LISBON STORY

by the Lisbon Street Photo Fest team



LISBON STREET PHOTO FEST

24-27th of September 2026
Faculdade de Belas-Artes, Lisboa

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WORDS OF INTRODUCTION

In 1994, Wim Wenders filmed Lisbon Story largely in the streets of Alfama, Castelo and Mouraria. Following a sound engineer who arrives in the city to work on a film, it is as much a portrait of Lisbon as it is a story set here: its trams, rooftops, steep stairways and everyday street life become part of the film's language.

More than thirty years later, many of those locations remain instantly recognisable. Some corners appear almost unchanged; elsewhere, only a railing, doorway or the angle of a rooftop reveals the original frame. The city has continued to evolve around them, adding a new layer to the images captured in 1994.

This guide, put together by the Lisbon Street Photo Fest team in partnership with MPB, retraces eleven of the film's locations, pairing each original scene with a photograph made today. At every stop, you'll find some context about the place and what has changed, together with practical suggestions on the best light, subjects to look for and equipment or focal lengths that may work particularly well.

Follow the route in order or use the individual stops as starting points for your own exploration. Rather than trying to reproduce Wenders' images exactly, take time to notice what remains, what has disappeared and how people inhabit these same spaces today.

This guide is created in partnership with MPB, the right way to buy and sell cameras. **Discover our other city guides,** Local's Perspective and Lisbon Photowalk here.

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BEST CAMERAS FOR STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

"You'll want your camera to have specific features to help you focus on capturing the 'decisive moment'. Your street photography camera should preferably be relatively inconspicuous and light enough so you can stay quick on your feet. Physical buttons and dials will help you to instinctively change your settings and shoot. Rapid autofocus and quick-burst modes are always a plus. And those extra megapixels will enable you to crop in post-production. In terms of lenses for street photography, you'll want a decent 35mm (or 35mm equivalent) prime or pancake lens."

To find out and learn more about Top 5 cameras for street photography, **click here and visit the MPB website for the latest article.**



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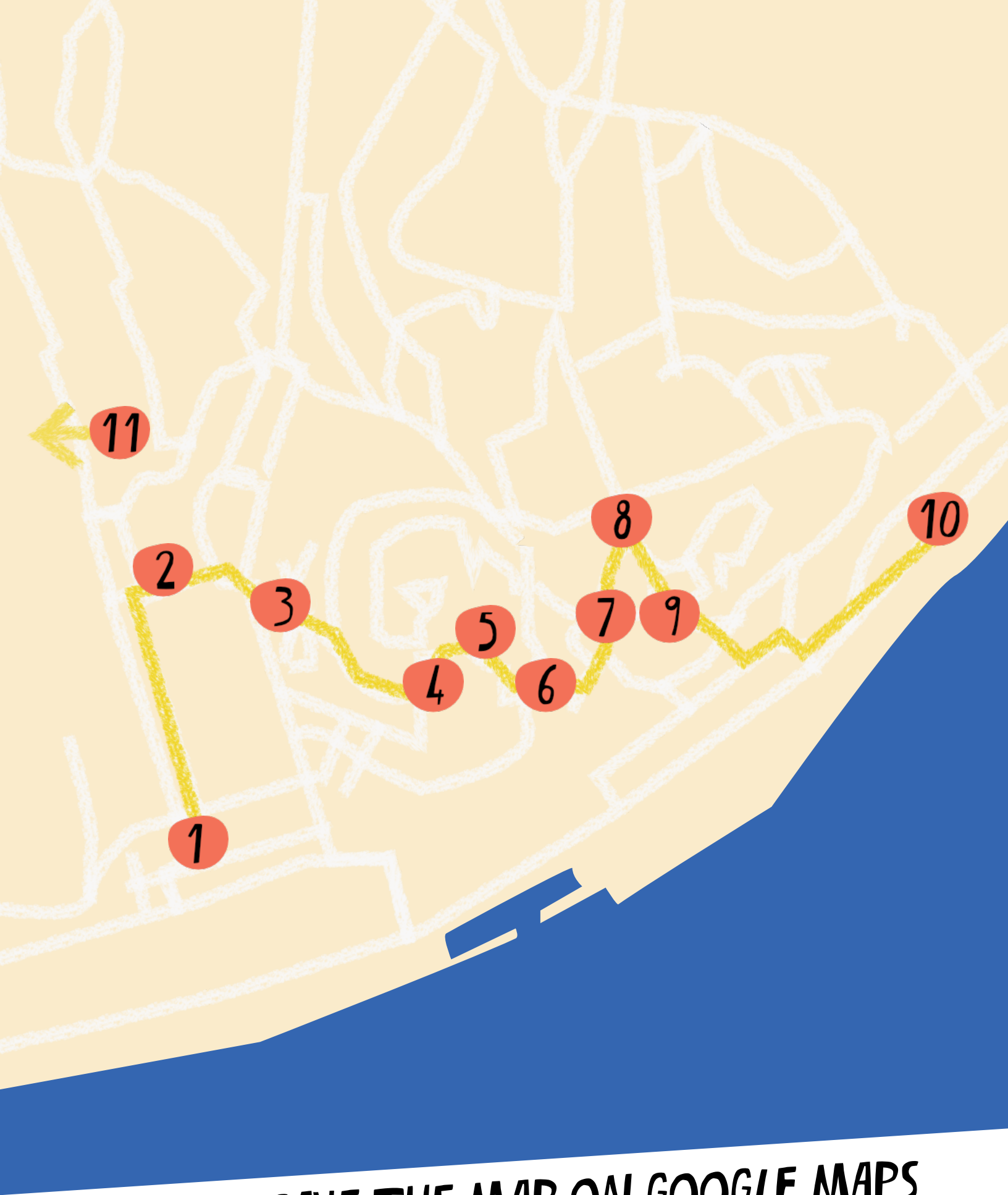


NIKON D850



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CLICK TO SAVE THE MAP ON GOOGLE MAPS

Stop 1

RUA DA CONCEIÇÃO

A main street through one of the busiest areas in Lisbon. A great place to stop and wait to catch a shot of the famous Tram 28. Sitting in the Baixa Pombalina, it's part of the grid that was rebuilt after the 1755 earthquake. The name itself comes from a church, Igreja da Conceição, that once stood nearby but was demolished years ago. Below these streets are the ruins of a Roman gallery complex that at certain times of the year you can visit via timed tours.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Golden Hour streaks down the road creating stretching shadows.

Look for: Trams and window reflections.

Gear: Longer focal lengths (over 50mm) that can create nice compression.

Bonus: Windows here tend to be slightly dirty. Creating interesting texture for reflection shots.





Stop 2

ESTÁTUA EQUESTRE DE DOM JOÃO I

In Praça da Figueira sits this statue since 1971, though they moved it from the center of the square to a corner back in 2000. Until 1949 the Mercado da Figueira called this square home. Nowadays you can often find holiday markets taking over the square with local goods and tourist-priced food stalls crowded together.

To the West of here on the other side of the building is Praça Dom Pedro IV. Officially named after King Pedro IV and is also often used as a holiday market location. In the film you can find the protagonist sitting here getting the sound of water flowing through the Fonte Sul do Rossio.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Early afternoon. As this square is surrounded by large buildings the best time for shooting is before the large shadows overtake it.

Look for: Skaters using the statue area for tricks.

Gear: The wider the better, it's a large open square so 28mm and lower can help to catch multiple subjects.

Bonus: Check the schedule for markets.


ALVARES. JOÃO DAS REGRAS, POVO DE LISBOA E CORTES DA







Stop 3

ESCADINHAS DA ACHADA

"Achada" is an old name, recorded since at least 1544, meaning a small flat resting point on a hillside (from "achaada," flat ground). The area sat just outside the old Moorish-era city. Thirty years on the tree appears to have been replaced while the flower pots haven't changed at all.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Late afternoon

Look for: This is just a scene from the movie. You might find locals wandering up or down the stairs.

Gear: A 24–70mm lens would be useful here. The wide end lets you capture entire street art pieces, while the zoom range gives you flexibility to create more compressed compositions in the narrow streets.

Bonus: Turn around for a large piece of street art.


CALOR ESTOS CALOR



Stop 4

PALÁCIO BELMONTE (ARCO)

Built into Roman and Moorish defensive walls, with foundations dating back to Roman times. The first section of the palace itself went up in 1449. Vasco da Gama was received there after returning from India. Now a boutique hotel featuring a Michelin restaurant. Going through here you can find the once empty lot featured in the film to have recently been retrofitted into a dog park. And behind you towards the castle is an occupied abandoned building. It contains a few artistic residents who at times put on music shows and sell their art.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: early morning the light shines into the tunnel.

Look for: solo walkers creating a silhouette.

Gear: Try a shutter speed of 1/10s or slower to introduce motion blur into silhouettes. An ND filter can help achieve slower shutter speeds in brighter conditions.









Stop 5

ESTÁTUA DE SÃO VICENTE

The statue itself rests between three different miradouros. Miradouro de São Vicente, Miradouro das Portas do Sol, and Miradouro de Santa Luzia all offer great views of the city and river. While the filming location from the film is actually taken from directly behind the food kiosk here. You can stop for a snack here but the best spot for that is on stop six.

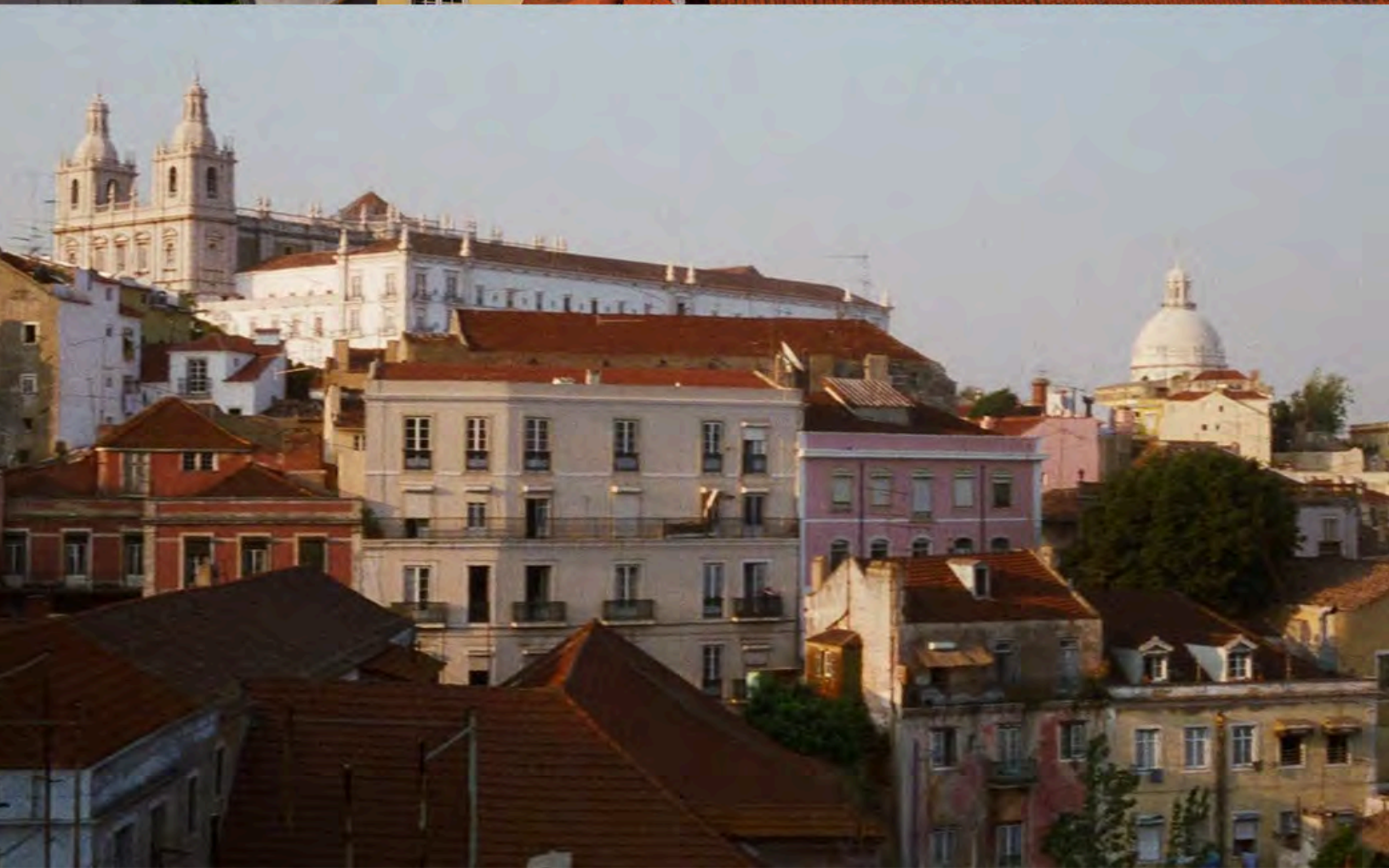
SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Sunrise and early golden hour here is the best.

Look for: People setting up for the day and locals getting their early walk on.

Gear: 35mm is perfect here. Lisbon being a city of cranes you might find that wider focal lengths need to be cropped to remove cranes from the scene.





Stop 6

ESCOLAS GERAIS

The name comes from Lisbon's medieval university, which operated at Pátio dos Quintalinhos before being moved permanently to Coimbra in 1537. So the street name is a leftover marker for where the university used to be.

It's a two way street with only room for one car at a time. So, trams and cars have to stop and wait for their turn making this a pretty fantastic second location for a shot of Tram 28. Since the traffic has to stop on each side you can see what's coming if you want and rush back to catch the shot.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: 11h-15h. This street is narrow and catching it outside these hours much of the street will be covered in shadow.

Look for: Trams and people waiting for them.

Gear: Shooting in more direct and harsh light either a CPL or ND8 might help you here.


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Stop 7

IGREJA DE SÃO VICENTE DE FORA

Slightly out of the way of the main route doesn't make this stop not worth the uphill travel. The church itself was founded in 1147, rebuilt in the late 16th century under Filipe II of Spain. It managed to survive the 1755 earthquake relatively intact. Known for extensive 17th–18th century azulejo panels and the Bragança royal pantheon inside. A few extra bits of information here that are worth noting:

If you're here on Tuesday or Saturday the famous Feira da Ladra is right beyond the Igreja. You can find many local stands offering up things for sale, interesting souvenirs and oddities galore here.

If you have the extra time the Igreja has a terrace and rooftop that you can view this side of the city from. It does cost to enter São Vicente de Fora but it is worth it.
If you're looking for a snack/coffee break this is one of the best spots to do that. Simply avoid walking up the steps to the main entrance and go towards the lower exit at the back of the parking lot. Once you go in through the doors head right down the hallway and you'll find the church cafe. It is almost never busy and you can take your snacks outside to their gorgeous hidden garden.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Same as Escolas Gerais, 11h-15h.

Look for: solo walkers or Tuktuks that look old fashioned.

Gear: A telephoto lens (around 70–100mm) can help compress the narrow street and frame subjects beneath the archway.


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Stop 8

CALÇADA DE SÃO VICENTE & CRUZ DE SANTA HELENA

We're back near the one-way-street. In the movie this scene features a man on a bike. He's an amolador or traveling knife sharpener, rarely seen/heard in Lisbon these days. They work the streets by bicycle where the bike itself is the workshop. A grinding wheel is mounted on the frame that is powered by pedaling. Often with a toolbox strapped on the back for any quick fixing. You'll hear them coming by their use of a pan-flute whistle.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Best light - 11h-18h - Same reasoning as Escolas Gerais

Look for: shadows coming from Cruz de Santa Helena so you can catch them as they round the bend.

Gear: 35-50mm here will let you stand down by the cafe and still get the scene. While a wider lens will help you get the rest of Calçada de São Vicente there are a couple of trash cans that don't improve the scene much.





Stop 9

MIRADOURO DE SANTO ESTÊVAO

Easily one of the most overlooked miradouros in Lisbon. Miradouro de Santo Estêvão is a quiet & hidden view of the city. You can really relax and take your time as it's rarely crowded like Lisbon's other miradouros.

The railing, antennas, and rooftops running down toward the Tejo are all easily recognizable. Thirty years on, the view has held its shape. While some things have obviously changed, when you stand here you're looking at almost the exact frame Wenders shot in 1994.

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: The afternoon light here is best to avoid the spot being fully covered in shadow. And if you arrive early enough and look away from the city, you can see the morning light breaking through buildings. Go to the railing and look down towards the East. It's a perfect spot to catch a lone silhouette walking through the dawn light.

Look for: This street is often washed early in the morning, you can find some nice reflections in the puddles.

Gear: A 28mm or 35mm lens works well here to include the surrounding architecture and create layered compositions with people in the frame.


Caixa
Alfama
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Stop 10

SANTA APOLÓNIA STATION

Lisbon's oldest railway terminus, opened 1865, built partly on the site of the old Convent of Santa Apolónia. Was the main international departure point until 2020. A fitting place to end since it's literally where journeys out of the city begin. From here if you're attending the festival you can just head down into the metro and ride back to Baixa-Chiado!

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: Golden hours here streak light either into the station itself or the terminal inside.

Look for: The motion of people rushing to the trains. If you see a train, maybe wait around a few minutes and you can catch people rushing to make it on time.

Gear: While tripods generally aren't allowed in transit locations, modern cameras tend to have good enough IBIS. An ND filter can help you achieve slower shutter speeds in bright light, allowing you to capture motion blur as people rush to catch the train.


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Extra Stop 11

AQUEDUTO DAS ÁGUAS LIVRES

While far out of the way of the walk we would be remiss if we forgot to include this shot. Walking over the aqueduct costs a small fee but you can spend quite a bit of time walking across the arches and looking out across the city from unique angles. It was built between 1731-1799 and commissioned by D. João V to provide a reliable water source to Lisbon. Before this the primary source of water to the city was the many public fountains you can find throughout places like Alfama. Most of which no longer provide water to the public but were once a cultural gathering point.

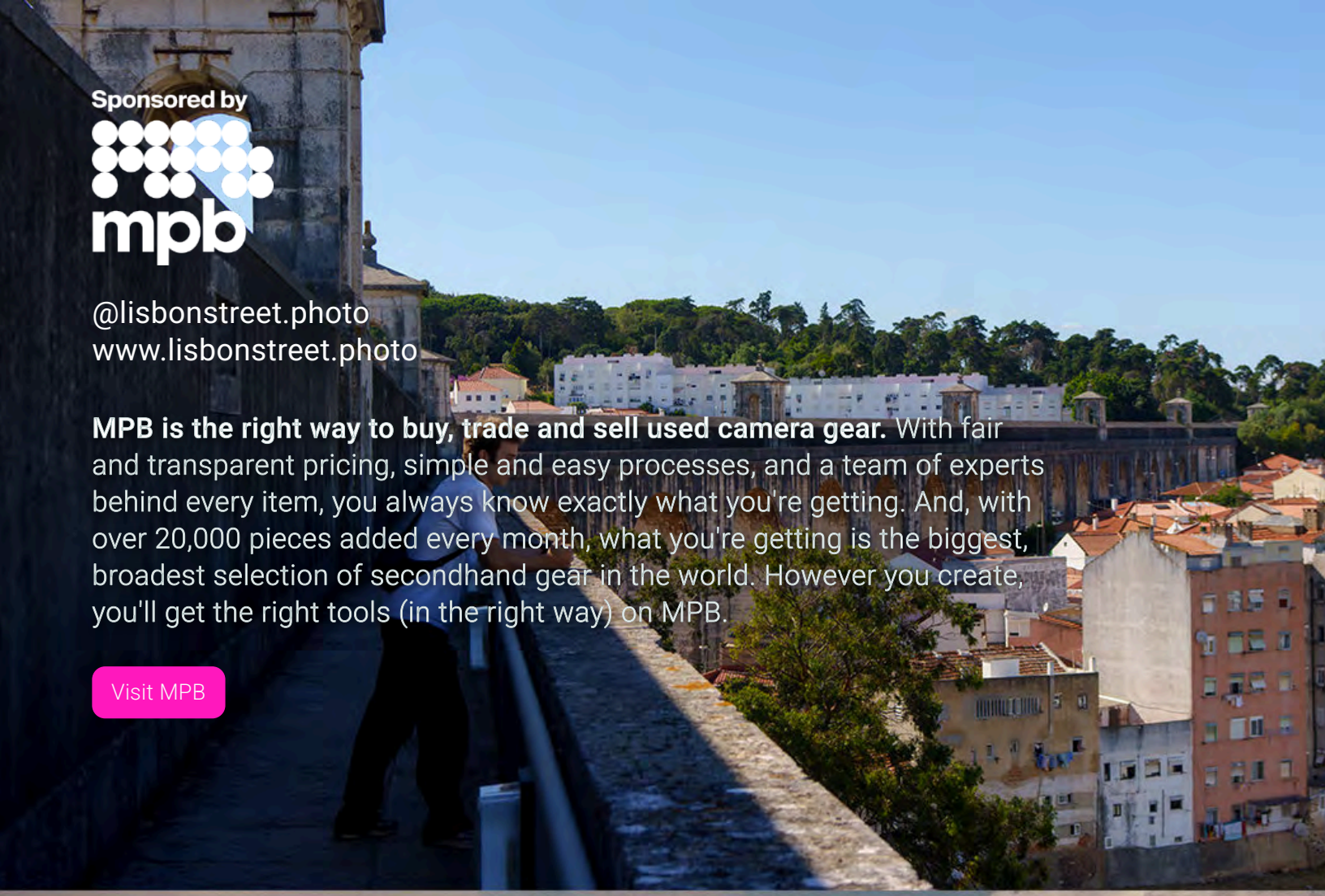
You're actually not too far from the starting points of Tram 24e here. Look for the Campolide tram stop and you can start your journey down to the rest of this walk without having to shove your way into an already crowded tram. It ends by Praça de Luís de Camões which is only a short walk to the festival location!

SHOOTING TIPS & WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Best light: 10h-12h and 15h-17h. Unless you're here in the winter you most likely won't be able to catch golden hours. However, during these hours you can still catch great shadows stretching across the buildings.

Look for: Look down, the amount of interesting light and subjects are below you. While you can look out at the city for the classic tourist shots for me the subjects are below here.

Gear: A tilt-shift lens can be fun here — from this height, you can make the cars, trains, people and buildings below look like miniature toys.



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