

earth alchemy earth alchemy earth

# relearning life on earth

Here we are all together, human beings, animals, plants, living on a planet that is round and free of barriers, an ecosystem of inexplicable bounty and beauty, of which we are a part. Every day, Earth provides us with enough to breathe, to drink, to eat, thanks to a tremendously efficient organization in which there is neither money nor authority. Everything nevertheless works optimally.

Remembering this fact is difficult: as humans we create absolutely nothing. The Earth gives us everything. Nothing we have comes from elsewhere. Art itself is but an attempt to attain beauty and universal truth that is inherent in Nature, which is ever beautiful. The perfect proportions, the harmony, are but a reflection of this plenitude that is offered to us, that contains everything, that emanates divine essence.

How could we have been so blind? Isn't Earth our true mother, intimately connected to ourselves? The indigenous peoples of the world are stewards of the planet who remind us of this. What is our real relationship with Earth? We live in symbiosis with her.

It is essential for us to feel close to Nature. This sensation of well-being is like returning home. Being immersed in nature inevitably shows us our relationship with the world. Nature is a source of personal experience, of irreplaceable re-discovery of the Self. Ecological awareness is nothing more than self-awareness, the consciousness of our destiny as a person and as the human race.

Having a large expanse of pure nature at our disposal is a privilege we must make good use of. Fazenda Catuçaba has the double vocation of being part hospital, part Nature school: we need care, fresh air and attention to cure our ailments and re-learn directly from the living world. Fazenda Catuçaba is a place out of this world and out of time, where an intimate connection exists with Nature, facilitating a communion with the Earth and rediscovery of its deep meaning. Wide open spaces, outdoor architecture and art, nourishment for the body and soul, animals running free, rediscovery of the meaning of sacredness, ancestral wisdom, venerable trees, plant elixirs, are some of the elements of a subtle alchemy, a natural and experimental laboratory serving our transformation and that of our era.

The meaning of Fazenda in Portuguese is “the place where we make, where we produce”, and Catuçaba, in Tupi-guarani, Brazil's indigenous language, signifies “land of the righteous, good earth”. Nothing can define this place better than this predestined name. In the last decade, many realizations were done here in many fields, seemingly diverse at first but altogether coherent and serving a unique mission: that of returning to Nature, to one's own essential nature.

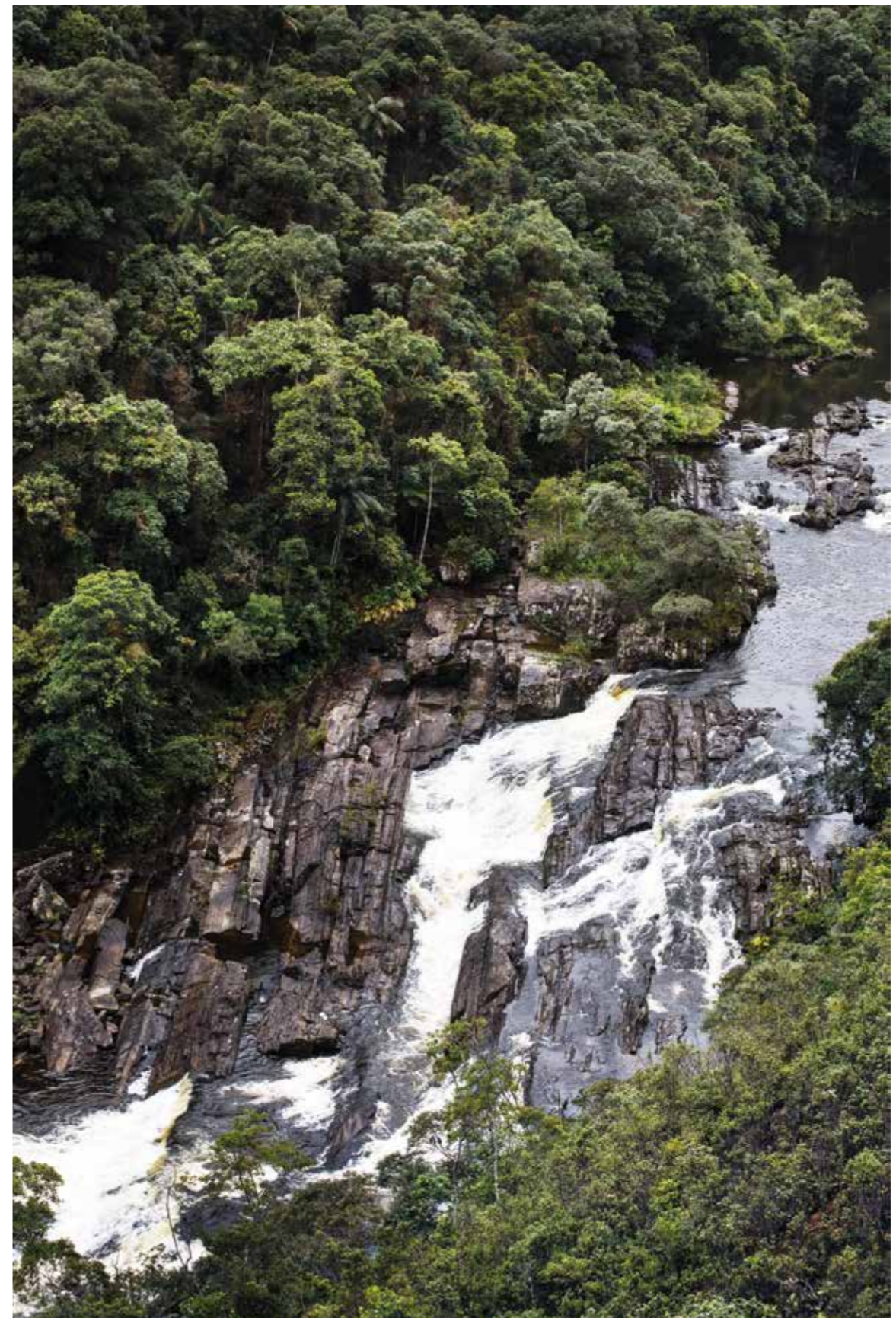


Space, abundance, generosity, land of welcoming and tolerance... These words define the essence of Brazil, where beyond the clichés and the circumstances, lies a marvelous peace, a particular energy that can be felt by everyone, perhaps because this large country has not seen any significant war.

Can we reduce a country to its political climate, to its economic potential? The worth of a land and its inhabitants is determined by a thread more subtle and longer lasting. There is a type of magic in Brazil that has made it a New World, a land of possibilities for so many, from its inception and repeatedly throughout its history. At this crossroads of reinventing our existence on Earth, a freedom space is needed.

Thirty kilometers away from the ocean, at the edge of the Mata Atlantica, one of the richest ecosystems on the globe where leopards, howler monkeys, toucans and hummingbirds live, Fazenda Catuçaba spreads out over 1,700 acres of forests, lakes, rivers, farm land and pasture. Here and there, an isolated house, in which to live with the rhythm of the land, a few horses running free, a man at work in the early morning.

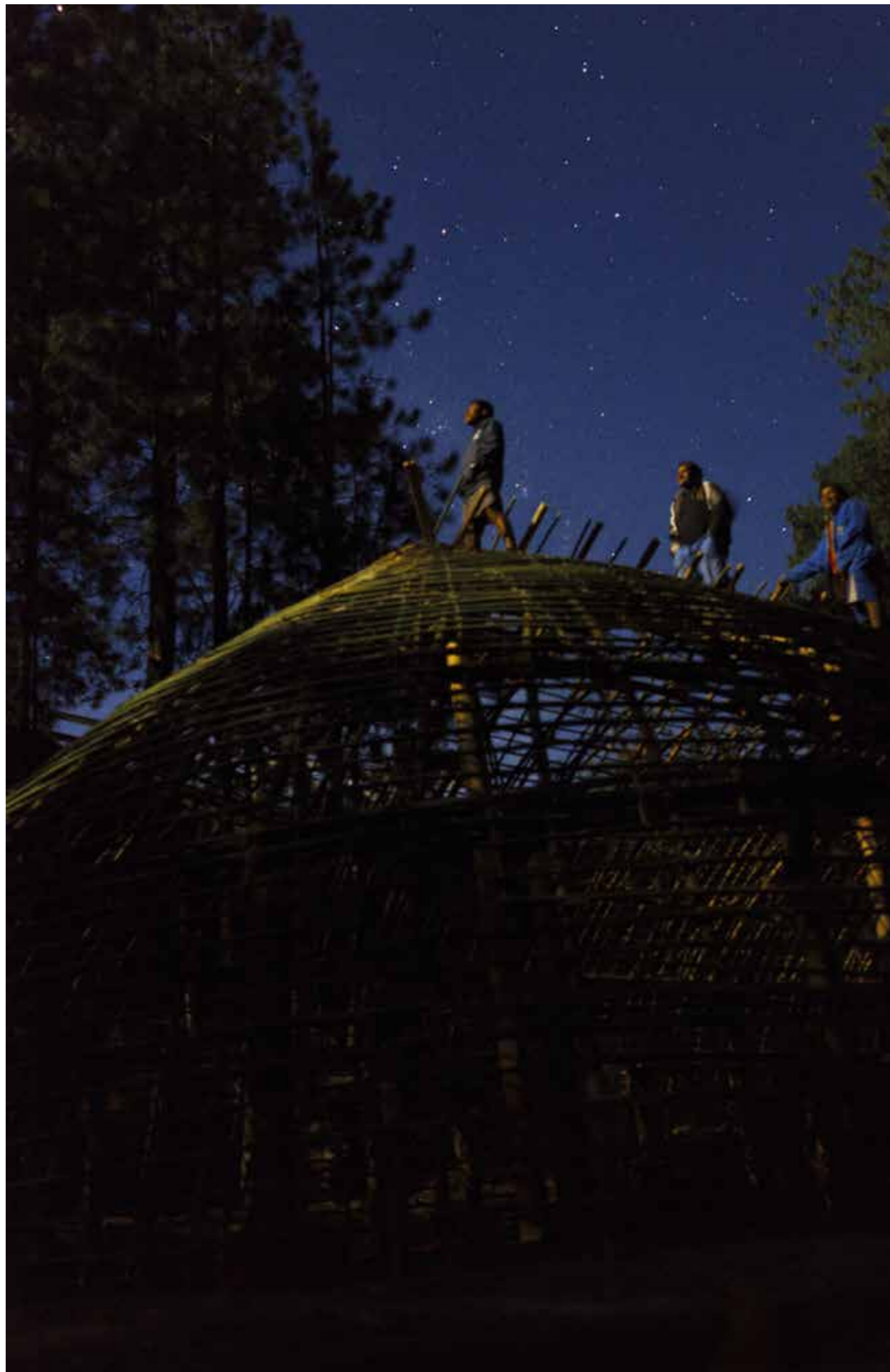
The real riches grow here: abundant water, pure air, total silence, unlimited time. The property counts more than 40 spring water sources, and the first neighbour is kilometers away. In this paradise regained, it is possible to build, create beauty, brainstorm solutions for the future, and dream the world of tomorrow.















The *manga larga* horses, a strong breed, are extremely docile and make fine companions for expedition trips across the primary forest to the sea, three days away.





abundance earth

Nature thrives thanks to an ingenious equilibrium between the animal kingdom and the plant world. Every single being has its place, and this logic, whether it is perceived as competition or as complementary, gives birth to an abundance that one must witness to understand fully.

At the Fazenda, we farm primarily vegetables, but we live with the animals. Around the house, a few geese play the role of watchmen and announce visitors, while peacocks display their sumptuous feathers. Cats and dogs honor each guest with their discreet and benevolent presence. The hens are so at home they seem to be the true inhabitants of the place. A flock of curious guinea fowls sometimes runs across the hallway. Some sheep in the orchard just next to the house bless everyone with their peaceful energy.

We are immersed in rediscovering what we really need to live. Food, of course, and the primary experience of getting it in nature ourselves, and being in constant contact with animals. This process triggers a natural delight particularly in the young ones - because this awareness of the source is a return to our childhood state: milking a cow, pulling carrots from the soil, finding eggs hidden in the shrubs. These simple actions inspire essential emotions that connect us to our ancestors and our condition as human beings on Earth. Catching a fish, grilling it, eating it. Picking fruit off the tree.

To learn to feed oneself is to remember we are self-sufficient. This is true at the community level, but is also a powerful realization on the personal level. Feet and hands in the soil, we realize that we do not take from Nature, but that she gives to us.

Animals and plants live in harmony here in a permaculture model that leaves space for local traditions and collaborates with natural forces. The result: beautiful produce, health and joy.







Every morning, Damião, the vegetable garden wizard, brings his treasures to the kitchen table for the lunchtime selection.





Every item of produce has its nobility and beauty. We contemplate it before eating it - for additional pleasure. They are all Nature's artworks.







A leisurely stroll to the vegetable garden is an adventure that awakens all the senses and endlessly reveals new secrets.





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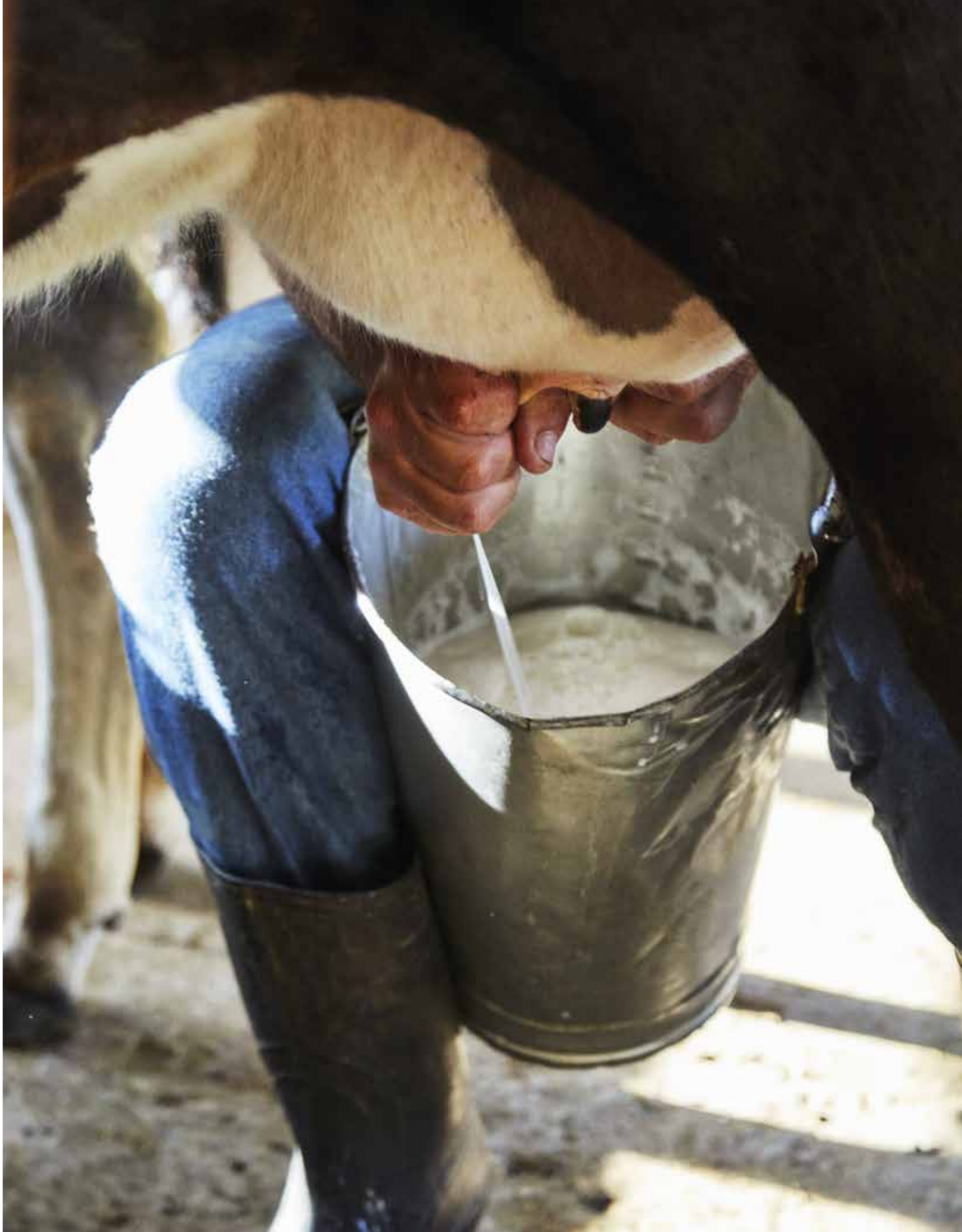
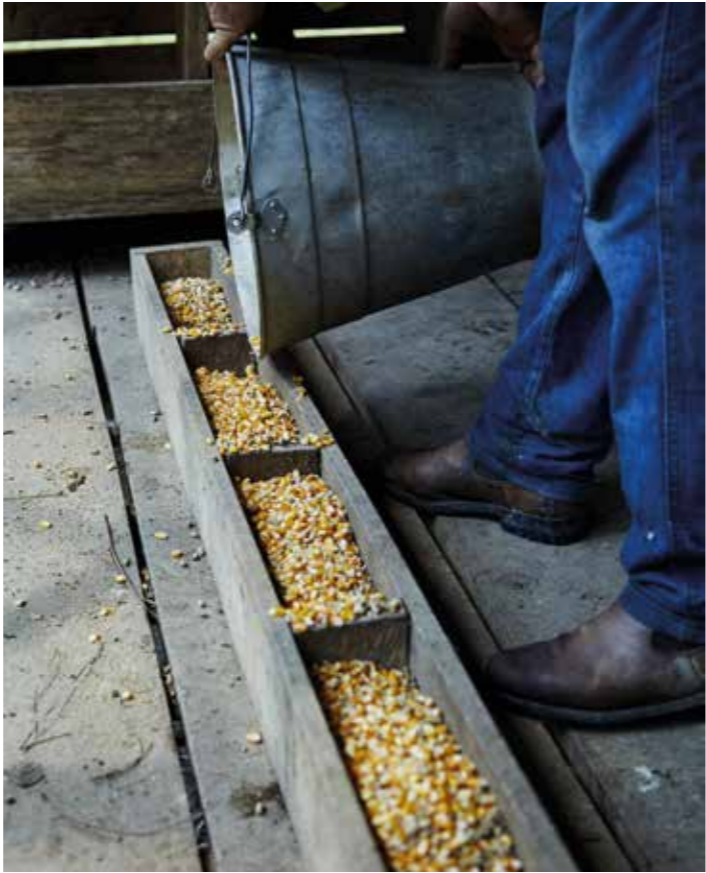


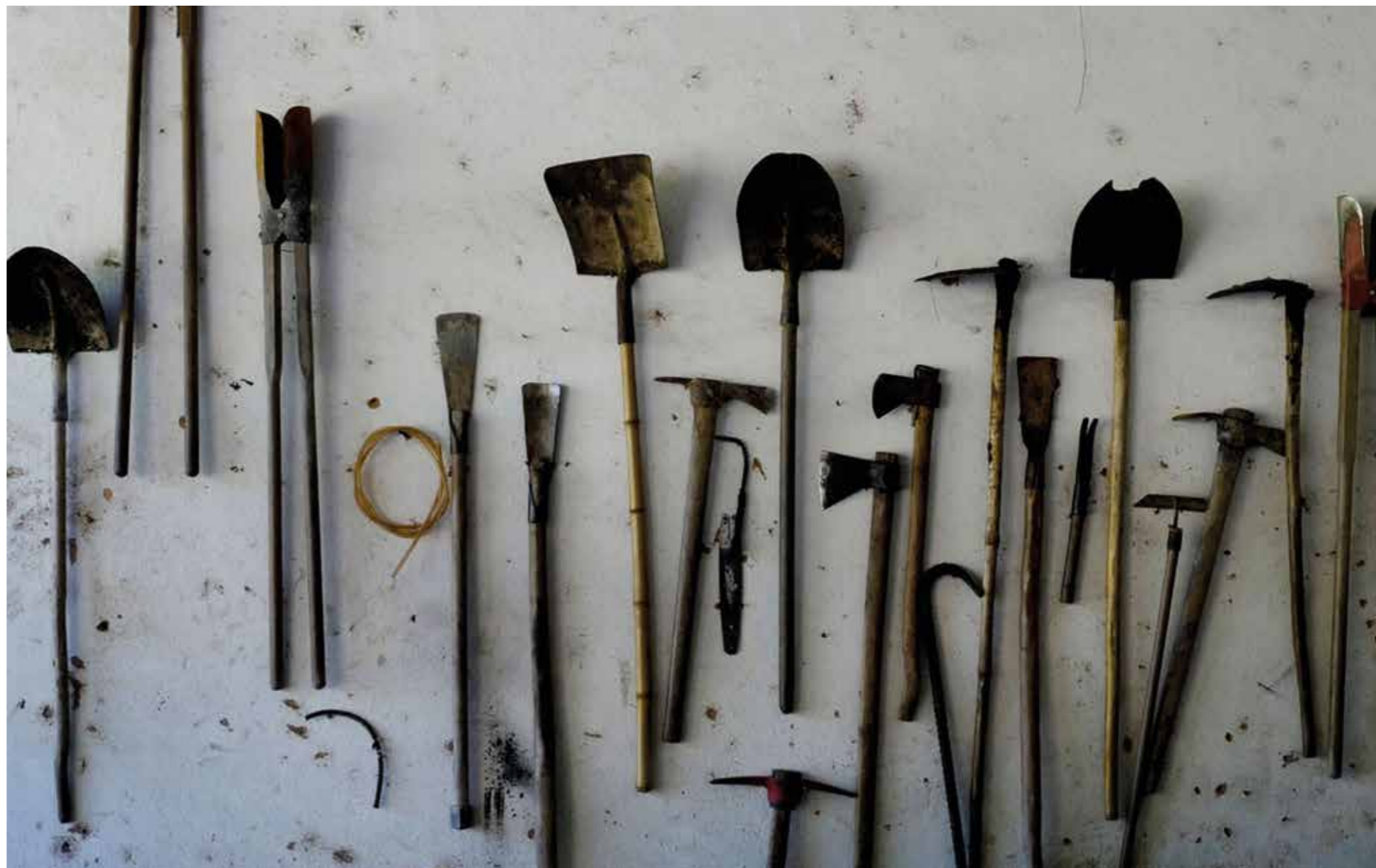


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nourishing earth

Preparing the essential foods: healthy flours (cassava, corn, buckwheat, ground from roots and grains that we grow ourselves), cheese made from our cows' milk, bread, butter, honey, alcohol distilled from our sugar cane. Rediscovering food preparation – raw, cooked, the wood stove – and how to get quantities and nutrition right.

Then feasting with ceremony: eating a picnic with your fingers under a tree near a stream, or over a white tablecloth at candlelight, under the stars. Eating together is a daily ritual, a celebration of life, of exchanging and sharing. The Supper is the foundation of our civilizations.

There lies the most extraordinary alchemy: everything we eat becomes ourselves. We integrate not only the foods we eat but also the energies they contain. Which is why the place where they grow and the intention with which they are prepared are so important.

Almost everything on our table grows here - was born here and lived free, and was gathered or killed with respect on site, with love. We consume the poultry and pigs, but not the cows, as it is an ancient tradition here. We do not kill wildlife either, nor insects. Each has a precise function, as well as a right to live, to occupy space.

Nothing is produced for sale. Everything is reserved for the home consumption of those who live here or those who come to visit. No economies of scale: everything must be of the best possible quality. All this is part of our experimentation in the search for a more efficient and fair model, beyond commercial logic.













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*Pão de queijo* (Brazilian cheese bread) for breakfast, fresh pasta made from eggs from the chicken coop, warm breads straight out of the oven.





Little snacks: coffee grown on the property, bread with *requeijão*, cassava crêpes with cheese and honey.











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Collecting plants from the garden for the laboratory: sage, fennel, macela, urucum, aloe vera, bálsamo, erva cidreira, tanchagem, peppermint, basil.



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Bees produce the green propolis from the resin of *Baccharis Dracunculifolia* (*alecrim do campo*) - or field rosemary. Some worker bees are entirely dedicated to the fabrication of this substance, which is necessary to protect the hive. The product is so powerful that it allows bees to embalm a small animal that would have made its way into the colony, so that the hive need not be vacated. It has cancer-preventing properties amongst others that are being discovered and studied in Japan.





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Green propolis preparation: once collected from the hives, the propolis is preserved in pure water or grain alcohol.





Collecting honey while leaving enough for bees to feed on and thrive. Brazil is an apiarist's paradise because there is no disease that targets bees. Clear water and pure mountain air on hundreds of square kilometers make a unique environment for our bee sanctuary.





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Honey is also an extremely beneficial substance for man, as described by Rudolph Steiner in 1923. Pure honey transmits bee-specific energy conserved by the geometry of the honeycomb's alveoli. Ancient texts which speak of a country of "milk and honey" do not refer to material riches – those staples being modest – but to health.

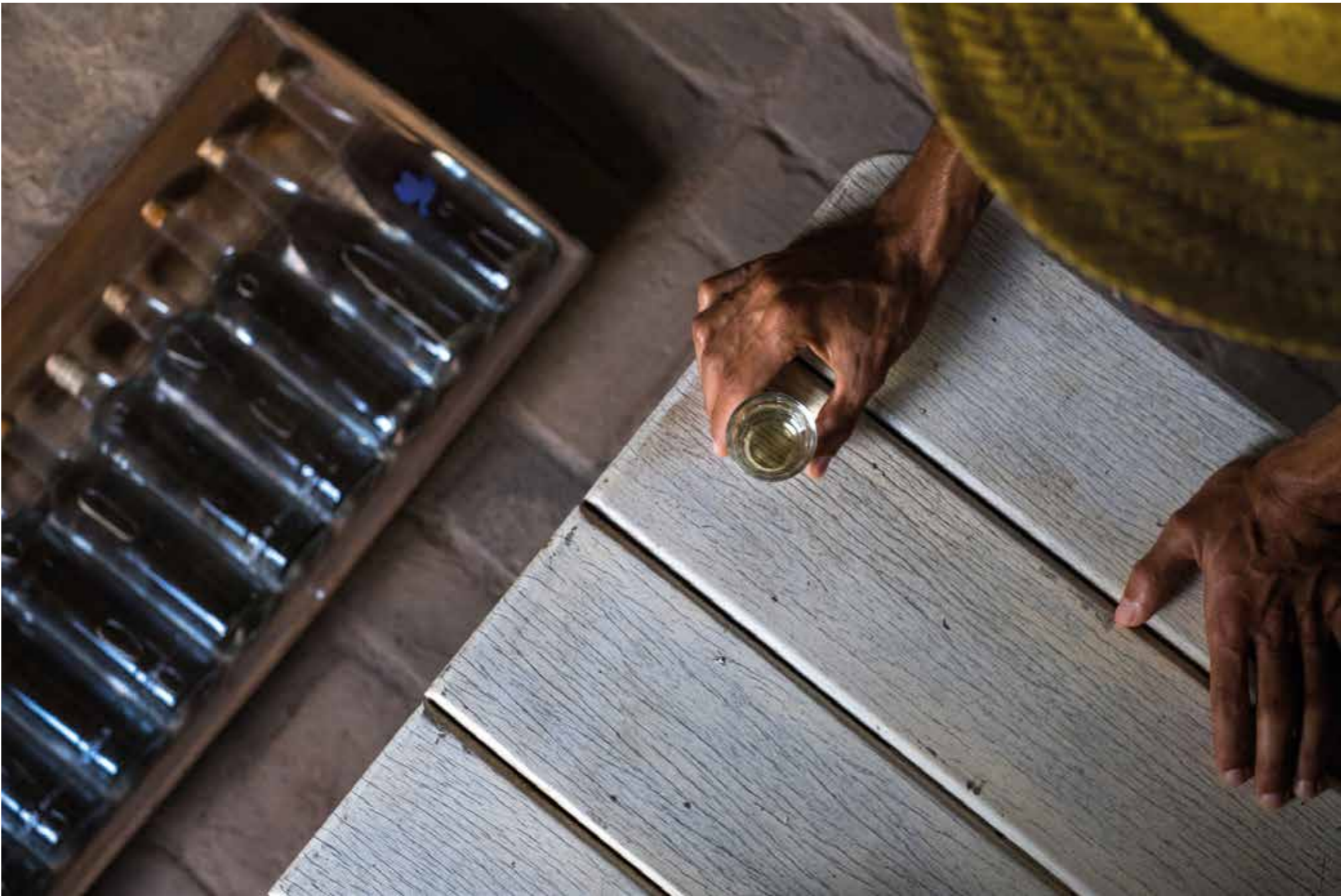




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Alcohol has its place in our civilization's culture. Here it takes the form of the *cachaça*, alcohol distilled in the village from sugar cane grown on the property, aged in barrels made of Amazonian wood. A sage once said: "There are three ways to commune with spirit: through prayer and meditation, humour and laughter, and wine and alcohol. That is why all three are called *"spirit"*."





houses on earth

Amazonian Indians say their house is a representation of themselves, as well as a representation of planet Earth. Imagine what our behaviour would be if, like them, we had learned this with certainty from birth. We would have three homes: our Body, our House, and Earth.

If we become aware that we have neglected our three homes, we start wanting to live differently, questioning the houses we live in. It is yet another realization that we must come to.

Perfect architecture, that follows the principles of sacred geometry based on the golden rule - like that of the Indians' oca - and an ecological modern architecture in nature, have more in common than they seem: both reconcile us with an invisible sense of harmony. Architecture dictates who we are. A well-proportioned house, placed in the right location in the landscape, is a happiness machine. Our ancestors knew this, intuitively through their observation of Nature, or through passed down knowledge, which we have also forgotten.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, founder of the Cistercians, said: God is length, width, height and depth, making reference to the divine proportions that are found in Nature as well as in any balanced construction, and that transmit to its occupants the world's harmony. What would our planet, villages and cities resemble if construction proportions and good architecture had been respected? Surely a different balance would prevail.

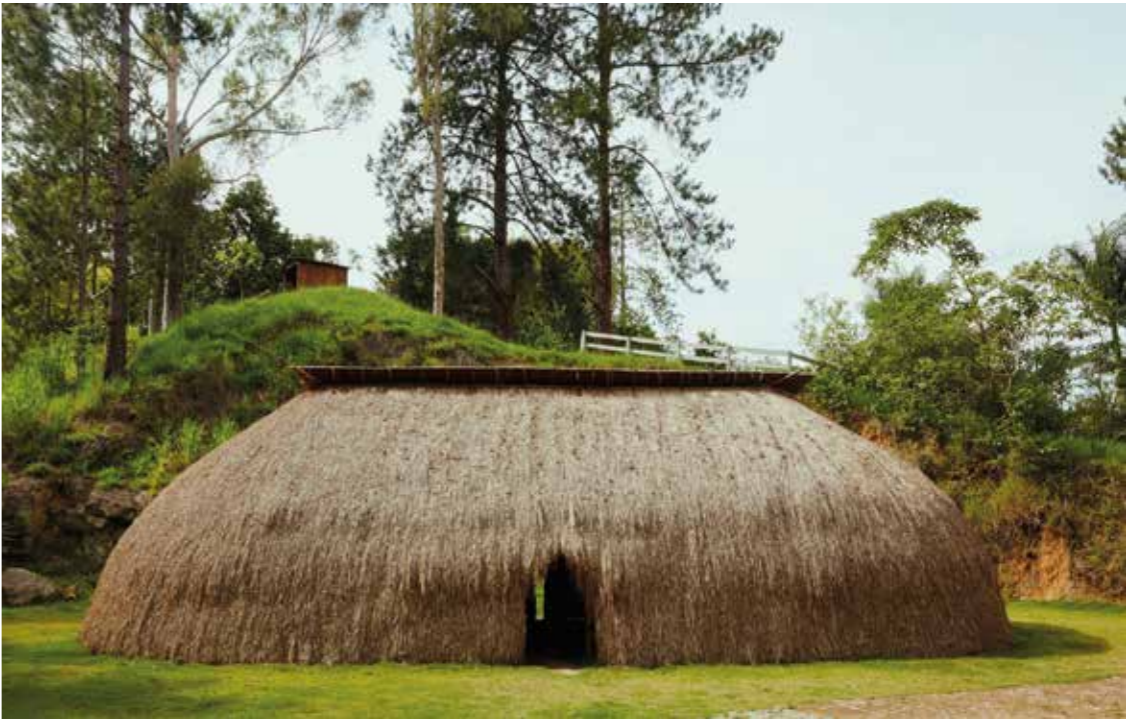
We are here to attempt to rediscover and transmit ancestral knowledge and to build the world of tomorrow. Our utopia is called "how to live in the world". What do we need? Sufficient space, beauty, common sense.





In 2014, Catuçaba received a group of eight natives of the Mehinakus tribe from the Xingu region, invited as architects in residence. They built an oca similar to the houses they inhabit themselves in the forest - in a mere three weeks - almost exclusively from elements in our local environment. The oca is 120 m<sup>2</sup> (1,292 square feet) and can accommodate 20 people in hammocks.



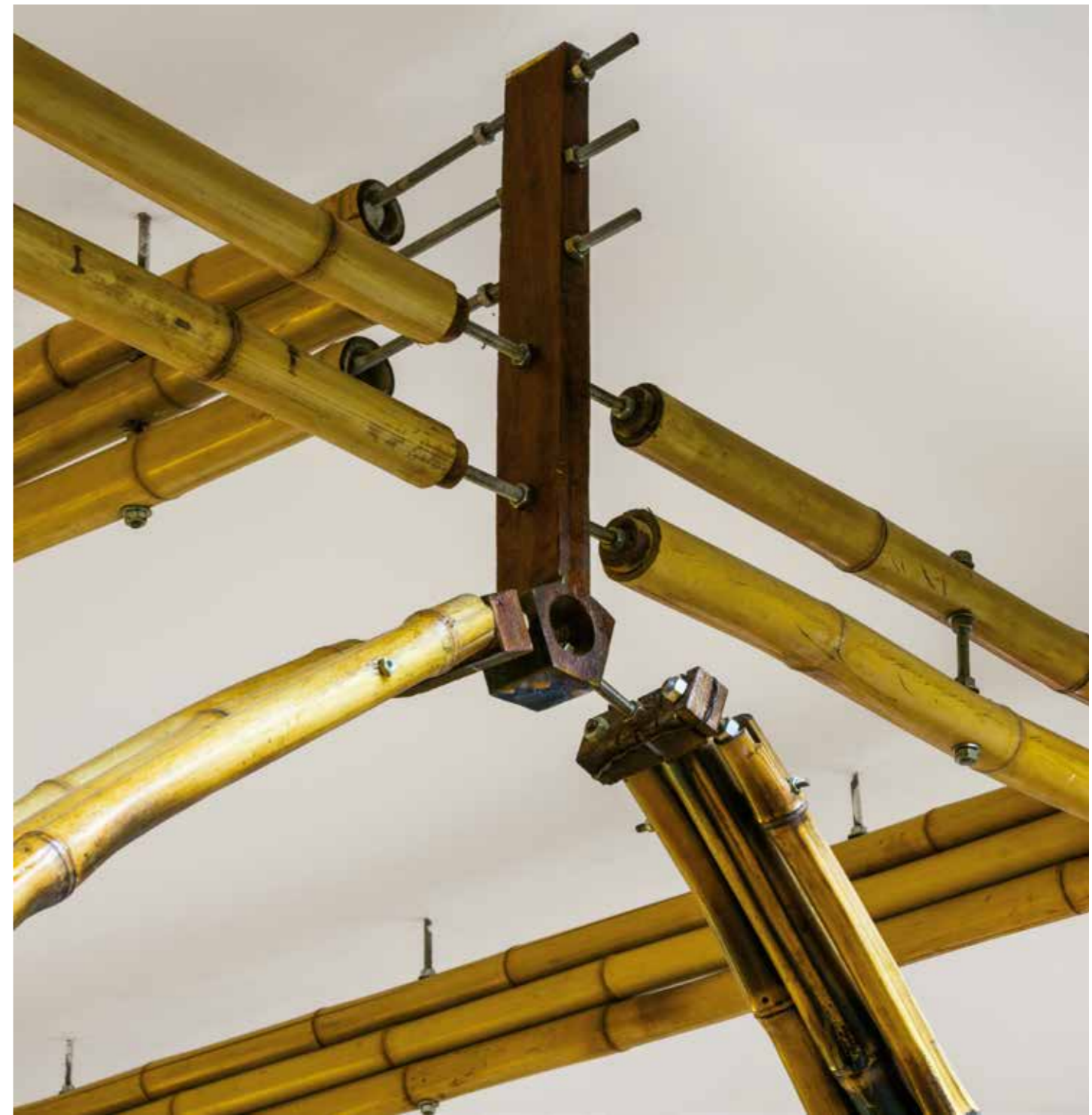






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Created by Belgian architect and bamboo expert Sven Mouton, this art gallery was erected in October 2016, inspired by Cistercian monasteries. The gallery is an architectural synthesis of the colonial house and the indigenous oca, utilizing the same base materials: clay and bamboo.





The role of the gallery is to bring Art back to Nature. Exhibits are organized there in collaboration with galleries in São Paulo. Highly versatile, it can also be used as a space for meditation, practicing yoga, hosting a meeting or sharing a meal.







The first child says: "It's the X on the map. Underneath it, is the treasure!"  
"No, says the second child. It is a spaceship that landed on the hill, and when it takes flight, it turns into a ball..."





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A prototype made in 2014 by the Brazilian and Uruguayan architect office MAPA, this comfortable and entirely self-sufficient cabin is an invitation to live in direct contact with the elements and makes it possible to tangibly experience the relationship between man and landscape.





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The main building, built in 1840 and maintained over the years, was revamped in 2009 and contains a total of 10 different extension rooms. It is made exclusively of bamboo, earth and wood - just like the art gallery, the indigenous *oca*, and the *modernista-caipira* house.







The Casa *Modernista-Caipira*, created by Brazilian architect Marcio Kogan and Emmanuel Rengade, is the first certified self-sufficient designer's house in Brazil. It shows that remoteness and high quality design are wonderfully compatible.







Nature teaches us what language cannot. A simple sunset, a full moon rising or a shooting star, instantly re-establishes our deep connection to the Cosmos. It reconciles us with ourselves, inexplicably so. This absence of words is crucial.

Pious lands, the mountains around Catuçaba are adorned with crosses and chapels, places of worship in the middle of nature, often installed where there was already a sense of intensity, a landscape favourable to self-connection. At the top of other hills or at the bottom of a valley, artists who have come to Catuçaba have felt these earthen energies and offered their works, in harmony with the landscape and its inhabitants.

Creating art is a sacred endeavour. Art's role is to reveal the invisible. On the other side of art lies spirituality, which naturally becomes universal in the great outdoors. In Joseph Campbell's words, art is Nature's mirror.

Local religiosity, ancestral wisdom, the sacredness of the trees and lakes, all blend in with art works, projects, objects or films that reinterpret a different facet of these lands' and their inhabitants' unique vibe. Wherever there is beauty and meaning, sacredness becomes tangible and entices us to reconnect with forgotten dimensions of ourselves.





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*Capela Nossa Senhora Aparecida*, circa 1920. These chapels are the meeting place for annual celebrations and grassroots festivities gathering nearby farmers. The sanctuary of Our Lady of *Aparecida*, located 50 kilometers (31 miles) from Catuçaba, gave its name to several churches and sanctified chapels in the region and is the worshipping place of the most venerated black Madonna in Brazil.





The worship of the *Divino*, represented by a bird which symbolizes Spirit, is a popular cultural event predominant in this region of Brazil. It is often associated to the Ascension, although this tradition is distinct from the agenda of the Christian Church, and may be celebrated at any date in winter. It is unique to Portugal and Brazil.



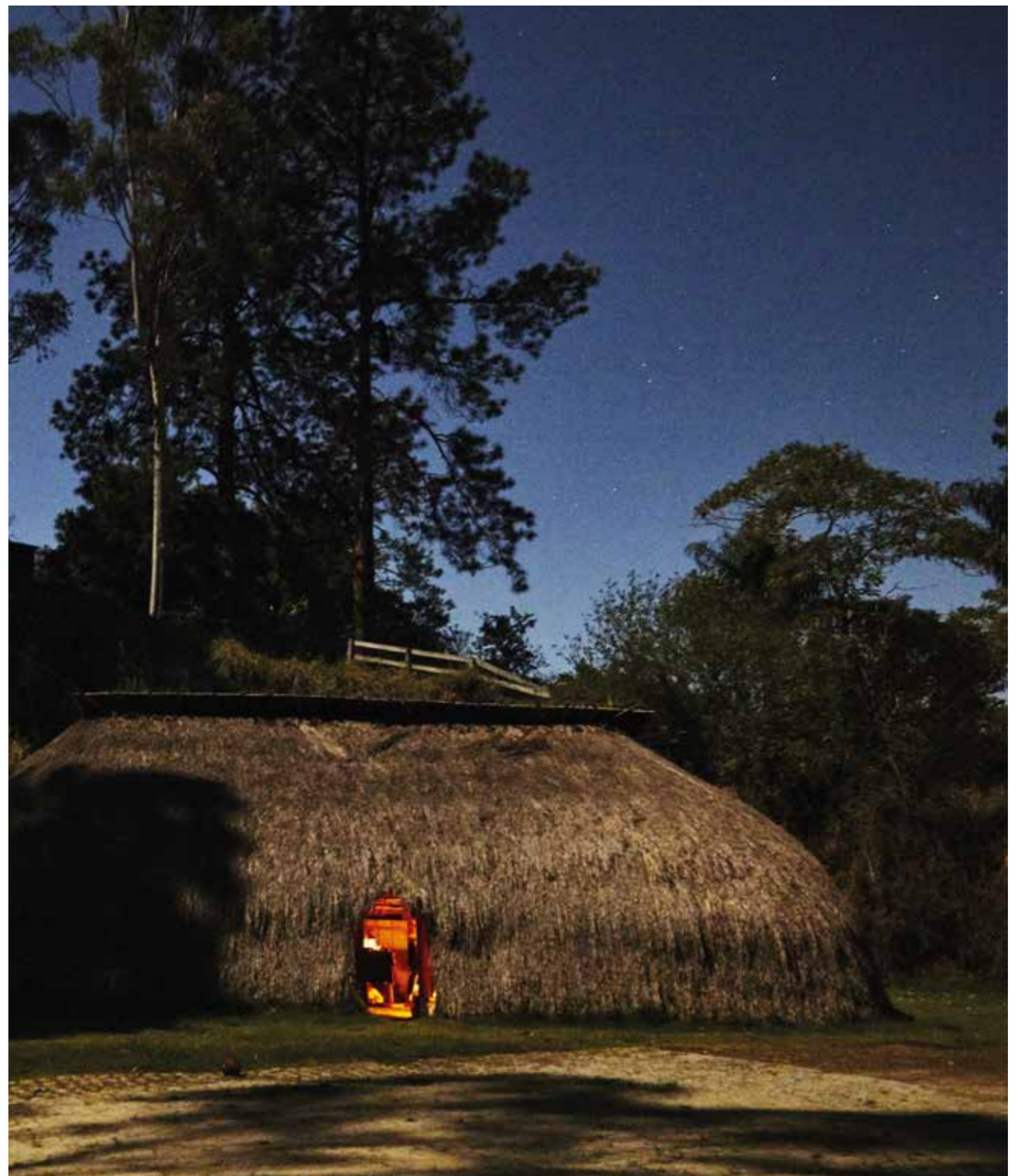


The ceremonies of the *Divino* last 15 days and culminate in the *cavalhada*, an impressive fight on horseback between Christians and Moors - which stages the story of the *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula in the 13th century. Catuçaba, located in the district of São Luis do Paraitinga, is one of only two places in the world where these ceremonies have survived, a testimony to the strength of local religious traditions.





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Since 2010, the Artists in Residence program of the Catuçaba Institute has welcomed to the Fazenda plastic artists, sculptors, photographers, filmmakers and designers from around the world. On this page, Argentinian artist performer and photographer Juan Doffo (2014).



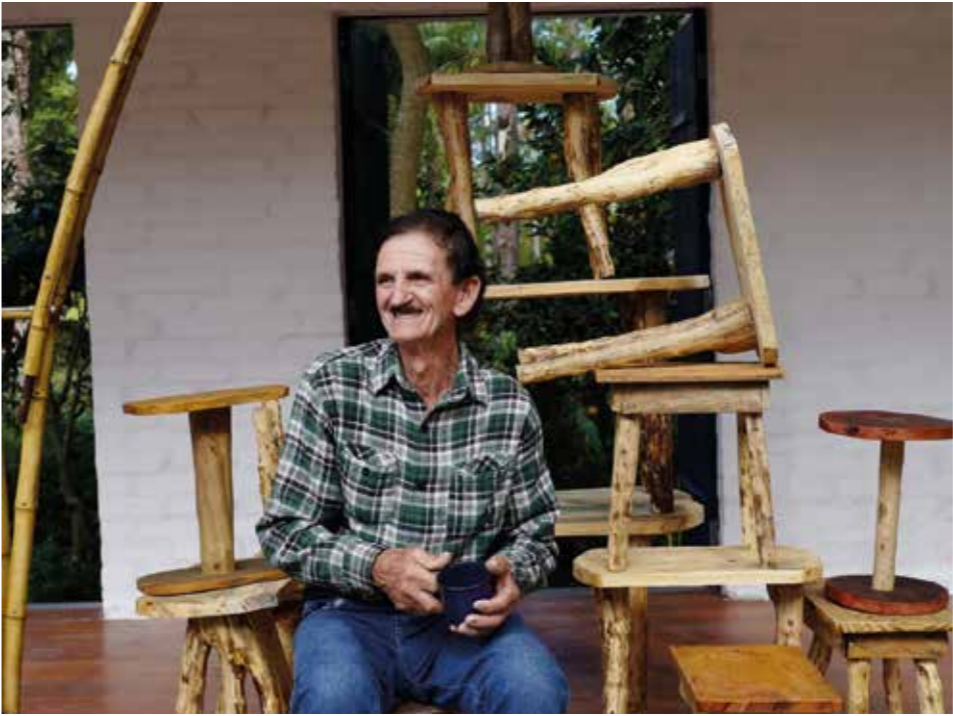


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The Brazilian designers Fernando and Humberto Campana devised in the hills their biggest land-art piece to date. Named *Bamboo Cathedral*, it is imagined as a meditation space or a meeting place for the dwellers of the isolated homes on the property (2014-2018).



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Field workers become artisans, designers or artists during their leisure time, freely breaking the boundaries between art and craft.





Brazilian popular artwork and wood designs found their place within the main house.  
 On this page: bench by Hugo França, chair by the Campana Brothers. Next page: art pieces of artist Veio in the oca.







*Portal do Sul* (2011-2017) by Belarusian artist Pasha Radetzki, is a collection of 12 structures arranged on over 250 acres that express the idea of homes in the middle of nowhere. The main piece, with its door facing North, invites change from the South (Brazil, India, Africa...). Built from salvaged wood, destined to be progressively destroyed by the elements, it was set on fire on Spring solstice, day of renewal, by the artist himself, to accelerate its destruction in order to build a new, long-lasting structure.



Immediately afterwards, the same door was rebuilt: this time in Amazonian hardwood. Six years later, its meaning has evolved: it now represents a portal, a passage from this time to a new time, one towards which we are evolving as a humanity, in which each one of us can personally contribute to wordly evolution. It has become a ritual, an opening onto other dimensions, a breach towards all possibilities.



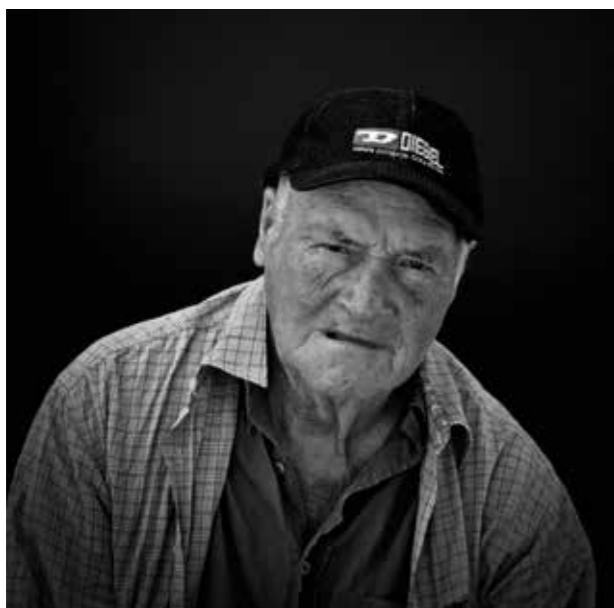
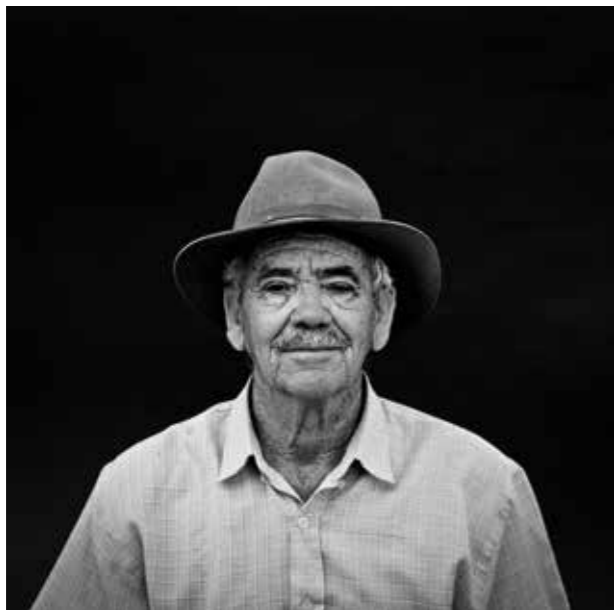
In 2013, during the course of one full year, filmmaker Bruno Jorge and photographer Fernanda Preto spent time at Catuçaba - immersed with the local population - to visually capture a world in transition. This was the first artists' residency organized at Fazenda Catuçaba.

Film : CATUÇABA, Bruno Jorge, 2013

Catuçaba, a village of 800 souls at 180km (110 miles) of São Paulo, is the stage of its inhabitants' actions and memories. Life drifts slowly here - far from the hectic pace of the big cities - and people have been making the same movements for generations. It's a simple life - peppered with religious celebrations dynamic with song, music and dance. There's a feeling of warmth, an old-fashioned countryside warmth. In people's memory - each event rapidly becomes a legend. Basking in a time interrupted and in a seductive setting, Catuçaba is a baroque fairytale with ordinary characters - reminiscent of the magical realism of novels by Gabriel García Márquez or Jorge Amado. "During the shoot," said Bruno Jorge, "we had the feeling their stories didn't need to be told. The impetus to tell a story arises when tales become historical and cultural heritage from the past. In Catuçaba however, the tales are about events from people's actual lives; that's the difference. This little village seems to spread its own legends and allegories to its daily life and turn its every move into myth."

Next pages:  
Portraits, CATUÇABA, Fernanda Preto (2013)





Film : *Luis Pedro, His name remains*, 2014, Ethan Goldwater

This wonderful short-film, first episode of a series of three, recounts the story of a man who built his own code of honor. Made by filmmaker in residence Ethan Goldwater (from New-York), the film narrates how 30 years ago, Luis Pedro, descendant of the first owners of Fazenda Catuçaba, discovered the body of a man no one knew anything about in the Santa Cruz Valley. He buries him, and vows to build a chapel on his grave. Years later, he fulfills his promise.

It is the story of an astonishing character who contemplates life through a perspective totally distinct from our contemporary way of seeing things. At nearly 80 years old, Luis Pedro embodies the soul and memory of Fazenda Catuçaba.

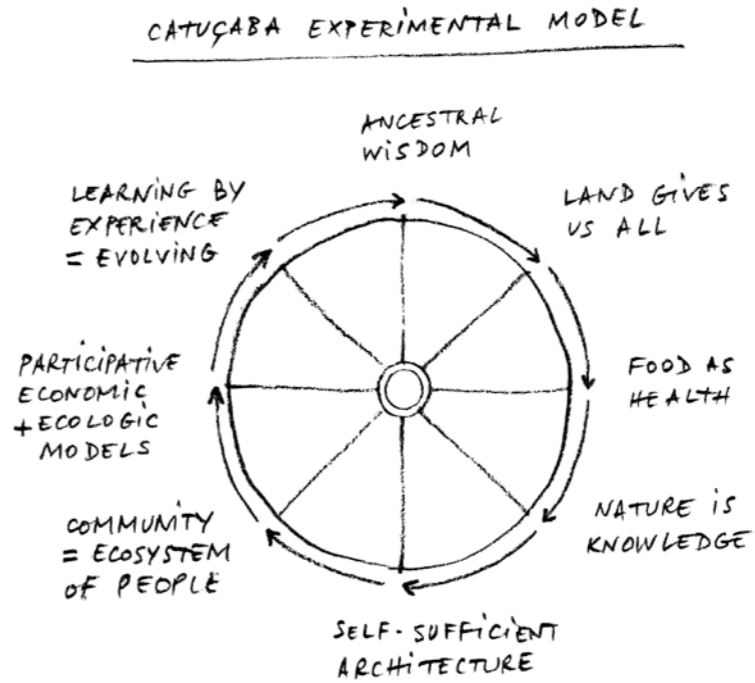


During the residency of Argentinian artist Juan Doffo, Ethan Goldwater has been on the property for several months with his team - filming the second episode of his film - *His name remains*. He approaches performing artist Juan Doffo, specialised in the use of fire, to create a short film on his work at Fazenda Catuçaba.

Thrown into a complicity due to the convivial setting, Ethan then convinces Juan to play a character in his second film, interlacing the two storylines. This type of collaborative spirit between artists keeps reoccurring in following residences.



building our dream world together



Art of living, art of hospitality, art of nurturing, art of loving... The entire underlying storyline of this book is about how to be in the world. This particular way to be, to exist, is imbued with a beauty that gets to our soul, because its rightness connects us to a deep truth we can feel, even though we cannot define it.

When we speak of “art” we really hear “sacred”. Sacredness does not rely on a spirituality limited to certain spaces: if we pay proper attention, we can see it is present in every thing, every attitude, every thing that is making sense, that is connected to its environment. Music, dance, singing, hiking in nature, swimming in a lake, an insect on a flower, can be entirely permeated with beauty, and reconnect us to the sacred. Nature itself is a creation that is of divine essence in every aspect: working the soil is a sacred connection, as is eating food, healing our bodies...

On this path of rapid evolution as a species, we feel the need to bring enchantment back into our lives, our homes, our relationships, and our diets - to reestablish the sacred dimension of the world. Our incessant search for places to travel, for other cultures, for art-induced emotions, our thirst for idealism, all suggest a universal quest for a meaningful world. It is that world that we need to recreate, and it is possible to do so, in a simple manner, by rediscovering our essence, our unity. Once we accomplish this reconciliation and attune our world vision, our intentions and our actions will naturally manifest the universe our hearts long for.

Words do not suffice at this point: we need action and engagement. At the time of this book’s publishing - in early 2019 - scientists have alerted the majority of western populations that if we do not radically change direction, if we don’t question the dogmas moulding our lives - the frantic pursuit of growth, the search of happiness through material wealth, the unconscious exploitation of natural resources - our human race won’t have a future. Indigenous peoples of the world, who have kept an intimate communication with the Earth - are unanimous and have a more alarming message than any media: we have only five to six years before reaching the point of no return. In response, they are therefore stepping out of their villages and forests, of their benevolent silence to help us and to remind us of our ancestral wisdom and responsibility towards our planet. A widespread awareness is blossoming, a global spiritual awakening.

At the same time, nothing seems to really be changing. We need to recognize and accept that our system is failing: ecologically, socially, politically, morally, philosophically... It falls on us to change it, but not to replace it by a more or less identical system. Like the change we need to invoke for ourselves, the change required is deep and may seem frightening: we need to die in order to be reborn. But nothing is in reality more natural - as it is the true cyclical movement of Nature and the Universe to come back to the Self - then open up to the world.

Fazenda Catuçaba's vision

After 10 years of running the Fazenda as a small spirited hotel and self-sufficient farm, constantly experimenting towards a holistic model, it became obvious to us, after witnessing the intensity of our guests' experiences and Catuçaba's transformative energy - that we needed to manifest more of what we had in us. We therefore decided to assume our role as an energetic hub, and dedicate our work to consciousness evolution - with longer stays to allow for the time necessary and the space suitable for deep change to become possible.

We discovered that what matters is to be together physically in the true inspiration of Nature and with enough ease and time, because very little can be accomplished alone, but despite this, the way our society is organized isolates us from one another. We need to reunite and reconcile our natural complementary talents, visions, and financial means. By being together in this context, with the same sincere intentions, the deep feelings of brotherhood and collaboration that unite us as humans spontaneously resurface, and solutions emerge.

Slowing down to step into action

The idea to step outside society to rethink the world is not a novel one. Yet now, more than ever, it is necessary to step out of our lives and observe them in quietude - far from the noise and complexity of the cities. Despite our best intentions, our urban lives seem to have become far too hectic. We need to make proper time to question what we do, find who we are, and which role we can play in the changes happening.

Many people on the planet at this moment of time have decided to align their life with the necessities of our destiny as humankind, and are geared to action, determined to bring their contribution to a change of paradigm. Many others have set their intention to do so, but do not know how to do it. Fazenda Catuçaba is designed to be a gathering place for the first, an inspiring place for the second, and a hub where all can meet and act together.

We have chosen to remain small, and to take the time. We can accommodate 20 people, as if in a large home - in addition to long-term residents. We do longer stays only, because fully opening up to the experience of here is a gradual process. We need generous time and space to really connect, and we also want to take the time to host personally everyone that comes to see us.

Action, creation and transmission formats

The idea to step outside society to recreate the world is not a novel one, but today, more than ever, it is necessary to position ourselves outside our lives and observe them in quietude, far from the noise and complexity of the cities.

The chosen formats allow for deployment and experimentation of new economic models in which the intention to contribute to the world precedes that of making money - all the while ensuring our self - sustainability in an independent manner.

We host our guests in three distinct ways at Fazenda Catuçaba (in addition to the hotel service we still intend to offer only to our friends and habitués) in order to address a diverse public and serve that intention. This opens the door to different options and different financial realities (pay a fee, trade, or free access), but always based on a reciprocal desire to unite efforts with our guests' - in a richer, more meaningful and more productive relationship.

**Retreats** gather a group of 10 to 12 people for 12 intense days during which a deep reconnection takes place in the privileged settings of Fazenda Catuçaba's 1,700 acres and installations. The group dynamic is supportive of individual experiences and space is held for each person to have their own journey of discovery.

Inspired by artist in residence programs, **Residencies** are an exchange of a specific talent needed at the Fazenda, for a transformative experience which happens by being part of this ecosystem of nature and people. The possibilities are many: permaculture, food, gastronomy, health, economic systems, and more.

**Workshops** aim to transmit essential messages often linked to ancestral traditions from around the world and their representatives: we intend to be a place where this original wisdom can be passed on and the energy and harmony of our land are supporting that mission.

A model destined to spread

We need to find without delay a sustainable human ecology inclusive of each and every one of us. There is a misunderstanding around the word "growth". It is not about material growth - which can only deplete the Earth, but about personal growth, mirrored by the collective growth of humanity - and attained in harmony with the support of the universe. More and more places on the planet are born with the intention of being hubs for personal growth. Fazenda Catuçaba is essentially the mothership and the laboratory of a model destined to spread through a physical network of places - that of Houses on Earth, **CasasNaTerra** - and around a platform of knowledge called *WeAreNature.com*.

As in monasteries, people come here to work on Self, together and with the Earth. The *ora et labora* (pray and work) of yesterday can be translated in contemporary language as an expression of one's deep intentions and actions. To give ourselves the chance to self-transform, to act within the world, to make our contribution. There is no dogma, no rules, other than the clear vision of a universal spirituality that translates into a personal experience of our connection to the world. This is an awareness that we are one and a desire to bring back to center the human spiritual dimension that we have forgotten and without which we cannot survive.



the call of Brazil

I have often wondered what led me to arrive in Bahia - during the 1997 carnival, not far from where the Portuguese set foot in 1500, with the idea of never returning. In love with the world, with adventure, and with my human brothers, I then traveled for months in the wild corners of this nature-country, asking each day along the road for room and board, or hanging my hammock between two trees. This land, I now know, was calling me, and I abandoned myself to her with trust, as in the arms of a mother.

What no one ever says about Brazil, a fact of great importance, is that colonization happened here very differently than in the rest of South America. The profound intention of a great number of initiates who have come to this part of the world was to renew humanity through an elaborate vision of universal spirituality - aimed to reconcile an European civilization deeply troubled by religious conflicts. Brazil was first built by Portuguese Kings, heirs of the Templar tradition. When they officially “discovered” in 1500 a country they in fact already knew, they first baptised it Land of the True Cross - in reference to the settlement of a new truth. They were carrying out a long-term mission in which, Christian faith was not a pretext to conquest, but a non-violent, conciliatory attitude - as much as was possible at the time - which is apparent in the lack of resentment to this day towards the invaders. Those kings (whether they actually came to this land or prepared their country for this mission) were joined and followed by a handful of extraordinary men, Jesuits, visionary and highly skilled organizers holding a pure intention.

This attitude of peace, fundamental message in our times, is inherent to the identity of a country that has uniquely never known a war of conquest, of independence, of a transition from monarchy to republic, or to end slavery. Additionally, the largest indigenous population of the world still living in nature (about 300,000) exists in Brazil - in the Amazon, while these peoples have been systematically massacred or alienated almost everywhere else. Those are the true intangible and fundamental assets of the fifth largest country in the world who will have a say in the next phase of our evolution on planet Earth.

A few years after this initiatory trip, I decided once and for all that to “make a living” in a big city wasn’t for me. I settled in a little fishermen’s village by the sea - in the protected paradise of Picinguaba - closer to this beloved nature. There, I fixed up an old building that became an oasis of reconnection, soon attracting people from all over the world. There, I learned to what extent our civilization has separated us from the sweetness of our mother earth, and by the same token from our conscience of the world and of ourselves.

One day in 2008, while searching the mountain for a piece of land to grow vegetables, I followed Catuçaba’s little dirt road I had walked past so often. Traffic down this particular road at the time was done on horseback, giving a western air to this remote country. A passerby had mentioned to me the presence of an old house a little further on. Animated by curiosity - and despite the approaching dusk, I continued to the end of the path. When I got there, I immediately felt it: “This is it”, I told myself. The groundskeeper, a man called Luis Pedro Pavret, welcomed me and introduced me to the place as though he had been expecting me for years. At that moment, I felt deep within that I had finally found my place on Earth.

I learned then that the main colonial building of the Fazenda was built by Luis Pedro’s ancestor, a Frenchman from Lyon - like myself - who had come to Brazil in 1840. His great-grandson, 78 years old, a man of extraordinary vigour and a great builder, dedicated his life to this place and its maintenance, and still takes care of it today. Since the day we met, I have never seen him without his legendary, forthright smile. We implicitly consider ourselves part of the same family, as we share the same work and intention.



At that time in my life, my first son was newborn and I had solemnly promised myself to never embark again into such an adventure, having struggled for seven years to create a special little hotel by the seaside - in Picinguaba. I wanted to live there and host people who, like myself, were fascinated by nature and passionate about a certain conception of human interaction - but the experience was not always an easy one. Nevertheless, that day in Catuçaba - the idea of acquiring a property without even knowing if it was up for sale, without any idea of its acreage or of the enormous amount of work required to maintain it, would not have stopped me from my immediate decision to move into this place. It also seemed like the ideal spot to grow a young family. All the financial needs and helpers materialized quickly, as if confirming this irrevocable destiny. A new story was beginning.

Catuçaba has therefore become a place where everyone, often unknowingly, comes to find their own answers in order to achieve what lies inside. It is a place where Nature, as a mother reuniting with her children after long wanderings, brings forward our truest selves, our true identity and our purpose in life, whether on a conscious level or not. It is a healing place open to all, but not to just anyone, that needs to be approached with humility while respecting the time required for it to work its magic.

Today, Luis Pedro, a small faithful team, my partner Bianca and myself, have the utmost pleasure of receiving all those who, like myself, are called there by the love of this place, of Brazil and beyond, and the magic of the Earth.

Emmanuel Rengade

the story behind this place



On these lands, we are merely pursuing a story started long, long ago. The path (still unpaved) that goes across the property of **Fazenda Catuçaba** was, in the 18th century, one of the roads connecting the interior of Brazil to Paraty, one of the major ports of access at the time. In the middle of the coffee trade era, this road was trodden by slaves, kings, and European immigrants.

**Ownership:**

**Prior to 1840:**

Presumably coffee and sugar cane plantations, before which the entire region was covered with primary Mata Atlantica forest.

**1840 - 1898: Antonio Silveiro Pavret**

Frenchman arrived from Lyon after the second revolt of the canuts, Antonio Pavret, ancestor of Luis Pedro Pavret, main character of the movie by Ethan Goldwater, builds the main homestead in the Portuguese colonial style during the time of the Empire of Brazil (1822 - 1899).

**1899 - 1983: Coelho family**

Following the abolition of slavery, the coffee plantation goes bankrupt and the property is purchased by the Coelho family, whose descendants still live in Catuçaba.

**1983 - 2008: José-Maria Leite**

A businessman from São Paolo, José-Maria Leite, buys the property and renovates it with Luis Pedro Pavret, descendant of its original builder, as project manager.

**2008: Fazenda Santa Helena Idta**

The property is bought by a consortium of friends led by Emmanuel Rengade, for the most part European.

partner and allies

Aldeia Itawana Mehinako  
Alejandro Cesar Orioli  
Anne Guesquière  
Artur Lesler  
Bajeco  
Best Made Co  
Bruno Jorge  
David Fuzatto  
Demian Quincke  
Dr José Edson Carreiro  
Erik Mootz  
Fernanda Preto  
Futon Company  
Galeria Estação  
Geneviève Maquinay-Deséglise  
Geoffroy De La Croix  
Gwenn Libouban  
Hugo França  
Humberto and Fernando Campana  
Inês Schertel  
Jean-Paul Ganem  
João Paulo Villani  
João Rodrigues  
Juan Doffo  
Julian Guderley and  
Lorrana Scarpioni  
Kamel Saci  
Kiko Simch  
Laure and Philippe Lemarchand  
Le Ciel Fondation  
Mapa Arquitetura

Marcio Kogan  
Mieko and Mario  
Pasha Radetzki  
Paulo Harcom  
Ponto Solidário  
Senhor Rômulo  
Studio MK27  
Sven Mouton  
Voyageurs du Monde

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Bastien Morin  
Bentão et Dona Maria  
Benedito Tino de Oliveira  
Benoit Rengade  
Bianca Borghetti  
Christophe Van Hamme  
Claire Gatinois  
Clark et Chica  
Cláudia Andujar  
Cláudio Manoel da Silva  
Damião Xavier da Silva  
Daniel et Marie- Josée Rengade  
Elda Muller  
Elon Fabio da Silva  
Ethan Goldwater  
Eva Francisca dos Santos  
Fabiana Zanin  
Famille Roellinger  
Felipe Ramirez  
Félix and  
Tomás Beiroco-Rengade

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François Champsaur  
Françoise Havinh  
Garance Primat  
Giselli Gumiero  
GNT- Casa Brasileira  
Gustavo Pinto  
Idália de Almeida  
Isabelle and Michel Mane  
Jean-François Rial  
Jeanne-Marie Leconte  
João Castanho  
John Parson +  
Jorge Ferreira  
Josinaldo Souza  
Julian Read  
Juliana Pinheiro Mota  
Kate Weinberg  
Lair Reis  
Lionel Bordeaux  
Lois de la Guerra  
Louis Jaubert  
Luciano Andrades  
Luis Pedro Pavret  
Marcela Falci  
Marciel Campos  
Mariana Aires  
Mariana Reali  
Marie-Claire Blanckaert  
Mélanie Boutet  
Michael Cahill

Milka Villani  
Mirian Badaró  
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