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# Nadia Yakimenko

## A passion for light, beauty and history

Since arriving in Portugal 20 years ago, Ukrainian entrepreneur Nadia Yakimenko has become a successful realtor. Now she has embarked on a career as a property developer with projects in Estoril, Evora and the Algarve

TEXT **CHRIS GRAEME**  
PHOTOS **APIANI**

**N**adia Yakimenko is the very definition of a self-made entrepreneur: charismatic, confident, shrewd, and prepared to take risks.

She hails from Russia (although Ukrainian by birth), born into a different era when Russia was then the hub of the former Soviet Union, and the concept of a go-getting businesswoman just didn't exist in the Marxist-Leninist lexicon outside of the derogatory term 'bourgeois'.

But Nadia's background was not the humble beginnings of the collective farm workers (they called them kolkhozniki in Soviet Russia) or the cumbersome public administration or apparatchiki. Anything but; her parents were firmly from the intellectual class or intelligentsia.

"I was born in Kiev. My parents moved to Russia when I was just two; first to St. Petersburg and then Moscow." Both parents were musical. Her father was part of the orchestra at both the famous Mariinsky and Bolshoi Theatres where he was a concertmaster and soloist playing first cello. Her mother a pianist.

Nadia came to Portugal aged 28 with an interest in architecture and design, and began to buy apartments to remodel and sell. Now 48, she says her success, the lovely climate and way of life make her look and feel young.

"I remember when I first arrived, and everything seemed so far away and strange. I couldn't speak a word of Portuguese then. I recall signing my first contract without understanding the text

100%. It was an experience I'll never forget in my life," says Nadia.

"It's precisely for this reason that I really do understand how overseas investors feel, their worries and their expectations. I know how important it is to take all the stress out of a transaction by offering a seamless service," explains the property developer.

The next logical step was to start her own estate agency business and offer a

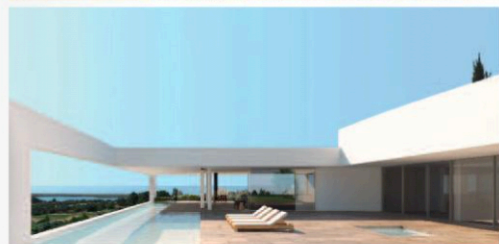
personalised service to property investors who were looking to invest in Portugal via the Authorisation for Residency by Investment (ARI), more commonly known as the Golden Visa.

"In fact, my background proved very useful. I can speak Russian, I understand the subtleties of the Russian and Ukrainian cultures, and having lived in Portugal for so long that I know the Portuguese too," she explains.

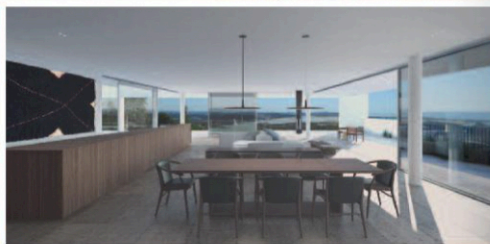


Monte Estoril Complex





Palmares Ocean &amp; Living, Algarve - Plot 79



#### FROM ESTATE AGENT TO DEVELOPER

Apart from a large measure of self-confidence, it wasn't such a big step to take from selling houses to actually developing luxury developments.

"I'd spent years studying the local possibilities and gauging what wealthy and discerning clients wanted. Today, of course, most of them are overseas citizens," continues Nadia Yakimenko, who has a knack for discerning opportunities and future trends.

Nadia founded the luxury estate agency APIANI, and her first major own development is the APIANI Monte Estoril.

Close to Lisbon, these residential properties will be the last word in luxury. The architects Helga Constantino e David Diniz have chosen top-quality materials, finishings and fixtures to grace

the houses that are in the most upmarket part of Estoril, a short drive from the smart resort of Cascais and just 20 minutes on the motorway from Lisbon.

The Monte Estoril development has three apartments with beautiful open views. Construction starts this year with off-plan sales now available.

The Estoril development has four apartments, with a pool and sea views. Both construction and off-plan sales start in 2023.

The properties in both projects are of a similar design and price. The 230m<sup>2</sup> houses have three bedroom suites, planted exterior wooden terraces and gardens (100 to 300m<sup>2</sup>), and 60m<sup>2</sup> lounges with large panoramic sliding door windows that overlook the gardens.

All of the sound-proofed houses come fully equipped with electrical

appliances, underfloor and fan-coil heating and air conditioning.

"These houses are aimed at people with refined taste, who seek a certain understated luxury lifestyle that isn't flashy and ostentatious," says Nadia.

"Work on these properties begins this year with completion expected in 2024 and average prices are at around €2,200,000."

APIANI is also coordinating 2 projects for its clients at the Palmares Resort - Ocean Living and Golf in the Algarve in a cooperation with the architect Mário Martins.

#### REMOTE INVESTMENT

Nadia says that one consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic is remote investment, since technology, particularly drones and high-definition videos, have

enabled clients to make virtual tours of properties without actually having to be in Portugal.

"Overseas investors have started investing without setting foot in the country. They are leaving all the administrative steps, from opening a bank account to purchasing the actual property, to agents like us, and this process occurred so naturally that it surprised even me," Nadia remarks.

"And despite the problems of getting Golden Visas during Covid, demand for properties in Portugal didn't stop, and for us the flow of clients increased substantially," she adds.

And whereas some investors some years ago faced difficulties renting their properties, Nadia doesn't find that now. Whether buyers or renters, the characteristics they look for are unique locations and property designs, which is what APIANI offers and why it has seen demand increase, even during the pandemic.

#### ASTONS - THE BEST PARTNERSHIP

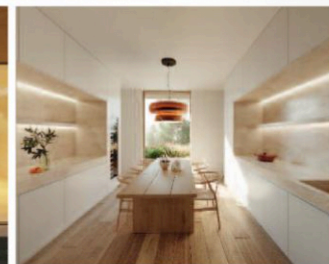
Six years ago, Nadia created a consultancy that sought to match investors with exactly the properties they were looking for. This year, however, the concept has been taken to a new level - APIANI developed a partnership with Astons.

Astons is a leading investment immigration and relocation provider offering bespoke residence and citizenship solutions in the EU (Portugal in this case) and the Caribbean. It provides end-to-end immigration support to businesses and private clients, as well as to leading lawyers, family offices, banks and investment firms worldwide.

"Instead of representing different overseas partners, I partnered with what in my opinion is the best group in this segment," says Nadia of the company that has its main office in London, and branches in different parts of the world, including Moscow.

And explains, "We will position ourselves in the market as Astons-Apiani. The director of Astons, Konstantin Kaminskiy, sees enormous potential in the local market. Together, we'll bring a lot of investment opportunities to investors, not just properties and funds, but also ones in the business sector."

At present, Astons-Apiani operates from two temporary offices - the Executive Lounge at the Grande Real Villa



Monte Estoril Complex

**"WHEN I ARRIVED IN PORTUGAL, EVERYTHING SEEMED STRANGE. I COULDN'T SPEAK PORTUGUESE. THAT'S WHY I UNDERSTAND HOW OVERSEAS INVESTORS FEEL AND KNOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO TAKE ALL THE STRESS OUT OF A TRANSACTION BY OFFERING A SEAMLESS SERVICE," NADIA YAKIMENKO**

Italia Hotel & Spa em Cascais, and the Sala Diana at the Évora Olive Hotel.

However, because its goal is to build luxury five-star tourism developments in Greater Lisbon (including Cascais and Estoril) to offer clients a unique and exclusive product, it will now set up a new office in the capital which will be its head office.

That said, Nadia stresses that Astons-Apiani often makes strategic partnerships with other agencies in order to satisfy client requests. "We are all for cooperation, especially given the growth in the number of clients that the company is seeing at the moment."

The partnership is a win-win for both Astons and Apiani, for various reasons. First, Astons has an extremely effective marketing team. Second, Apiani's properties became part of the Astons portfolio, and third, the brand image has

brought leverage and has resulted in rapid and often off-plan sales.

#### A PROJECT IN HISTORIC ÉVORA

Nadia tells Essential Business that Astons-Apiani is developing a new project in the ancient Alentejo city of Évora. This comprises a band of 40 townhouses with private swimming pools, in a Mediterranean style.

This exclusive development, just 500 metres from the old medieval walls, has been specifically designed with Golden Visa clients in mind by the same architects who designed the current project from Astons-Apiani, Helga Constantino e David Diniz, with off-plan sales starting from 2023 at prices of €430,000 for the townhouses (300m<sup>2</sup> plot/170m<sup>2</sup> house). The project envisages patios (80m<sup>2</sup>) with three-bedroom properties featuring two-three ensuite bathrooms. ■