



November 11th 2014, cloudy 17°

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Headless bear

Before the guests leave, we always check to make sure nothing stays behind. Still, every now and again, something crops up while we clean the houses. This bear, for instance. We haven't been able to find out whom it belongs to, but we can imagine, the owner will be really pleased to have him back. If you let us know where he belongs, we'll make sure to get him home really soon.



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Painting weeks 2015

The 11th painting week has been and gone. Again, it was a rewarding combination of hard work, good food, making beautiful things and holidaying a bit.

In 2015, the painting weeks will take place from **Monday 13 till Monday 20 April** and from **Wednesday 7 till Wednesday 14 October**.

So, you'll need to exercise patience, but you can book your reservation.



1. MONTE DO CASARÃO: THE MOVIE

The promotional film about Monte do Casarão is finished. We are really happy with it and the responses of those who have seen it are decidedly positive. It was great fun to make it; first, thinking of what exactly we wanted, then filming followed by editing and refining it. Camera-man Jaromir Wimmer, whom we knew from



when a documentary about the *serra* was made locally, made film shots for three days, starting early in the morning and working till late. A colleague assisted him; Bas was the producer and a drone made the aerial shots.

Various entrepreneurs cooperated without charge. That's why I'll now promote them shamelessly: Anke Ruschhaupt of Ecotrails with her canoes, mountain bikes and e-bikes, Beatriz in Odemira sells wickedly delicious handmade chocolates, Simone Höllriegl's horses and riding lessons, Délia Rodrigues's Academia D'artes, featuring power fitness, Zumba and Pilates. We also want to thank all our guests who were willing to adjust their plans in order to take on the roles of extras.

By now, you can see the Dutch film on Youtube. The English version will follow.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h82mYBoHfc>

2. MEDRONHO

The gardener hasn't been for some weeks. He's been busy. October is the month when the medronho is picked and every pair of hands is welcome. This year, the trees, the *medronheiros*, are full, and the fruits have never been this large. The harvest is immense, enough for the many litres of (whether or not legally distilled) eponymous aguardente.

Officially, the tree is named *Arbutus Unedo*. Word has it that the Roman Virgil simply called the tree 'arbutus', but that Pliny the Elder opted for the second part, 'unedo', which means something like 'just eat one'. Apparently, you do get drunk if you eat too many fruits. Monte do Casarão is chock-a-block with medronheiros and we always fill a few buckets for our neighbour Fernando. He is a licensed distiller and makes the best medronho in the area. From time to time, especially after a copious BBQ, a *pinga* (a drop) is not to be sneezed at. Moreover, it doesn't just taste



good, it also helps cure urinary tract and throat infections. And syphilis. Cheers.

3. PILATES

Every week, I attend a Pilates class in São Teotónio. The fitness method, a combination of focussing and muscle control (*Contrology*), has been around for about a hundred years and was developed by the American Joseph Pilates during the Great War as a convalescence programme for war veterans.

The teacher is very good. She keeps a close watch on the participants (our guests are wel-



come too) and sees straightaway what they do wrong.

During the summer, the regular class stops. Reason for us to ask mistress Délia Rodrigues to come to Monte do Casarão and team Pilates to neighbours and guests there. And thus, during the summer each Thursday morning at 9.30 a.m. sharp, the mats were unrolled and the muscles were put to work in an extremely relaxed environment. A huge success. Even during the painting week we inserted a class.

So, it's certainly worth repeating. Next summer, we shall ask Délia back. No doubt about it.

4. IT AIN'T HALF HOT...

Guests often ask us, "Isn't it terribly hot here during the summer?"

No, during the summer, it isn't hotter than it can be in from early March till the end of October. The difference is that there are hardly any clouds in the summer, that the temperature is the same for weeks on end and that it seldom rains. There are days when you think, goodness, it's really hot, but they occur in the spring and autumn as well. The reason why it isn't as hot here as about 12 miles further inland is that our weather is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, which lies about ten miles from Monte do Casarão as the crow flies. By day, there is always a refreshing blowing from the sea, and it cools down during the night. You don't need the a/c. Last summer, the average temperature was 26° in July, 28° in August and 27° in September. Not so bad, eh?



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