

ANTÓNIO MARTINS CASTRO & FILHOS

With generous doses of time and patience, Joaquim and José's workshop produces jewels that can melt hearts to the sound of *Fado*.

Here, everything is Portugal.

The workshop was their father's and, before that, belonged to their grandfather, who became part of the wonderful world of Filigree at the age of 12, moving away from farming, his parents' occupation. Joaquim and José nourish a special admiration and respect for their father. They keep souvenirs of him under lock and key in the workshop safe, specially a reliquary inspired in a photograph from an old book. It is an unusual jewel that was hard to execute and took endless hours of work and dedication. It is 18 centimetres long and is richly worked in Filigree in its entirety. It bears the symbolism of the Passion of Christ: the cross, the grail, the ladder, the spikes, the hammer, the scourge, the crown of thorns, the tongs. "It was the most iconic jewel our father ever made, and he dedicated all his passion to it." The reliquary was the height of their father's creative works and Joaquim and José find in it angles of inspiration through which to honour his legacy.

The happy notes of *Fado da Mariquinha* echo through the workshop. A few years ago, the two brothers dared to pay homage to the diva of *Fado*, Amália, taking part in building a shawl in Filigree, because "Amália always wore a shawl when she sang." They wanted to exceed themselves, to experience the ecstasy of their own apogee, the feeling their father must have felt. The shawl, made out of 19.2 kt gold, weighing 750 g and richly decorated with Hearts, reproduced the complexity of Portuguese lace edged with fringes. The clasp, shaped like a map of Portugal, bore a diamond placed to mark Gondomar, the land of Filigree. A unique, superb jewel!

According to the song, Mariquinhas' famous house "had a guitar and a wood window in the living room". At the request of some clients from Lisbon, *Fado* and Filigree had to be represented in a Portuguese Guitar, an instrument of such unmistakeable sound that any Portuguese person can recognise it instantly. Just like Filigree. And thus, another national icon was born, followed by the Crown of the Immaculate Conception, the Patron Saint of Portugal, because when one exceeds himself he never truly does, but seeks the challenge to achieve the next level.

The belief in Portugal is the beginning of the story that is written using the finest twisted and beaten threads. Starting out from that fervour, the hands of Joaquim, José, Rui, Gilberto and Fernanda — the goldsmiths and *enchedeira* (filler) who work there — create unique Filigree jewels. Each is made by hand because no machine, no matter how sophisticated, can ever have a Portuguese soul, an essential requirement for creating unique jewels.

In the detail of Filigree, verses of *Fado* dictate the rhythm of the passing days in the workshop, putting together brooches, earrings, pendants, rings, bracelets and decorative jewels. Whether it is *a capella*, merry or humorous, *Fado* is only *Fado* if it is sung with soul and the performer is moved and often cries. As Amália used to say in one of her songs, "*Fado* is easily cried." And so is Filigree.

Texts by Sónia Felgueiras

Enchant yourself with the story
of António in video

