



ISABEL CAPELOA GIL AND NELMA SERPA PINTO HONOURED AT THE 38TH EDITION OF THE DONA ANTÓNIA AWARDS

Vila Nova de Gaia, 8 July 2026 – Isabel Capeloa Gil and Nelma Serpa Pinto are the winners of the 38th edition of the Dona Antónia Awards, an initiative created in 1988 by the descendants of Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira and Sogrape to recognise Portuguese women who stand out for their achievements, talent and contribution to society.

Isabel Capeloa Gil, a renowned academic and one of the most influential figures in higher education in Portugal, has been awarded the Career Consecration Award. Nelma Serpa Pinto received the Revelation Award, which recognises emerging careers distinguished by merit and the potential to make a significant impact. Despite their different backgrounds, both now join the group of “Ferreirinha” women whose vision, determination and ability to create positive change in society reflect the values associated with Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira.

“The Dona Antónia Awards represent an ongoing commitment to promoting female talent and recognising women whose contributions help drive the country’s development. This initiative is part of Sogrape’s Global Sustainability Programme, Seed the Future, through which we seek to preserve the legacy of Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira and celebrate women who, across a wide range of fields, contribute to a fairer, more inclusive and better qualified society”, said Mafalda Guedes, Sogrape’s Corporate Communications and Sustainability Director and a fourth-generation member of the founding family. *“This year, we are honouring two women whose journeys demonstrate that there are different ways to lead and create positive impact, leaving a lasting mark and opening paths for future generations”,* she added.

In the Career Consecration Award category, Isabel Capeloa Gil is recognised for a highly respected academic and leadership career in Portugal and internationally. Rector of the Portuguese Catholic University since 2016, she was the first woman to hold this position and has led a process of internationalisation and innovation that has helped establish the University among Europe’s most prestigious institutions.

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Her academic, scientific and institutional work, combined with her advocacy for education, culture and critical thinking as drivers of development, make her one of the most influential figures in Portuguese public life.

In the Revelation Award category, Nelma Serpa Pinto was recognised for her work as a journalist, distinguished by her ability to address issues of public interest with rigour, clarity and accessibility. Her career in Portuguese television reflects a professional journey built on high standards, critical thinking and a strong commitment to quality journalism — qualities that earned her this recognition from the jury.

The Dona Antónia Awards are granted annually by an independent jury chaired by António Lobo Xavier. The Career Consecration Award honours women whose distinguished careers deserve public recognition, while the Revelation Award celebrates emerging careers that already demonstrate meaningful contributions to society.

The ceremony announcing the winners of the 38th edition took place at the historic Ferreira Cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia, a venue closely connected to the legacy of Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira. The event brought together guests from different sectors of Portuguese society to celebrate the achievements of the award recipients and the enduring relevance of the values embodied by the “Ferreirinha”, which continue to inspire new generations of women to make a difference in their respective fields.

More than two centuries after her birth, Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira (1811–1896) remains one of the most remarkable figures in Portuguese history. A visionary entrepreneur, a driving force behind the development of the Douro region and a model of social responsibility, she stood out for her leadership skills, entrepreneurial spirit and strong commitment to the communities in which she operated.

More information about the Dona Antónia Awards, previous winners and the presentation videos of the 38th edition recipients is available at <https://www.antonиаadelaideferreira.com/en/dona-antonia-awards>.

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