# Azores Wine Company, Pico



So, where are we?

On the rugged north coast of Pico, one of Portugal’s much under-explored Azores. The same size as Madeira but with just a fifth of the population (and Madeira is hardly Hong Kong!), it’s a remote spot, the love child of the wildness of Scotland with the mystical tropicalness of Hawaii. A volcano, green fields, huge turquoise waves pummelling the black volcanic rocks of the shoreline and miles upon miles of strange stocking-top-height walls built from clinker to protect the shoreline vines. So, yes, there is wine. Really good wine.

And where we’re staying...?

The Azores Wine Company, an actual real-life winery with rooms and a restaurant and acres of the rocky walls leading down to the sea, which you can enjoy from every vantage point around the property.

What’s the style?

Building started in 2018 with the property opening just before lockdown - doh! - this is a minimalist dream of a place, constructed almost entirely from pale grey concrete and glass. Sharp lines, sleek 70s furniture and the occasional blocky bit of wood, the exterior emerges horizontally almost like a petrol station from the volcanic landscape. Cool doesn’t even begin to cover it.

And the rooms?

With the pale grey concrete covering walls, floor and ceiling the spaces are filled with light from a huge sliding picture window that takes up almost the entire sea-facing wall. Sit on one of the stylish chairs out on your mini-terrace and watch those waves pound the coastline. Back inside, things are simple but comfortable - a huge big-enough-for-four bed with no headboard, a mini-kitchen area with a wine fridge and real coffee and a bathroom that couldn’t be starker in concrete and glass lit by a skylight. Add mid-century chairs and so-minimal-it’s-almost-not-there lighting and you have a space that is masculine and handsome. We would date this room.

Is there a story?

The brainchild of three friends who wanted to update the Azores tradition of having a spot in among vineyards to entertain friends, Azores Wine Company is at the forefront of the revival of Azorean wines, delicious mineral-flavoured whites and reds that you can taste and taste again during your stay. The wine is made in the midst of the structure built around a strange volcanic courtyard with a huge concrete tank for irrigation (even though it looks like you might be able to swim in it - don’t!) and you can go and see the stainless steel wine tanks before your tasting. With just five rooms and a mini-apartment, it’s an exclusive spot but you will need a car to get you out and remember to bring a little bit of food as they only do dinner and a simple breakfast.

And to eat?

On the top level of the building with floor-to-ceiling views down to that savage sea is a restaurant with an open kitchen and space to sit up and watch and one big sharing table and a terrace for sunny days. The food is clearly going to get a Michelin star sometime soon as it is beautiful, thoughtful, sustainable and delicious. Try the tasting menu, seven courses that lead you through the wines from whites to reds and then to sweet after-dinner Madeira-style delicacies.

So, to sum up...

The Azores are a pretty much undiscovered gem of wilderness and strangeness in the shadow of a volcano and there’s no better way to dip your toe in than at this brutalist beauty.

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