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We wish you  
all the best  
for 2009.

Wynand, Nel, Lies  
and Bas

## 1. ALOJAMENTO LOCAL

Since December 12<sup>th</sup>, Monte do Casarão may call itself an official tourist enterprise in the category Alojamento Local. We are filled with pride. Alojamento Local is a new legal classification. Good cause for a party, especially since we are the first in Odemira council to obtain this licence. The Chairman of Tourism nailed the AL sign to the wall in front of our guests.



For a moment it looked as if everything was going to be washed away – it had been raining for days – but at the moment supreme the sun was shining. A good omen? For the record we would like to point out that we obtained an ISO certificate last October.

## 2. PAINTING ON THE HILL

In the middle of November, we had a group of artists visiting Monte do Casarão, the Vrije Kunstgroep Almere (a Dutch art group from the surroundings of Amsterdam), 17 people in all, the teacher included. The flight, the transport, filled fridges, beautiful weather, we arranged the lot. It was a big suc-



cess, everybody was in high spirits and quite a few of our art guests produced some very nice art. To be repeated.

## 3. EUCALYPTUS

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the eucalyptus tree, native to Australia, was planted to drain the Portuguese swamp areas, because it uses about 100 litres of water a day. Soon people realised that - because of its fast growth, hardiness and low maintenance - it would be suitable for the paper industry. Throughout the country eucalyptus plantations appeared. Monte do Casarão is one of those

plantations. Although an eucalyptus is a beautiful tree, it doesn't belong in Portugal and is not good for the environment. It drains all the water and due to volatile oil is highly combustible. Also, it hampers the undergrowth. Other trees and bushes simply do not stand a chance. Reasons enough for us to have taken down a lot of the eucalyptus trees to give the real Portuguese landscape another chance. The eucalyptus trees are off to Spain. To the paper factory.



## 4. NO MORE EXCESS WEIGHT

You can only bring 20 kilos aboard a plane and that is not a lot. Certainly not if you were planning to at last read all those novels and see those films you didn't manage to find the time for at home. Luckily for you, Monte do Casarão has an interesting library with books in several languages and genres, films, games and jigsaw puzzles. All guests are welcome to use them. Everybody has the same reaction: 'If only I had known...'



## 5. LOOKING BACK

2008 is over and it is time for us to look back on the first year we were up and running. To use a favourite expression of my mother: we can't (despite some setbacks) complain. 1400 overnights, only interesting and pleasant guests, widely differing ages from 0 to 78. A lot of the guests will come back this year. Only partly thanks to us. It's just so beautiful over here, so quiet and peaceful. The space and scents, an exceptional experience, you can't catch in words or on the web. You really have to undergo it yourself. Maybe this year?

