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Terra Lodge in Cape Verde by Ramos Castellano Architects prides itself on sustainability

Hotel incorporates recycled and found materials, water recycling systems, and a rooftop solar array





In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, on the island of São Vicente - a dry windy island where it only rains in August - Ramos Castellano Arquitectos have built a beautiful sun-soaked retreat that prides itself on sustainability. A French trekking guide decided to build his own hotel for the incoming tourist that wanted to go trekking in the nearest mountain island of Santo Antão. The Terra Lodge Hotel is the outcome of his vision.

The guide bought an old colonial house on the outskirts of the town center and asked the architects to develop a new hotel using the historic property as a starting point. The hotel, which had to integrate with the old house, is aimed at tourists who come to the island for 2-3 days before taking the ferry for the island of Santo Antão.

By using the same implantation philosophy of the surrounding buildings, Ramos Castellano Architects adapted the complex's separate units to the existing terrain. In separating the buildings and melting them into the built environment, the architects have been able

to create a hotel that helps prepare its clients for their next destination.

Designed in response to the sun's path throughout the day, each block is oriented to face a different view of the island - from the city to the bay. The breakfast-bar building has been positioned to shield the site from the strong winds that blow in from the Sahara desert. In addition, all rooms at the Terra Lodge hotel promote cross ventilation and passive climatization strategies. Built predominately from lime-plastered concrete, the Terra Lodge Hotel's five structures are rotated to optimize views and cross breezes. The hotel includes 12 rooms and a suite, a breakfast room, a lap pool, and a large outdoor terrace on the roof of an old green colonial house that now houses the owner's tourist agency.

Ramos Castellano Arquitectos designed the hotel using recycled and found materials, water recycling systems, and a rooftop solar array. The hotel draws the eye with its gridded timber frame, constructed

from unfinished African wood, that partially encloses private verandas. The architects also used found materials in construction, such as the recycled metals from petroleum barrels for the gate and the locally sourced rocks for the walls.

The architects tried to simplify the design as much as possible as the remote island has a clear lack of material and resources. Most of the elements that make up the scheme of the hotel from the floor finishes to the furniture are handmade and have been crafted by local people. Wood has been used for the buildings' gridded verandahs, while lime putty has been used to clad the hotel's brilliant white structures.

With sustainability as a key objective, the architects also designed the furnishings and light systems with locally handcrafted and recycled wood whilst roofs feature photovoltaic panels and water is re-used on site for irrigation. All in all, reuse is essential to the innovative design of Terra Lodge, which shows how local materials and handmade furnishings can add up to a singular experience.

Project Details

Project Name
Terra Lodge Hotel

Client
Terra Lodge

Completion date
2017

Location
Mindelo, São Vicente,
Cabo Verde

Architect
Ramos Castellano
Arquitectos

Collaborators
Camille Cellier,
Marvin Delgado

Structural engineer
Ilidio Alexandre

Builder
Duka

Photography
Sergio Pirrone

