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2022  
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outlook

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Words by Olga Dolina  
Photos by Lourenço Teixeira de Abreu

The olive tree at the centre of the courtyard is the project's central feature and an homage to an old tree that used to grow on the site. The new tree was placed here with a crane to celebrate the final stage of construction.



## UNDER THE PORTUGUESE SUN

Soaked in earthy tones and a tranquil setting, the 'Melides' house blends the indoors and outdoors into a perfect rural escape.

A family and their pet dog, Baco, live in this 352-square-metre single-volume house with a flat roof set in the peaceful, picturesque Portuguese village of Grândola, just a short distance from the Atlantic Ocean and Lisbon. According to architecture studio *Fragmentos* partner and architect Pedro Silva Lopes, the project reflects the owners' modern lifestyle, in which family life and the house as an element of communion are valued. The essence of this home has its origins in fishing and agriculture and the rural surroundings. In recent years, the arrival of new residents – both Portuguese and foreigners who enjoy privacy, authenticity, and proximity to the sea – has given Grândola a new lease on life.



▲ The landscaping by *Polen Land Design* and *Terra Lógica* used plants and trees suitable for the local features, many of which already existed. Pine trees, olive trees, cedars, and meadow plants were carefully chosen with respect for the natural landscape.

◀ The patio functions as an outdoor living area. Due to the protection from the elements, it can be used throughout the year. 'As in the Roman *domus*, the patio proved to be a wise choice, enhancing the relationship between the interior and exterior spaces in the social areas of the house,' says Lopes.



◀ Wooden beams form pathways leading to the swimming pool, which is designed over a natural amphitheatre. The 'Melides' project reflects a new interpretation, through a contemporary language, of the rural concept of this area of Portugal.

▼ 'The central and western wing hosts five bedrooms, including two independently accessible ones, which give necessary privacy to guests. This design allows the house to be divided into two parts when the whole family is not present. It was clearly a winning bet, and the relationship between these rooms and the central courtyard is special,' Lopes explains.



▲ Inspired by the simplicity and volumes of the local architecture, the use of various natural materials and an exposed concrete ceiling all came together smoothly. This approach was strongly influenced by the vernacular Comporta style: rural, rough, raw, and dry. Much of the furniture, tables, kitchen cabinets, and wardrobes were designed specially for this home.

◀ The roof projects over the walls at differing lengths according to the solar orientation, extending the interior of the dwelling to exterior spaces covered by pergolas. White glazed tiles adorn the minimalist shower room, which fills with light from the floor-to-ceiling window. **bo**