

Aldeota, the Brazilian City Everyone Lives In or Says He Does

Contributed by Ernest Barteldes
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The Fortaleza neighborhood known as Aldeota in the city of Fortaleza can be a bit misleading - though officially a relatively small area that covers about a dozen blocks, the name is often stretched by real estate companies due to its high profile.

Aldeota is where the well-to-do historically reside, and everyone in town wants to say that they "live in Aldeota." The space is however very limited, and due to that many developers have rechristened other lesser-valued areas as "Planalto da Aldeota" or "Aldeota Sul" in an effort to jack up prices, which has strangely worked.

During the 1940s, Fortaleza experienced a boom in construction as the city grew thanks to the benefits of wartime economy at that time. Several professional began building European-styled houses - most of them designed by a Hungarian-born architect named Emilio Hinko (1901-2002).

Hinko went to Fortaleza in 1929. At the time, the city had about 100,000 inhabitants, and development was pretty much limited to the downtown area and older residential neighborhoods and of course endless stretches of beach. Once he arrived in town, he was mostly hired to design residences, and with the money he made, he invested in buying land in what is now the Avenida Beira-Mar.

Among his best-known works that still stand today are the Náutico Atlético Cearense (Avenida Beira Mar, 2727), a social club built almost eight decades ago to serve professionals who longed for a regular meeting place, and also the local headquarters of the Brazilian Air Force (Base Aérea de Fortaleza), which was used as a base of operations for the US Air Force during World War II.

His designs are easy to recognize - he sought inspiration in the classic homes of his native Europe, with high arches and solid walls. Hinko also pioneered indoor bathrooms (a novelty back then), front yards and gardens, which were not a characteristic of the times.

Thanks to his innovations and contacts, Hinko quickly became a respected entrepreneur, being commissioned to large projects around the country. He also famously married Pierina de Carvalho, the eccentric Italian-born widow of Plácido de Carvalho (this was mentioned on the first piece of this series)

A lesser-known project of his is a large home that today houses the Shalom Charismatic Community in Fortaleza (Rua Barão de Aracati, 1304, pictured). Built in 1943, it was for many years the residence of my grandparents Dr. Luiz Gonzaga da Silveira (1907-1986)

and Adalgiza Silveira (1910-1989).

The good doctor is remembered today for introducing several surgical procedures to the local hospitals. It is a beautiful house with three upstairs bedrooms and a large verandah. There was also an office, a living room and a large dining room. I spent many happy months inside that house, and have great memories of that place.

Hinko passed away at age 100 in Fortaleza, the city he adopted as his own. His construction company is still active today, and caters both to locals and to those willing to come to Brazil for retirement.

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