**ABOUT CERDEIRA**

**Cerdeira - Home for Creativity** is a rural tourism space closely linked to artistic creation and training, located in *Serra da Lousã*, about 37 kilometers from *Coimbra, Portugal.* It has ten renovated schist houses and a set of infrastructures and workspaces.

In these houses, you can enjoy all the comfort provided by a modern home, but without the distractions of the city, immersing any visitor into a space of tranquility and inspiration. In this place, the TV has been replaced by books and board games. By the window, there are no concrete buildings. Instead, you can enjoy a stunning view of the mountains or the picturesque corners of the village. In Cerdeira, no two houses are the same: each one has had the intervention of contemporary craft\* artists who have created pieces of art inspired by the village and its natural surroundings.

In all, there are eleven houses equipped with a kitchen and with a capacity of two to eight people. There is also a Hostel with two shared rooms and a common kitchen, with a capacity for twelve people. One of the accommodations is fully equipped to receive people with reduced mobility or a wheelchair.

But Cerdeira is not just a place for sleeping. Many activities take place here, especially for those more determined to get their hands to work. There are several creative experiences, aimed at both adults and kids: from learning techniques such as Ceramic Figurines, Introduction to the Potter's Wheel, or even a Regional Cooking Workshop.

Once in the village, guests also have at their disposal, nine itineraries prepared by Cerdeira to explore the country's central region, with suggestions for hiking routes and a selection of places of cultural and historical interest, as well as detailed maps. If you’re feeling adventurous, it’s also possible to go through mountain trails, go mountain biking, canyoning, or paragliding.

The *Café da Videira* is the place where guests can have their breakfast, eat a light meal with products from the region or enjoy one of the delicious homemade cakes that come out of the village’s oven daily. It is one of the most inviting spaces in the village, where guests and other curious visitors can enjoy a beautiful view over the *Serra da Lousã.*

*\* Craft is the creation of unique designer pieces using manual techniques such as pottery, ceramics, woodwork, drawing or painting.*

**PROMOTING TOURISM AND THE RESTORATION OF THE VILLAGE OF CERDEIRA, WITH A SUSTAINABLE AND ECOLOGICAL PROJECT**

“The reconstruction of this village is the story of a great friendship”, says Kerstin Thomas, an artist and Head of the artistic project of Cerdeira. In 1988, aged 24 and studying in Coimbra, Kerstin was looking for a place to set up her studio when she fell in love with Cerdeira.

“When we arrived, we realized that people had run away from here because there were no living conditions. There was no electricity, basic sanitation, or easy access to the village. Cerdeira was abandoned. We immediately felt a great desire to bring the village back to life and bring an artistic community in here” says Kerstin.

Then, Kerstin Thomas and Bernard Langer started to recover some of the houses in the village of Cerdeira. Later, in 2000, Natália and José́ Serra, friends they had met in Coimbra, joined in the effort to recover the village. Gradually, the project started to take shape and meaning and, in 2012, the **Cerdeira Village** project took place, which, in 2018, became **Cerdeira - Home for Creativity**.

The accommodations were built giving preference to local and ecological materials, such as the use of schist stone inside and outside the buildings, structures in chestnut wood and pine floors, plastering in mud and straw, and treating wood with exclusively biological products.

Using local suppliers for all the construction work, furniture, pottery, and tapestry in the region was one of the main goals. The village was rebuilt by local workers who, thanks to the project, had the opportunity to specialize themselves in traditional and sustainable construction techniques.

The *Casa das Artes,* which serves as the center of all activities, for example, is a building with four floors rebuilt according to traditional methods and materials. The walls were only made of schist and clay, the interior structures were made of chestnut wood, some finishing touches with clay and straw and the acoustic insulation was achieved using cork, making it part of the EcoArq - Ecological Arquitecture international route.

Having a responsible tourism activity in environmental, cultural and social terms has always been one of the pillars of the village’s reconstruction project. In 2019, Cerdeira became a reference in ecotourism and received the Ecolabel label, the **European Union's ecological certification**. The village uses local and sustainable products and produces its own solar energy.

The village was classified as having municipal interest in order to protect its architectural heritage. Since the village has been immune to interventions that could mischaracterize or adulterate its traditional design, this classification will make it possible to legally ensure its future protection. In 2017, Cerdeira was one of the pre-finalists in the “7 Wonders of Portugal - Villages”.

**GATHERING VISITORS AND CRAFT PROFESSIONALS AT THE SCHOOL OF ARTS & CRAFTS**

Cerdeira also has an art school with all the necessary infrastructures for artists and those wanting to make their first contact with new art: the School of Arts & Crafts. Here, it is possible to have training given by renowned artists in Ceramics, Woodwork, Visual Arts, and other subjects.

In this school, it’s possible, for example, to build your own wooden chair with Peter Lanyon. From ceramic sculpture to tile painting or decoration of Japanese teacups, there are courses for every taste.

The School of Arts & Crafts courses are open to beginners and the most experienced. There are 1 or 2-day initiation workshops or longer courses that allow for deeper learning.

**A RETREAT IN A PLACE WHERE TIME STOPS AND IDEAS FLY**

The beauty of the mountains and the sound of the streams provide the perfect setting to make Cerdeira a place of contemplation and creative inspiration for people from all over the world.

Cerdeira annually receives retreats of all kinds: from strategic retreats for companies to yoga, painting, or spiritual retreats.

To that end, it provides all the services and conditions necessary to make the experience a memorable one. There are work and leisure spaces, a spacious deck for outdoor activities, catering services, and the possibility of organizing teambuilding activities, such as a guided walk or creative experiences carried out by the School of Arts & Crafts.

**EVENTS THAT CELEBRATE THE MEETING OF ARTS WITH NATURE**

“Elementos à Solta” has been held in Cerdeira since 2006, a unique festival of its kind in Portugal. With exhibitions, workshops, lectures, talks and music and the attendance of Portuguese and foreign artists, the arts and crafts present at the festival range from contemporary jewelry, to sculpture, basket weaving, land art or even illustration and puppets.

This is also where “From Masters and Chefs” takes place, an event that brings together ceramics and fine cuisine in an unusual combination. Unique ceramic pieces are born from the hands of master ceramists and surprising gastronomic delicacies are created by renowned chefs. Afterwards, everyone is invited to join the table to socialize, appreciate and delight themselves with these works of art.

During the editions of these events, more than seven dozen national and international artists have been in Cerdeira, where, in addition to exhibiting their work in a unique environment, they had the opportunity to share experiences and ideas between themselves and the visitors.

More than bringing visitors to the village, Cerdeira is a project that invites people to explore and fall in love with the central region of Portugal, while also learning and developing their more creative side, taking advantage of the peaceful environment that only this scenario can provide.

**Please visit our website:**
 https://www.cerdeirahomeforcreativity.com/

**For more info and photos, please contact:**
Rita Santos
rita.santos@cerdeirahomeforcreativity.com