

Press Release

Immediate Release (23rd May 2011)

Antique Olive Press Uncovered during Green Renovation Project of Historic Building

During the comprehensive renovation of an old Cortijo in Motril workers discovered an ancient olive press which has now been restored. The Cortijo had been acquired by a cancer research charity and bought as an investment to convert into energy efficient and environmentally friendly apartments while preserving the historic integrity of the building. One of these apartments now features the restored olive press.

Luis Llopis, chief architect at Eco Vida, said:

“At first we didn’t know what it was. We knew it could be something of historical importance. We had to excavate the area carefully until eventually we unearthed this enormous vase which stored the olive oil when the press was last in use, probably about 100 years ago. We then contacted various experts in order to confirm what we had found and to help us decide how best to preserve the artifact. The vase now stands in the entrance hall to the cortijo.”

A similar jar, found in an old wine cellar, was placed in the original spot, making it possible to display how olive oil was produced in the past.

The Cortijo is a traditional building described in the local Urban Regulations as a "rural property of relevant ethnographic value". From the outset the idea was to operate with utmost respect for this historical and environmental value while at the same time using a modern architectural language and contemporary materials. A complete renovation of the installations was carried out, providing the entire building with high levels of soundproofing, insulation, and interior comfort.

Many of the techniques used in the renovation have a low impact on the environment and intense discussions took place with the town hall to get approval for what are considered locally as innovative and unusual techniques.

Eco Vida, an architectural construction company specializing in energy efficient buildings, comprises the same team members that carried out the restoration.

Luis Llopis, said:

“We have minimized the need of water, sand and cement wherever possible to perform a fast, easy to control, high quality construction, with reduced energy consumption during both winter and summer. We used solar energy – a cheap, sustainable energy supply in the south of Spain - but integrating the panels in the architecture to avoid their impact. Water is collected from gutters to water the garden at a minimum cost during summer.

I would like to point out that it isn’t difficult nor expensive to improve environmental conditions in common spaces: shallow pools to refresh the air, filtering paving that grows grass, pergolas in outdoor circulation corridors, sliding louvers to protect windows and doors from the summer sun; or climber vegetation to get natural green in the surrounding walls. There is really little excuse nowadays not to let the green in!”

Further Notes:

Eco Vida Founders John Wolfendale and Luis Llopis are available for interview

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Images:



The earthenware jar placed in the original position.



Partial view of the old olive press space at the end of the restoration process.



The original olive jar in its final setting at the entrance porch



Interior view of one of the apartments



The building at the beginning of the intervention



General view of the intervention from the back of the main patio