February brings all the cheer of flowers in bloom and plenty of events to the parks and monuments of Sintra

- “Camellias and Orchid Exhibition” returns to the National Palace of Sintra Courtyard
- Ringing session in the Farmyard of Monserrate to commemorate Darwin Day
- “There’s Donkeys Here” in the D. Fernando II Hunting Grounds

Sintra, 10 January 2018 – February may be the shortest month of the year but in the parks and monuments of Sintra that only means a more packed agenda. Throughout these days, drawing on the beauty of camellias and orchids for inspiration, we are all invited to throw open the doors to spring and the pleasures returned from discovering the wonders of the natural world.

On the weekend of 9 and 10 February, from 10am to 6pm, the National Palace of Sintra Courtyard bursts into colour with the “Camellias and Orchid Exhibition”. Pre-empting the fast approaching spring, this annual event fosters the botanical value associated with the camellias and orchids of Sintra and provides the opportunity to view the best examples of these species exhibited by participants. There is also the chance to buy plants and attend free demonstrations of propagation, pruning, potting and maintenance techniques. The 2019 edition is dedicated to Japan and counts on performances, workshops and guided visits; all free to the public but in some cases requiring prior registration. This exhibition is organised by Parques de Sintra in collaboration with the APC – the Portuguese Camellia Association and COP – the Orchidophile Club of Portugal.

On 16 February, at 9.30am, in the Farmyard of Monserrate, celebrations of Darwin Day (12 February) take place with a ringing session. Through this initiative, there is the chance for all to learn a little about the fascinating daily work of the many scientists that work to study and protect biodiversity. Ringing is a scientific technique that, while simple, enables access to a range of information about birds (their weight, sex, age, among
others) through their temporary capture and attaching an individual identification ring to each bird. This is a very important process to avifauna conservation that participants in this session shall learn all about. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to observe the captured species up close and become able to distinguish between the various species of bird as well as their respective characteristics.

In order to engage in an amusing exploration of the animal world, another proposal: “There’s Donkey’s Here!”, in the D. Fernando II Hunting Grounds, right next to the Convent of Capuchos. Every Saturday, at 10am, 12pm and 3pm, children and adults are invited to interact with these affable, patient and calm donkeys. The activity reveals lesser known facets to these nice animals and ends with a pleasant trek through the forest of Sintra in which the children get to ride while their parents guide the donkey in an ambience of great mutual complicity.

**PROGRAMMING**

**Voyage to the Court of the 18th century**
**Saturday, 2 February, 3pm, National Palace of Queluz**
Step by step, participants are invited to discover all of the charms of the National Palace of Queluz, listening to its history and encountering people from another epoch. There shall be singing, playing and watching 18th century musical dance and learning about how they staged their huge parties, the clothes and costumes they wore and in this space of such great beauty and refinement. This is the chance to learn how princes and heirs did not go to school but still had a lot of material to learn and in addition to a lot of other surprises for discovery.
- **Target audience:** Recommended for families with children aged over 5
- **Duration:** 2h
- **Ticket:** €9/participant
- **Requires prior booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm)
- **Note:** The running of this activity requires a minimum number of participants

**“Exhibition of Camellias and Orchids”**
**Saturday and Sunday, 9 and 10 February, National Palace of Sintra Courtyard**
The Courtyard in front of the National Palace of Sintra welcomes the “Exhibition of Camellias and Orchids” on the weekend of 9 and 10 February with this annual event nurturing the botanical value associated to the camellias and orchids in Sintra in providing the opportunity to observe the best examples of these species brought for display by each participant. The exhibition also includes the opportunity to acquire plants and attend demonstrations of propagation, pruning and potting techniques as well as more general maintenance recommendations. With Japan this year’s theme, the 2019 edition also features performances and the chance to participate in the aforementioned free workshops as well as guided tours. The exhibition is organised by Parques de Sintra in collaboration with the APC – the Portuguese Camellia Association and COP – the Orchidophile Club of Portugal.
Families in the Forest  
Saturday, 16 February, 11am, Farmyard of Monserrate/Monserrate Hunting Grounds
A unique opportunity for families to set off in discovery of nature where there is the time and place to run, climb, play, to let creativity flourish and make shelters and works of art from natural materials. Playing, whether in the sun or rain, stimulates the acquisition of individual and collective competences, team spirit, complicity, valuation and respect both for others and for biodiversity. The sessions, held by Parques de Sintra and by the Bloom Movement, incorporate Sharing Nature activities, a learning methodology inspired on Flow Learning, which values the application of the entertaining component to games, activities and workshops that enable participants to deepen their relationships with themselves, with other persons and the natural world through the means of play.

The Bloom Movement is a non-profit environmental association that has run Sharing Nature Portugal since 2012 with the goal of fostering, encouraging and promoting the conservation of the surrounding environment alongside children and their families, through initiatives that seek to establish bonds with nature so that they begin playing active conservation roles.

- **Target audience:** Recommended for families with children aged between 4 and 12
- **Duration:** 2h
- **Ticket:** €8/participant
- **Requires prior booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm)
- **Note:** The running of this activity requires a minimum number of participants. We recommend the wearing of comfortable clothing and footwear that may get dirty. Participants should thus bring a complete change of clothing in a small backpack (including trousers, socks, undergarments, t-shirt, jumper).

Ringing in the Farmyard  
Saturday, 16 February, 9.30am (Commemorations of Darwin Day), Farmyard of Monserrate
Ringing, the scientific technique that, while simple, enables the gathering of information about birds (weight, sex, age, among others) through the temporary capture and attaching of an identification ring to each individual. This session ensures participants not only gain the opportunity to observe the captured examples up close but also to learn how to distinguish between the various types of birds, their main characteristics and the importance of the ringing process to avifauna conservation efforts.

- **Target audience:** all age groups
- **Duration:** 2.5h
- **Ticket:** free of charge
- **Requires prior booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00 (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm)
- **Note:** Limited to 15 participants. We would recommend comfortable shoes and clothing appropriate to the season. The sessions are subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

From the Park to the Hunting Grounds: Nature in Sintra and in Mafra  
Saturday, 16 February, 10am, Hunting Grounds of Monserrate, and 2.30pm, Hunting Grounds of Mafra
A joint visit program to Sintra and Mafra, which opens up insights into the diversity of the Sintra – Cascais Natural Park ecosystems – a protected area that includes the Monserrate Hunting Grounds – and the magnificent and historical indigenous forest making up the National Hunting Grounds of Mafra. In the Monserrate Hunting Grounds, visitors explore the natural history of the Sintra hills, their peculiar microclimate, concepts such as forest food, ecological succession, invasive species, among others. Along the route, visitors are surprised by the presence of wooden sculptures of the medium and large scale mammals that once roamed the Sintra hills in the recent past. In Mafra, along less explored paths, visitors are taken on a tour of discovery of this mature forest that, given its walled protective enclosure, has guaranteed excellent conditions for vulnerable, where not at risk of extinction, species that are here able to feed, reproduce and find shelter.

- **Target audience:** all age groups
- **Duration:** 90mins in Monserrate, 2h in Mafra
- **Ticket:** Adults: €13/participant | Young and OAPs: €11/participant | Families (2 adults + 2 children): €45
- **Requires prior booking (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm):** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** The running of this activity requires a minimum number of participants. The visits are subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

**Equestrian Art Performances**
**Gala:** Friday, 22 February, 9.30pm, Henrique Calado Riding Ring (Calçada da Ajuda)
“Equestrian Art Mornings”: regular (calendar at www.arteequestre.pt/bilheteira)
The Henrique Calado Riding Ring regularly hosts the “Equestrian Art Mornings”, an initiative that reveals the daily activities ongoing at EPAE, and thematic galas.
- **Target audience:** all age groups over 6
- **Ticket:** Galas - €25 // “Equestrian Art Mornings” – €8
- **For further information:** www.arteequestre.pt / info@parquesdesintra.pt / +351 21 923 73 00

**Feel the Heritage**
**Saturday, 23 February, 10am, Park of Monserrate**
In amongst the romantic ruins and waterfalls, visitors discover the Gardens of Monserrate through touch, hearing and smell. There is the chance to touch the waterfall, feel variations in temperature and learn about various botanical species, feeling their textures and drawing in their exotic fragrances. Around the Palace of Monserrate, this enables the discovery of all the materials making up the facades.
- **Target audience:** targeting blind and visually challenged visitors
- **Duration:** 90mins
- **Ticket price for registered disabled persons:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Regular ticket:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Requires prior booking (The visits are subject to cancellation in case of adverse meteorological conditions):** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** this activity counts on the support of ACAPO – the Blind and Partially Sighted Association of Portugal. We recommend wearing comfortable footwear and clothing appropriate to the respective meteorological conditions. The visit may be cancelled in case of adverse weather or adapted only to the interior of the Palace of Monserrate.

**Gardens of Monserrate without Barriers**
**Saturday, 23 February, 10.30am, Park of Monserrate**
Guided tour for persons with mobility restrictions who may move about the gardens with autonomy due to equipment that breaks the barrier of slopes and facilitates the mobility of manual
wheelchairs. This opens up contact and exploration of the Fern Valley, the Mexican and Rose Gardens, the Lawn and Lakes in the Park of Monserrate.

- **Target audience:** targeting visitors with mobility restrictions
- **Duration:** 90mins
- **Ticket price for registered disabled persons:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Regular ticket:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Requires prior booking (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm):** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** visitors may bring their own wheelchairs or opt for one provided by Parques de Sintra (at no extra cost). Open to accompanying individuals. The traction equipment adapts to the great majority of wheelchairs. The visit may be cancelled in case of adverse meteorological conditions.

**Heritage in Sign Language**

**Saturday, 23 February, 2.30pm, Park of Monserrate**

Visit to the gardens and Palace of Monserrate with a Portuguese Sign Language guided tour. The visit to the garden, one of Portugal’s finest examples of Romanticism inspired landscapes, which contains over 3,000 species of plants from every corner of the world. Taking in the Fern Valley, the Mexican and Rose Gardens and the Lawn before ending in the Palace of Monserrate.

- **Target audience:** targeting deaf visitors
- **Duration:** 90mins
- **Ticket price for registered disabled persons:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Regular ticket:** entrance ticket + €5 guided tour supplement
- **Requires prior booking (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm):** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** this activity counts on the support of APS – the Portuguese Deaf Persons Association. We recommend wearing comfortable footwear and clothing appropriate to the respective meteorological conditions. The visit may be cancelled in case of adverse weather or adapted only to the interior of the Palace of Monserrate.

**The King’s Treasure**

**Saturday, 23 February, 3pm, National Palace of Sintra**

In a palace with over 700 years of history, packed with secrets for discovery, participants are invited to follow clues, resolve puzzles and complete tasks to finally learn just what and where is the king’s treasure. This is a game of clues through which participants embark on the discovery of the history of the National Palace of Sintra in a different and stimulating fashion.

- **Target audience:** recommended for families with children aged over 8
- **Duration:** 90mins
- **Ticket:** €9/participant
- **Requires prior booking:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** The running of this activity requires a minimum number of participants

**There’s Donkeys Here!**

**Every Saturday in February, 10am, 12pm and 3pm, D. Fernando II Hunting Grounds (alongside the Convent of Capuchos)**

Patient, affable and very calm, donkeys are great partners in this adventure for children and adults alike, which tells of the history of these animals down through centuries, explaining their gentleness, how they do not kick or bite (when treated with respect), they are not nervous (when frightened, they stop still rather than flee), are strong and intelligent. Take a ride through the forest; children on top and the adults leading the animals by hand and with all enjoying a most pleasant trek through the forest.

- **Target audience:** recommended for families with children aged from 3 to 12
- **Duration:** 90mins
- Ticket: €10/participant
- Requires prior booking (weekdays from 9.30am to 6.30pm): info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- Note: the rides may be cancelled in case of adverse weather conditions. This activity is available daily following prior reservation.

**Horse and pony trekking**

**Daily, Park of Pena**

Horse rides in which visitors take a different means of exploring the paths and bridleways of the Park of Pena. The horse ride duration may vary from between 30 and 90 minutes or from 3 to 6 hours. In the longer program, there is the scope for visiting the other sites under Parques de Sintra management and even scheduling lunch at a particular spot. All rides take place in the company of the horse handlers who guide visitors along the way. Thinking of children, Parques de Sintra also runs an activity that enables younger persons to gain their first riding experience on a pony especially trained for this purpose and also accompanied by one of the handlers.

- **Horse rides:** €15/30 min, €30/90 min, €50/3h, €100/6h (in addition to the Park of Pena entrance ticket)
- **Pony rides:** €7/15 minutes (in addition to the Park of Pena entrance ticket)
- **Further information and reservations:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00
- **Note:** these rides always depend on the prevailing meteorological conditions
- **Find out more:** www.parquesdesintra.pt/experiencias-e-lazer/passeios-a-cavalo/

**Cart Rides**

**Park of Pena**

Cart rides through the Park of Pena provide a genuine journey through time over the route stretching from the Valley of the Lakes and the Chalet of the Countess of Edla, taking in the Farm of Pena and the Garden of the Countess of Edla. This trip may be free or accompanied by a specialist guide. The passengers are taken off in discovery of the history of this park and its creators, its botanical species and the animals that appear along the way in addition to the built heritage and the garden nooks revealed on the route.

- **The ride may include up to six adults or four adults and four children**
- **From 1 October and throughout the low season, only available following prior reservation**
- **Ticket:** €75/1 hour (in addition to the Park of Pena entrance ticket, where these programs take place)
- **Note:** Holding this activity always depends on the prevailing meteorological conditions
- **Find out more:** www.parquesdesintra.pt/experiencias-e-lazer/passeios-de-charrete/
- **Further information and reservations:** info@parquesdesintra.pt; +351 21 923 73 00

- **end** -

**About Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua**

Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua, S.A. (PSML) is an exclusively state owned company founded in 2000 in the wake of the UNESCO classification of the Sintra Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage site. The company does not receive any state budget funding and hence ensures the restoration and maintenance of the heritage under its management through the revenues generated by the ticket offices, stores, cafeterias and renting out spaces for events.

In 2017, the areas under PSML management (Park and National Palace of Pena, National Palaces of Sintra and Queluz, Chalet of the Countess of Edla, the Moorish Castle, the Palace and Gardens of Monserrate, Convent of Capuchos and the Portuguese School of Equestrian Art) received around 3.2 million visitors, around 80% of which were international in origin. The
company also received the World Travel Award for Best Conservation Company in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.
The PSML shareholders are the General Directorate of the Treasury and Finance (which represents the State), the Institute of Nature and Forestry Conservation, Portugal Tourism and the Municipal Council of Sintra.


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