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PICO ART RESIDENCY

Located in the stunning setting of Sao Miguel Island, Azores, the *Pico do Refugio* is a place with creativity & art in its design dna.

Once the home of sculptress, Luisa Constantina de Ataíde da Costa Gomes, the farm at Rabo de Peixe has been run by the family of current owner Bernardo Brito e Abreu since the Seventeenth Century.



The farmhouse building itself of the Pico do Refugio is an homage to art and creativity, with various murals adorning the walls and paintings from a global array of artists dotted around everywhere for all to admire.

The natural landscapes of the Azores and Sao Miguel offer the perfect creative venue for the annual Art in Residency Programme of the Pico do Refugio. And the iconic volcanic soils and shapes inspire artists and creatives from around the globe – producing sculptures designed to recreate the shape of volcanic craters themselves as shown here.



In previous incarnations the farm grew oranges and tea but now it is a haven for tourism with numerous charming holiday cottages for rent and a popular artist in residence program.

The Pico do Refugio Art Residency program allows for national and international artists to come to the island and spend a period of time developing projects, with the twin aims of adding to the artist's portfolio and improving Pico do Refugio's Art and Design collection.

Every year between November and March the *Pico do Refugio* hosts a series of artists in residence. The artists are set up in a purposely designed studio with accommodation, flight tickets and the use of a car all included in the residency package. They are normally in situ for about one month and given the idyllic setting many don't want to leave!



For the artists, this is an incredible opportunity to remove themselves from their everyday environment and breathe new life into their work. The residence effectively becomes a place of refuge, where artists can escape the pressures of the modern world, make their mind quiet and focus on producing their best work.



And on the work front, freedom is the operative word. The artists are given complete artistic control to read, research, reflect, imagine, conceptualize and create artworks that will stand the test of time and give pleasure to the visiting tourists.

Tourists flock to the Azores for the feeling of isolation and the stunning natural landscape: the beautiful lakes, pristine sandy beaches, rolling hills, green plains and crystal blue ocean.

Being surrounded by amazing artworks just adds to the magic of the place.

Indeed, visitors and the local community are encouraged to interact with the artists and ask them about their work during the regular open days, where the artists present their work publicly.

The aim is to bring the local people closer to the artists and to create a bond between the artists and the island.

It is fascinating for tourists to see the creative process at work, to look at a work of art – a painting or sculpture for example – unfold in front of their eyes while they are holidaying on the island.

The *Pico do Refugio* has a wonderful history but is always looking forward.



Due to the success of the farm and the artist program, they have asked for the authorities to grant architectural planning permission to expand its number of lodgings, its art studios and galleries – so that many more artists can take part in such a wonderful residency program and guests can enjoy the fruits of their labour.

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