

TRAVEL TIPS

TRAVEL IDEAS FOR RIGHT NOW: JUNE 2018

The terrace at White, Azores
CREDIT: PAULO GOULART

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1 day ago



1. THE AZORES

Portugal's humming creative scenes in [Lisbon](#) and [Porto](#) have had our heads turning for a while. Now, however, our attention is being drawn some 1,200km off shore, deep into the Atlantic, to the remote Portuguese archipelago of the [Azores](#). The nine volcanic islands – often compared to a cross between [Hawaii](#), [Ireland](#) and [New Zealand](#) – are best known for their wild allure: lush forests, surreally coloured crater lakes, black volcanic-sand beaches, hot springs and thundering waterfalls; the dramatic backdrop for hiking, surfing, diving and whale spotting.



A sculptural installation by Ayelen Peressini at Sete Cidades during Walk&Talk 2017

CREDIT: FILIPA COUTO

But there's an arty undercurrent simmering too, from a nascent hip hop scene (catch the experimental [Tremor](#) music festival each April) to [Walk&Talk](#) arts festival, which this year runs from 29 June to 14 July on the main São Miguel island.

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A pop-up shop at Walk&Talk Festival in the Azores

CREDIT: JASON CHALK

Now in its eighth edition, after starting with just one street artist it has gone on to feature over 200 artists, and highlights this year are spread along a Public Art Circuit of site specific works dotted around São Miguel and Terceira islands. Last year this featured the likes of a miniature forest set in a wooden tank in the Terra Nostra nature reserve by Berlin-based duo Benandsebastian and rippling sound installation in the Praça de São Francisco bandstand from Portuguese sound artist and cellist Ricardo Jacinto.





'Nordic Miniature' by Benandsebastian at Walk&Talk 2017 on the Azores

CREDIT: FILIPA COUTO

On the north side of the island, [Pico do Refugio](#) continues the artistic thread: once the country house of artist and writer Luís Bernardo Ataíde and home and studio of sculptor Luísa Constantina, it was passed to Luísa's son (and fifth generation owner) Luís Bernardo Brito E Abreu who, as an architect, renovated the former orange tree plantation and tea factory, converting it into creative retreat.

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The track to Pico do Refugio in the Azores.

Inside the 16th- and 17th-century buildings, the five lofts and three apartments are sharply contemporary, decorated with mid-century furniture and modern art. From November to April, the property runs an artist residency programme that has seen the likes of Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore along with filmmakers and photographers stay for a month at a time, creating works inspired by the elemental landscape.



Interiors at creative retreat Pico do Refugio in the Azores.

Nearby, another young pair of architects, Giacomo Mezzadri and Joana Oliveira (working together under the moniker Mezzo Atelier) have recently completed the [Pink House](#), an old stables reimagined as a striking, flamingo-coloured place to rent.

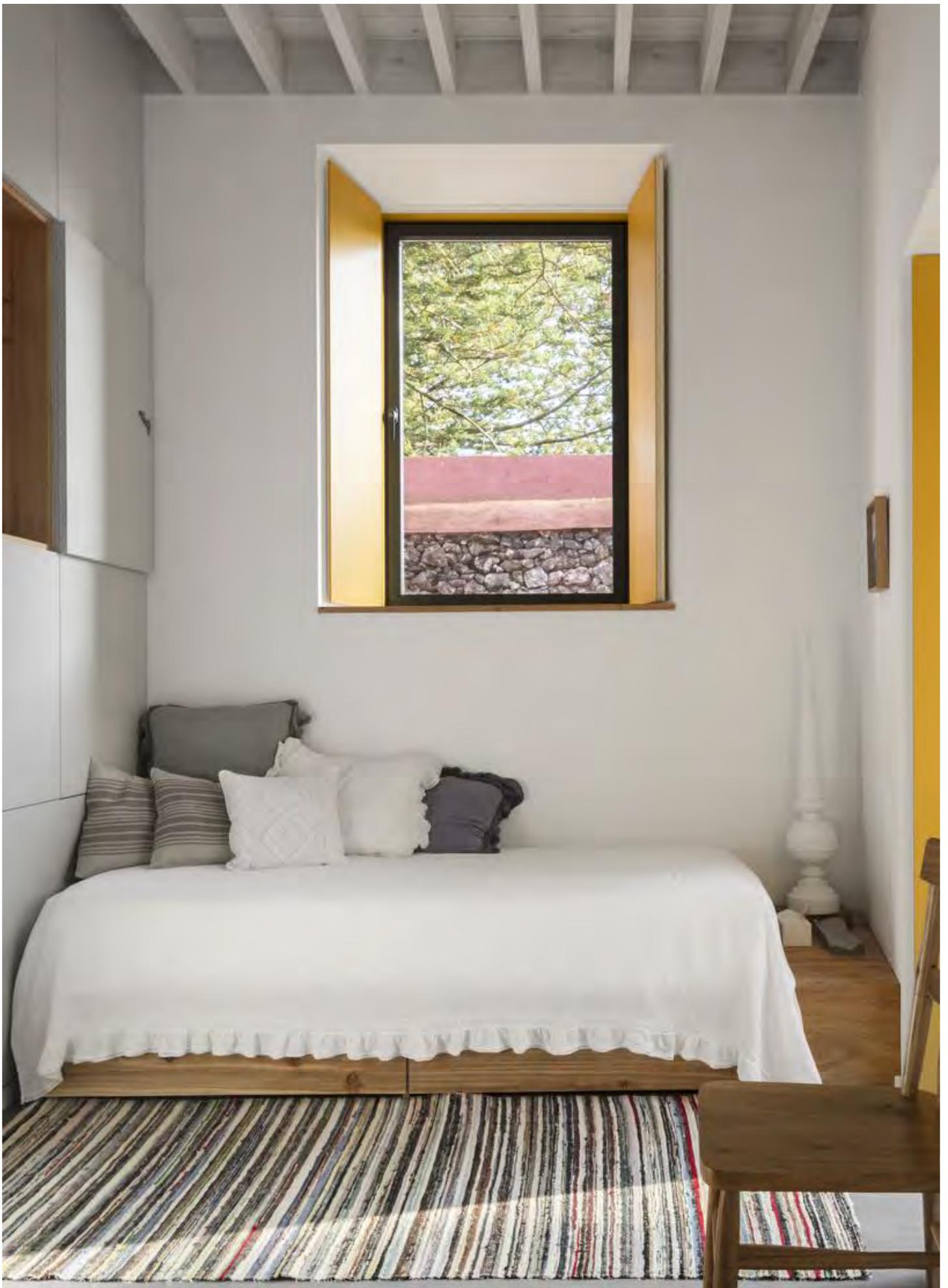


The Pink House in the Azores

CREDIT: FERNANDO GUERRA

Now based outside [Milan](#), Oliveira spent her teenage years growing up on the estate, and the studio also worked with Walk&Talk to create their HQ in the capital Ponta Delgada in 2015; this year they create a new main-stage temporary pavilion in the central São João square.





Traditional carpets at the Pink House in the Azores

CREDIT: FERNANDO GUERRA

And along the coast from Ponta Delgada, [White](#) opened last summer on the top of a cliff in the village of Lagoa. The 18th-century summerhouse has been transformed into nine suites and one freestanding villa, all riffing on a natural palette of white and soft grey with tactile driftwood, rattan and basalt bringing the island's alluring outdoors inside.



White, Azores



ISLANDS

The Azores – Europe's most exotic islands



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Costa Vicentina - Portugal's wild coast

2. HELSINKI, FINLAND



Our obsession with all things Nordic rarely wanes, but it is particularly intense in the run-up to midsummer. Now the spotlight has swung from the Scandinavian mainstays of [Copenhagen](#) and [Stockholm](#) to [Helsinki](#), the good-living Finnish capital. [Finland](#) celebrated its centennial last year (100 years of independence from Russia, before that it was part of Sweden) and it was recently voted the happiest country in the world in an annual report by the UN. And there's plenty that's happy-making here: a strong design heritage (Alvar Aalto, Marimekko) and thriving New Nordic food scene, not to mention saunas and Moomin.

