

# MONTE DO CASARÃO

Privacy, peace & quietness in the Alentejo, Portugal

# Newsletter 49

March 22nd 2019, sunny, 20°

## VINHO DO CASARÃO

As soon as we bought the grounds, we knew: the vineyard will be situated on the hill behind our house. The hill faces south, is not too steep and soil is not too rocky. The reservoir guarantees a steady water supply. The preparations have been made. We have sought expert advice from the local winegrowers, we have read up on wine and gathered further information, the soil is ready for planting, the gota-gota system has been installed, the grapevines have been ordered.



We can pick them up next Monday. Then, the Alicante-Bouschet, the Tourigo Nacional and the Syrah can be planted. Portugal, and especially the Alentejo, has excellent wines that rival French wines in terms of quality. They are considerably cheaper but can hardly be bought in the UK. Just wait and see whether our wines will be just as good. Everything comes to those who wait.

## TWENTY PAINTING WEEKS

It is a milestone worth mentioning. Twenty painting weeks have been organised on Monte do Casarão. What started as an experiment involving members of my painting club in Almere, has very much proven itself and has by now become a fixed item on Monte do Casarão. The painting weeks continue to be joyful events: tempting surroundings offering an inexhaustible number of painting subjects, as a rule, divine weather, good food, pleasant and enthusiastic company. By now, this company has grown very familiar. Most participants have been here a number of times, but every time, there are new participants as well. Obviously, this is fun and inspiring.



All twenty weeks, Jenny Helder, a talented artist and an excellent teacher, has been guiding us. Next April, too, during the 21st painting week, she will be there again. We may count ourselves very lucky to have her.

## PONTE DA PIEDADE

A day in Lagos is a fun outing. Lagos is a cosy

town: lots of shops, a few good-looking churches, an archaeological museum, Europe's oldest slave market, the fortress, the harbour, beaches, the zoo. In short, enough to see and do. It makes sense to reserve a few extra hours, so that you have time to visit the Ponte da Piedade, a spectacular nature reserve west of Lagos, boasting cliffs, limestone rocks and caves, all shaped by pounding waves and severe winter storms.



You can explore the Ponte da Piedade on foot. There are excellent trails. Getting into one of the small fishing boats for a trip on the incredibly blue water is even more adventurous and imposing. The boating trip takes you through the cathedral and Amor's cave, past the elephant and the camel, past Kingkong, the twins, the crocodile and the Titanic. The skipper knows any rock and cave by name. A walking – or in this case, floating – encyclopaedia. Moreover, he is a very able sailor. Skillfully, he will pilot his vessel through narrow passages and past visible and invisible rocks, fully aware how the sea and the waves may behave. He knows this area by heart. That's why it's sensible to pull back your head if he says so.

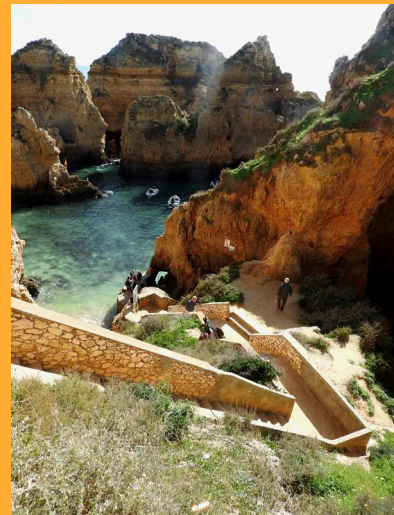
## NO OLIVE OIL, BUT WE DO HAVE CORNMEAL

The olive oil did not work out, but we do have our own cornmeal. We had the miller in Odemira grind our corn. We paid in kind; you hand in ten kilos of corn and get 8 kilos of cornmeal back, including a bag of shells and seed coats. So, we harvested kilos of corn. Far too much,



obviously. I've even tried to make popcorn, but it turned out to be the wrong type of corn for that. Therefore, we have given the greater part of our corn (and the bag of shells and seed coats) to our neighbour Maria, to feed her chickens and pigs. Everything is a learning process. Portugal has its own national mill day, but if you are in the vicinity of the Odemira mill, you can just walk in. The miller will be happy to tell you all about the grinding process, the tools, the sails, the wind and the never-ending whistle song.

Nel



[www.montedocasarao.com](http://www.montedocasarao.com)  
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[info@montedocasarao.com](mailto:info@montedocasarao.com)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVtr](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVtr)

## Winners 2018 New year's lottery



Kaj and Flo pulled the 2018 winners from the hat. Monica, Niek, Sofie and Lisa turned out to be the lucky ones.

You can find further information on our website.

The painting week in April (April 11 - April 18) is **fully booked**.

In the week in October (3 - 10) there are still some places available.

<https://www.montedocasarao.com/en/guestbook/painting-holiday-portugal/>

