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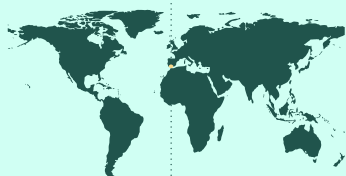
Sérvulo & Associados
Portugal

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PORTUGAL



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1. Could you share a little bit of your background?

I have been around for some time, 24 years, to be more exact. I've graduated in the class of the millennium at the Faculty of Law of Lisbon University, back in 2000 (and the most awkward part is that I now work with young lawyers who were not even born at the time!). I have started in the newly born, by then, law firm "Caiado Guerreiro", then passed on to Landwell (the Legal Chain that worked with PwC), where I have completed my training in areas as M&A and Labour Law. Moving on, back in 2003 I went to "Gonçalves Pereira, Castelo Branco", today, "Cuatrecasas", and that was a fantastic school, where I learned to work with autonomy and have experienced all sorts of transactions, from Project Finance, PPPs (private public partnerships), the raise of Renewable Energy Projects, Green fuel companies, and very challenging start ups in the world of gaming and technology. For 5 years and a half (a very important half), Cuatrecasas as both trained me to team up with fellow colleagues in a due diligence process, which I have several times coordinated, despite my twenties, as well as to accompany the daily life of business and companies, showing me the core of corporate structures, management and governance (good and bad). This has widened my skills and made me want to progress into management as well, so I post graduated in Management and Law by the University Nova of Lisbon in 2007, and put my studies where my experience was, in order to widen and perfection some management skills. I have even founded two companies of my own (one of Energetic Certification and the other of Local Lodgement Management). Then it was time to raise a family, and working 12-14 hours a day, from Monday to Sunday wasn't helping much, so I decided to try in-house support, and become a legal Director of Design Resorts Group, a start up that aimed at developing real estate projects throughout Cape Verde, Angola and Brazil. These 7 years of in-house were tremendous: I have not only deep dived in the management world, as also have met live with 3 other different geographies and jurisdictions, in a sense, much different that Portugal. Moreover, those who have worked has in-house know what means to work on your own, with no safe net nor barrier to protect you from the wrath of an angry Board of Directors if you don't deliver on time, and with a straight answer. It allowed me to step into the client' shoes, to become aware of its expectations, and to know exactly how he wants to

be treated and served. I thus have learned to work efficiently, focused on result and reply, and anticipating the needs of my Board. In a nutshell, I have developed the notion of service.

Cautiously, I have returned to the law boutiques by the hand of a team who I had previously worked with in some projects at Cuatrecasas, and was included in the Finance and Capital Markets Department in Sérvulo & Associados. At Sérvulo I began to work with investment funds and asset management companies, entering the regulatory world for real, and for the first time. The secret was persistence and stubbornness (one attribute that has been linked to me by my colleagues, God knows why), but from rookie I became an expert, and have use my learned experience in Real Estate to support Management companies in Portugal, and their real estate projects and asset management. In 9 years, I also helped to build the Real Estate Department in Sérvulo, which shyly converted from 2 to the present 12 lawyers that compose it, and have recently decided to start deep diving into the world of Artificial Intelligence and its impact in Real Estate world, as well. The best, however, is yet to come.

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2. **In your opinion, what are some of the key challenges women lawyers face in the legal profession?**

Basically, the same type of challenges women face in any other profession. What one expects of us, and I mean leaders, peers, competitors, and even other women, is that we are perfect, multitask skilled, outstandingly competent, good looking but not ravishing, humorous but not too funny, feisty but not too confrontative, proactive but not surpassing, ambitious but not too critical. In a word: impossible. The good news is that now there are more of us, so it becomes a bit more difficult to keep up with unreachable standards. Actually, I believe we have immensely progressed. Until 25 April 1974, women could not vote in Portugal, and married women had to request permission to work. Look at us now: we are working, leading, become Managing Partners, having a heard voice. Democracy has reached mid age in this country, and we are on toddler steps. Once more, persistence and stubbornness are the only paths possible to keep on progressing. And we will. Just watch us.

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3. How do you balance the demands of your legal career with other aspects of your life, and what advice do you have for aspiring women lawyers in achieving this balance?

I've read somewhere: "When you are tired, learn to rest, not to quit". This is the main advice that has led me so far, a divorced mother of the most 2 spectacular boys one can possibly imagine, who has decided from the beginning she had to drop them and pick them up in school everyday, help them with their homework and also to become the fantastic humans they are growing into. It can be done, it is possible, it is challenging, and it is not always justifiable or fair to explain. But it is a choice, and in order to make it, you have to be prepared to face consequences: some delay in career, some surpassing of others, some misjudgement of your capabilities. Be practical, pragmatic, efficient, and never stop studying, don't give in to misjudgement, and don't be afraid to occupy your place in the sun. Work your best, always be proud and be a good person.

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4. Can you share an example of a professional achievement or success that you are particularly proud of, and how did your gender play a role, if at all, in the accomplishment?

I was the first woman in my family to get a college degree. That was the first breakthrough. In my professional career, even today, every time I finish a transaction closing, and there have been dozens of them, I am proud. Not of myself, particularly, but of the team that pulled it over, either led by me, or of which I was part. The happiness, the silly laughter at 5 am in the morning, when everyone is dying of exhaustion, but we manage to say another joke just to keep the moral and lead the boat to safe shore, and then – we deliver, and the client is happy.

I have had many reasons to be proud of along these 24 years: young lawyers I have taught, colleagues I have helped in a rainy day, friends I have made, projects that were built because of what me and my team have done. Women and Men.

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5. Networking and building relationships are essential in the legal profession. Can you share insights into how Legalink has provided you with opportunities to connect with legal professionals globally?

I think the importance of Legalink is much wider than can be measured. I have had the opportunity to meet such extraordinary professionals, and women in particular (in the Women in Law Group) throughout the world. The most amazing bit is that, no matter how different your culture is, how radically distinct jurisdictions are, in the end, people are so alike. We all face the same challenges, we all had similar career experiences and have developed very approximate skills, because, most of all, we are human beings connected, and called on connecting by our most profound and primitive instinct of being closed to each other, sharing thoughts and ideas, in order to learn and grow together. In my view, these gatherings should happen more often because they are indeed, enriching to all of us.

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6. How do you see Legalink's role in supporting women lawyers in the network?

Frankly, I think we have started to make a difference. There is a natural solidarity in the members of the recently created Legalink's Women in Law Group, where women law professionals are feeling progressively more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and experiences throughout the world, personally and professionally. Moreover, I believe that some major contributions in inclusion politics inside the law offices, work life balance and time management, coping up with professional challenges (both in office and in society), allied with coaching to better career progress. Also, the increasing of network pitches will certainly stimulate the growth of this group, and hence the raising of new ideas and projects for future development. I hope Legalink becomes a harbour as well as a great school to attend

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Radar — Women in Law

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