

Play

TREND

THE BIG STITCH

The days are long gone when it was something only old ladies with glasses perched on the tip of their nose did. Nothing against it - it's just that knitting is now a rejuvenated hobby in the hands of a new generation.

By **Mauro Gonçalves**

Ana Pizarro grew up watching her grandmother knit, but it took almost 20 years for her curiosity to be aroused. She had her first experiences with sewing, and only later, through Instagram, did she discover the desire to try using two needles and a ball of wool. Today, the 25-year-old copywriter is not only a prolific knitter, but the hobby has led her to a new group of friends - Helena, Rita and Sofia. From social media to the real world, the quartet began meeting.

"We all get along very well. And my knitting has come on a lot. I began paying more attention to the quality of the wool and the needles and discovered the fascination with Rosa Pomar that some of them already had," Ana explains. The decisive push for Helena Cruz (27) and Sofia Daniel (22) came with the pandemic. From a solitary hobby, their experiences with wool turned into group therapy. "It was a way to overcome loneliness," says Helena, who has a degree in computer engineering.

In addition to sharing ideas, the group is united by the same sweater - a cropped model with small twists that they each made in a different colour. Without any formal training, just the internet and each other to help, knitting continues to be part of their daily life. "I've always got 500 sweaters on the go. I see what others are doing on Instagram and I get some new ideas," says Sofia, who has already completed a degree in chemistry.

23-year-old Rita Cunha is the fourth member. Today, she works as a content producer in a city in Nebraska, USA, but in Lisbon in early 2021 she discovered knitting as a way to overcome the isolation caused by the pandemic - that and an Instagram group designed for exchanging experiences. Online, she learned to knit in the English style. With her new friends, she started knitting in the Portuguese style. "Crochet is popular on TikTok; perhaps because it is faster," she says. They talk about a hobby that the pandemic helped normalise, although members of the older generation still often express their incomprehension. "We can go to Zara and buy a sweater for €30, while this one,



for example, cost around €100. People don't understand, but there are sustainability issues involved. The wool is of good quality, and I'm being entertained while I make it. It's a choice we make," Helena concludes.

Having worked with wool and needles for 15 years, Rosa Pomar does not hesitate in outlining the profile of this new generation of knitters. "It goes hand-in-hand with this more conscious consumption trend and the more critical observation of the fashion market. There are lots of very young girls and boys knitting," she says. In the haberdashery Rosa Pomar (Anjos), they sell their own and some imported wools, organise workshops for beginners and knitting sessions



FRANCISCO ROMÃO PEREIRA

to encourage the sharing of experiences. "It's particularly easy - it doesn't involve expensive tools like carpentry, or complex raw materials like basketry, nor does it require us to be in the same place, as is the case with sewing. It's always there at the point of always being reinvented."

From a dated and stigmatised practice, knitting has become a factor of empowerment for a new generation, especially girls. "Perhaps the liberation of these girls comes from the fact their mothers don't knit. Many women of my generation didn't learn how to knit. The stigma was so great that their mothers didn't want to teach them - they had the idea that modern, educated and emancipated women don't knit. But this has been turned around. Now they learn on YouTube or TikTok" says 47-year-old Rosa Pomar.

As for men who take part in this hobby, they are still in a minority, amounting to only 5% of those who come in to Rosa's haberdashery. The stigma has deepened, but there are those who have broken through the prejudice and developed a real passion. One such case is Fábio Branco, who currently lives in Bilbao. His grandmother wanted to teach him how, but as a good teenager he preferred not to learn. The interest came later, although hand knitting was never

a strong suit of this 33-year-old pharmacist. Instead, Fábio prefers the speed of machines. "It is the mechanical part of it that most fascinates me." He once had eight machines at home [he now has six], all second-hand. He loses track of time assembling, disassembling and experimenting. He is part of a UK-based community of domestic knitting machine users. Even though he lives in Spain, it is still difficult for him to find someone who shares his hobby, just as seeing a man as a knitting ace still amazes many people - although perhaps a little less since the phenomenon surrounding Olympic swimmer Tom Daley. Fábio only responds in one way: anyone can knit. "It's not just for women or old ladies. It's for anyone who wants to do it and who feels happy doing it."

WHERE TO TRY YOUR FIRST STITCH

COMPANHIA DAS AGULHAS

— Rua do Zaire, 36, Anjos

PULAA ATELIER

— Rua Edison, 6 A, Areiro

THE CRAFT COMPANY

— Praça Dr. Francisco Sá Carneiro, 4 (Cascais)

FITNESS

PRESCRIPTION: PILATES LIKE WE'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE

In this new pilates studio, all it takes is one machine - and a few complementary accessories - to work up a sweat. Vanessa Motte, our host at Prescription, came to Lisbon five years ago with a dream and ended up finding a gap in the market which needed filling: to create a space where the full potential of pilates could be explored without it being seen as just an exercise for those in need of physiotherapy.

The secret is in the technology. "I didn't invent anything. It's a



concept that already exists across Europe; I just realised that people were missing out on the same kind of thing here," explains Motte, a 37-year-old French woman. Reformer is the name given to this seemingly complicated piece of machinery, but also the term she uses to describe this break from conventional pilates.

We notice the differences right away in the choice of the soundtrack. In a warm, well-lit space, funky pop helps us to pace ourselves. There are just eight machines in the studio, which dictates the maximum capacity for each class. An instructor is always on hand to run things. Posture, flexibility, strength and balance - the exercises (which vary according to each lesson) give a full-body workout.

The level of intensity changes too. The First Prescription classes progress at a slower pace and are recommended for those who have not yet had any experience. Two or

three sessions should be enough to get you to the next level. The Signature Dynamic Prescription sessions make the most of the technology involved and promise to make you sweat.

There's practically no limit to the number of exercises and this also depends on the creativity of the teacher. "It's about 40 or 45 minutes of intense work," says Vanessa.

Sessions are booked online. There are between two and three classes daily, as well as standard packages of single lessons (€35) or three, five, ten or 20 sessions (€55-€500). One-on-one private classes can also be booked, and are especially useful in the case of pregnant women. Vanessa wants to add a few more options to the schedule, such as classes that work specific muscle groups. Always with the machine, of course. MG

— 195 Rua de São Bento (São Bento). 96 019 2408. Mon-Sat. €35-€500

KIDS

THERE'S NO MONSTER WITHOUT IT'S LITTLE MONSTER

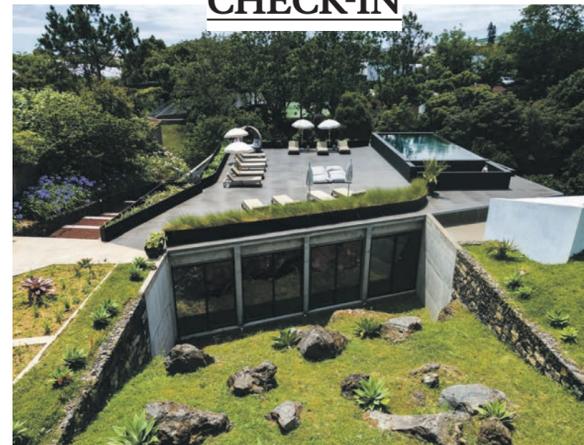
Monstra animated film festival is once again on the loose in Lisbon - and on its tail, as always, is Monstrinha. If you haven't already checked out the programme, let us tell you what to see as a family.

The Portuguese were the first Westerners to reach the coast of Japan, and 480 years of relations between the two countries is as good a reason as any for animated film festival Monstra to pay homage to Japanese cinema. Among the highlights between March 15th and 26th are directors including Masaaki Yuasa, whose animated rock opera *Inu-Oh* gets an official sneak preview in Portugal. But don't forget, it's also the centenary celebration of Portuguese animation, since it was 100 years ago that illustrator Joaquim Guerreiro created the first Portuguese animated film, *O Pesadelo do António Maria*. A milestone Monstra will commemorate over its 12 days, in a programme of 423 films in total from 50 countries, eight world and 17 international premieres, split between retrospectives, special screenings and six competition categories. At the same time, there are, as always, exhibitions, workshops and masterclasses, as well as another deluxe Monstrinha programme, which will fill the

weekends with shorts and feature films for all the family in screenings spread across different spaces, from Cinema São Jorge to Sines Centre for the Arts. So as not to get lost between adult content and kids' stuff, we recommend *Tiger* (2022) by Julia Ocker; Daria Stolbetsova's *The Little Boar Who Looked Into the Distance* (2021); and *Thrown Away Book* (2022) by Agata Gorzałdek. For wee ones, who have their own section just to themselves, there's *Squirrel* (2022), also by Julia Ocker, *Trash Can* (2022) by Greta Semionovaite, and more. Or head to Cinemateca Júnior for a special session on March 25 at 3pm to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Walt Disney Company. The programme kicks off with Disney's first-ever short, *Alice's Wonderland* (1923), followed by *The Ugly Duckling* (1939), and revisits the inevitable *Steamboat Willie* from 1928 - the first short it ever made with synchronised sound introducing in delible popular icon, Mickey Mouse - and *The Skeleton Dance* (1929). *Raquel Dias da Silva* and *Renata Lima Lobo*



CHECK-IN



A hotel in São Miguel where guavas and pineapples grow

In 1994, this same building on the Azorean island of São Miguel opened its doors as an inn. Modern for its time, the interiors bore the signature of its owner, the decorator Lili Damião, who breathed new life into a family property with almost 200 years of history. It was an enterprise that did not withstand the test of time, eventually filing for bankruptcy in 2011. The Damiãos lost the inn but kept the rest of the land.

"We ended up living next to something that was no longer ours," says Joana, recalling her parents' setback. It is now she who welcomes guests at the entrance of the same building, which was recovered, transformed and reborn as the Senhora da Rosa Hotel in April 2021.

The floor we step on when entering, made of volcanic stone, is original, as is the layout, which has only undergone slight changes. In the centre is a lamp with numerous points of light, reminiscent of the glass of old oil lamps. Even those are not missing from the collection of family treasures that make up the hotel lobby - they are inherited from Joana's grandmother and great-grandmother, as are the old cans and the carpentry bench. The hotel shop

offers a range of Azorean products (from Lapinha nativity scenes to natural cosmetics), while the bar provides a cosy refuge on rainy days. The rooms are further down, 35 in total, including two suites and two outdoor shelters, built in the likeness of old agricultural storehouses.

Joana guides us through her little piece of Eden, a plot of land from which oranges, bananas, loquats, custard apples, guavas and chestnuts are harvested. Yams and bamboo also abound here, not to mention the pineapples, whose greenhouse also serves as a shelter for a hot tub reserved for guests.

The feeling of mission accomplished is inevitable - the farm can be enjoyed once more, with its spa, padel court, rooftop bar and restaurant (open to non-residents) all built from scratch, while the memories of the Damião family are preserved. What about sustainability? The oils used in the spa are made from ingredients found on the island, while the 220 solar panels provide 65% of the hotel's energy consumption.

— Rua da Senhora da Rosa, 3 (Ponta Delgada). 296 100 900. Rooms from €110 per night