

## NATURAL MINERAL WATERS

Stemming from aquifers located at a considerable depth below ground, NATURAL MINERAL WATERS are unpolluted aqueous systems of an original, natural chemical composition which are borne exclusively of the interaction between rock and water.

For this reason, the chemical composition is unique; no two waters are the same, and each water's own standard chemical composition is unchanged with time. The Official Journal of the European Union published the following clear and precise definition of a Natural Mineral Water: "A natural mineral water is derived from an aquifer; it is bacteriologically sound and characterized by the content of certain minerals, by the proportional presence of said minerals, by the presence of trace elements or other constituent parts, by certain aspects determining its original purity."

Did you know that?

Natural mineral water differs from ordinary drinking water because:

- Of its original purity, that is to say it is from an unpolluted source,
  - It is derived from an aquifer in a specific, identified location,
- It has a unique chemical composition, practically unchanged in the course of time.

The commercial use of natural mineral water is duly regulated for in Portuguese legislation, and requires authorisation by the Directorate General for Energy and Ecology, once approved by the Directorate General for Health, and once evidence has shown that the hydromineral resource meets all requirements of the definition of mineral water as set out by the European Union. European legislation sets a particularly stringent level of regulation for this type of natural water and requires that:

- The spring or outlet from which the mineral water is extracted is duly protected against environmental pollution.
- The exploitation needs to take place at the catchment site
- Within abstraction works, any catchment pipes through which the water circulates or reservoirs where it is stored shall be made of materials that, as shown in previous clinical studies, have been proven not to cause alterations in the original chemical and bacteriological properties of the water.
- Industrial installations, including those in the bottling process, should possess the necessary means of assuring operations that do not cause any changes to the original product.
- Programmes of systematic monitoring must be defined and implemented by the competent state bodies, which evidence the preservation of the specific characteristics of the hydromineral resource.