

Partners in Business

INVESTMENTS | REAL ESTATE | RETAIL | TOURISM

Issue N° 1 :: March 2012



Globalisation

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LX Factory

A hive of young entrepreneurial talent

Hidden away behind Largo do Calvário in Lisbon's waterside Alcântara district, in what were once early 18th century textile warehouses, a quiet revolution is going on.

For behind the façades of shabby chic shops and restaurants selling bio-organic food and kooky kitsch household items is a veritable hive of business activity. A positive vibe generated by scores of micro-companies run by a largely young and talented bunch of Portuguese entrepreneurs that represent the future for this country.

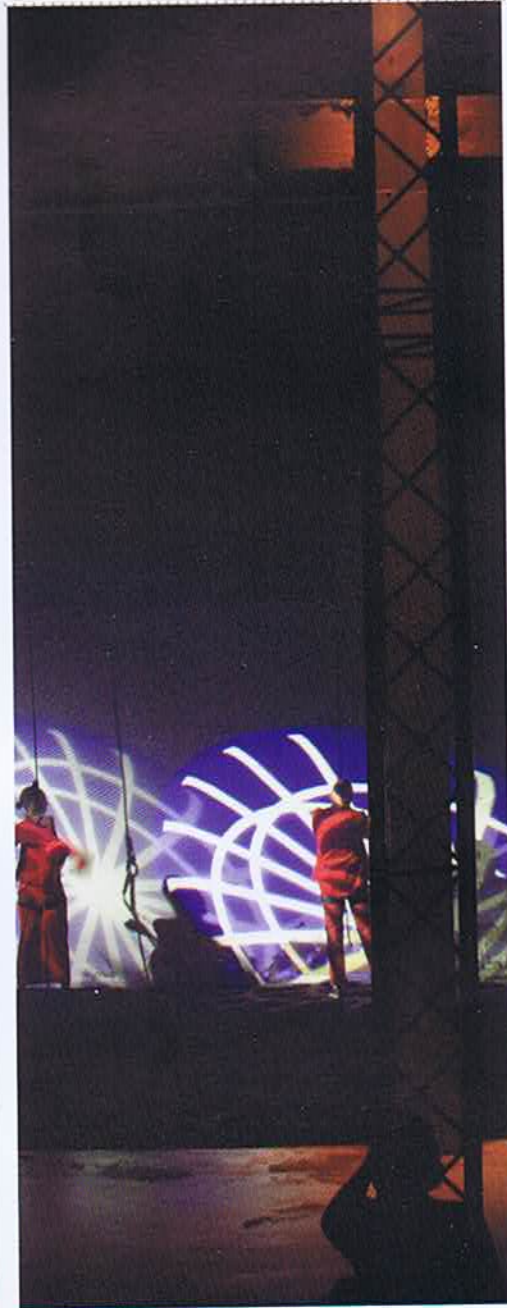
Nestled amongst the once disused manufacturing complex of buildings are architecture firms, internet start-ups, advertising agencies, boutiques, performing arts schools, design

studios, IT and software companies, fashion designers and yes, magazines. In fact the new business magazine you have in your hand, *Partners in Business*, is also based in the lofty warehouse that is filled with enormous old printing machines reflecting the industrial relics of a bygone age.

The atmosphere at LX Factory is relaxed, yet strangely charged and dynamic. Young people, dressed informally in shabby urban chic, sit around tables in the café on the fifth floor, *Quarto com Vista*, pouring over

laptops and notebooks, exchanging ideas and getting inspiration from one another.

Others, leaving a large central room, *Cowork Lisboa*, where countless one or two people businesses believe it's better to work in company than in isolation at home or in a rented office, relax in an unregulated coffee break on old car seats or casually smoke on the balcony. Here there are no company rules, no Salazar-like paternal bosses controlling each and every movement. This is a place for self-starters and motivated individuals who



set their own agendas and pace.

Lining the cobbled main street between these honeycombs of enterprise are a myriad of cafés and restaurants: A Mesa - an Italian eatery with pizzas to die for, where you can eat to your heart's content for 7€, a restaurant serving up tasty vegetarian options with an outdoor garden, or the snack café Landeau that's famous for one thing - the best chocolate cake you've ever tasted.

The accent in this small and compact commercial warren is on the stylishly different, the organic and the sustainable. There's a bio-supermarket, for example, which may not be as cheap as Pingo Doce but it is 100%

healthy. There's the chance to enjoy a coffee while perusing over the volumes in one of the most original bookshops in Lisbon, Ler Devagar, which is packed from the floor to its lofty ceiling with new and second-hand books, oh, and often hosts small arty seminars and meetings.

LX Factory already attracts dynamic events like Open Day, which is now in its eighth year, takes place in May and offers a full programme of arts, design and entertainments with projects, exhibitions and performance arts events, and the LX Market which is open on Sundays.

There's even an art colony, the Red Bull House of Art, with resident artists of all

persuasions at the very top of LX Factory from where you get 360° panoramic views of the River Tejo and the emblematic April 25th bridge.

In what has become a success story of urban regeneration in its rawest, most human form, with scores of small companies and businesses, and the possibility of attracting tourists to what could, with a little more imagination and investment become the Camden Town of Lisbon, LX Factory provides a model to other developers, investors and municipal authorities of how a little imagination and talent can transform a once rundown inner-city area into a young, creative and exciting new urban environment.