



2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Casa do Valle – Virpi Oliveira e a Sustentabilidade Hoteleira

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Sintra, Portugal

Country: Portugal

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Position: Director of Tourism and Culture Department of Municipality of Sintra

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org

DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Casa do Valle is located on the grounds of an old vineyard and is surrounded by a vast garden with swimming pool and the charming, breath-taking palatial landscape of the beautiful Serra de Sintra. Award-winning wines have been produced in these lands for decades, but after many years of abandonment, the property's soils were once again used, this time for the planting of an orchard with various fruit trees that flower and present us with fruit throughout the entire year.

Casa do Valle is located just 400 meters from the lively Historic Center of Sintra. Part of the Serra de Sintra monuments, as well as museums, restaurants, shops and also the train station are located within easy walking distance.

They are a reference at national and international level, contributing to the dissemination of Sintra, outdoor activities, local culture and gastronomy, and we guarantee permanent growth through a sustainable business model at social, economic and environmental levels.

Their mission is to comfort their customers, maintain a sustainable and ecological attitude, preserve nature and contribute to the growth and sustainability of local businesses and social solidarity institutions, ensuring a safe and fair environment for our employees.

They are an establishment with the ecological seal "Chave Verde" (GreenKey) the oldest in Sintra (since 2017). Changes were made on the efficiency of energy use and steps were taken in reducing the carbon footprint and encourage the team as well as guests to adopt a more "green" and socially responsible behavior in maintaining Sintra as a sustainable destination.

This means that they make a special effort to protect the environment and the climate.

Methods, steps and tools applied

The "Green Key" seal (GreenKey) is an ecological distinction of the hotel industry granted to companies within the sector that meet certain environmental requirements.

To acquire this certification, the hotel must introduce environmental management measures, reduce energy consumption, reduce waste, promote the use of organic products, avoid the use of organic herbicides and many other measures. When we consciously started to be greener, we made changes in terms of electricity (LED lamps, energy stabilizer) and water consumption (we changed tap tips and filters - we placed recycling bins on the property and stopped using plastic water bottles and we installed 2 water filtering points. All the investments they made were recovered in less than 1 year in savings on consumption.

Belonging to a community like Sintra makes it important to celebrate and encourage all the small businesses in the region. So they buy locally and, whenever the season is season, the fruit comes from local farmers. The sweet is made locally. They suggest visiting small local businesses, which have products such as honey, wine and tiles, as souvenir gifts. In terms of care, they support local charities, the São Pedro animal shelter and the NGO Montanha de Afectos.



The half-empty individual lotions and shampoos are refilled and go to the homeless in Lisbon. They are careful to promote Sintra as a destination and not just Casa do Valle as accommodation.

At Casa do Valle they love nature and the Serra de Sintra. Celebrating your beauty and taking care of it is part of your life. They promote activities that encourage everyone to experience the famous Sintra Mystery, such as hiking, cycling, mountain biking, yoga, Shinrin yoku, flora and fauna observation, climbing, paragliding and surfing - or rather, those with a low carbon footprint. Some of the employees are volunteers for the maintenance of Sintra's walking routes. And more:

1. They have placed 2 charging points for electric cars (free for our guests) and also for electric bicycles.
2. Installed a washing point for bicycles also in the parking lot to encourage the use of bicycles.
3. Created maps and 'roadbooks' for our guests to visit the area on foot without getting lost.
4. Under the Walk Sintra brand

- Created a free APP (to be launched in June 2021) with walks in every corner of Sintra to encourage visitors to visit, in safety, all 4 corners of Sintra: Historic Centre, Serra de Sintra, the coast and area Saloia. The APP also suggests visits to museums and local businesses along each route

- Guests who do not want to download the APP, the maps are also available on Google Maps through QR CODES that we make available

- The WalkSintra.com website (already online) supports the APP and even more information about hiking and Sintra, including all maps in PDF format

- They organize walks for people who don't want to go alone but want to get to know Sintra.

They continually seek service excellence, with a view to the comfort of their customers and based on the offer of personalized activities and experiences, always with the guarantee of the best service and provision of services.

They work with the utmost dedication to provide the best quality service to our guests and partners, in order to be a service quality reference and to create and maintain solid and lasting synergies for the future.

MORE:

We serve breakfast in the rooms, upon requests made the day before - like this:

- we serve customers exactly what they want
- we avoid wasting food

We notice that more and more people are looking for units that take care of the environment and appreciate our gestures - especially the filtered water and the absence of plastic bottles

Key success factors



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The main success factor is the fact that they have chosen to promote activities that make sense and that are known to them. Sustainability makes sense. Hiking and the Mountains We developed this theme, we managed to be creative and have elaborated what was lacking in Sintra - maps and organization around the theme. Innovation and creativity are an important key - to remember, sustainability goes beyond recycling.

Lessons learned

1. Being sustainable doesn't mean cutting back on service and customer experience - quite the opposite.
2. Customers feel our care for the environment and local commerce and for internal and external collaborators and each step we take seems to elevate its importance
3. The important thing is not just recycling - it's having less to recycle (less consumption)
4. By using and promoting other local businesses, bonds and a good atmosphere is created with colleagues from other companies (for example with our Hike & Wine and Bike & Brew products)
5. By partnering, we encourage them to be sustainable too
6. By promoting year-round activities (focusing on walks) we are able to give our employees more work and also combat seasonality
7. Promoting Sintra instead of just Casa do Valle brings more tourists to all of us.
8. By being more ecologically sustainable we save energy and money

Results, achievements and recognitions

In addition to the savings achieved, we have extended our mid-season and our winter occupancy has increased. In addition, traditionally most of our customers are foreigners (90%) but in recent years (already before the pandemic) especially in winter, we can already see the results of our sustainable efforts: the Portuguese share increased from 10 to 13 and 15%, noting that we are starting to have more Portuguese nature lovers and/or electric car drivers.

Additional references

Click or tap to enter text

SITE: www.walksintra.com (caminhadas e APP)

FILMES:

Chave Verde /Green Key: <https://youtu.be/JW-CJrGR6qs>
<https://greenkey.abae.pt/galardoados/>

Shinrin Yoku: <https://youtu.be/Ovxs5YVasMQ>

Caminhadas: https://youtu.be/F5jrJzn_vGM Geral
<https://youtu.be/EXz-Z6K8Jkl> Caminhar durante o inverno
<https://youtu.be/LPVokEIOXew> Treino nas escadas

Promover as zonas diferentes de Sintra.

Zona das Praias de Sintra: https://youtu.be/lAghxm9Jf_Y e <https://youtu.be/ZmGq56xrylk>

Zona Saloia: <https://youtu.be/wlQMnK7PA-Q>

Doces locais: <https://youtu.be/arPPIWiPOqw>

Geral: https://youtu.be/eo_RVWwqWZl

