotta roof tiles with handmade green glazed ones. This change, while deviating from the original design, is very much in the spirit of many such Portuguese Suave buildings of 1950s, and, in this particular case, constitutes an architectural improvement. Glazed tiles would have been much more expensive than regular ones, and, considering the highly corrosive concentration of salt in the air, only cost would have prevented their use.

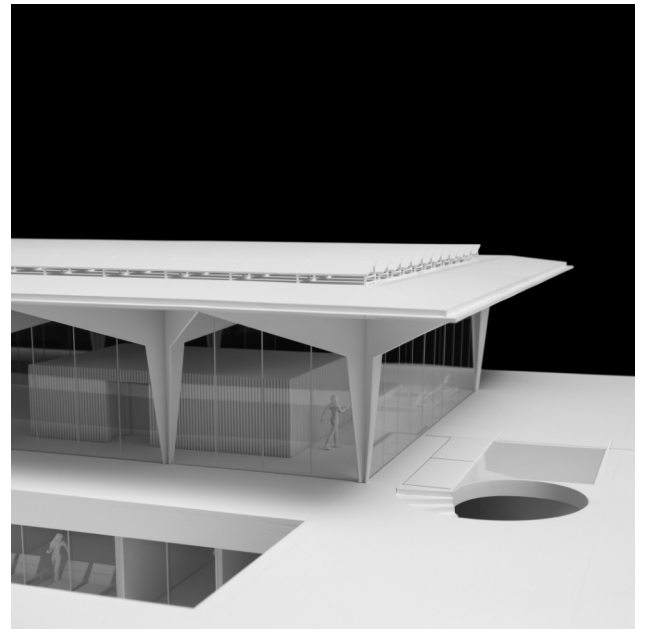
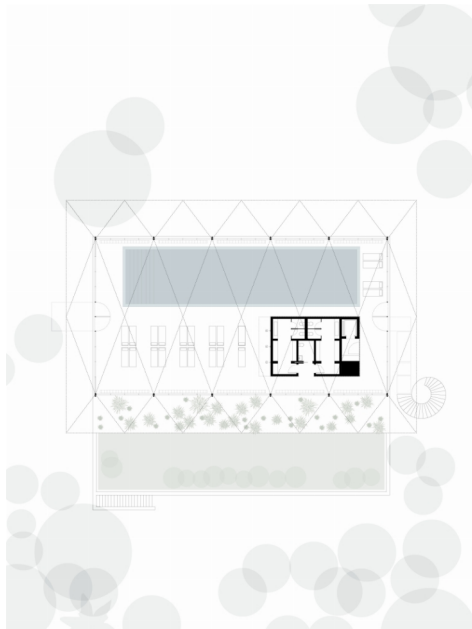
In terms of hotel layout, the children's dorms have been merged in different configurations and converted into guestrooms and suites that vary between 22 and 88 sq. m, ranging from small compact units to apartments with kitchenettes and double-height loft suites. Nonetheless, all the units are directly accessed from outside, meaning that most of them enjoy a private garden terrace. The main building programme comprises the hotel's social areas, namely the lounge, bar and restaurant, in addition to service and staff areas in the basement.

Making use of the remaining permitted building capacity, a spa building houses a 25-m-long indoor swimming pool, treatment rooms, sauna and gymnasium on the ground-floor and basement levels. This building will be unmistakably perceived as a new construction, distinguishing itself from the others by its language, form and materials. Located at the transition between the main building and the more secluded areas associated with the accommodation units — in the gravitational centre of the development —

it is devised as a pavilion with a slim steel structure and a transparent glass façade, subtly painted green in order to blend in with the surroundings. Its tree-like canopy structure consists in a set of ‘paper-thin’ cruciform columns/beams located around the perimeter of the façade, thereby covering the column-free interior of the pavilion in a single span. The eaves project in all four directions, creating a covered circulation area around the building and controlling the direct sunlight on the glazing. The spa treatment areas are located in the basement, with access via an independent lift and spiral staircase in order to control the flow of users. Stretched along this basement, a longitudinal courtyard provides the treatment and relaxation spaces with lighting and ventilation. A second basement is exclusively reserved for technical equipment. The roof includes a 480-sq. m area of photovoltaic solar panels, set back from the perimeter, to generate as much solar energy as possible and reduce the energy footprint. An outdoor biological pool, where guests can meet and relax, will be built on the central lawn, in front of the spa building and fully visible from the reception area of the main building.

The whole resort has been engineered based on an ambitious sustainability programme, focusing on energy efficient solutions that reduce energy consumption and maximise water recycling. All rubbish (paper, plastic/metal and glass) will be separated for recycling and the organic waste of the whole resort will be composted to generate organic fertiliser to be further used for in-house farming production. The landscape architecture plan includes a programme to replace the eucalyptuses and other invasive species with native Mediterranean flora, such as stone pine, oak, fig and cork trees. The replacement of these trees and shrubs is a fundamental principle in the re-wilding of the property’s natural landscape within the Sintra-Cascais Nature Park.





Location: Estrada do Rodízio 5 (Colares/Sintra), Portugal

Client: Quinta do Mar – ET, SA

Scope of services: Architecture and interior design

Project brief: 5-star boutique hotel resort and spa with 89 guestrooms and suites

Gross floor area: 8,960 sq. m

Project status: 2019 (concept design) – 2025 (estimated completion)

Rendering: 4+Arquitectos

Model: Norigem

Photography: Bruno Lopes (model)