

# THE LOOM



Riopele



# WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE IN TWO YEARS?

The textile industry is going through one of the most challenging periods in its recent history. In this context, it becomes essential to invest in the modernization and digitalization of processes, reinforcing the sector's position as a benchmark in quality, innovation, and sustainability, both nationally and internationally.

At Riopelle, we believe that the future is built on the decisions we make today. That is why we have been rigorously and strategically investing in technological innovation, energy efficiency, circularity, and, above all, in people.

We are aware that the coming years will bring new challenges, but also new opportunities. For us, true sustainability is not limited to external indicators — it is reflected in the way we manage our processes, care for our employees, and actively contribute to solutions for the industry.

In this latest edition of The Loom, we invite you to discover some of the projects we are working on so that Riopelle continues to stand as a reference in consistency and responsibility.

Two years from now, on our 100th anniversary, we aim to stand exactly where our vision leads us: at the intersection of innovation, tradition, ethics, and excellence.

**José Alexandre Oliveira,**  
President of Riopelle



# RIOPELE ACCELERATES ENERGY TRANSITION WITH NEW PHOTOVOLTAIC PLANT



Riopele takes another strategic step towards sustainability with the inauguration of a new photovoltaic park at its Hub A site, reinforcing its leadership in the energy transition within the textile sector. This new infrastructure includes around 5,200 solar panels and an installed capacity of 3MWp, representing an investment of approximately €5.5 million.

This project complements the photovoltaic park inaugurated in 2024 at Hub B—one of the largest rooftop installations in Portugal—with around 8,000 panels and an installed capacity of 4.5MWp, covering an area of 22,000 m<sup>2</sup>. This system already enables Riopele to reach energy self-sufficiency peaks of up to 80% on certain days of the year, particularly at the company's most energy-intensive facility.

Riopele's commitment to green energy dates back to 2019, with the inauguration of its first photovoltaic plant at the Olifil-Riopele site in Castelões, Vila Nova de Famalicão, as part of its environmental responsibility strategy.

## **A leading factory in europe's energy transition**

“These investments are allowing us to move decisively toward carbon neutrality by 2027, the year of our centenary. It's a particularly symbolic milestone that showcases our ability to transform and lead the textile sector with a forward-looking vision. We are confident that we are on the right path to becoming an industrial benchmark in Europe's energy transition,” emphasizes José Teixeira, General Manager of Riopele.

Through these initiatives, Riopele will significantly increase its energy production capacity, aiming to cover 20% of its current energy consumption with green power. Additionally, the company estimates a reduction of 2,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually.

In total, these three projects represent a global investment of approximately €14.9 million, partially funded by the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR), further strengthening the company's competitiveness and potential for sustainable growth.

# ENERGY POSITIVE FACTORIES: DRIVING DOWN EMISSIONS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY





Founded in 1927, Riopelle has embarked on a journey to become the first operationally carbon-neutral textile company in Europe by 2027. Being aware of how ambitious this goal is, the portuguese company has been implementing a range of projects to achieve this historic milestone in the same year it celebrates its centenary.

The investments made in recent years aim to reduce the company's environmental impact within the textile industry and are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These investments include cutting-edge technologies such as automation and more efficient equipment; the development of a digital platform for both employees and clients, where Riopelle's digital collections are available; the monitoring of the factory floor; and the implementation of an artificial vision system in the looms—streamlining processes and strengthening internal capabilities.

According to Isabel Domingues, Sustainability Director at Riopelle:

“Celebrating 100 years of history only makes sense if we look to the future with responsibility. At Riopelle, we want to mark our centenary with a clear commitment: to be a benchmark for sustainability in the textile industry. We know there's no time to lose and that companies must lead the response to the climate crisis—and that's exactly what we are doing.”

## Responsible transformation

Riopelle already recycles 54% of the water used in its production processes. Reducing energy consumption, investing in renewable sources, and advancing technological modernization are also central pillars of its sustainability strategy.

State-of-the-art equipment recently introduced across its production units ensures lower energy and water usage, making processes more efficient without compromising quality.

Adopting a smart, preventive approach, Riopelle has automated the control of water extraction, ensuring the company uses only the amount necessary for its operations. This system also enables continuous monitoring of the entire circuit, detecting and preventing potential leaks and losses. The company also invests in the reuse of rainwater, maximizing the efficient use of every drop.

Another major step forward came in 2023, with the installation of a biomass boiler, resulting in an almost 70% reduction in natural gas consumption across production units. While some finishing equipment still relies on natural gas, alternative solutions are being explored to eliminate this fossil fuel dependency entirely, aligning with the company's ongoing decarbonization roadmap.

## **Commitment to recycled raw materials**

At Riopelle, sustainability starts at the source: raw materials. A constant and strategic focus on recycled and natural-origin materials—supported by a transparent supply chain—is driven by R&D projects that place innovation at the core of the production process.

Currently, 79% of our products fall under sustainable categories, a figure that reflects the company's commitment to transforming the textile sector. Highlights include fabrics made from recycled polyester, products under the Tenowa brand, and fabrics developed using dyeing and finishing processes that significantly reduce water and energy consumption.

## **Responsible waste management**

A large portion of the waste generated is reused, recycled, or recovered. To enable this, selective collection equipment has been installed across all areas of the company, preventing waste from being sent to landfill.

This effective management is reinforced by a strong internal sustainability culture, with employees playing an active role. They regularly participate in training and awareness initiatives on proper waste separation and environmentally responsible practices.

In 2024, the company managed to recover 99% of the waste generated in its operations, reinforcing its commitment to the circular economy and responsible resource management.





# SHE MOVES IN HER OWN WAY

PHOTOGRAPHY PEDRO GOMES  
MODEL LUANA MOREIRA















































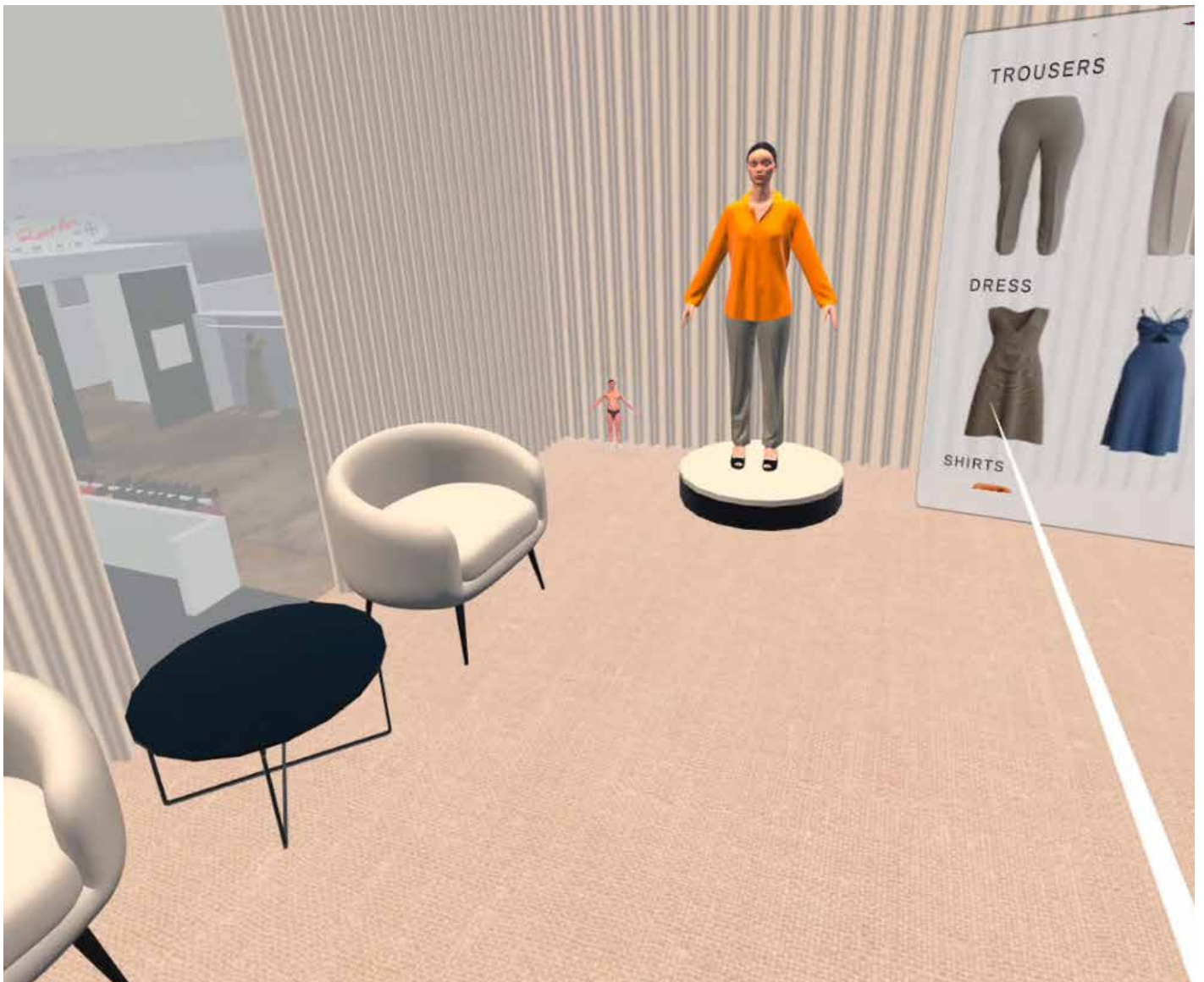








# SMART INDUSTRY: THE FUTURE HAS ALREADY ARRIVED AT RIOPELE





What if we could build a smart industry model—people-centered, data-driven, and agility-oriented in the fashion sector? The future has already arrived.

Digital transformation is profoundly and permanently redefining the fashion industry. At Riopelle, we don't see it as a passing trend but as a strategic pillar that allows us to lead in innovation and operational efficiency.

But there's a fundamental principle: artificial intelligence (AI) only creates real value when it is built on a solid foundation—with well-defined processes, interoperable systems, accessible data, and a deeply rooted digital culture.

## Digital transformation was the first step

“Over the past few years, we've been putting our house in order. We restructured the architecture of our systems, automated processes, organized data, and developed dashboards and decision-support platforms,” explains Rui Oliveira, Chief Information Officer at Grupo Riopelle.

This reorganization effort involved all areas of the company—from production to product design, from planning to maintenance, from logistics to commercial, not forgetting human resources.

“This allowed us to build a digital, interconnected backbone, where information flows with context, relevance, and precision. More than a technological transformation, we prepared an organization focused on collaborative processes and shared knowledge. Today, processes are no longer linear or isolated—they are dynamic, interdependent, and driven by intelligence,” he concludes.

## AI: The new co-pilot in production

This transformation has enabled Riopelle to integrate artificial intelligence into its production processes. The goal is clear: to transform how production is carried out, ensuring more efficiency, precision, and quality.

Among the first AI-driven initiatives are:

- Parameter adjustment, adapting to the variability of raw materials and environmental conditions.
- Anticipation of quality issues, detecting deviations before they become failures and immediately proposing corrective actions.
- Recommendations for more efficient production sequences, based on factors such as energy consumption, setup time, and resource availability.
- Optimization of production order distribution, with a real-time view of industrial unit capacity and customer delivery times.

And we go further: through intuitive interfaces like voice control, augmented reality, and contextual visualizations, the necessary information reaches our operators, technicians, and engineers in a simple and integrated way. The impact is visible: faster and more accurate decisions, fewer errors, fewer stoppages, improved quality, and greater confidence at every step. All of this, without forgetting what matters most—people.

## **Creating value for human talent**

By taking over repetitive tasks, AI frees up employees for higher-value activities: problem-solving, creativity, continuous improvement, customer relations, and innovation—enhancing their experience, motivation, and development.

## **Preserving the knowledge of past generations**

At Riopelle, we've always valued the knowledge accumulated over decades—as an intangible heritage. That's why we see artificial intelligence as an ally in managing intergenerational knowledge.

By transforming the tacit knowledge of our most experienced employees into accessible and reusable intelligence, AI allows us to learn from the organization's history, recognize patterns, document best practices, and accelerate the training of new generations.

## **Fashion thrives on trends and we intend to anticipate them**

In a trend-driven sector, AI plays an increasingly central role. For Riopelle—and for the entire supply chain—competitiveness lies in being able to predict and respond quickly.

That's why AI will enable us to:

- Identify emerging micro trends through real-time analysis of weak signals.
- Correlate data from consumer behavior, social media, collections, and sample requests.
- Rapidly adjust the portfolio of fabrics, colors, materials, and solutions.
- Support product design based on real data and predictive simulations.
- Reduce the time between insight and response—from idea to delivered product.

## **Innovation with purpose**

At Riopelle, innovation is anticipated, planned, and built with vision. It's not just about chasing the future—it's about shaping it.

“AI is not a destination—it's a reflection of an organization's maturity and vision, and it demands purpose, structure, leadership, and foresight,” concludes Rui Oliveira.



# INDARIO: LESS IMPACT, MORE INNOVATION





In an industry increasingly driven by sustainability, modernization, and versatility, the commitment of leading companies to introducing innovative solutions that truly make a difference is evident.

One such example is Indario, a groundbreaking dyeing process developed by Riopelle, offering an eco-friendly alternative to the traditional methods used in denim production.

## **A more sustainable approach to the denim look? Yes, it's possible.**

Committed to contributing to a more sustainable future in fashion, Riopelle, in partnership with Archroma, has developed a solution that combines technology, environmental responsibility, and high performance. The results speak for themselves: Indario uses 67% less water, 35% less energy, 15% fewer chemicals, and generates 40% less CO<sub>2</sub> compared to conventional denim processes.

In addition to complying with the strict criteria of the ZDHC program, Indario reinforces Riopelle's position as a reference in the development of responsible and innovative textile solutions.

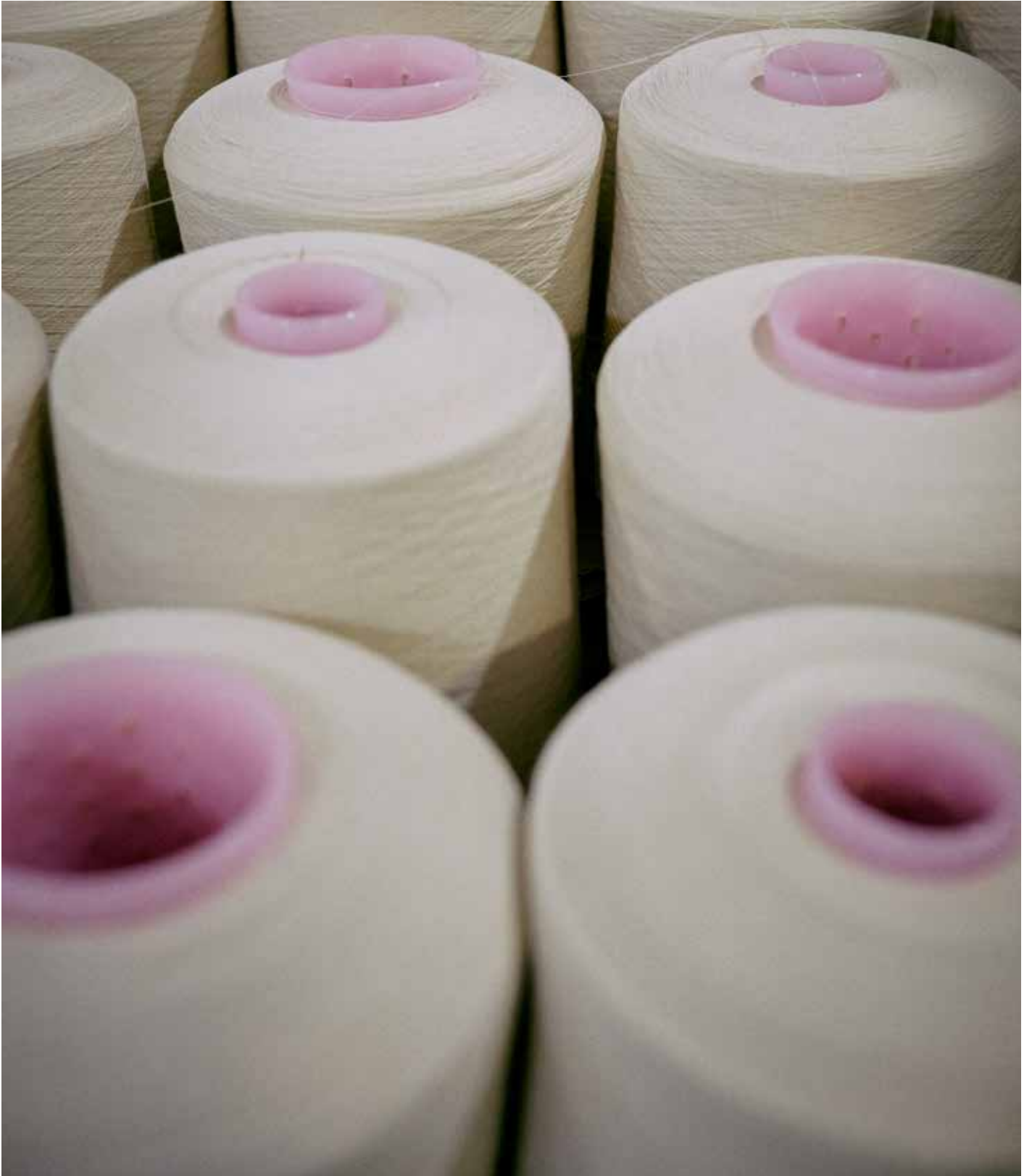
## **Fashion driven by innovation**

According to Ângela Teles, Sustainable Product and Innovation Projects Manager at Riopelle:

“This solution has already gained traction in international markets, with strong uptake in countries like Sweden and Finland — both known for their commitment to sustainability — as well as in Germany, France, and Spain, reflecting a growing global concern for more responsible practices.”

With Indario, Riopelle not only strengthens its position as a pioneer in sustainable innovation but also redefines the future of the denim look: “In recent years, we've heavily invested in R&D and in the various departments that support this activity, always guided by a deep commitment to environmental responsibility and innovation. At the same time, we place great emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of our products, ensuring they meet the demands of even the most discerning clients,” she concludes.

# THE HIDDEN COST OF FASHION





Like many other sectors, the fashion industry is undergoing a period of profound transformation. High inflation is making consumers more price-sensitive, while climate change and global trade instability are placing increasing pressure on how we produce, distribute, and consume fashion.

Despite these challenges, fashion remains one of the most profitable and important industries. According to 2023 data from Euratex, it generates an annual turnover of €170 billion and employs over 1.3 million people in Europe.

However, it is worth asking: are we moving in the right direction? Are we building a more responsible, ethical, and sustainable industry?

The growing speed at which new collections reach the market has reshaped the fashion landscape, making it more dynamic and accessible to a global audience. Yet, this fast-paced production model raises important concerns about environmental impact and working conditions throughout the value chain.

On the environmental front, the industry's footprint is substantial. It is estimated that the fashion industry accounts for around 10% of global water consumption, with dyeing and finishing processes being major contributors to water pollution.

But the impact goes beyond the environment. As one of the world's largest employers, the fashion industry also bears a huge social responsibility. Promoting fair, safe, and dignified working conditions is essential to ensure the sector evolves in an ethical and inclusive way.

## Creating positive impact. How?

Fortunately, a paradigm shift is underway. Innovation, circular economy practices, traceability, and social responsibility are gaining ground, with more and more companies positioning themselves as active agents in building a more conscious industry.

Riopele is an example of this transformation. With a strategic vision based on sustainability and innovation, it has been implementing practices that place the company at the forefront of the textile industry.

- **The use of more sustainable fibers**, such as recycled polyester, viscose from responsibly managed forests, and European-grown linen, reducing dependency on natural resources and promoting circularity.
- **Optimization of dyeing and finishing processes**, using low water-consumption technologies with reduced environmental impact.
- **Certification and traceability across the entire value chain**, ensuring transparency and trust for partners and customers.
- **Engagement and empowerment of all employees**, encouraging participation and commitment to the sustainability journey.
- **Continuous investment in technological innovation**, including R&D for the development of smart and functional fabrics that are more durable and have a lower impact throughout their life cycle.
- **The “Sustainability Box”**, which presents detailed information about the technology used in the development of fabrics from the “Next-Gen Materials” capsule collection. It includes fabric samples, certification data, and moodboards with application examples, offering clients a comprehensive view of the creative and sustainable process behind the collection.
- **An ambitious commitment to become operationally carbon-neutral by 2027**, through the implementation of various measures and projects that will reduce the environmental impact of all company operations.

## The future wears responsibility

The true cost of fashion is not measured only in euros—it’s measured in environmental impact, working conditions, and our collective ability to ensure a sustainable future for the generations to come.

The transformation of the sector is not only inevitable—it is urgent. Fortunately, it is already underway. More and more companies are proving that it is possible to combine quality, design, and responsibility.

At Riopelle, we believe that fashion can—and must—be a positive force. And we work every day to ensure it is made with innovation, awareness, and respect for both the planet and people.





# CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONTINUES TO REDEFINE THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY



Is the textile industry ready to rethink traditional models and embrace a new, greener, and more competitive era where the transition to a circular economy is inseparably linked to economic growth?

Years of research and development culminated in the launch of **Tenowa**, Riopel's circular brand that uses fabrics made from recycled raw materials, including textile waste.

Today, Tenowa is a well-established brand, representing a significant percentage of the company's sales. The brand's immense acceptance can be easily explained, as highlighted by Ângela Teles, Sustainable Product and Innovation Projects Manager at Riopel: "The success of Tenowa is not just due to the brand's recognized superior quality, but also because of the positive impact its innovation has had on the sector. This premium positioning has enhanced its visibility and sparked growing interest among designers looking to incorporate it into their creations."

## A Riopel brand with reduced environmental impact

The name Tenowa stems from the motto "Textile no Waste," reflecting Riopel's commitment to the principles of the circular economy. The brand transforms textile waste

into new resources, from which it creates innovative and sustainable fabrics, such as Tenowa 2. This satin fabric, with a sophisticated shine and subtle flamé texture, combines a continuous filament of FSC® certified cellulosic fiber with a rustic recycled polyester/cotton yarn, certified GRS. It is an ideal choice for summer dresses, skirts, or light suits.

## Internacional recognition

"The brand's acceptance has been especially strong in international markets, notably Belgium, France, and Spain. This phenomenon can be easily explained by the growing consumer awareness of more ethical and responsible fashion," adds Marta Pacheco, Sales Director at Riopel.

The Tenowa brand has been widely recognized for its innovation and commitment to sustainability. In 2018, it received the "Best Art Work Award" from the Society of Fashion & Textile Industry, one of the most prestigious academic organizations in South Korea. Additionally, it won the COTEC Innovation Product Award in 2018 and was named the winner of the iTechStyle Awards in the Sustainable Product category.



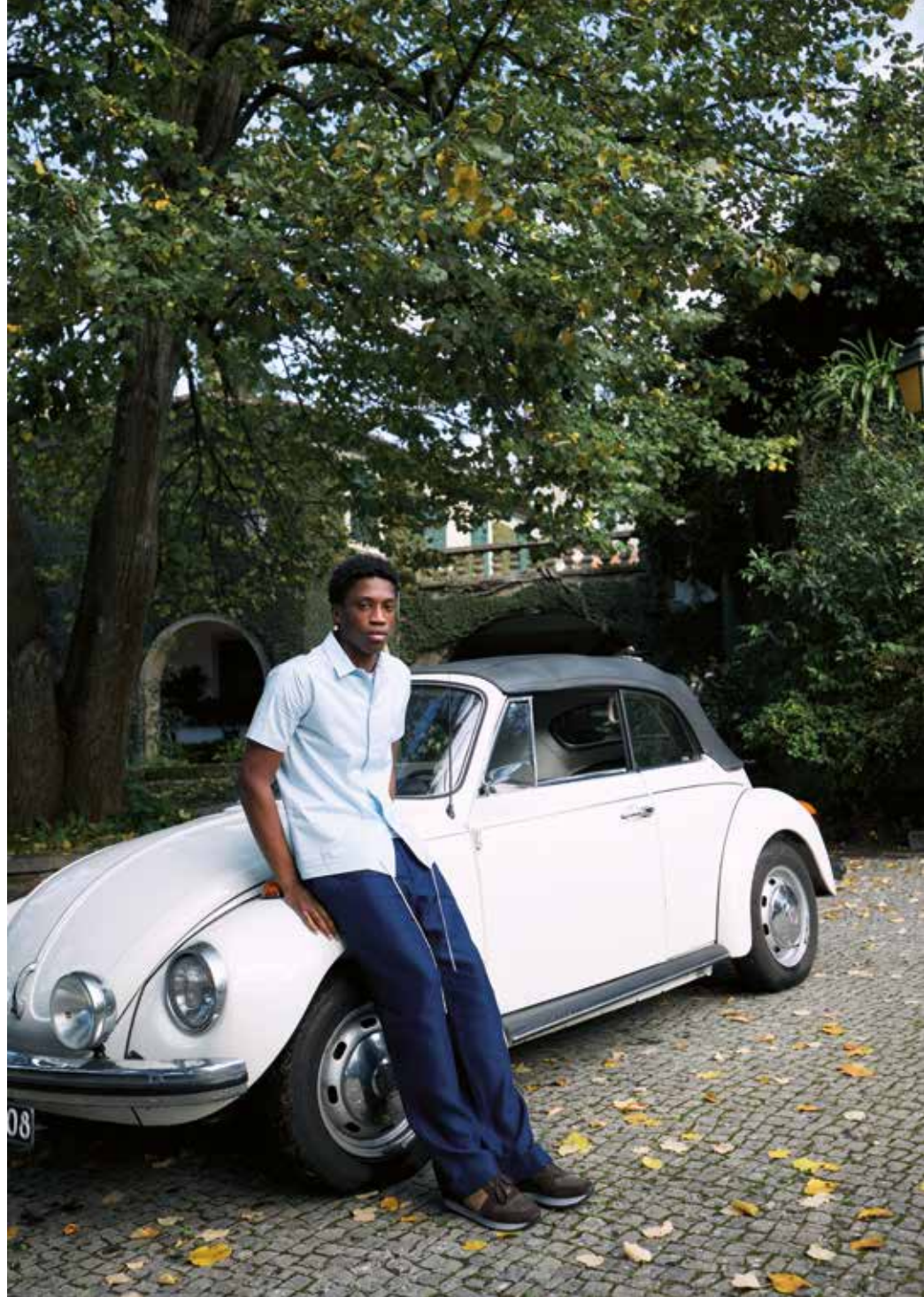
# GOODBYE MR. BLUE

PHOTOGRAPHY PEDRO GOMES  
MODEL FRED TRINDADE













































# THE SCHOOL OF THE TEXTILE UNIVERSE IS BORN AT RIOPELE

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The textile sector is more innovative than ever—and thriving. We are now counting down to the inauguration of the Riopelle Academy, another project by the company that demonstrates that, despite its nearly century-old roots, it refuses stagnation and is in a constant state of evolution, fully aware of changes in the sector and the world of work.

It is precisely from this mindset that the Riopelle Academy is born—a project designed to inspire and strengthen the company's people development strategy, offering more flexible training models tailored to the evolving needs of the business.

With the Riopelle Academy, the company aims to provide cross-cutting training to its approximately 1.200 employees, grounded in its deep market knowledge and supported by strategic partnerships in the fields of training and qualification.

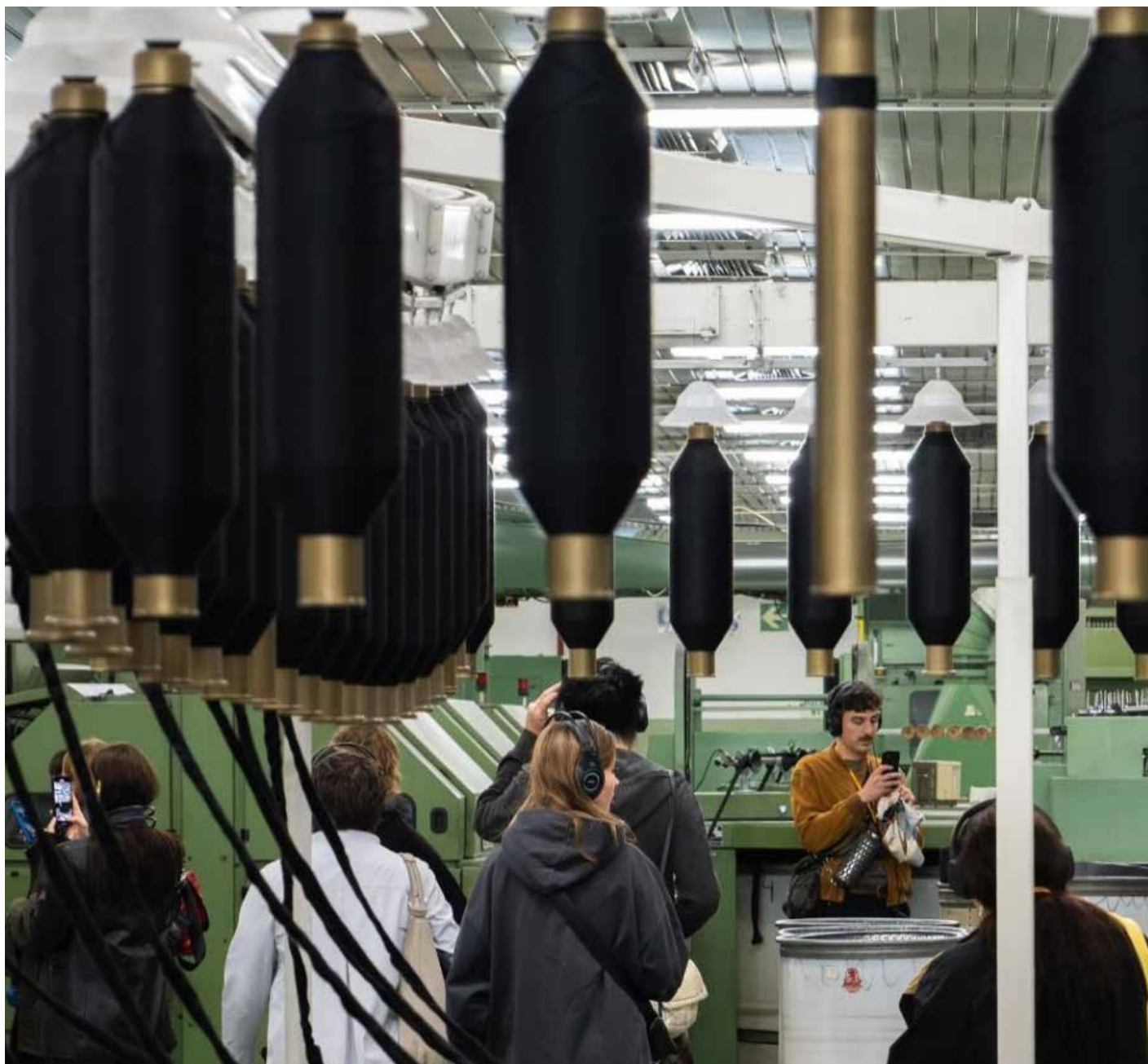
## **The art of craftsmanship passed down through generations**

This school within the textile universe will be dedicated to transmitting ancestral knowledge, preserved across generations, ensuring that the true heritage of the profession remains alive and is shared with all those who are part of Riopelle.

## **Building the future on a legacy of tradition and innovation**

The Riopelle Academy will go beyond passing on past knowledge. Its goal is to empower the organization to face future challenges, offering a distinctive and sustainable value proposition.





To achieve this, the academy will invest in more flexible, dynamic, and personalized learning models, tailored both to the company's strategic needs and the generational diversity of its workforce.

All employees who aspire to expand their knowledge in other areas—such as sustainability, leadership, technology, foreign languages, among others—will be able to enhance their qualifications and

professionalism within the company, through specific training plans designed to foster their personal and professional growth. This includes not only current core competencies but also those that may, in the future, enable the organization to deliver a differentiated value proposition in its target markets.

“The goal of the Riopele Academy is to offer our employees a new way to engage with relevant training content, making it possible to deepen their knowledge across

the many areas of the textile sector, as well as essential skills for individual career progression,” emphasizes Cláudia Queirós, Human Resources Director at Riopele.

Training has long been a priority for the company, which over the past three years has delivered 115,000 hours of training to its employees, supporting the continuous development of their careers.

THE  
SUSTAINABILITY  
OF THE FUTURE  
STARTS WITH DATA  
- AND RIOPELE  
WANTS TO LEAD  
THAT  
TRANSFORMATION



ESG4FASHION is the name of the new project set to change the paradigm of the fashion industry in Europe. Led by Riopele, this consortium marks a turning point in how sustainability is conceived, measured, and transformed within the textile sector. More than just a technological platform, it represents a forward-looking vision where data becomes the new fabric from which decisions are stitched together.

“We are facing a true paradigm shift within the company,” says Rui Oliveira, Chief Information Officer of Riopele Group. “We want every decision — from design to procurement, production to marketing — to be based on real sustainability data.”

At the heart of the project is an intelligent platform capable of digitizing, automating, and integrating all ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) information from companies across the fashion value chain. The ambition is clear: to make the entire value chain — from raw materials to the final product — traceable, transparent, and efficient, both environmentally and economically.

## A project with collective impact

Riopele leads the ESG4FASHION project not only as the promoting company but also as a living lab for many of the innovations to be tested. Over recent years, it has strategically invested in digital transformation and sustainability, paving the way for a qualitative leap forward.

“We want our processes, systems, and practices to become a European benchmark,” emphasizes Rui Oliveira. “But more than that, we believe in the power of the collective: we are building a digital infrastructure that can be replicated by other companies in the value chain — or even in other sectors.”

## Aligned with the Europe of the future

ESG4FASHION emerges in a European context undergoing profound transformation, particularly with the launch of STEP — Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform, a strategy aimed at accelerating Europe’s technological sovereignty and industrial sustainability.

Innovation fits squarely into this ambition. With digital tools applied to traceability, circularity, and resource efficiency, the initiative positions Portugal at the forefront of the new green and digital economy. “We are aligning Riopele with what will become the new standard for competitiveness in Europe,” highlights Rui Oliveira.



## Innovation with tangible results

The expected impacts are as ambitious as they are measurable. Among ESG4FASHION's goals are:

- **Reductions of 15% to 25%** in energy and water consumption in areas where there is currently no detailed monitoring.
- **A decrease of 10% to 30%** in product carbon footprint, based on eco-design simulations.
- **Over 95% reduction** in ESG reporting time, which currently requires weeks of manual work.
- **The ability to track each product** throughout the entire chain, from raw material to final consumer.

All this supported by a real-time digital platform capable of anticipating risks, optimizing decisions, and enhancing transparency with customers, partners, and investors.

## A transformative vision

What sets Riopelle's approach apart is its ability to unite long-term vision with concrete execution. "We don't just react to regulation — we anticipate it. We invest in knowledge, internal talent, technology, and strategic alliances," says the Chief Information Officer of Riopelle Group.

With nearly a century of history, Riopelle once again demonstrates that it's possible to think like a start-up without losing the solidity of a well-established industrial brand. The ESG4FASHION project is more than just a technological innovation: it is a legacy for the sector, for the country, and for future generations.

"At Riopelle, we are committed to being part of that pioneering group. ESG4FASHION is another chapter in our story — and a legacy we want to leave for the industry and for generations to come," concludes Rui Oliveira.



# CERTIFICATIONS: WHICH ONES TRULY MATTER?





In an increasingly demanding market that values responsible business practices, certifications play a central role in establishing a company's credibility and commitment. Across all sectors, they serve as a seal of assurance, confirming compliance with high standards of quality, sustainability, and ethics.

## In the textile and fashion industries, this is no different.

“At Riopelle, we recognize that certifications are fundamental in building a more responsible and transparent industry. These systems represent a commitment to the most rigorous environmental, social, and governance practices, aligned with the current challenges of the fashion industry. As such, their adoption has allowed us to establish a strong foundation of trust and credibility with our clients and partners,” emphasizes Isabel Domingues, Sustainability Director at Riopelle.

But which certifications truly matter when it comes to sustainability and responsible business practices?

## Global Recycled Standard (GRS)

Issued by the Textile Exchange organization, this certification governs the use of the GRS eco-label. It ensures traceability of manufactured products, verifies the content of recycled materials—guaranteeing that the product contains at least 20% recycled content—and confirms compliance with strict environmental and social responsibility criteria, including restrictions on the use of harmful chemicals during production.

## OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100

Internationally recognized, the OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 certification guarantees that certified textiles are free from substances harmful to human health. Riopelle has held this certification since 1995 for various fabrics, reflecting a long-standing commitment to safer materials and a more sustainable fashion industry. In recent years, it has expanded to include recycled and organic fibers, in line with market trends.

## **OEKO-TEX® STeP – Sustainable Textile Production**

Riopele is also certified under OEKO-TEX® STeP at the highest classification level. This attests to the company's continuous implementation of environmentally responsible production processes, as well as its assurance of safe, healthy, and socially just working conditions.

## **Organic Content Standard (OCS)**

The OCS certifies products containing natural fibers from organic agriculture. It enables transparent verification of the presence and percentage of organic material in final products, ensuring credibility for both producers and consumers.

## **European Flax™ Standard**

The European Flax™ certification ensures integrated crop management practices and highlights the unique know-how of European flax fiber producers. It guarantees the traceability of European-origin flax—from fiber to final product—across all destination markets.

## **FSC® Certification – Chain of Custody**

The FSC® Chain of Custody Certification applies to all actors that transform, process, or trade certified forest-based products. It verifies FSC®-labeled products throughout the entire production chain. Every stage of processing requires FSC® Chain of Custody Certification to ensure that certified forest products are kept separate from non-certified ones, or properly mixed under authorization.

The FSC Principles and Criteria define best practices for forest management. This is a product certification based on traceability and includes labor requirements.

## **A continuous commitment**

The integration of internationally recognized certifications is a strategic tool to ensure quality, transparency, and accountability across all stages of the production process.

But more than responding to market demands, this is a commitment to the future. It's the foundation of our ambition to lead by example and actively contribute to a more conscious, balanced, and regenerative industry.

On this journey, each certification is more than a label—it is a reflection of our identity and what we believe in.







# GREENWASHING VS. SUSTAINABILITY: WHAT'S TRUE, WHAT'S STRATEGY?

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The fashion industry is under increasing global scrutiny regarding the sustainability of its operations, as it is one of the sectors with the greatest environmental impact. In response to this pressure, it's becoming more common to see commitments to social and environmental best practices, with several companies announcing changes and adaptations to their business models.



However, not all of these initiatives are genuine. Many ambitious promises may simply be well-executed marketing strategies. It is therefore up to consumers to assess their truthfulness and educate themselves about the environmental impact of their choices.

In this article, we explain the differences between the concepts of Greenwashing and Sustainability.

## Greenwashing: what is it?

Put simply and clearly, this concept refers to a marketing strategy used by companies that claim their products or services are sustainable without providing concrete evidence to support those

claims. This message can appear in various communication channels, with the aim of improving the company's reputation by capitalizing on consumers growing environmental awareness.

A clear example of greenwashing is the promotion of collections labeled “eco” or “conscious” while, in reality, the brand's overall production continues to rely on polluting practices. The use of terms like “sustainable”, “natural”, or “eco-friendly” without verified data, recognized certifications, or concrete explanations about materials, manufacturing processes, or supply chains reveals a lack of transparency.

Additionally, encouraging excessive consumption—

contrary to sustainability principles—and maintaining environmentally harmful practices, such as excessive water use or high carbon emissions, are also examples of greenwashing in the industry.

## Greenwashing vs. Sustainability: what's the difference?

Does the general public really see the fashion industry as one of the main contributors to major environmental issues? The most likely answer is no.

This perception may be linked to the aspirational image the

sector projects and its positive economic impact. It is precisely in this context that understanding the difference between greenwashing and genuine sustainability becomes essential.

Companies that are truly committed to sustainability base their claims on recognized certifications and invest in creating more transparent operations. They support innovative textile solutions, promote digitization and industry training, and invest in continuous research and development. Additionally, they set clear, measurable short, medium, and long-term goals, involve stakeholders, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to responsible practices—environmentally, socially, and economically.

- **Sharing the brand's sustainability journey**
  - Clearly document and communicate the path taken and the challenges faced, through a Sustainability Report.

- **Establishing partnerships with positive impact** – Collaborate with credible organizations or initiatives that align with the brand's mission.

- **Using clear and straightforward language** – Avoid exaggerations and ensure that all claims can be verified, preferably through certifications or independent entities.

## Transparency is key

Today's consumers are more aware and demanding when it comes to environmental issues—and also more skeptical of vague or exaggerated sustainability claims.

Therefore, marketing and communication professionals should promote their sustainability initiatives truthfully and transparently, adopting simple and effective practices such as:

- **Backing up claims with concrete data** – Avoid generic terms like eco-friendly, and instead use measurable indicators such as “produced with 100% recycled materials.”

- **Supporting messages with real actions**
  - Demonstrate investments in renewable energy or sustainable production processes, for example, by using the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tool, which evaluates the environmental impacts of a product or service throughout its entire life cycle, from raw material extraction to end of life.





# ONE FILAMENT LESS POSSIBILITIES

...ative game-changing lyocell filament, derived from  
...d from sustainably managed forests and exclusively  
... with an awarded sustainable closed-loop process.  
... this eco filament we create fabrics of extraordinary  
... and smooth to the touch, with a deep respect for  
... nature in the pursuit of exceptional quality.

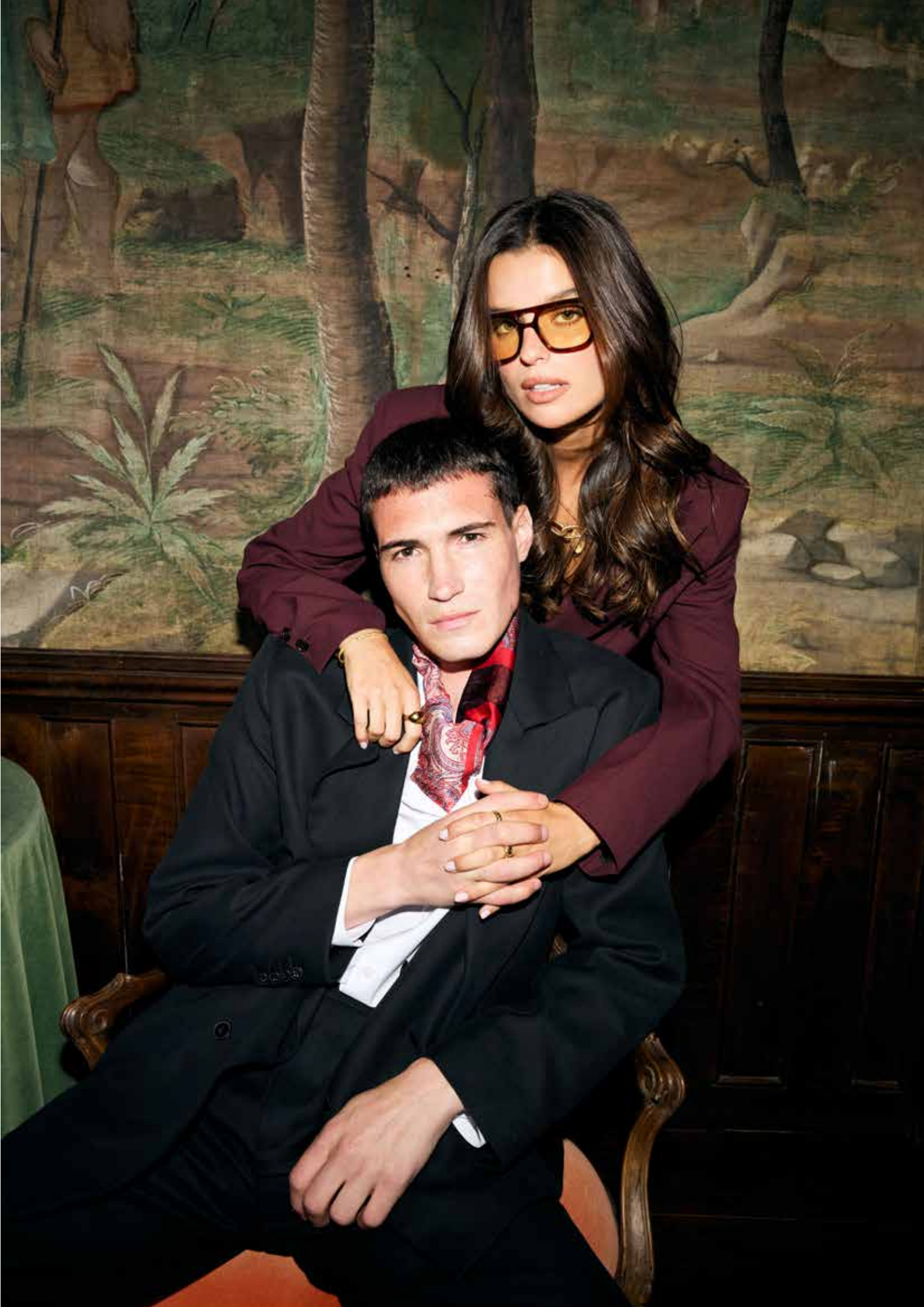


# THE FIRST THREAD

**PHOTOGRAPHY** PEDRO GOMES

**MODELS** MARGARIDA OLAZABAL, LOURENÇO CARVALHO











































































## Rio Pele water mill

A modest water mill on the left bank of the River Pele, in Pousada de Saramagos, marked the beginning of the journey into the textile industry that would later give rise to the Riopelle Textile Factory. Everything started during a particularly challenging period — the Great Depression of the 1930s, the state-imposed industrial restrictions, and, later, the Second World War.

The company was initially founded with just two looms for the production of fabrics such as cotton twills and striped cloth. It operated in that mill until 1933, when the founder, José Dias de Oliveira, driven by the ambition of creating a complete manufacturing facility, moved the production to a new building. Over the following two decades, the factory gradually expanded to include the areas of Spinning, Dyeing, Weaving, and Finishing, thereby establishing the vertical structure of production that would come to define the company.

The old Rio Pele Mill remains to this day a symbol of Riopelle's origins and is still owned by the Oliveira family. There are plans to restore and rehabilitate this emblematic site as a tribute to the company's history and legacy.

## Dona Olinda neighborhood

A figure of great significance in the history of Riopele and the community of the parish of Pousada de Saramagos was Olinda Reis de Oliveira, the wife of José Dias de Oliveira, founder of the company.

According to the current President of Riopele, José Alexandre Oliveira, Olinda Reis de Oliveira “almost acted as a Human Resources department for the company. People often turned to my grandmother to help get their children employed, and she, in turn, would task us with helping them. That’s how Riopele became, at the time, an important center of support for the community.” Among Olinda Reis de Oliveira’s many contributions to the people and the community, the construction of the Dona Olinda Neighborhood, built in the 1960s, stands out.

Comprising around 20 homes, the neighborhood was originally intended to house company employees.

More recently, in 2015, the Dona Olinda Neighborhood underwent a major renovation, fully financed by Riopele.



2016. Tribute to Olinda Reis de Oliveira, wife of José Dias de Oliveira, founder of Riopele.





## Visit by Portugal's future President

In 1976, at a decisive moment for the consolidation of Portugal's young democracy, Riopele received a visit from General António Ramalho Eanes. His presence at the company took place during the presidential campaign for the first free presidential elections, scheduled for June 27 of that year.

The visit happened just two years after the Carnation Revolution of April 25, 1974, which had brought an end to 48 years of dictatorship in Portugal. The country was undergoing a period of profound political, social, and economic transformation — a time marked by instability but also by hope for a better future.

António Ramalho Eanes would go on to become the 16th President of the Republic and the first to be democratically elected following the 1974 revolution.

## Devotion to our Lady of Fátima

On February 12, 1953, the Oliveira family was suddenly deprived of the founder of Riopele, José Dias de Oliveira, who passed away at the age of 50, still in the prime of his professional life.

The responsibility of leading the company then fell to his eldest son, José da Costa Oliveira, who was only 22 years old at the time.

Very young and facing enormous responsibility, the father of the current President of Riopele took on the leadership role at a particularly demanding moment: the company was undergoing a major transition to a new factory building equipped with modern

machinery. This brought complex technical and administrative challenges, along with significant financial burdens.

The period between 1953 and 1959 was marked by intense economic and technical efforts, which were overcome through the unwavering dedication of all employees. Their work, carried out in an atmosphere of deep spiritual faith, played a vital role in the consolidation and growth of Riopele.

In this context, the figure of Our Lady of Fátima held a central and deeply symbolic place. One of the most meaningful moments occurred on April 13, 1959, when José da Costa Oliveira, fulfilling a vow made during a critical time for the company, offered a votive plaque to the Chapel of the Apparitions in Fátima.

The offering took place during a pilgrimage attended by all employees.

This devotion to Our Lady of Fátima has spanned decades in the company's history, which even had a chapel dedicated to Her at one point. In 2019, Riopele's votive plaque was displayed at the Convivium of Saint Augustine, in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity in Fátima, as part of the temporary exhibition Capela-Múndi, which marked the centenary of the construction of the Chapel of the Apparitions. That same year, during a trip to the south of Portugal, the current President of Riopele, José Alexandre Oliveira, and his wife made a stop in Fátima and, by chance, came across the exhibition showcasing the company's votive plaque.



1959. José Dias de Oliveira, founder of Riopele, in Fátima.



1953. Riopele workers on a pilgrimage to Fátima.



2019. President of Riopele, José Alexandre Oliveira, visits the Capela-Múndi exhibition in Fátima.



# GUIMARÃES



“Oh! Guimarães, your progress, your life,  
Is our deepest aspiration;  
Blessed land, oh! beloved homeland,  
You hold an altar in the hearts of your children.  
Oh! Guimarães, your progress, your life  
Yes, they are our deepest aspiration!”



The city's anthem proudly proclaims that Guimarães is the soul and the aspiration of its people. Local pride, tradition, and a deep-rooted identity are among the characteristics that make Guimarães—the birthplace of Portugal—an unmissable destination in northern Portugal.

In this guide, we suggest some of the most iconic places in the city—most of which can be visited on foot. But more than that, we share some insider tips known only to locals that will make your experience truly unique.

As you walk through Guimarães' Historic Center, you'll feel like you've stepped into a medieval scene. While strolling along the cobbled

streets lined with typical houses from the 17th century, classified as UNESCO World Heritage, you'll also feel the vibrant energy of the city's lively squares, brought to life by its people.

During your visit to the “Cidade-Berço” (cradle city), you'll notice the abundance of green spaces and the well-kept cleanliness of the streets. The municipality has invested in several environmental projects, preparing the city— with nearly 900 years of history—for future challenges. Guimarães will be the European Green Capital in 2026, thanks to its exceptional performance in the ecological transition.

And of course, don't leave without tasting some of the Minho region's culinary delights: the traditional *rojões à minhota com papas de sarrabulho*, the *arroz de pica-no-chão*, the unforgettable *Tortas de Guimarães*, or the famous *Toucinho do Céu*.



## Guimarães Castle



## What to Do/Visit

Guimarães Castle was built by order of Countess Mumadona. The purpose of the fortification was to protect the Monastery of Santa Maria from the Norman and Saracen invasions that threatened the Iberian Peninsula. In the 20th century, the castle was restored and later classified as a National Monument.

## Paço dos Duques de Bragança



Built in the 15th century by Afonso, the illegitimate son of King João I, the Palace of the Dukes of Braganza was originally a noble residence. It was later turned into a shelter for the needy by his wife, Dona Constança de Noronha. After a period of abandonment, the building is now one of the most visited museums in Portugal, housing an extensive collection of 17th- and 18th-century decorative arts, including tapestries, oriental porcelain, and furniture. Since 1910, it has been classified as a National Palace and serves as an official residence of the Presidency of the Republic.

One of the oldest squares in Guimarães, it owes its name to the tradition that the apostle Saint James placed an image of the Virgin Mary there. In the 11th century, the Franks built a chapel on the site, which was later replaced in the 17th century by another temple that has since disappeared. To commemorate these origins, the square features a scallop shell engraved on the ground and part of the Carta de Foral (Royal Charter) granted by Count Henry to the settlers of Guimarães.

Nossa Senhora da Oliveira Church has its origins in the 10th century, linked to the founding of Guimarães by Countess Mumadona Dias. It became a collegiate church in the 12th century and, during the Middle Ages, was an important religious center, especially for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela. Over the centuries, it underwent several renovations that added elements from different architectural styles, with a strong Gothic influence standing out today. Although the collegiate chapter was dissolved in 1911, the church remains one of the most iconic historical monuments of Guimarães.

## Praça de São Tiago



## Nossa Senhora da Oliveira Church





## Vila Flor Palace and Cultural Center



PHOTOGRAPHY VÍTOR OLIVEIRA

Vila Flor Palace, built in the 18th century, is known for its tiered gardens and granite statues of Portugal's first kings. The palace hosted significant events such as Queen Maria II's visit in 1852 and the 1884 Commercial Exhibition. After restoration by the Pitágoras Group architecture studio, completed in 2005, the building became the Vila Flor Cultural Center (CCVF), a prominent cultural venue featuring auditoriums, meeting rooms, exhibition areas, and a diverse and contemporary program.

## Platform for Arts and Creativity



Inaugurated on June 24, 2012, the Platform for Arts and Creativity transformed the former Guimarães Market into a multifunctional space for artistic, cultural, and socio-economic activities. The building comprises three main programmatic areas: the José de Guimarães International Arts Center (CIAJG), the Emerging Studios, and the Creative Labs. The CIAJG, dedicated to contemporary art, houses three collections by José de Guimarães – Tribal Art, African Art, and Chinese and Pre-Columbian Archaeological Art – as well as works by the artist himself. These collections are in dialogue with pieces by other contemporary artists and objects from local heritage. Designed by the Pitágoras Group architecture studio, the Platform has received several awards, including the 2012 "Detail Prize," the 2013 "National Urban Rehabilitation Award," and the 2013 "Red Dot Design Award."

## Jordão Theatre

Inaugurated on November 20, 1938, Jordão Theatre was originally a cinema-theatre and also housed the former Jordão Restaurant on its lower floor. Designed to host both films and stage plays, the building was a modern landmark in the city. After closing in 1993, the theatre reopened on February 12, 2022, along with the Avenida Garage, with new functions. It now serves as an academic and cultural center, housing the School of Theatre and Performing Arts, the School of Visual Arts, and the School of Music, offering courses from the University of Minho and the Guimarães Conservatory. The new rehabilitation and conversion project, designed by the Pitágoras Group, preserved the memory of the building while adapting its structure for new uses, without compromising the need for transformation. Jordão Theatre was turned into a multifunctional space with an auditorium that can be reconfigured for various events such as performances, conferences, and other cultural activities, returning this Guimarães icon to the city and its community.



PHOTOGRAPHY JOSÉ CAMPOS

## Penha Mountain

A popular tourist destination, Penha Mountain spans 60 hectares of green space. It offers breathtaking views, a sanctuary, caves, viewpoints, and a variety of services including a cable car, campground, hotel, mini-golf, restaurants, and recreational areas. It's ideal for outdoor activities and connecting with nature.





## Where to stay

### Hotel da Oliveira



Hotel da Oliveira is Guimarães' most distinguished boutique hotel. The project, designed by interior designer Paulo Lobo, transformed a former Pousada de Portugal into a contemporary and elegant hotel. Its understated luxury and prime location in the heart of the historic center make it the ideal choice for those wishing to explore Guimarães' cultural and entertainment offerings. A perfect hotel to truly experience the essence of the city.

### Pousada de Santa Marinha



Located on the way up to Penha Mountain, the Pousada de Santa Marinha (recipient of the 1985 National Architecture Award) is the result of the restoration of the 12th-century Monastery of the Augustinians. It offers a charming setting, with gardens, cloisters, granite fountains, and stunning views over the city. Its culinary and wine offerings are equally remarkable.

## Hotel de Guimarães



PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIA HOTEL DE GUIMARÃES  
WEBSITE

A four-star hotel that combines modernity and excellence, offering a harmonious response to guests' comfort and well-being needs. Located in a contemporary building with excellent access points, the hotel is fully integrated into the city center of Guimarães, close to the historic area recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## Casa de Sezim



A little further from the city center lies the charming Casa de Sezim. Owned by the same family since 1376, it is a stunning example of architectural beauty, featuring an impressive façade and a unique collection of 19th-century wallpaper—the largest in the Iberian Peninsula. The estate's *vinhos verdes* (green wines), enjoyed since the Middle Ages, continue the tradition of excellence. It's the perfect place to experience a blend of history, art, architecture, and the renowned wine heritage of the region.



## Where to eat

From traditional dishes that reflect the soul of Minho cuisine to innovative creations by contemporary chefs, in Portugal's birthplace, gastronomy is defined by rich and ever-present diversity at the table.

### Taberna do Trovador



PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIA INSTAGRAM  
TABERNA DE TROVADOR

At Taberna Trovador, Minho tradition is proudly and joyfully served at the table. Minho-style alheira sausage, red wine caramelized onions, cod fritters, and pork cheek are just a few of the authentic flavors on the menu. You'll also find regional favorites like cured ham platters and rojões (pork cubes), accompanied by fine wines and the relaxed spirit of a self-proclaimed "professional tavern-keeper." The atmosphere is lively, both in the cozy indoor room and on the outdoor terrace, often with live music setting the tone. Standout sides include tomato rice and bean rice with cabbage. For vegetarians, the "Leek Brás" is a delicious option.

**Average price:** €25  
Largo do Trovador, 10,  
Guimarães.  
Tel. +351 913 205 263

### Norma



PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIA INSTAGRAM NORMA

Chef Hugo Alves stands out for his creative reinterpretation of traditional Portuguese recipes through a contemporary lens. Dishes include inventive options like "Waffle with quail egg, kimchi, potato and cabbage" or a twist on the classic "Pica no chão" served as arancini. Other surprising highlights are the cod "Brás" with a jalapeño kick and the tender oxtail. To finish, the "rice pudding" with puff pastry, tonka bean, and wine-soaked pear. For a full experience, the tasting menu invites diners to "turn the world upside down" at the table — ideal for those who love surprises.

**Average price:** €40  
Rua Dr. José Sampaio, 35,  
Guimarães.  
Tel. +351 939 501 461

## HOOOL



PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIA INSTAGRAM HOOOL

The experience and creativity of consulting chef Vítor Matos come together with the talent of Minho-native cook Liliana Moura, whose roots lie in Trás-os-Montes. Located in the historic center of the city, the restaurant offers an à la carte menu, but the highlight is its tasting menus: “À Descoberta” with nine courses, and the “Raízes” and “Terra Mãe” menus (the latter fully vegetarian), each with six courses — an immersive way to explore the restaurant’s culinary vision. For those who prefer more traditional flavors, the “Roast Kid à Hool” is an excellent choice. The meal can be elegantly concluded with the iconic “Torta de Guimarães.”

**Average price:** €60  
Hotel da Oliveira, Largo da Oliveira, Guimarães.  
Tel. +351 253 514 157

## A Cozinha



PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIA INSTAGRAM A COZINHA

Dining at A Cozinha by António Loureiro is a journey into a concept where sustainability is at the heart of everything. This was the first restaurant in Europe to achieve zero-waste certification, thanks to a firm commitment to environmentally responsible practices: they work with seasonal, locally-sourced ingredients, following a “zero kilometer” philosophy. On the upper floor, a vertical garden with over 200 pots ensures organic production of herbs and vegetables. Holding a Michelin star since 2018, the restaurant has also received a Sustainability Award and a Golden Fork in the 2024 Boa Cama Boa Mesa guide.

**Average price:** €100  
Largo do Serralho, 4, Guimarães.  
Tel. +351 253 353 402



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THE LOOM

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Rispele  
1927