

José Régio *in Romance de Vila do Conde*

"Up above from its mount,
above the pine trees line,
Lady Sainte-Anne, from afar,
seems a waving handkerchief."

The municipality of Vila do Conde, with its rich geographical and topographical diversity, is punctuated with places from where you can have magnificent panoramic views that also help to narrate its millenary history.

From its highest point, located in the parish of Bagunte, to the geodesic landmark next to the Atlantic coast, in Labruge, you'll find many and varied landscapes and photographs that you can keep in your memories.

Increasingly in vogue, be sure to also stop by Monte de Santo Ovidio, in Vairão, and try the wooden swing installed there and enjoy, on days without fog, the beautiful landscape that extends to the sea.



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1. STAIRCASE OF OUR LADY OF GUIDANCE CHAPEL

. This chapel probably already existed in 953, being referenced, in 1059, in the inventory of assets belonging to the Monastery of Guimarães, but designated as the chapel of Saint Julian. In addition of being used for religious purposes, the chapel initially functioned as a point of support for the defense of the coastline. With an irregular composite plan, it has beautiful tiles from the 17th and 18th centuries and coffered paneled ceilings decorated with biblical scenes or figures of saints. At the southern top of the chapel there is a high staircase, topped by a platform, where a stone cross was placed in 1940 and from where you can see a beautiful view of the city, the mouth of the river and the sea.

. Location: Avenida Marquês Sá da Bandeira | . Latitude: 41.339004 . Longitude: -8.749561

2. MEIA LARANJA GARDEN

. This garden invites you to take a break and is an authentic "balcony" over the River Ave. It is located downstream of the weir that served the 16th century Water Mill. During the second decade of the last century, the Junta Patriótica do Norte sought to make the cities and towns of Portugal honour the ones who died during the First World War, erecting a monument in honour of the soldiers who perished there. In Vila do Conde, the inauguration of this monument in this garden took place on April 10, 1932, fourteen years and a day after the Battle of La Lys. It was also in this place that the first stone bridge over the River Ave was located, which lasted just a few years, due to its destruction during a great flood.

. Location: Avenida Figueiredo Faria | . Latitude: 41.351999 . Longitude: -8.738154

3. GEODESIC LANDMARK OF SÃO PAIO

. The Geodesic Landmark of São Paio, in Labruge, is an important monument that was used for location purposes. It is located on top of a large rocky elevation, from where you can have fantastic views over the Atlantic Ocean and the nearby beaches. Several types of rock carvings were found on its cliff, related to the occupation of the Hillfort of São Paio, an important archaeological site and the only example of such a fort, in national territory, where the sea touches its defenses. The Hillfort of São Paio is a small village of the so-called Castreja Culture of the Northwest Peninsular. This culture, dating from the Iron Age and sometimes from Romanization, is characterized by the construction of fortified villages. Its highest point is topped by the Chapel of São Paio or São Pelagio, the saint who, having been handed over as a hostage to the Emir of Córdoba, was martyred there in the year 925. The people called the top of the Chapel of São Paio Lugar da Mota, term which since the Middle Ages designates a fortified place. The small beach enclosed between the two elevations is called Praia dos Castros.

. Location: Labruge, VCD | . Latitude: 41.280608 . Longitude: -8.729732

4. SAINT AMARO CHAPEL VIEWPOINT

. The Chapel of Saint Amaro was built, probably by the devotion of the Pinheiro family, from Barcelos, in the 16th/17th century and, in this place, there was a tower that allowed to watch over the northern access to Monte do Mosteiro. It has a popular and neoclassical layout, with a rectangular floor plan and square presbitery. Annually, on the 15th January, a centuries old tradition is celebrated here and some festivities are held to honour the saint's memory. Today it is a privileged place to enjoy a pleasant view over the historic center of Vila do Conde.

. Location: Rua de Santo Amaro | . Latitude: 41.356294 . Longitude: -8.741284

5. OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CHAPEL VIEWPOINT

. Located on a rocky massif overlooking the river Ave, the Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Help has a peculiar architecture, with a square plan, covered by a vault. Of note is the interior decoration of beautiful 18th century tiles, representing the life of Mary, as well as the rococo-style altarpiece. The chapel was ordered to be built by Gaspar Manuel, a professed knight of the Order of Christ and chief pilot of the routes of India, China and Japan, and by his wife Bárbara Ferreira de Almeida, who are buried there. From the platform that surrounds the temple, you can enjoy an incomparable view over Vila do Conde, "sprawled between pine forests, river and sea", as José Régio, an illustrious Vila Conde native, romanticized it.

. Location: Rua do Socorro | . Latitude: 41.349314 . Longitude: -8.743969

6. HILLFORT OF BAGUNTE MOUNT

. With a known chronology of occupation from the 4th century BC. to the 4th century AD. (based on a ceramological analysis), the Hillfort of Bagunte is a village of enormous dimensions, with more than 50 hectares of area of interest. This village is the object of a cultural dynamization project - the archaeological field of Bagunte. Of pre-Roman origin, it has a complex system of walls. In archaeological excavations, the "torques of Bagunte" were found, five silver jewels that attest to the importance and artistic level of this community. The Hillfort of Bagunte is located to the northeast in the Municipality of Vila do Conde, at an elevation (Hillfort Mount) that reaches 206 meters of altitude and where water lines are born that mostly drain into the Este River. It is the highest point of the parish, a ridge that separates the basins of the River Este and the River Ave (northwest and southeast respectively).

. Location: Bagunte, VCD | . Latitude: 41.383492 . Longitude: -8.655649

7. SANT'ANA MOUNT

. In the square where the eponymous chapel is located, in addition to a small leisure area, we have a breathtaking view over the Monastery of Santa Clara and the city of Vila do Conde.

. Location: Azurara, VCD | . Latitude: 41.350308 . Longitude: -8.735514

8. SAINT OVÍDIO MOUNT

. The Mount of Santo Ovidio, where the eponymous chapel and a wooden swing are located, is an excellent viewpoint over the physiognomy of the agricultural fields and from where, on clear days, you can extend the view over the pine forests of Mindelo all the way to the Atlantic coast. In this place is located Castro do Boi, an important fortification in the Middle Ages, having been the castle that militarily dominated practically the entire south of the municipality of Vila do Conde. However, the ceramological analysis of the site shows that it was a fort before being a castle.

. Location: Lugar de Crasto, Vairão, VCD | . Latitude: 41.324047 . Longitude: -8.676635

9. MONASTERY MOUNT

. Monte do Mosteiro is a rocky elevation where, strategically, the first inhabitants of the locality must have settled, as there is evidence that the Hillfort of Saint John and the primitive Mother Church were located here. Today, in their place, we find here the Monastery of Sainte Claire, one of the most emblematic monuments of Vila do Conde and, from this huge "balcony" over Vila do Conde, we can enjoy an exceptional view over the city, the river and the sea.

. Location: Largo D. Afonso Sanches | . Latitude: 41.352635 . Longitude: -8.739743

