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Casa Cedo

PORTO

In the heart of Porto's creative quarter, a restored 19th-century townhouse blends history and heritage with its owners' passion for botany and books.

Words: Elly Earls • Photography: © Inês Silva Sá

Before Casa Cedo opened its doors as a boutique hotel, the residents of Cedofeita – a neighbourhood in Porto known for its galleries, vintage emporiums and second-hand bookshops – were already familiar with the 19th-century townhouse as a flower shop and perfumery. Today, the retail space doubles as the hotel entrance, with a verdant display of plants and vines serving as a precursor to the botanical theme that blossoms within.

Casa Cedo is the result of a long-held shared vision between Massimiliano Salé and Jeremiah Healy, having both visited and fallen in love with Porto. The pair wanted to breathe new life into one of the city's oldest buildings, preserving as much history and heritage as possible, while weaving in their own passions for art, ceramics, botany, books and community.

This fusion begins in the hallway between the flower shop and the lounge, where walls are lined with pineapple azulejo ceramic tiles. The majority are original decorative elements, while the rest have been carefully recreated by local ceramics studio Atelier Joaquim Pombal in a nod to the previous owner's ties to Brazil.

Entering the cosy, low-lying living room, guests are introduced to Daniela Franceschini's interiors. The founder of Lisbon-based Quiet Studios was commissioned to shape all the finer details that guests come into contact with during their stay. "It's all about balancing antique and contemporary," explains Franceschini. "The vintage elements bring a patina and texture that only time can create, and the combination of contemporary lines with classical pieces creates high contrast."

The lounge is a space that guests can sink into and relax for hours. Modern slouchy velvet sofas are offset by Giovanni Michelucci's statement Torbecchia sideboard from Italy, with everything Casa Cedo's resident mixologist needs to make his signature negronis hidden inside. A custom-designed bookshelf fills an entire wall and can be re-configured. "It was important for us to include a library, because for me, it's not a real home without books," says Franceschini. "It creates a space that allows you to slow down, step away from your phone and explore a collection that isn't your own."

Another wall is almost entirely given over to a striking painting by Portuguese visual artist Juliana Julieta depicting a naked figure adrift on the water, bathed in a vibrant colour palette. Meanwhile, the botanical theme continues in the flower motifs on the coffee tables – a detail that makes a repeat appearance in guestrooms.

But the real heart of the property is a few steps away in the 'workshop'. The townhouse's original outbuilding has been remodelled to draw in natural light through tall, narrow windows, which lands on a farmhouse-style table with tree





Named after a different flower or plant, each guestroom juxtaposes vintage furniture with modern accessories

trunk legs. Now restored to more than its former glory, it anchors the room: a setting for relaxed breakfasts, daytime snacks and dinners hosted by visiting chefs. "It's a busy room, but that's what makes it so homely," says Franceschini. "There's something about the everyday in this space, from breakfast to sitting and working, with people in the background preparing food."

However, there is nothing everyday about the dinner prepared by Chef Caroline Giandalia of Porto restaurant Gruta during Sleeper's visit – a tasty affair combining her Brazilian roots with seafood from the North Atlantic. A refined meal served in a space that feels like home only made it more special. There is no in-house chef at Casa Cedo; instead, the owners hope for the space to become a flexible backdrop for chef-led dinners, as well as events and exhibitions.

At the rear of the workshop, a cosy nook with a sofa and fireplace opens onto a wraparound garden designed by Mallorca-based botanical artist Toni Sastre. It has an almost English country garden feel, with wild ferns, strawberry trees and bay laurel. The benches are made from stone reclaimed from the house – just one





example of how the owners reused materials wherever possible. Architect Joana Leandro de Vasconcelos and her studio Atelier In.vitro worked closely with heritage specialist AOF to preserve the building's character at every stage. Beams supporting the workshop were salvaged from the main house, while the concrete flooring incorporates rubble from the original structure. Even the skylight was removed and sent to Braga for several months for a full restoration. Now, as well as bringing light into the staircase, it is a feature of the top-floor bedroom – once an attic, now with new life.

Casa Cedo has eight rooms that are available for individual stays, group bookings, or as the owners hope will happen more often than not, the whole house is available to book. Named after a different flower or plant, each room has a slightly different configuration. For example, Amaranthus – the largest and only room with a terrace – is inspired by the plant once known as Prince's Feather, as explained in a personal note on the vintage desk. Its name means everlasting and it is known for its 'strength, resilience and quiet grandeur'. Rooms also include a Portuguese classic novel, sourced from a second-hand bookshop in the neighbourhood. And the juxtaposition of modern pieces continues, such as the contrast of vintage desks with bespoke headboards by Quiet Studios and floral-themed lamps.

The same attention to detail is given to the bathrooms, designed in Italian stone. In Amaranthus, twin sinks and a double shower provides room for guests to stretch out and truly unwind. "In our design, we acknowledged the lacks and wows of each room and played around to balance them," explains Franceschini.

With excellent soundproofing, Casa Cedo offers a calm retreat in the heart of Porto's creative quarter. The owners set out to create a home away from home, but with a sense of occasion, and they've achieved exactly that. It's easy to imagine the house filled with people – for celebrations, shared dinners or quiet moments in its comfy communal spaces.

EXPRESS CHECK-OUT
Owner: Massimiliano Salé and Jeremiah Healy
Architecture: Atelier In.vitro
Interior Design: Quiet Studios
Art Consultant: Ana Siguad
Visual Identity: Mano a Mano Club
Landscaping: Toni Sastre
Main Contractor: AOF, Swark
www.casacedo.com