

RESTLESS LIVING

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VOLUME 140



CASA NO CRATO

Crato, Portugal

In the idyllic landscape of Alto Alentejo, Casa no Crato is placed with a series of volumes to create the illusion of a smaller scale with an intimacy to resemble the typical Alentejo rural house. A perfect retreat for a couple who loves the silent nature.

"I always try to respect the local architecture, understand who the clients are and study the plot on which we will build. 'Casa no Crato' is located in Alto Alentejo, a rural and sparsely populated region, where white one-story houses with large chimneys crown small hills", architect Inês Brandão says. The project is shaped like a cross, which was the result of adapting the house to the natural preexistence and avoid cutting down trees. "By molding the construction around the trees, each of its four arms was allowed to be entirely surrounded by the landscape that penetrates the interior of each space, creating the illusion of a smaller-scale construction, inspired by the small Alentejo houses", Inês explains. Due to the incredible views of the landscape, Inês and her team decided to open the house with large windows. With high temperatures throughout the year, "we created several porches throughout the house that can be closed off by perforated corten steel shutters, inspired on the 'Muxarabi' – an element of Arabic vernacular architecture, which passively controls the temperature inside the house, as they allow the constant ventilation of these spaces", Inês elaborates.

Inside, the light-filled spaces always relate to the exterior where the pool can also be seen from the kitchen, adding a playful and convivial character. "Each room has an independent relationship with the landscape, enjoying a more controlled view, given the topography that welcomes them. Lavender and other small species form the border next to the porches of the rooms, reinforcing the tranquility inherent to these spaces", Inês notes. With the local ecosystem always in mind, Casa no Crato is ideal to escape from the busy city life.

Architecture by **Inês Brandão Arquitectura**

Photography by **Alexander Bogorodskiy**

